



# *Show Me Hostas Newsletter*

Volume 12, Issue 2

March, 2011

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**



**Pam Wolkowitz President**  
*Photo by Kelly Hall*

Hello fellow gardeners,

Spring is my favorite time of the year. Everything seems new and fresh as we start another year of gardening. Our March meeting will be filled with information in our round table discussions that we can all use all year long.

I have to admit that I will be glad to see some of the hostas pop through the ground that I had potted up last year. I'm anxious to get back in the garden as I'm sure most of you are.

The catalogs are great, filled with lots of items we can incorporate into our gardens along with our hostas. I have to admit that it has been a crazy winter and I sure am looking forward to spring!

Don't forget to pot up some hostas for our two big events, our member auction and the Missouri Botanical Garden Sale. Your help will make these events a big success.

Happy Gardening,

*Pam*

## 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 20**                      **Meeting and Roundtable Discussions**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- April 17**                        **Vendor Day and Club Plant Pick-up**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- May 15**                         **Meeting with Speaker David Robsen on Ferns**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- May 20**                         **Garden Walk at Home of Barb Moreland**  
6:00 PM
- June 4**                         **Plant Sale at the Missouri Botanical Garden**  
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Missouri Botanical Garden  
(7:00 – 9:00 AM Plant drop off and sale set up time)
- June**                            **Club Garden Tour – date/time to be announced**
- June 18 (Saturday)**            **Tour of Chesterfield Valley Nursery**  
(Note location change)            Meeting location and time to be announced
- June 22-25**                    **American Hosta Society National Convention**  
Marlborough, Massachusetts  
For more information: <http://www.hosta2011.com>
- July 7-9**                        **Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention**  
Madison, Wisconsin  
For more information: <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>
- July 17**                         **Member Plant Auction**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- September 18**                 **Meeting with Speaker Don Dean**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- October 16**                    **Meeting with Speaker Mike Curran**  
(Note location change)            1:00 PM, Summer Winds Garden Center
- December 4**                   **Holiday Party**  
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center

## **March 20 Meeting – Roundtable Discussions - An Opportunity to Share Ideas -**

Our March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting will feature five roundtable discussions. Members will split into small groups seated in different parts of our meeting room for a 15-20 minute discussion about a topic of the group leader's choice. After about 15 minutes, members will disperse and meet with a different group leader on a different topic. There will be time for each member to participate in the five group discussions.

Currently, four members have volunteered to be group leaders. Members and their topics are:

Phil Brammer – Photography  
Rick Clarkson – Container planting  
Sandy Evertowsky – Soil  
Jeff and Kelly Hall – Where to buy stuff

Phyllis Weidman, Vice-President in charge of programs, is seeking one more group leader. There are lots of topics left unexplored - share your experiences in dividing hostas; talk about your favorites or what grows well in your garden; explain how you handle common hosta pests and diseases.

Call Phyllis at [314-965-7027](tel:314-965-7027) or email her at [Pow1031@gmail.com](mailto:Pow1031@gmail.com) to volunteer your help.

### **Just for Fun - What are your favorite hostas – What grows well in your garden?**

Is it towering 'Victory' or little 'Popo', or both?

Can't get enough of the swirls of color in 'Paradigm' or 'June'?

Prefer the simplicity of 'Marilyn Monroe' or the complexity of 'Stitch in Time'?

Do streaked hostas make your heart race?

How about the ones that grow and grow no matter where you plant them?

Phyllis Weidman has put together a 'St. Louis Hosta Society Popularity Poll'. If you receive your newsletter by e-mail, the form is the second attachment. If you receive a postal copy, the form is at the end of the newsletter. I like gold hostas, so I added a line for gold ones at the bottom of the form.

What pops into your mind as you look at each of the squares? Print the form, fill it out and return to Phyllis at the March or April meeting. If unable to attend a meeting, email it to her at [Pow1031@gmail.com](mailto:Pow1031@gmail.com) or mail to 508 Pointe Essex Court, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

## **2011 Membership Dues are Payable Now**

If you receive the newsletter by postal mail, check the two-digit number appearing after your name on the address label of this newsletter. Your membership dues are paid through the end of the year appearing after your name. For example, if '10' appears after your name, your dues are paid through the 2010 year and are now payable for 2011.

If you receive the newsletter by e-mail, check the attachment for a list of all members and the year through which their dues are paid. For example, if '2010' appears after your name in the attachment list, your dues are paid through the 2010 year and are now payable for 2011.

Dues are \$7 annually (individual or family) or \$18 for three years. Make checks payable to SLHS (St. Louis Hosta Society) and bring to the next meeting or send to:

**Dave Poos  
9904 Crestwood Drive  
Crestwood MO 63126**

## **Hosta Finder 2011 Available**

This spiral-bound reference book contains the retail listings of over 40 hosta growers. The 3,700+ listings include hosta name, Originator/Namer/Introducer/Registrant, size, leaf color, flower color and price. The cost per book is \$14. Please contact our treasurer to purchase a copy:

Dave Poos  
[David.Poos@att.net](mailto:David.Poos@att.net) or 314-821-1622  
9904 Crestwood Drive  
Crestwood, MO 63126

## **Remember that New Year's Resolution – VOLUNTEER**

A volunteer is needed to chair the July member's only auction. Pam and Phyllis have put together job descriptions for each of our Society's events. Thus, detailed information needed for the auction will be available for you. Few skills are needed and many members are willing to help with this very popular society event. Contact Pam Wolkowitz and say **'I can do that!'**

Pam Wolkowitz  
[lovehostas@msn.com](mailto:lovehostas@msn.com)  
636-285-3114

## Missouri Botanical Garden Update

Written by Phyllis Weidman

Jim (Weidman) and I had a meeting last month with all the people involved with the hosta area of the Garden – Darman Williams, Jason Delaney, Jim Cocos, Rebecca Sucher and the new Vice-President of Horticulture, Andrew Wyatt. With the naming of a new Botanical Garden President and a new Vice-President of Horticulture, the mission of the area has changed a bit.

The Garden wishes

- To keep the cultivar section, the various award collections and current hosta information
- To increase the awareness of the Garden's hosta collection
- To help fundraise through the sale of excess hosta divisions. The Garden has given us over 100 pots of hostas to sell at our up-coming plant sale.

The area will still be a showcase for a broad diversity of Hosta cultivars with the addition of wild sourced plants and complimentary plants. The Garden wants the hosta collection to become a flagship public collection. We will be looking at the cultivars at the garden and adding selected new cultivars again this year.

The group would like our Society to sponsor an application to the AHS so the area can become an AHS Display Garden. This entails some paper work and the purchase of the 'Display Garden' plaque at a cost of \$350. This money would come from the \$2,000 currently budgeted to this project by our society.

Jim and I would like to encourage you to volunteer at the garden in the hosta area. We volunteer 3-4 hours a week. We find it lots of fun and educational.

We will be scheduling a work Saturday, probably in May, for the whole society. Stay tuned!

### Only 20 Days 'til Spring

Heather Anderson has volunteered (Yeah Heather!) to chair this year's Missouri Botanical Garden Sale. She will be relying on fellow members to donate plants for this important fund raising event.



Spring is almost here, so June can't be that far away. It's time to start thinking about those three big D's - Digging, Dividing and Donating. If you don't have the time or feel you are unable to dig those overgrown hostas or don't quite know the best way to attack a plant or maybe just need a little help with the heavy lifting, the SLHS Board will assist you. Volunteer digging crews will be assembled to help members who would like to donate but are unable to divide their own plants. It's not too soon to contact Heather and let her know how you can help. More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters.

## **FEBURARY POTLUCK - GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD FOOD**



**The food starts rolling in.**

The day was gorgeous – that February thaw that warms our blood and gets us thinking about the gardening year ahead. What a perfect atmosphere for the first event on the 2011 hosta calendar.

Barb Moreland, Hospitality Chair, piled the table high with beef brisket sandwiches and chicken salad laden croissants. Arriving members soon filled in the spaces with potato, vegetable and jello salads. Making a decision about which dessert to select was brain taxing. This chocoholic was in heaven.



**Members Al Farrow, Pam Wolkowitz, Jan and Spence Sorenson socialize.**

Members came early, eager to see old friends and greet people new to our society. Talk centered on the joys of the past holiday season, the latest happenings with children and grandchildren, the chaotic winter weather, the hopes of an early spring, and everything hosta.

Pam Wolkowitz and Phyllis Weidman described the events planned for the 2011 season. Speakers, tours, auctions, sales and garden walks are already scheduled. It's going to be an exciting year.



**Aaron Burchett gives us the low down on adding a pond in our landscape.**

Aaron Burchett from The Pond Market then led us through the basics of pond selection and building. He explained the three types of ponds – water gardens, Koi ponds and fish ponds. Our first decision is which one fulfills our wants and needs. A water garden contains mostly aquatic plants with few or no fish. A Koi pond contains mostly fish and very few plants as Koi love nibbling on their tiny roots. A fish pond contains a bit of both.

Aaron talked about suitable locations and ideal shapes. Then the real work begins – digging! Through the use of pictures taken during the construction of a pond on The Pond Market property, Aaron described the steps in creating a masterpiece. The hole should have ledges for aquatic plants and a sloping bottom for easier cleaning. The hole is then under-lined and lined.

Aaron suggests starting the stonework on the ledges below the water level to hide the liner and create a more natural looking pond. Almost any type of rock can be used. Once the main pond is finished, work can begin on a waterfall if desired.

Aaron ended his presentation with information on the mechanical guts of a pond – filters and pumps. There are many different types. The best suggestion is to write down data about your pond – size, height of waterfall if present, amount of water – then march down to the Pond Market and ask Aaron.

Thanks to all for an enjoyable and information kick off to the 2011 season.

## **Avoiding Spring Frost Damage** **By Ray Rodgers**

**The anticipation and excitement of early spring** – Spring is a joyous time for gardeners, a time of great anticipation as we start wandering around our gardens looking for signs of new beginnings. Such excitement must be tempered with the realization that freezing temperatures are always a possibility until approx. mid-May in Central Illinois. The average last frost date for Peoria is May 8 (In St. Louis, average last frost date is April 15). Every year, I hope spring will come in gracefully, without the major temperature swings we have come to expect. Unfortunately, this rarely has happened.

Last year was a prime example. After efforts to protect my rapidly unfurling hosta leaves on a couple of occasions, I thought those days were once again behind us when we reached the month of May, only to be surprised by an unexpected (to me) frost, that damaged gardens throughout the area on the night of May 2/ May 3.

Every spring, I give credit to H.'On Stage' as being the smartest hosta in my garden: as it is the last hosta to emerge from winter dormancy, making it much less susceptible to frost damage.

**When hostas should be protected** – It is important to realize that hostas, even completely leafed out, can withstand temperatures below freezing (32 degrees F). I have repeatedly read that hostas can handle temperatures down to 28 degrees F for short times with minimal or no damage.

During winter, if I find exposed hosta buds, I scrape a little mulch or soil mix from the surrounding area over them for protection. In very early spring, if shoots are starting to emerge, I often cover them in the same manner, in an attempt to slow their progress and provide additional protection.

If shoots are a few inches or more tall, yet leaves have not started to unfurl or are still in the early stages, and temperatures below 30 degrees F are forecasted, I suggest providing additional protection via a choice of mulch or dried leaves piled around and over the emerging shoots. Alternatively, one of the protective methods described below can be utilized.

The more leafed-out hostas are, the more susceptible they are to frost damage. In these cases, covering via one of the methods described below is the best alternative.

One must consider the uniqueness of their gardens and plant placements when determining whether to protect or not. Of course, part of the decision process is how much trust one has in the accuracy of the forecast. Isn't that a scary thought!

**Plant protection** – If one decides to protect, there are many options. Basically almost anything that can cover a hosta will help. It is important not to let the leaves touch the covering material as they are more likely to sustain freeze damage at that contact, if the temperature gets low enough.

There are many methods for protecting your plants via covering. Materials include:

- Plastic pots (crumpled newspaper covering drainage holes improves protection)
- Newspapers
- Cardboard boxes
- Frost Cloth\* (fabric material available through nursery supply companies. Search the internet for options.)
- Bed sheets\*
- Bath towels\*
- Light blankets\*
- Burlap\*
- Garbage cans
- Bushel baskets
- Wheelbarrows turned upside down

\* Need to be propped up and anchored down. I try to keep a bundle of sticks or stakes around for props. I have also used covered sawhorses over larger hostas. Bricks and rocks are good anchors and also work well to hold down plastic pots during windy conditions.

Polyethylene film or similar materials, including plastic bags, should be avoided as condensation buildup on the inside can increase the likelihood of damage to hosta leaves. These materials are also a danger once the sun comes out.

Another method is to keep a continuous spray of water on plants when the temperature is below 28 degrees F as water is warmer than the air.

**The morning after** – After all the chosen plants are protected from the impending freezing temperature (usually during the night), one must address the uncovering task the following morning. Keeping the plants covered until the temperature climbs back above freezing is the best option. But, if one has to go to work, family or neighbors may have to be called upon for help. If the forecast calls for temperatures to remain in the danger zone, keep plants covered.

**How cold is too cold** – This somewhat depends on the number of hostas one has to protect. If hostas are completely leafed out and the temperature dips into the low 20s F, protective measures may reduce the severity, but it is unlikely that they will prevent freeze damage.

**What should be done to frost damaged hostas** – If hostas are hit by damaging frosts it is best to cut off and discard the most significantly damaged leaf tissue, keeping as many of the undamaged leaves and petioles as possible to allow the continuation of the plant's food making process. At some point, if enough leaves are removed, hostas will force a second flush of leaves from smaller and previously dormant buds. This flush will likely produce smaller leaves.

Even worse than hosta leaves turning to mush, is the possibility of the crown being damaged, which if not attended to, typically allows rot to set in. The crown of the hosta is the base where the roots and shoots join. Crown rot can happen in early spring when water stands around the crown or by the plant freezing after it breaks dormancy. If hostas sustain significant leaf damage, be sure to check the crown for soft areas. If discovered, this tissue should be removed back to solid tissue to prevent further rot and possibly the death of the plant.

**Which hostas are most frost sensitive** – Late freezes can be a problem with any variety, especially the ones that break dormancy early. The species *H.plantaginea* and its sports have the reputation of being the most frost sensitive. It is widely believed all fragrant hosta have *H.plantaginea* in their lineage, making them candidates for protection. *H.plantaginea* is one of the only species that will continue to produce new leaves all summer long. This is an advantage when the original spring foliage becomes damaged. Contrarily, I have read that hostas in the Sieboldiana Group and Tokudama Group are slow to recover from frost damage as they tend to push only one good flush of growth in a season, also making hostas with these lineages, good candidates for protection. A few other of the more sensitive hostas include *H.montana* 'Aureomarginata', 'Sagae', 'Lancifolia', and 'Chinese Sunrise'.

**New purchases** – If hostas are purchased prior to mid-May, I suggest leaving them in pots so they can easily be moved to a protected area when frost warnings occur.

**Is it worth the effort** – Protecting hostas from freezing temperatures is certainly a hassle. Each of us has to determine for ourselves whether it is worth the effort and when to take protective measures. In my opinion, we must always be aware of the possibility of freezing temperatures and react accordingly to preserve the beauty of our gardens.

Article reprinted from the March 2009 newsletter of the Northern Wisconsin Hosta Society.

## St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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## Membership Information

### The American Hosta Society

Contact: Sandie Markland  
8702 Pinnacle Rock Ct.  
Lorton, VA 22079-3029

[AHSMembershipSecretary@earthlink.net](mailto:AHSMembershipSecretary@earthlink.net)

Dues: Individual \$30 per year, Family \$34 per year

### Midwest Regional Hosta Society

Contact: Barb Schroeder  
1819 Coventry Drive  
Champaign, IL 61822

[mrhs.treasurer@midwesthostasociety.org](mailto:mrhs.treasurer@midwesthostasociety.org)

Dues: Individual \$20 for two years

### St. Louis Hosta Society

Contact: Dave Poos  
9904 Crestwood Drive  
Crestwood, MO 63126  
[david.poos@att.net](mailto:david.poos@att.net)

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

Meetings held at 1:00 PM 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](http://www.stlouishosta.org)

## Other Hosta and Garden Web Sites

American Hosta Society – <http://www.hosta.org/>

Midwest Hosta Society – <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>

Hosta Library – <http://www.hostalibrary.org>

Hosta Forum – questions/answers – <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/hosta/>

Mini Hosta forum – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/minihosta>