



Shady Notes

Volume 18, Issue 4

May, 2017



President Diana Plahn

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello All:

If you are like my husband and I, you have had a strange spring. Some plants died for no reason I can see, except the 70 degree weather we had and then the cold snaps after that. I hate when that happens. I have lost plants that are many years old. All I can think of is that the plant started to leaf out when it was so warm and then got stopped too abruptly when the weather dropped to the 20's and 30's two days later. It's very frustrating. However, now I have a new place to put a newer hosta, or other companion plant. That's my positive way of thinking about it.

Our next meeting is a garden walk at my home. The meeting will be very, very short and start at 1:00 PM on May 21st. Then everyone is free to walk around the garden. Please bring some sort of snack to share with others. This garden walk is BYOB, so alcohol is permitted (since we are not at Creve Coeur Community Center). Please bring whatever you like to drink. Come to the very short meeting, and then visit with new and old hosta friends. My address is 1911 Westview Avenue, Kirkwood, MO, 63122. Please park on Westview Avenue and walk down the concrete driveway to the house on the left at the bottom of the driveway. My cell is 314-346-3007, and my husband's is 314-346-1090 if you get lost.

We'll have a report about Vendor's Day in the next newsletter, since it falls on April 30th, past the newsletter cutoff date.

Hope to see you all soon. And let's all hope the weather straightens out.

Diana

2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 5-6** **Plant Sale at the Missouri Botanical Garden**
Setup May 5, 4:00 PM – until we are done
Sale May 6, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Missouri Botanical Garden
- May 21** **Garden Walk/Meeting**
1:00 PM, Home of President Diana Plahn
- June 7-10** **AHS National Convention**
Indianapolis, IN
- June 18** **Garden Walk/Meeting**
1:00 PM, Location TBA
- June 22-24** **MRHS Regional Convention**
Lenexa, Kansas (Kansas City area)
- July 16** **Members Plant Auction**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- September 17** **Meeting with Speaker Rob Mortko**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- October 15** **Meeting with Speaker TBA**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- November 12** **Board Meeting**
TBA
- December 3** **Holiday Party**
TBA – Party at a member's home

Welcome New Member

Pamela Danklef of St. Louis, MO

Look for her at future meetings and introduce yourselves. Show her how welcoming and friendly we all are. We hope all our members, new and old alike, will attend the May Garden Walk and July member auction.





Don't Miss It!

MAY 5-6

St. Louis Hosta Society Plant Sale Missouri Botanical Garden Beaumont Room

Setup: Friday, May 5, starting at 4:00 PM
Sale day: Saturday May 6, 9:00 – 5:00 PM

Set up for the sale begins on Friday evening at 4:00 PM at the Missouri Botanical Garden in the Beaumont Room. This is the smaller of the two meeting rooms located on the West side of Ridgeway Center.

Please drop off your donations during this setup period (and maybe stay awhile to help). We will be covering tables with plastic, pricing donations, then placing them in alphabetical order on the display tables. It doesn't take long if there are many hands to help. If you are unable to bring your plants on Friday, please bring them on Saturday morning before 9:00 AM. Selling begins at 9:00 AM and continues to 5:00 PM or until all plants are sold.

Remember, the plant sale is one of our Society's biggest fund raisers. Monies from this sale pay the costs associated with publishing the society newsletter, maintaining its website, speakers, facilitating community projects such as MoBot hosta bed enhancements, plus our many other activities. All donations and help are greatly appreciated.

Pots Wanted

If you have any one or two gallon nursery pots that you plan to discard, member Dave Poos would like to have them. He uses these to pot hosta divisions for the MOBot plant sale and for our member auction. His supply is about depleted. Dave does not need the smaller sizes. They are too small for a nice sized division and tend to dry out too fast.

Please bring any one or two gallon pots that you don't want to the next meeting or call/email Dave for possible pick-up.

Dave Poos

david.poos@att.net or 314-821-1622

AHS Mini Hosta Popularity Poll 2015

1. *H.* 'Blue Mouse Ears'
2. *H.* 'Pandora's Box'
3. *H.* 'Curly Fries'
4. *H.* 'Dragon Tails'
5. *H.* 'Cameo'

Keep the Society in Mind – Member Auction coming in July

Our member auction, which is known for having nice, harder to find hostas, is fast approaching. Now is a good time to divide those big clumps in your yards. As you do so, set aside a plant or division for our auction in July. In the spring it's easy to see clumps that are no longer symmetrical or have formed a ring due to center dying out. Besides, it's much more pleasant to be digging and potting now when the air is mild, the lawn is newly green and plants are just poking their heads above the ground, then in hot, humid St. Louis July.

Not sure how to begin? Here are a few hints about dividing hostas.

To get the most divisions from a clump or if the hosta isn't too large, dig out the entire plant. Dig around the clump in a circle at least six inches from the crown, then use your shovel like a lever to lift the clump out of the ground. Many gardeners prefer to use a garden fork to dig and lift as this causes less damage to those important long roots.

Once the clump is out of the ground, wash the roots in a bucket of water or spray with a hose. You can then see that the clump is made up of many individual plants. Next pull any easily removable eyes from the crown. Then try to pull the clump apart. To separate single plants from the crown, use a back and forth pulling motion, working the stems back and forth until they come loose. It might be easier if the plant is in a bucket because the water keeps washing the soil away and makes the roots slick so they can be pulled out of the tangled clump.

If you cannot break the clump apart, you may have to use a sharp knife. Make your cuts through the crown, but not into the roots. Once you have your divisions, plant them as soon as possible. Do not let the roots dry out. If you cannot plant them right away, place some moist soil or peat moss on the roots and put them in the shade. If the roots dry a little bit before you get a chance to replant, soak them in a bucket of water for a while. Do not leave the plants in water for more than a day because the roots will begin to rot.

The above is the preferred method as it results in less damage to the crown, emerging leaves and tender roots. However, if your hostas are too large to lift out of the ground or you want a simpler and less time consuming method, use your shovel to cut through the crown of the clump as it remains in the ground. Carefully dig out the sections you want and replant or pot them. You will lose some of the fans and roots, but the process is much faster. This is a good way to attack those clumps that no longer have a pleasing shape. Just nip off that bulge on the side or back. My husband uses two garden forks placed back to back to pry the divisions apart. The forks cause much less damage to those tender roots than a shovel does.

All photos copied from <http://hostalibrary.org/misc/div/>



Hosta newly dug showing numerous eyes and good roots



If you can't pull the divisions apart, use a knife to cut the crown. Be careful not to cut too many roots.



Result is two nice divisions each with plenty of roots – ready to replant.



Entrance to the Plahn garden.



Long bed of hostas situated at the base of a plant-studded retaining wall.



Some of the smaller conifers growing in pots along the patio.

Garden Walk and Meeting May 21, 2017, 1:00 PM

**Home of Diana and Craig Plahn
1911 Westview Avenue
Kirkwood, MO 63122**

Our May meeting will be held at the Kirkwood home of our president Diana Plahn and her husband Craig. This garden has it all. Plenty of hostas for those of you addicted to this particular plant. For members who have some side interests there is Craig's conifer collection. Both conifers and hostas add texture and structure to their garden. In June, the Plahn's daylilies burst into bloom. Both Diana and Craig hybridize daylilies and have introduced several of their favorites. There are many other surprises tucked into this beautiful yard.

May is the perfect time to have an outside meeting and social time. Bring a lawn chair, a snack to share with other members and your beverage of choice. Wander the garden, then sit a spell and talk with Diana, Craig and your fellow members.

Directions:

From the intersection of Hwy 64 and 270, travel South on Hwy 270. Take the Dougherty Ferry exit (Exit 8). Turn left (East) on Dougherty Ferry passing over Hwy 270.

Travel 0.31 miles, then turn right (South) onto N Ballas Road. At the bottom of the hill veer right to stay on S Ballas Road. Turn right onto Bach Ave, the first street on the right.

After 0.09 miles you have reached Westview Ave on your right. Park on Westview Ave and walk down the concrete drive. Their home is at the bottom on the left.

The slugs are coming!

With all the badly needed rain that has fallen in our area recently, I can just picture all the slugs in my garden doing their happy dance. Due to the moisture and warm weather that is sure to follow, hostas are rapidly growing, presenting a delicious food source for these pests.

Whether you use slug baits like Sluggo or organic controls such as spun wool, hair, beer, garlic spray or ammonia and water, the key is to get started early, just as the pips are emerging from the soil and the leaves unfurling. Waiting until holes appear is much too late – many generations of slugs are already thriving in your garden. Don't procrastinate another day.

Be Alert for Southern Blight

Southern Blight is caused by a fungus, *Sclerotium rolfsii*, which attacks hostas at their leaf bases. The fungus overwinters as mustard-seed-sized sclerotia. In warm, humid conditions (that's St. Louis) these round mustard seed looking objects germinate into spreading webs of white mycelia. They look like spider webs around the base of the petioles. This mycelia release oxalic acid that destroy cell walls, causing the leaf to collapse. The mycelia can also produce new sclerotia which remain dormant on leaf debris or in the soil. Thus the cycle can continue if left unchecked.

What to do. Some members drench the plant and surrounding soil with a 10% bleach solution. Some remove and soak the plant. I have used this remedy in the past with some success.

However, I have had excellent results with a fungicide: **Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose and Flower Care** or **Bayer Advanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs**. This is a systemic product that controls insects and diseases, while fertilizing the plant. Read the label to make sure one of the active ingredients is **Tebuconazole**. There is no need to lift the plant, just saturate the crown and surrounding soil. I usually wait a couple of weeks, then repeat. I also retreat the plants the following spring regardless of whether or not they display symptoms



Simon Warren looks over his notes.

March Meeting

Simon Warren

Education Coordinator of EarthWays Center

How can we make really good soil? The answer in most articles we read is to add lots of organic matter, i.e. compost. Simon Warren presented an informative and interesting program on the recycling of food wastes.

Simon discussed his formula for compost.

$C(3) + N + H_2O + O_2 + \text{Decomposers} \times \text{Time} = \text{Compost}$

What does all that mean? C(3) stands for Carbon. This is the brown stuff in our yards - dead leaves, sticks and straw to name a few. N is Nitrogen, the green stuff. This category consists of grass clippings that haven't been commercially treated with chemicals, weeds, egg shells and kitchen vegetable scraps. H₂O refers to moisture in the form of plant juices, rain or hose watering. Every compost pile requires oxygen, the O₂ in Simon's formula. Decomposers are the bacteria and fungi that are created during the decomposition process. Let this mass percolate in a compost bin for some amount of time. The result: dark, rich compost.

Simon listed a few items that should not be added to the mix. Meat scraps, dairy items and grease cause odors, attract varmints and may go rancid. Also never include pet or human waste as these items may harbor diseases.

Judging by the number of questions, this was a topic of interest to members. We can all do our part in preserving our environment by recycling. This is just one small part.



Why isn't my plant as vigorous as yours?



The last few years my husband and I have been disappointed with our *H.* 'Empress Wu'. It hasn't attained its advertised size or vigor. The celandine poppy growing beside the hosta is taller than it is. We moved it once to no avail. The plant has received plenty of water and lots of encouraging words over the years.

In 2015 we purchased at our annual member auction *H.* 'Empress Wu' in a large pot that had been donated by former members Kelly and Jeff Hall. This specimen is gigantic and gorgeous! They look like the same plant. What gives? Perhaps the following article written by Ray Rodgers and reprinted courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange is the answer.

TC (Tissue Culture) vs OS (Originator's Stock)

Have you ever looked at a hosta price list and wondered what the "TC" and/or "OS" meant in some of the hosta descriptions? Occasionally one would even see two prices for the same plant, the lower price being for TC (Tissue Culture) and the more expensive price for OS (Originator's Stock).

TC references plants which have been propagated via tissue culture. In very simple terms, these are chemically energized test tube babies started from small shavings of the parent plant's meristem (the central growth point of a hosta crown).

Compared to increasing the number of plants through manually dividing garden plants, tissue culturing results in rapid reproduction. Tissue culturing must be performed in a sterile lab type environment. This is a tedious, exacting, repetitious process that must be monitored very closely. Except for a few serious hobbyists, tissue culturing is better left up to the professionals. The resulting plants are typically wholesaled in multiple quantities to retail outlets.

The OS designation basically means the plant being offered is a division of the original named hosta. This hosta could have been derived through hybridization (seedling) or sporting*, which is not uncommon with hostas. If an OS plant was purchased and a division was given to another person, who in turn eventually gave a division of their plant to yet another person, all these plants would still be considered originator's stock. On price lists, the OS designation is most often used for newer or rare plants. Originator's stock plants can help to validate exactly what was originally registered and ensure the direct lineage of the original plants are not lost.

Are originator's stock hostas better and should they demand a premium price? The newer the plant and the more unique it is, the more likely an OS division is worth the extra money. Some of the truly unique hostas are not replicated easily via tissue culturing. With these plants, a TC lab may develop a high percentage of babies not possessing the same characteristics of the parent. This inability unquestionably drives the price of these varieties up. Luckily for us consumers, most hostas can be TCed with a high degree of success.

Responsible wholesalers and retailers will typically guarantee their plants to be true to name. This starts with the TC labs' commitment to cull (throw away) or give a new name to hostas not meeting specific criteria. Since it is not always possible to know for sure if small tissue cultured plants will look like their parents in subsequent years, a small percentage of untrue hostas do reach nurseries and other retailers. Since responsible retailers typically grow TC plants on for at least one full season prior to selling them, some additional variants may be caught.

It is the untrue forms that slip through the cracks that generate some of the unfavorable comments about tissue cultured hostas. Usually such comments are used to justify the price of OS plants. Certainly people should expect to receive what they pay for. Some variants are not as attractive or as good of a grower as the named variety. But, some variants are actually better than the original plant. As an example, in a batch of tissue cultured H. 'Great Expectations', some wider-margined plants were discovered. These plants were given the name H. 'Dream Weaver'. The additional green leaf surface allows this hosta to produce more chlorophyll than H. 'Great Expectations', making it a better grower.

Tissue culturing has also accelerated the popularity of "Sport Hunting". This is the act of hosta enthusiasts searching through nurseries for hostas that are different from their published descriptions. These plants may vary in a variety of ways, including variegation pattern (including Instability**), coloration, plant size and leaf shape. For those interested in hybridizing or just growing open pollinated seed, finding an otherwise desirable plant with some degree of splashing could be a significant find. Except for somewhat rare occasions, it requires an unstable pod parent (mother plant) to produce variegated seedlings. Whether the found plants turn out to be better than the named variety or not, it is occasionally worth the purchase price to the hunter to have something a little different to display in their garden.

Make no mistake; tissue culture plants have fueled the popularity of hostas by rapidly increasing the availability of many newer varieties of hostas at affordable prices. The elevation of hosta to the rank of most popular perennial from almost obscurity can directly be linked to the early 1980s when plant tissue culture was in its infancy.

Tissue culture and originator's stock plants both have their place in the hosta world. Whether purchasing OS plants is a good value depends largely on the specific hosta variety, but the ultimate decision rests with each individual buyer.

* A Sport is a hosta arising from another hosta, possessing different characteristics.

**In hosta, Instability is a plant that does not maintain its solid or variegated pattern, resulting in a Splashed pattern (formerly referred to as Streaked, also known as Striated). Splashed hostas have many non-connected light and dark variegated sections. Splashed hostas typically stabilize into a solid colored or variegated plant over time.

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

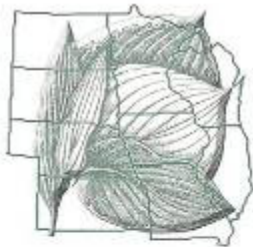
Contact: Melissa Byrd
117 Gunston Hall Drive
St. Charles, MO 63304
mabyrd68@gmail.com

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

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/>