

Prairie Hosta Herald

Illinois Prairie Hosta Society

Promoting knowledge and interest in Hostas, fostering the development of new and improved Hosta varieties and encouraging cultivation and usefulness of Hostas in landscapes.

IPHS Membership

Single membership and Family membership is \$15 per year.

Monthly meeting, March to September

Contact:

Barb Schroeder, 1819 Coventry Dr, Champaign, IL 61822 Check out our Web Site:

http://
www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com

Inside this issue:

June Meeting Notice	1
Mike's Comments	1
Officers/Committees/ dates	2
Fertilizer—Solberg	2
Hosta Meetings and Conventions	4
May Meeting—Cold	4
Our IPHS Friends	5
IPHS Hosta Garden—MG's	6
Garden Notes from Susan	6
New Plant Tags	7
Rick's Remarks	8

June Meeting— Tuesday 25th—6:00 PM

**At the home of Maureen and Neal Cohen, 3214 Lakeshore Drive, the Maynard Lake Subdivision, in Champaign
Program by Mike Weber—Plants that Rabbits Don't Like**

Maureen talks about their garden: *Our garden is 13 years old. It started with nothing but grass and a beautiful view of the lake. We knew we wanted a beach so our Labrador retrievers could play in the lake and that gave us the idea to take that soil and make a large berm in the back of the house and a smaller one in the front of the house. I never had a plan. In the beginning I bought whatever was on sale at Prairie Gardens. I've learned a lot now & I'm not afraid to experiment, move or dig out plants. We still have a great view but now there is a lovely garden in it also.*

Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the meeting and the view of Maynard Lake. Entrance to the back yard is along the walk on the west side of the house.

President's Comments by Mike Weber

May 2019 will be remembered for persistent and sometimes torrential rains, tornadoes in C-U, and cool to moderate temperatures. If one was NOT trying to plant corn and beans, it provided a beautiful and long lasting display of most spring blooming perennials. On Memorial Day 2018 my perennials had bloomed out so fast that even the Siberian Iris had passed, forcing us for the first time in memory to buy flowers at the grocery store to decorate the 3 graves where we place flowers, a remnant reminder of 'Decoration Days' of yore. This year the peonies peaked on May 27, and the Siberian Iris are peaking in my yard as I write.

The Hosta have never looked better, luxuriating in the wet weather. And for some reason mine have not had much slug damage. How about yours? Oh, the rabbits have continued to nibble even on some mature leaves, notwithstanding that a few days ago our beloved cat hauled a half grown one to our patio for display. As we all know, the reproductive numbers in this battle are decidedly on their side!

As many of you IPHS members who are Master Gardeners know, we are on the C-U Garden walk this year. The last one was 9 years ago. Don't know if Rick will get this

(Continued on page 7)

Officers and Committees

Officers for 2019

President—Mike Weber
1st Vice President—Programs—Mary Munoz
2nd Vice President—Membership—Barb Schroeder
Treasurer—Carol McClure
Secretary—Kathy Robinson
Past President—Rick Schroeder
Board Member at Large—Steve Mullen

Committee Chairs

U of I Hosta Garden—Susan Weber
 Audit—Fritz Drasgow
 Newsletter—Rick Schroeder
 Historian—Jim O'Donnell
 Plant Raffle/Auction—Mike Weber

Fertilizer—by Bob Solberg

What Kind of Fertilizer Do You Use?

Whenever I give a talk to a hosta group, the question always comes up, "What kind of fertilizer do you use." I'm never quite sure if they believe that growers like me have some kind of magic plant food that we use to grow our hostas bigger and better or that if they really want to know what, when and how to fertilize their hostas.

In the garden hostas need light, water, and nutrients for healthy growth. Any fertilization program must take all these as well as soil type in to account and balance the needs of the hosta.

If you water a lot, you will need to fertilize more often during the season as watering leaches nitrogen away from the plant (and/or garden). If your garden is very shady over fertilization will not necessarily produce bigger hostas because of the lack of light. Sandy soils will leach nutrients faster than clay soils. Get to know your garden.

There are organic and inorganic fertilizers. Both contain the same nutrients (chemicals) but they come from different sources. At the cellular level hostas "see" these nutrients identically. Organic fertilizers tend to have lower analysis numbers than inorganic ones and thus tend to burn less but you will need to apply them in larger amounts to apply the same amount of nutrients, making them often more expensive in time and money. They may

2019 Meeting Schedule

The following are the dates and locations for the meetings this year. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Mary has a great set of programs lined up for 2019 with a variety of subjects. Note the locations are firm and program will be announced in future issues of the newsletter.

July 22nd - Monday - 6:00 PM at the U of I Extension Auditorium, Country Fair Drive, Champaign. Jim Schmidt, retired horticulturist from the University of Illinois will present – **Bringing a Garden Back to Life**

August 22nd - Thursday - 6:00 PM at the Bill and Katrina Dick garden 706 Ashton Lane North, Champaign. Bill will present a program on water gardens and their construction.

September 15th – Sunday – 1:00 PM Annual Meeting and Luncheon at the Holiday Inn (former Hawthorn Suites), 101 Trade Center Drive, Champaign (just off South Neil Street). The menu and cost for the meeting will be available in August. **Hybridizer Robert Solberg of North Carolina will be our speaker—"Travels with Bob: The Search for Hosta sieboldiana in Japan"**.

also attract rodents (code word, voles) since several of the materials used as sources of nitrogen in organic fertilizers like cottonseed meal and alfalfa meal are used as animal feeds. Manure is a good cheap organic fertilizer that should not burn if properly composted.

Both types of fertilizers come as a liquid feed, a granular and a slow release. Liquid fertilizer, Peter's 20-20-20, Miracle-Gro, Fish Emulsion, etc., can be used as a drench into the soil or sprayed on the leaves only as a foliar spray. (If this is the only type of fertilizer you use then a drench is more effective.) **Liquid fertilizer needs to be applied to hostas at least once every two weeks during the growing season if not weekly since it remains in the root zone for only a short period of time.**

Standard inorganic granular fertilizers like 10-10-10 are quite inexpensive and remain in the garden 4-6 weeks depending on the amount of rainfall. Thus, two to three applications are necessary, beginning as the hostas emerge and ending when their growth slows in the heat of summer. Beware! Formulations with a high percentage of urea will release their nitrogen in a short period of time

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

in periods of high rainfall and at best be washed from the garden or at worst burn your plants.

Slow release fertilizers like **Osmocote** and **Nutricote** release nutrients over time dependent on temperature and rainfall and have the advantage of only needing to be applied once a year. They come in a variety of formulations with hostas preferring a nitrogen number of 18-21. Choose a time of release, 3 months to 9 months that matches the active growing season for your hostas. Many bagged organic fertilizers release their nitrogen slowly also and can be treated as slow release fertilizers and applied just once a year.

Which fertilizer you choose probably has more to do with you than your hostas. What kind of gardener you are and how often you want to feed your hostas? If you enjoy preparing snacks for your hostas and want to shower them with tender loving care, then liquid fertilizers once a week during the growing season is the way for you to go. If you are a lazy gardener like me or one just pressed for time, then you should choose a 9-month slow release formula and fertilize once a year when your hostas first start emerging from their winter's nap. The important thing is to have nutrients available when your hostas are actively growing, from emergence to fall.

Probably the best way to fertilize is a combination of the two. **Apply an organic or inorganic slow release fertilizer in early spring.** Then supplement this with foliar applications of a high nitrogen liquid fertilizer with Epsom Salts (18-24 nitrogen) maybe twice, a couple of weeks apart while the hostas are growing at their most rapid rate. For us that is around the first and fiftieth of May. An application or two of 10-10-10 liquid fertilizer can also be applied in August when the hostas make their "little flush" of new foliage, especially if all the slow release nitrogen has been released by high summer temperatures and rainfall. This diet is sure to fatten up your hostas.

What fertilizer do we use in here in the nursery? We grow all our hostas in containers, so we can control as much as possible the environment in which we grow our hostas. Currently, we are using a slow release "Nutricote" product sold by Florikan that has been blended with some soluble urea and magnesium. It is actually three fertilizers in one. Since we want nitrogen available from day one for our newly planted liners, there is some soluble nitrogen for the first week or two. Then some 10- 10-10 like fertilizer with magnesium for the second and third weeks and then in the third week the Nu-



tricote kicks in. The Nutricote works great in regions of the country that have hot summers, releasing its nutrients evenly into the fall. Our formulation is 14-5-10 and because we would like the nitrogen number to be up near 20, we apply the fertilizer at the "high" recommended rate rather than the normal rate.

We like this fertilizer so much that we now sell 20-pound buckets of it here at the nursery under our own private label. It is called "Green Hill Hosta Fertilizer" and we are now licensed as a fertilizer manufacturer in North Carolina. Sorry the law does not allow us to ship our fertilizer to other states, but you can legally come to the nursery, pick it up, (with a few new hostas to boot), and take it back home. Our local customers keep coming back for more!

Tips to remember:

1. Use a foliage feed as a supplemental feed especially for magnesium (Epsom salts 50 ppm) and trace elements when your hostas are actively making new leaves.
2. Hosta roots do not grow during the winter. They stop growing when the plant goes dormant and begin only after the soil has warmed in the spring. New roots are not made until after the first flush of foliage has unfurled. Winter fertilization for added root growth is unnecessary.
3. You can test your soil throughout the season to measure the available nutrients in the soil. It may be more fun to test your hosta leaves for their nutrient content. Hosta leaves can be tested by most State Labs to determine the amount of nutrients that actually are available in the plant not just in the soil.

Notes from Bob Solberg 8/22/18 – "We have now changed fertilizers again. We use a formulation from Harrell's, a slow release 17-6-12. The reasons for the change have to do with the fertilizer but mostly how it can be purchased, I do not need a broker to get it sent to me, I can deal directly with Harrell's. It also seems to work as well or better than the Nutricote.



Profertilizer

*(Editor's Note: Harrell's sells online in 50 lb. bags.)
Published by the Northern Illinois Hosta Society in their newsletter, Hosta Happenings, Issue 106, March 2019.*

May Meeting

So in early January I planned to give a program on potting up hostas in our yard knowing it would be good weather, maybe a chance of rain, but winter would be over by then I said. Well, for those of you that attended the meeting you know what happened.

First, this has been a wet spring, so much that as I write this article on June 6th many of the fields have not been prepared for corn or beans due to the continuous rain days. That said, our hostas and other plants are bigger than usual. But the issue the day of the program was not rain but cold temperature. The day started around 45 and by afternoon made to almost 60 degrees. The wind was out of the east at about 25-mph and by late afternoon Barb and I made the decision to move the program from the driveway to the back yard. By 5:30 when members



started arriving the coffee was ready—yes, coffee. As you will note from the photos “winter” arrived and most attendees had

their heavy coats on. Some even had to head to the car later to get warmed up. Of course the next day the temperature hit 80 degrees.

The program was splitting and potting up hostas. I covered the mix I use, Miracle Grow Potting Mix and Black Forest Mulch from Lowes. The mix is 1 part potting mix to at least 2 parts mulch. In years past Illini FS had the ideal mulch, a very small bark mulch, that was wonderful to use. They no longer carry it.

I wanted to note a couple of the tools that I use in the yard and I am sure not everyone had a chance to write it down. One is the “Soil Scoop” by the Garden Works of Bellevue, Washington. This is a stainless steel scoop, curved with point and serrated edge, that is ideal for digging, prying plants out of the ground or scooping your plant mix.

The second tool is “The King of Spades” a steel spade with no wood handle. It has a chisel point and will pry any plant out of the ground. I must note that this is “all steel” and not to be used in anyplace where there is buried electric lines. The spade has a rubber foot pad that

Hosta Meetings and Conventions—2019

Be sure to put these dates on your calendar so you can attend one of these conventions, especially the one that is close to us.

The American Hosta Society will hold a convention in Green Bay, Wisconsin sponsored by the Green and Gold Hosta Society on June 12th to June 15th, 2019. CONVENTION IS SOLD OUT. The Midwest Regional Hosta Society will hold its annual meeting during this convention as no group came forward to host a regional convention in 2019. In 2020 the Northern Illinois Hosta Society will host an annual MRHS convention. Check www.ahs2019event.org for Convention Details

In 2020 The Minneapolis Hosta Society will host the annual AHS convention in Minneapolis area June 10th to 13th. In July 2020 the Northern Illinois Hosta Society will host the Midwest Regional Hosta Society convention. In 2021 the convention will be in Kalamazoo, MI hosted by the West and Southwest Michigan Hosta Society's.

can be bolted to either side, depending if our are right or left handed. It will pry the plant out of the hardest ground around. I recently used it to excavate plants in Pam Hohn's yard after the storm. A number of her hostas were destroyed and we removed them and potted them up for storage for late this year or next spring planting.

One item that I did not cover due to time and cold weather was digging a plant from the garden. In normal cases the roots of a hosta are at least 6-9 inches outside the crown of the plant. So my normal excavation line is at least 12 inches from the crown and as the plant is lifted up I use my scoop trowel to cut the soil away to expose the roots so I find the actual plant.

So lets say you have a large plant you want to move and the leaves are in the way to find the crown and your digging location. The best method is to take a long piece of burlap about 3-4 inches wide. I use one that is about 3-4 feet long. Take one end and feed it around the base of the plant. When you get the ends together begin to tie a knot. As you keep pulling the ends keep raising the burlap up the leaves until they are about vertical, then finish the knot. Do not use a bungee chord or rope at they are narrow and will cut into the leaves as you tighten the knot. If

(Continued on page 5)

Our IPHS Friends—be sure to visit them

American Hosta Society

For \$30 per year (\$34 for family) you can join the American Hosta Society because it gives you –

* The bi-yearly publication, *THE HOSTA JOURNAL*, probably one of the best publications you will receive about hostas. In addition, there are 3 to 4 on-line newsletters per year.

* An opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's clinics, buy plants from hosta dealers or the auction and a chance to see the latest and best hosta in the hosta show.

To learn more and join go to: www.americanhostasociety.org where you will find an application and mail it to the Membership Secretary listed.



(Continued from page 4)

you are digging the whole plant you can keep the burlap on the root ball and move to your new locations, get your hole dug, mix in compost with removed soil and begin planting the hosta. Once the first 1-2 layers of soil are in place water thoroughly, wait, and then fill with soil up to the final layer just below the crown. Be sure to compress the soil and leave a very slight indentation for future waterings.

For those of you that have a variegated hosta and find some green leaves appearing, or a streaked hosta with green leaves, you want to get the green removed as the plant is reverting back to one of the parents. We have had a large clump of 'Galaxy' for over 10 years on the north side of the house and every 2-4 years I have to dig and cut out the green crowns. This year we de-

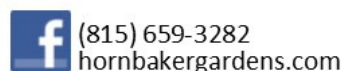


(Continued on page 6)



Botanical Gardens • Arboretum • Garden Center
April 10 – October 10

Open House & Hosta Walk on June 8-9-10



Midwest Regional Hosta Society
sweet deal for **FIRST TIME** members

Join MRHS (\$20 for 2 yr) and receive a **\$10.00** voucher toward a one-time qualifying purchase from any one of our Midwest Region partner vendors/retailers/mail order nurseries (<http://www.midwesthostasociety.org/Vendors.shtml>). MRHS members also receive semi-annual newsletters and member registration rates for the Annual Convention. Sign up now, first time members in time for them to cash in their \$10.00 voucher this spring!
www.midwesthostasociety.org

Send your completed membership application and check (\$20 for 2 years, payable to MRHS) to:

Barb Schroeder
1819 Coventry Drive
Champaign, IL 61822-5239

NATURE'S FINEST, INC
3009 W. Old Church Road
Champaign, IL 61822

U OF I ARBORETUM HOSTA GARDEN CLEAN-UP DAY, SATURDAY July 13TH FROM 8:30 TO 10:00 AM, BRING YOUR COFFEE AND WE WILL HAVE DONUTS

IPHS Hosta Garden—Master Gardeners

We have our agreement with the Master Gardeners completed. If you are a master gardener and put hours in our Arboretum Garden you may turn those hours in towards your annual requirement. The limit is 10 hours per year that can be used towards your Master Gardener hours requirement. We hope you put in more than that. :) The agreement goes back to April 1 so if you had any hours in April you may turn those in also.

There is a Category called "Hosta Garden" where you are to put to those hours.

(Continued from page 5)

decided to donate part of the plant to the auction at the AHS Convention in Green Bay so this was a good chance to demonstrate how to get the green crowns out of a plant.

Our treasurer Carol McClure, had a large clump of 'Mouse Trap' that had green crowns, which is then 'Mouse Ears' or 'Green Mouse Ears'. Carol thought I was going to demonstrate on her plant but not so, she had to get her hands dirty (even brought gloves just in case) and proceeded to split the plant. We auctioned off or sold of the green crowns and a couple of 'Mouse Trap' to attendees.

I know that due to weather you were not able to dig and bring a plant so if you have one in your garden and are not really sure how to eliminate the green crowns send me a note and I will come "consult" the process, but you will be the one doing the work. I will even bring "King of Spades" for you to use in digging the plant (I might help in this part).

Rick



You can't say that gardeners aren't a hardy bunch, rain, heat or cold and we always hang in there.



On the left is *H* 'Miss Mitzi' named after our Bichon Frise. It was registered in 2018 and this week we will receive liners produced in tissue culture by Rob Mortko

On the right is one of our seedlings *H* 'Miss Abbie' named after our other Bichon Frise. It will be registered in 2019.



Garden Notes from Susan

We had our first Second Saturday in the Garden on June 8. Those who were there got some hostas identified and labeled, picked up a few sticks, and cut back some daffodils. They also chatted about typical garden things...the weather and such. Mike says we will have a little planting to do at the next meeting on July 13 since we lost some hosta and a few other things to the deep cold this winter. Hope to see you then at 8:30 in our garden at the Arboretum. Be sure to bring a cup of coffee, or your favorite drink and join us. Happy gardening to all of you in this beautifully cool weather!

New Plant Tags at Hosta Garden

We have been having issues with our old plant tags since the beginning. We started with See Fine Stakes and used a Brother printer to print the names. That was not working because the squirrels were sharpening their teeth on the tags and ruining the label. Just before the 2017 Midwest Convention we got the engraved tags and put those on the See Fine Stakes. They looked great for the Convention but found out the squirrels still liked them. They also bent easily from people walking on them. So now we are trying a new tag. It is a stainless steel stake and tag that hangs down on the stake so hopefully it will move enough that the squirrels will not try to eat them. We will see.



(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 1)

published before the Walk on June 15 but, if he does, I encourage everyone to support it by buying a ticket. I always get some ideas about plant material, landscaping design or both when I visit other gardens no matter how simple or complex the display.

We are in 'performance' mode, making several structural changes and limb pruning that have been deferred for several years. In the name of having a deadline, we are spending an outrageous amount of time getting everything into shape. Given my proclivity to, according to wife Susan, NOT observe boundaries, the gardening area stretches into 2 of the neighbors' yards along with 1006 and 1010 So. Prospect creating even more of a challenge. I have dubbed our area an arboretum or another appropriate term may be 'plant museum'!

Maureen Cohen has graciously stepped forward on short notice to host the June meeting. She has a beautiful garden with a wonderful setting overlooking Maynard Lake. I have volunteered to lead a discussion about 'rabbit tales' and how to mitigate their most extreme damage. However, please come prepared to offer your own antidotes for control of not only them, but the other hostile varmints that challenge our gardening ventures. Please invite a friend. I hope to see you there.!

Please invite a friend.. *Mike*



H 'Faith'

(Continued from page 6)

We put in new plant tags last Saturday during the work day. We did most of the west side beds and will finish them up before the next work day in July when we will put the east side tags in. Several people

helped and it went fast. We also discovered that we need to put the tags in the leaves of the plants as people are still walking on them and bending them. We hope if they are in the plant they will not step on them.

The exception will be at the big plants, especially tall ones, but we will need the tag really close to the plant. The photo notes the tags in front of the mini's at this time but we

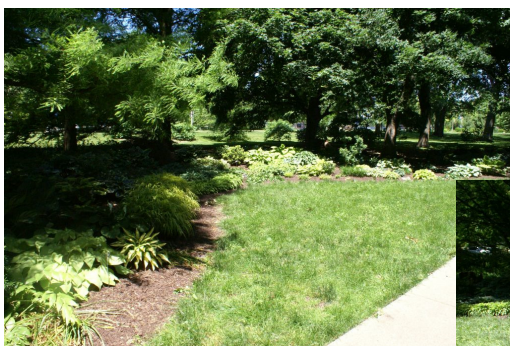
need to put in the area of the leaves and toward the back of the plant. Rick took these photos today and you will note



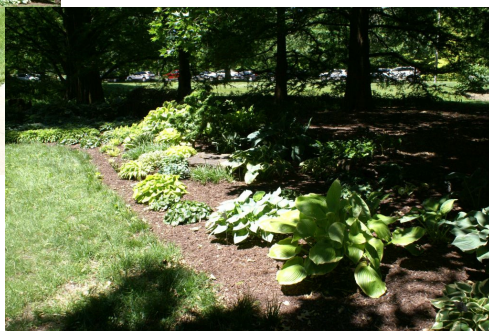
Hostas 'Curley Fries', 'Baby Bunting' and 'Blue Mouse Ears'

where some have not been changed yet. The black tag is one of the old ones that has not been chewed on and the silver hanging tags are the new ones. Once we complete the installation for the hostas we will start on most of the companion plants. Come out in July and help us "tag the garden".

Barb



The IPHS University of Illinois Arboretum Hosta Garden



For new members attending the June meeting be sure to check with Barb Schroeder when you sign in to pick up your Hosta Adventure published by the American Hosta Society.

**C-U Master Gardener Garden Walk
Saturday June 15th 9 AM to 4 PM
\$10 tickets available by visiting Mike and Susan Weber's garden first—1006 S Prospect Avenue in Champaign**

Illinois Prairie Hosta Society

1819 Coventry Dr
Champaign, IL 61822-5239

Check us out on Facebook and we
are on the Web at:
[http://
www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com](http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com)

Remarks by Rick

I want to note I appreciate all of the members that came to the last meeting. As noted by the photo of the group we gardeners are a hardy group. Who else would put on a heavy coat, sit in a yard on a cloudy and windy day with a temperature about 60 degrees and talk about plants. The neighbors probably wondered what kind of nuts were in our yard. That said one yard has chickens and other strange yard decorations while a second has 3 dogs and a pig, so who is crazy.

This is a short note this week. For four days I was in Omaha playing with trains on four model railroads (did I say crazy people) and got back Sunday night. We leave for Green Bay on Wednesday and thus trying to get the yard ready for mowing, trimming and water. Yes, water. I checked the potted hostas today and they are dry. We have gone from almost a flood to now I need to check soil, especially in the pots.

We will miss the garden walk and we wish our members that are on the walk the best. The garden walk is fun even with the work ahead of time. But we are off to Green Bay and will be seeing all of our old friends, helping during the auction, visiting some 10+ gardens in the area and of course, probably buying plants. Take care.

Rick (rickschro1@gmail.com)
