



Shady Notes

Volume 21, Issue 3

April, 2020



President
Phyllis Weidman

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Vendor Day is canceled!

Did we ever think a virus, seen only with an electron microscope or a 'nanoscope', could change our world? Well it has!

Because of this the St. Louis Hosta Society will not meet on April 26th for our annual Vendor Day event. This is a sad day for me because it

is the one meeting I really look forward to. I'm sure all the hosta vendors will do mail order, but it is so nice to see before you buy. Thanks to Jolly Ann Whitener for all the hard work she has done to organize the event.

All I can say is the plants have not been told about this virus. They are waking up for spring. As gardeners we can get outside and do things. The garden always has something to be done.

If you see a neighbor, remember social distancing. Stay home and stay well. See you at the Workday and the Plant Sale in May (we hope).

Phyllis

2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 26**
CANCELLED
- Vendor Day**
1:30 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- May 2**
- Work Day at the Missouri Botanical Garden**
8:00 AM, Missouri Botanical Garden,
AHS Display Garden beds
- May 15-17**
- Plant Sale at the Missouri Botanical Garden**
Setup May 15, 4:00 PM
Sale May 16-17, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Missouri Botanical Garden
- May**
- Garden Walk/Meeting/Demonstration**
Time and location TBA
- June 10-13**
- AHS National Convention**
Minneapolis, MN
- June**
- Garden Walk/Meeting**
Time and location TBA
- July 12**
- Bus trip to Hornbaker Gardens Nursery**
Pick-up time and point TBA
- July 16-18**
- Midwest Regional Hosta Convention**
Lisle, IL
- August 16**
- Members Plant Auction**
1:30 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- September 20**
- Meeting with Speaker Gene Bush**
‘Hosta Buddies’
1:30 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- October 18**
- Meeting with Speaker TBA**
1:30 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- November**
- Board Meeting**
Time and location TBA

April Vendor Day

Sadly, our immensely popular Vendor Day event must be cancelled this year. Due to the unpredictable future, it seemed prudent to cancel rather than try to reschedule this activity. What fun it is to browse through tables of hosta and companion plants, seeing what is new on the market, comparing purchases with our fellow members, picking up needed supplies and sharing the excitement of a new gardening season.

While the drastic measures imposed on us this spring have put a damper on our lives, we must think about what these same measures are doing to our small businesses. The Board encourages our members and their friends to patronize our loyal vendors as best we can.

AVALON ACRES



Avalon Acres is a 10 acre hilltop nestled among hundreds of large red and white oak trees in South Central Illinois near Effingham. The family owned and operated nursery's mission is to bring you the highest quality plants at the lowest possible prices. Denny and Alicia Ricketts have had a sales table at our Vendor Day event for many years, offering quality plants, both new cultivars and old standards. They welcome visitors, but **please call ahead** so they can dedicate quality time to you. They are available most evenings and Sundays.

Avalon Acres is open April 30 through August 25. For more information about their products access their web-site at <http://avalonacreshostas.com/> or call 217-536-9443. Their address is 11092 N 965th St. Effingham, IL 62401

Hostas on the Bluff



Hostas on the Bluff is a specialty hosta farm and display garden. This small family owned business, the brain child of Brian and Erica Kniffin, is situated on the French Village bluffs overlooking the St. Louis skyline and river valley near Fairview Heights, Illinois.

They are open for business starting late April. Anyone can contact them through Facebook or phone 618-830-5929 to set up an appointment.

Use their website - <https://hostasonthebluff.com/> to put in online orders for shipping or select local pickup if you want to meet the Kniffins and view their beautiful nursery.

Homestead Farms Nursery



Homestead Farms Nursery is a family owned perennial flower nursery located near Owensville, Mo, which specializes in field-grown daylilies, hostas, peonies and Siberian iris. They also have a nice selection of clematis and hardy ferns. The nursery, run by Ron Vitoux and his family for more than 25 years, offers over 1200 varieties of daylilies, 350 varieties of hosta, 100 different peony cultivars and 50 Siberian iris varieties. For a number of years, Ron and his sons Kurt and Brett have brought hostas and companion plants to our Vendor Day event.

Homestead Farms Nursery has an outstanding web site, www.homesteadfarms.com/, which is easy to navigate. Besides a picture inventory, the web site has hosta growing tips as well as information about the other perennials they offer for sale. If you plan to visit the nursery, **please call ahead to set up an appointment**. Their policy has changed. Instead of having "open hours" they ask you call ahead to set up an appointment (phone number (573) 437-4277).

OVERLAND HARDWARE



Overland Hardware owners, Gregg Wesche and Don Burkhardt, continue the long tradition of excellent customer service established by their father and father-in-law. They state that they are an "old-fashioned" hardware store. In their minds that means "you can get in and out without having to walk a quarter mile, that someone offers to help you when you walk in the door and the person who helped you find what you needed also checks you out and helps carry it out to your car". They stock everything from Italian granite paint for countertops to numerous blends of birdseed and rabbit chow.

Overland Hardware, located at 2520 Woodson Road, Overland MO 63114, state on their website: "As an "ESSENTIAL BUSINESS" during this unsettling time, please know that we are disinfecting all counter tops, door handles, handrails, credit card machines, etc in order to protect our customers and ourselves, as well as maintaining proper social distancing. If you want to avoid coming into the store, simply call ahead with your order. We will assemble your purchases and call you back with a total so that you can pay with a credit card over the phone. Then just pull up to our rear parking lot for pick up! Thank you for supporting our small business." This is the place to go for those hard to find services. Summer is approaching. Now is the time to repair screens and broken windows, sharpen chainsaw chains and lawn mower blades. Visit their web site, www.overlandhardware.net or call Gregg at 314-427-1404 for more information, hours of operation, directions to their store or to place an order.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOYAL VENDORS

Member Plant Sale

The original plan was to have Brian Kniffin of *Hostas on the Bluff* bring our Member Plant Sale orders with him to Vendor Day. That is not now possible. Plan B goes into effect.

The Board does not want to cancel this sale. We must support our small businesses. Your paid orders have been received and processed by *Hostas on the Bluff*. Brian will hold all plants at his nursery until the time comes when we are allowed to freely move about the country again.

Basil, with help from Board members, will pick up the plants and either deliver your order to your home or set up a convenient time and place where you can pick up your order. When the time comes, someone will contact you with pick-up information. Hopefully the “stay-at-home” mandate will end sometime in May. The up side is that hostas are tough and can be planted most any time.

Any questions, contact Basil

Basil Honaker, Jr
honabn@charter.net or 636-332-1726

Don't Cross Them Off Yet

Two events occur early in May, our annual **Work Day** at the Missouri Botanical Garden on **May 2** closely followed by our **Hosta Sale** on **May 15-17**. Currently the Missouri Botanical Garden is closed to all events until May 1 at which time they will reassess the situation. President Phyllis Weidman and the Board plan to wait until the end of April to determine if these two events have to be cancelled. Information will be posted on Facebook, Instagram and in the May newsletter.

Bus Trip to Hornbaker Gardens July 12

On Sunday July 12, Hornbaker Gardens is hosting an event featuring hosta expert Bob Solberg of Green Hill Farm in North Carolina. **This event has not yet been cancelled.** Hornbaker's schedule for this special event is:



- 10 am to noon – A Meet and Greet with Bob Solberg in the garden center
- 11:30 – 12:30 – Lunch in the event center
- 1:00 pm - 'Growing Hostas in Containers at Home and in Japan' – a presentation by Bob Solberg.

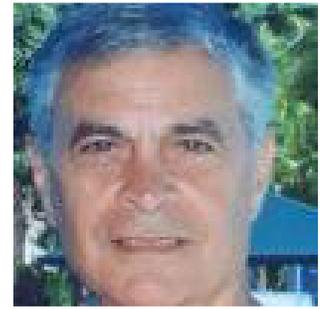
In addition, there will be door prizes, a photo contest, \$2.00 off all hostas, a floral arrangement contest featuring one or more hosta leaves, and more.

Hornbaker Gardens is located in Princeton, Illinois about a three hour drive from St. Louis. Our society is planning to charter a bus for this all day event. The Board needs to know if you are interested. Bus trips are a lot of fun. It is a great time to get to know other gardeners, plus visiting an exceptional hosta nursery. Just think, none of the stress of driving and plenty of room to bring back lots of plants or even a tree or two.

Contact any officer – their email/phone information is at the end of this newsletter.
Reservations are required.

March 20 meeting

There was a bit of a topic change as our March speaker Master Gardener Wally Cammarata talked about the recipe for a successful garden. The recipe consists of three main ingredients: good soil, adequate moisture and light considerations. This is the time of year to take stock of these three items in our own gardens.



Perfect soil for most plants should hold moisture, but shed excess water. This is achieved by incorporating amendments such as compost, peat moss or leaf mold to flower beds. To retain moisture cover with a layer of mulch. Mulch has the added benefit of keeping the soil cool in the hot summer and warm in our chilly spring and fall. Organic mulch breaks down and adds nutrients. Inorganic mulches such as crushed rock or dyed rubber help control weeds but don't add much to the composition of the soil. The fertility of soil changes from one growing season to the next. It is useless, expensive and maybe even detrimental to add fertilizer to garden beds. Have a soil test done first.

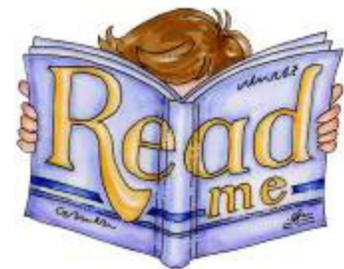
Wally recommended "watering your soil not your plants." Water in the mornings preferably between five and nine. There is less evaporation at that time and foliage has time to dry before the nighttime hours. Plants such as hosta need about an inch of water per week. This should be deep-watering by using drip irrigation or a soaker hose. Wally admitted that this type of watering, while ideal, is not always practical. Few of us are standing in our gardens at 5 am holding a hose. The advantage of automated irrigation systems.

The third component is light – sun/shade. There are different kinds of shade. Light shade is defined as 4-6 hours of direct or filtered/dappled sunlight per day. Medium shade means direct sun rays are blocked most of the day. Full shade implies no direct sun light. The most difficult gardening conditions are dry, full shade.

Wally concluded his talk with a discussion of garden pests – slugs, snails, rabbits and deer. Members had many ideas of ways to discourage these pests. Some products mentioned were Bobex, Liquid Fence and Ortho Deer B Gon.

Magazine and Book Exchange

On chilly evenings or dreary rainy afternoons or even a sunny day after all the work is done, it's nice to curl up in a comfortable chair with a good book or magazine. How many of us have beautiful and inspirational gardening magazines and books that we read once and then discard in the recycle box?



A member suggested, and the Board agreed, that we ought to institute a magazine/book exchange. Bring in your old copies of ***Fine Gardening***, ***Birds & Bloom***, ***The Hosta Journal***, ***Horticulture***, ***Garden Gate*** or any other such reading material and place on the lending table. Take something that looks interesting to you. We'll set aside a table at each meeting for this purpose. This is stress free – no need to subscribe, no need to bring in magazines, no need to return them if you don't wish. Enjoy informative and educational articles, how-to tips or just look at the pretty pictures and dream.

What's Your Favorite Tool?

At the March meeting, President Phyllis Weidman introduced us to her new best friend – a garden fork, a Christmas present from her daughter. Not only is this a gardener's best friend, it is your soil's best friend. It is great for turning the soil, aeration and mixing nutrients into the soil.

More importantly to us, it is perfect for lifting and dividing hostas. The tines are strong enough to loosen big plants from the surrounding soil, but will not cut roots as a spade will do. My husband places two forks back to back into a hosta he wishes to divide. Insert the forks into the center of the plant so that the backs of the forks are touching each other and the tines are crossing. Press down so that the forks go through the plant. You will probably hear some cracking as the plant splits. Then pull the forks apart. This action will sever the crown and pull apart the roots making it easier to lift the part of the plant you wish to remove.

Phyllis's talk got me thinking about my must-have items. I love our "poaching" or "rabbiting" spade. In 19th century England, when meat was scarce or the nobility was away from the estate, poor tenant farmers would file down an old spade into a smaller, round-point and use it to dig out rabbits for their dinner. Thus its name. The modern rabbiting spade with its curved, narrow blade enables gardeners to dig accurate, rounded and deep holes without disturbing any of the roots of established near-by plants. I love it because it is small, light and easy to carry, yet strong enough to do the job.

At this time of year, I make good use of my shrub rake. It has a long handle, but a narrow head of long metal tines. It is perfect for cleaning under our many azaleas and conifers and in corners and fence rows where a normal rake can't easily reach. Small and light weight, it is great for small areas. Larger expanses I leave to my husband and his leaf blower.

After raking, there remains the back-breaking task of picking up the leaves and tossing them in the recycling bins. A friend gave us an extra pair of hands. I was skeptical. This had to be a gimmick. But no, they really work – I love them. These heavy-duty, jumbo plastic hand rakes are designed with forked edges and a scoop shape which allow you to grab and pick up huge piles of leaves, cuttings and other debris without the risk of being scratched or stung by insects.



More Tools!

I am the weeder in the family. For this task I rely on a Dutch Hand Hoe. This beauty has a sturdy sharp triangular shaped blade that is offset for greater control and balance. It slices weeds off at their base just beneath the surface of the soil. The tip of the triangle can work closely around plant stems or into cracks between bricks. It comes in both right and left handed styles. Notice that mine is painted yellow so I won't lose it in the vegetable garden.

One of my husband's favorite tools is a heavy-duty knife with a serrated edge. His very favorites were the "ginsu knives" sold at every Home and Garden Show of yesterday. Sad to say, he's worn them all out. I found similar ones on the internet called Japanese garden knives (or hori hori). The hori hori knives listed on the web had a serrated edge on one side and a sharp edge on the other side. My husband likes the serrated side to divide plants in spring, to cut off ratty daylily foliage after bloom season and to saw down our ornamental grasses in late winter. There's usually one in the shed, one on the potting bench and one in the wheelbarrow.

Before putting any of these wonderful tools in your hands, slip into a pair of comfortable gloves. I love the Atlas brand. They fit! These gloves have a lightweight but durable nitrile coating on the palms and fingertips and a breathable mesh on the back. Not as thick as rubber, this coating is flexible and pliable. I can feel what I am doing and pick up small objects. They are washable, but need to be air dried. One of our Vendor Day participants, Overland Hardware, carries this brand.

Now that you have finished your gardening day using one or more of these fabulous tools, it is time to sit back and admire your work. Treat yourself to a glass of ice tea, with lemon of course, or a relaxing glass of wine. Tomorrow's another day.



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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

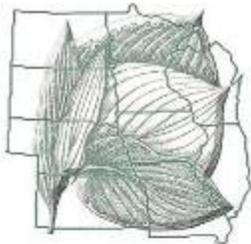
Contact: Dave Poos
9904 Crestwood Drive
Crestwood, MO 63126
david.poos@att.net

Dues: \$7 per year, \$18 for three years
Family or Individual

Meetings held at the **Creve Coeur Government Center, 300 N. New Ballas, 63141** (between Ladue Road and Olive), unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: www.stlouishosta.org

Visit us on Facebook, St. Louis Hosta Society



Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter.

Please mail a check made payable to **MRHS** to:

Barbara Schroeder,
Treasurer
1819 Coventry Dr.
Champaign, IL 61822

along with Name, Address, phone, and email (Most correspondence is by email). For questions email MRHS.Hosta@gmail.com.



AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

Members receive three issues per year of The Hosta Journal, which includes color photographs of hostas, reports on national conventions, scientific information concerning current research pertaining to hostas, and advertisements of interest to hosta families.

Membership checks should be made out to "AHS," and mailed to:

Sandie Markland, AHS Membership Secretary
P O Box 7539
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Dues for one year are \$30 for an individual and \$34 for a family. For more information, visit the AHS website: <http://www.americanhostasociety.org/>