

Shady Notes

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ST LOUIS
HOSTA
SOCIETY



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



President Dave Birenbaum

Greetings Fellow Gardeners,

2025 has been a great year – at least most of the time – for gardening and enjoying the many activities the Hosta Society has undertaken. I appreciate the several members and friends of our Society who have responded to my calls and opened their private gardens to us. For all of our members, I thank each of you!!

With one meeting remaining in October (see the Activities calendar herein), our club's annual activities will have been completed. Be aware that the Nominations committee is rounding out a slate for 2026-2027 officers, with elections that will take place during that meeting. It takes quite the tribe of folks to make our plant society hum. I encourage members to consider or continue volunteering simply by raising your hand or talking to a Board member. Your assistance to run our two plant sales, garden walks, meetings, and possible bus trip are always welcome.

The Board continues to search for gardens to tour (hint hint). Doesn't matter whether it's elegant and large by a long-time member or something small by a newbie or friend – we all enjoy gardens. Period. Planning the activities calendar for 2026 will take place by year end.

Is anyone playing with propagating hostas from seed? Yes, that's how new varieties come about, but some people have better results than the majority who have tried. I'd personally like to hear about your adventures in that realm and perhaps that will be a future newsletter article.

Our members continue to exude great knowledge from our varied backgrounds including expertise in identifying Southern Blight that was plentiful in many gardens this year and its control, Hosta Virus X (HVX) disease that I hope has not devastated your plants, and pest management from deer, rabbits, and raccoons to slugs and other critters. I've been able to change my garden for the better from frequent chats with members about fertilizing, need for

daylight but not too much direct sun, mulching issues, and companion plants that improve the landscape. Attendance at our functions makes this sharing possible.

As I mentioned in the previous newsletter, the garden season is winding down. Therefore, if you are planning to move or divide hostas, they'll want 5 to 6 weeks of growing time to establish roots. This means you've got a limited number of weeks to get that chore done for your plants' benefit. Time to hustle. In the meantime, continue to water, water, water!

Hostily,

- Dave

HOSTA SPOTLIGHT: *H.* 'DOUBLED UP'

If you are one of the gardeners who usually grow hostas for their foliage and snip off their blooms, it's time to make an exception. Meet *H.* 'Doubled Up', a tetraploid sport of *hosta plantaginea*. It's a late bloomer (it's blooming now), but its large, wonderfully fragrant flowers are worth waiting for.



H. 'Doubled Up' was registered by Bob Solberg in 2011.



White, very fragrant flowers on H. 'Doubled Up' average 6" in length.



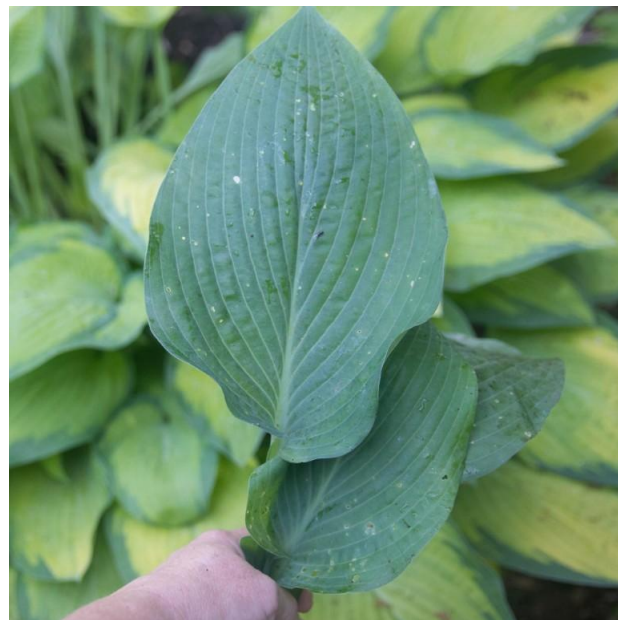
H. 'Doubled Up' displays its exceptional blooms at the Missouri Botanical Garden.



If you notice solid green leaves on a variegated variety, your hosta is most likely reverting to one of its parents (or could be a new sport). Solid shoots will grow faster and larger due to more chlorophyll, so if left alone, they will quickly overtake the variegated parts of the hosta. Remove the reversion either by carefully cutting from the crown, or digging up the entire clump and gently separate from the original plant.



An H. 'Paul's Glory' with reverted leaves at the Missouri Botanical Garden



The reverted plant isn't necessarily one of the parents, (in this case, H. 'Perry's True Blue') and can only be verified by testing.

BOTANY AND BLOOD: PLANTS IN TRUE CRIME

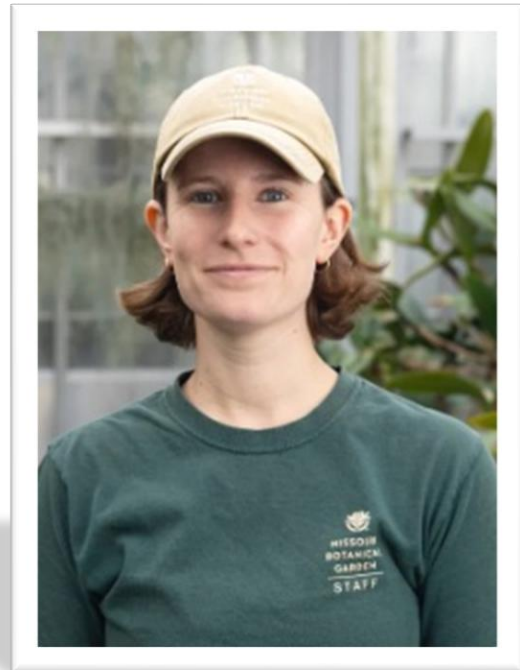
By this time of year, our gardens can look like crime scenes – victims of heat, blight, slugs, deer, or some unlucky combination. So, what a perfect time to have Senior Horticulturist Claire Krofft give a talk on forensic botany!

“Botany and Blood: Plants in True Crime”

Come along as we explore the fascinating intersection between the natural world and some of the most notorious true crime stories. From toxic plants used in historic poisonings to botanical evidence found at crime scenes, we will delve into how plants played a pivotal role in both creating and cracking criminal investigations.

Sunday, October 19
1:00 – 2:00pm

MoBot CBEC Building
[4651 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110](https://www.missouri.edu/4651ShawBlvd)



Claire Krofft, Senior Horticulturist at the
Missouri Botanical Garden
Photo by Nathan Kwart

GARDEN WALKS TO REMEMBER

On July 12, 2025, the St. Louis Hosta Society visited two gardens in Manchester, Missouri, starting at the home of members George and Nancy Lynn. The mature oak and pine trees provide abundant shade for hundreds of hostas and companion plants such as Aroids, Japanese Maples, and Solomon Seal. The Lynns put hours of planning and design into their garden and keep track of plantings with an extensive map. George and his wife are proud of the private oasis they created and enjoy sharing it with visitors.



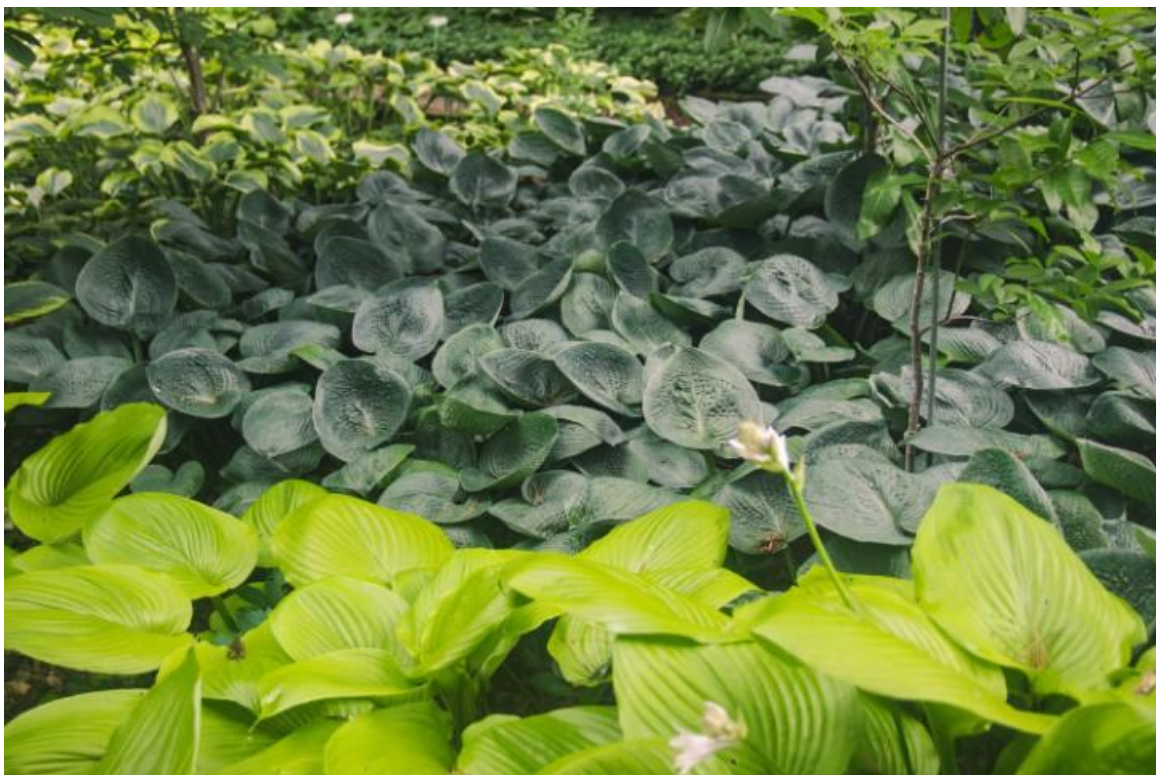
George Lynn (2nd from left) leads members through a tour of his extensive garden. The Fallopia Variegata in foreground is one of his favorites.



George found these intricate plant markers while visiting Williamsburg, Virginia. Originally herb markers with raised brass letters, he ground off the existing names so he could add his own labels. Beautiful, but pricy, he bought a few more every time he visited the area. Once sold out, he contacted the brass foundry and purchased their remaining stock.



George collected historical bricks from the city to line his pathway.



In addition to being striking, planting in clusters has the benefit of leaving no room for weeds to grow!



George built this shed with the wood from fallen trees. He did all of the work himself and only needed help from neighbors when it was time to raise the walls.



Mike Teller and Janelle Criscione enjoy the swing while chatting with neighbors Bill and Shelli Handy. George used wood left over from the shed project to construct this charming structure.

Our next stop was Bill and Shelli Handy's native woodland garden, right next door. When they moved in a little over three years ago, the property was crowded with invasive honeysuckle and prone to drainage issues. The Handys embraced the challenge, removing more than 40 honeysuckle trees and installing a rain garden to improve stormwater management. Over 1,000 plants later, their garden is taking shape—though hostas have yet to make an appearance. With George nearby, that may not last forever.



The deer fence separating the two yards is barely visible, which helps maintain a natural look.



Eutrochium Purpureum (Joe Pye Weed) attracts butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. It is also used in natural medicine and cooking.



Self seeding native plants such as Brown Eyed Susan and Purple Coneflower create a low maintenance pollinator garden.



The rain garden uses native plants with deep roots to absorb stormwater runoff.



"Sassafrass Garden"

ANNUAL PLANT AUCTION

Our Annual Plant Auction is always a popular event and this year's offerings did not disappoint. On July 13, 2025, bidders competed for approximately 70 plants and related items primarily donated by members. After the final hammer fell, the club earned about \$1,900. Thank you to all who contributed and/or purchased plants. And special *Thank You's* to Gene Pulliam for once again serving as Auctioneer and to Janelle Criscione for serving as his lovely assistant. We're already looking forward to next year!



Auctioneer Gene Pulliam (center) hypes up the current item while Vice President Janelle Criscione (left) scans the crowd for new bids. President Dave Birenbaum (right) waits patiently for his favorite plant to come up on the block.



This year's collection. Will any inspire a bidding war?



David Colvin (holding plate) places a bid while wife Marigold (left) wonders if there will be room left for her in the car. Bob Henson (right) debates whether he needs this one too.



The right side of the room was clearly having a good time.



Mark Heiland (front row) playfully turns to Phyllis Weidman (red shirt) after she dared to outbid him again. Membership Chair Kris Ash (2nd from left) is shocked to witness such cutthroat behavior.

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT: NH HOSTAS

By Lynn Teller, Newsletter Editor

Purchasing plants sight unseen can feel a little unnerving. That's why I'd like to share my experiences with [New Hampshire Hostas](#). I've ordered from them for several years, and our Society also purchases plants from them for the Missouri Botanical Garden. Every shipment I've received has arrived quickly, well-packaged, and—most importantly—healthy. Their shipping rates are reasonable, and once you register on their website, you'll automatically receive a 5% discount on future orders (or 15% if your total reaches \$300 or more).

On a recent trip to visit a friend in New Hampshire, I had the chance to check them out in person. We were greeted warmly by PJ, who not only showed us around but also gave me the rare treat of exploring their “staff only” greenhouse. Inside were varieties they were growing out for next year as well as varieties that were nearly sold out.

We also got to see a few plants that were not for sale including *H. 'Gunther's Prize'*. PJ explained that he doesn't like to sell streaked hostas because of their instability. He doesn't want a customer to purchase an expensive plant for its streaking only to be disappointed when it is solid green the next year.

Here are a few photos from my recent order, my visit, and the shipment of plants I purchased on the trip. Based on years of positive experiences, I can confidently recommend New Hampshire Hostas. I suggest signing up for their [email list](#)—you'll get updates on new varieties and inventory changes, which makes it easier to snag something special before it sells out.



Welcome home, new friends!



H. 'Catherine'



H. 'Woop Woop'



Hostas were shipped in 4.5" containers and arrived in excellent condition.



Outside the retail space at New Hampshire Hostas in South Hampton, NH



H. 'Gunther's Prize' in the "Not For Sale" section



H. 'Doubled Up'- I showed PJ the photos of the one at MoBot and he said it never blooms for them in NH.



Is this Heaven? No, it's New Hampshire.



All of their plants are grown and overwintered in greenhouses like this one.



H. 'Guardian Angel'



H. 'Chance Encounter' – This is a newly available variety from Hans Hansen. Notice the watermark halo where the center and margin color meet. I'm excited to see what this one does next year.



IN OTHER (NON-HOSTA RELATED) NEWS

You can learn about more than just hostas when volunteering in the MoBot Hosta Garden. Just last week, Horticulturist Ash Sander pointed out a fringe tree showing signs of *Alcoholic Flux*, a condition often triggered by drought or heat stress. It occurs when microorganisms enter the sap through a crack or wound in the bark, causing fermentation and a foamy white ooze to seep from the tree. While Alcoholic Flux itself won't kill a tree, it signals underlying stress that should be addressed. Care may be as simple as watering more often and adding mulch, or if the tree shows decline such as wilting leaves or dead branches, as serious as removing the whole tree or affected limbs. Ash will continue to monitor and evaluate the tree.



Alcoholic Flux on a chionanthus virginicus commonly known as fringe tree

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 19, 2025 1:00 pm (Sunday)	Program	“Botany and Blood: Plants in True Crime” Speaker Claire Krofft with the Missouri Botanical Garden Come along as we explore the fascinating intersection between the natural world and some of the most notorious true crime stories. From toxic plants used in historic poisonings to botanical evidence found at crime scenes, we will delve into how plants played a pivotal role in both creating and cracking criminal investigations. MoBot CBEC Building 4651 Shaw Blvd, St Louis MO 63110
November 2, 2025 1:00 pm (Sunday)	Board Meeting	Board 2026 planning meeting at Janelle Criscione’s home. Members are welcome. 624 Locksley Place, Webster Groves, MO 63119
February 20 – 21, 2026 (Friday – Saturday)	Regional Symposium	2026 MRHS Winter Symposium Embassy Suites Hotel - Brookfield-Milwaukee, WI Event Check-in Fri. Feb 20th, 4-6 PM and Sat. Feb 21st 7-8 AM 

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 10 – 13, 2026 (Weds – Saturday)	National Convention	American Hosta Society Convention in Dublin, OH Embassy Suites by Hilton • Dublin, OH  2026 AHS Convention - Dublin, OH
July 9 – 11, 2026 (Thurs – Saturday)	Regional Convention	Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Madison, WI  2026 MRHS CONVENTION 50TH ANNIVERSARY WHS MADISON, WI

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

Application is available on our [website](#) or
contact [Lynn](#)

Dues: \$10 per year,
\$20 for three years

Membership term is January - December

Please visit our website
stlhosta.org

Check us out on Facebook
[St Louis Hosta Society](#)

THE AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY



Join the American Hosta Society and get to know America's most popular perennials and those who love them. Memberships range from \$30 - \$40/year with multi-year discounts.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Full-color print issue of The Hosta Journal mailed twice each year
- Unique digital edition of The Hosta Journal emailed once each year
- Access to "Members Only" section of the website
- Access to display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members
- Eligibility to purchase a member-only hosta
- Exclusive invitation to exhibit hostas and compete for recognition in AHS-sanctioned Hosta Shows
- Updates on speaker programs, events, awards, plant auctions, news, and more!

FIRST-TIME MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVE

- \$15 voucher for use at participating nurseries
- Option to receive an exclusive gift hosta (additional \$10 to cover shipping)
- Hosta Adventure—A Grower's Guide, a primer on hostas outlining what every gardener should know
- Hosta of the Year Booklet, a full-color publication featuring the American Hosta Growers Association Hostas of the Year

Join Today at americanhostasociety.org

THE MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



Membership in the society is \$20.00 for two years for both an individual or family membership. A family membership includes the primary member and his/her significant other. Members receive two issues per year of the society's newsletter, *The Hosta Leaves*. **First time members receive a voucher for \$10.00, good for purchases at our participating Hosta Vendors.**

In addition there are two meetings held annually. The Winter Symposium is held in the Milwaukee area in early February. It is a one-day event with an assortment of speakers that present the latest information pertaining to Hostas and gardening with them. All of this is offered in an enjoyable and down-to-earth format with something for everyone interested in gardening and learning more about Hostas.

In the summer, an annual convention, hosted by a local society, is held in different locations throughout the region. This three-day extravaganza features garden tours, a show of Hosta leaves, vendors selling the newest in Hosta plants, an auction of plants, a banquet, and informational speakers.

Send your completed membership application and check to:

Mona Keehn, Treasurer
1635 Chippewa Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

[Printable MRHS Membership Form](#)