

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:

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<http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com>

Also on Facebook

Inside this issue:

Meeting notice	1
President's Comments	1
Growing Hostas in Pots	2
Dannaher Special Sale	2
Hombaker Event	3
Arboretum Walkway Project	4
IPHS Meeting Dates	4
Officers and Committee	4
Solberg Summer Notes	5
Trade/Sell Notice	5
Rick's Remarks	6

July 15th—6:00 PM Live Meeting

"Making Major Changes to the Garden" by Mary Ann Metz At the Home of Mary Ann and Dan Metz — 1108 W William Street in Champaign

Join us for the July IPHS meeting at 5:30 on Thursday July 15th at Mary Ann Metz's newly renovated garden. She has completely redone her garden since our last meeting. She lost a large Oak tree, so her garden changed from a shade garden to a sun garden. She will share with us the redesign adventure that was required.

Mary Ann is one of the charter members of IPHS which started in 2004. She has been very involved in educating the community through her work at Prairie Gardens and by opening her garden frequently to the Hosta Society and the public via the Garden Walk. She is also an active member of the American Hosta Society. Last year she was nominated to be on the American Hosta Society (AHS) Wall of Honor.

As usual we will have some plants for raffle and a couple of sale plants. Please bring your own chair.

President's Comments by Mike Weber

If any of you read my June newsletter message about keeping Hosta well-watered due to concerns about a drought, mother nature has had the last laugh, at least for now. Last Wednesday I dumped out a cumulative 6-day total of 7.4" from my gauge. The first 2 weeks of June were among the driest on record and the last two weeks among the wettest. It was a slug's paradise as there were several days where even the grass did not dry off.

But with the rains came the weeds which finds me exchanging hours watering for hours weeding. The tradeoff is that the Hosta loved the water and look great. The Hosta flowers are also exuberant this year, which is keeping the pollinators happy, unless you are like one IPHS member that I know well. She dislikes the blooms so much that she cuts down the scapes BEFORE they bloom. I enjoy many of the later blooming cultivars. They have fragrance and compact blooms of blue to pink colors.

Blooms or not, the spent blooms are eventually an eyesore after they have fed the bees. I hope all IPHS members know that removing old scapes does no harm and helps their ornamental appeal. Removing them gives me an 'opportunity' to find additional weeds hiding under the canopy, allows me to check the health of each cultivar

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

and, it is a reminder that my collection addiction seems to know no bounds.

I am looking forward to Dannaher Nursery coming to town on August 14 for a parking lot sale. Details are listed elsewhere in the newsletter. I am also looking forward to seeing Mary Ann Metz's new garden. As all of us know gardening like life imposes constant changes, be they planned or unplanned. In Mary Ann's case the redesign of the front yard was necessitated by the Oak Tree succumbing to Oak Wilt. Her decades long shade garden is now a sun garden, and her back yard is totally redesigned.

I hope to see you on the 15th when she will give us the details of the renovations.

Mike

Special Plant Sale

Since the Master Gardener walk was cancelled the last 2 years, Dave and Leslie Dannaher from Galena, Ohio, who have been popular vendors at the Garden Walk the last several years, are coming to Champaign for a parking lot sale on August 14, from 8 AM to 12 PM. Most of you know that Dannaher Nursery specializes in unusual, hard-to-find, but very hardy ornamental woodies and conifers. The location is the Lincolnshire Professional Building, 1701 South Prospect, Champaign. It is the building between Art Mart and First Financial Bank. There are about 40 free parking spaces in the lot on the west side of the building.

EARLY BIRDS: We will begin to unload and set up at 7 AM. Those who wish to come early and help unload will receive first opportunity to purchase plants. Forms of payment accepted: cash, check and credit card IF there is a signal (you may want to bring a back up form of payment just in case). They encourage anyone who may be interested in preordering plants to contact them at: info@dannahernursery.com or call them at 740-972-0318 before August 10. Please note that if you have questions about plants that you might be interested in, you should contact them the prior week.

An inventory that was taken in January of this year can be found on their Dannaher Landscaping website under the "2021 Inventory" tab. If you'd like to visit their nursery, they are located in Galena, OH which is about a 6-hour drive from Champaign. The nursery is open 9 AM-5 PM most Saturdays through Tuesdays (check their website under "Open Nursery" tab for closures.)

As many of you know Dave has grafted 'Illini Sunrise' which was named after the tree in the Schroeder's Coventry yard. The tree may, or may not, be available this time of year.

Growing Hostas in Pots—Minis to Maxis

Why not grow hostas in pots? Here are some advantages:

- You can grow hostas where soil is poor, or even absent (on a patio, deck, or driveway).
- You can rearrange hostas with the season, without digging.
- Hostas in containers constitute numerous divisions in a Hosta Show.
- Many younger hostas, and miniature hostas, will appreciate growing in ideal conditions without root competition.

On the other hand, hostas in pots need some extra care, especially during winter. Even with the best care, you will lose a hosta from time to time, but by following some basics you can keep losses to a minimum.

Here are some basics for growing hostas in pots. First, if you are choosing a decorator pot (not just growing in nursery pots), make sure it is frost-proof. Even the best ceramic pots may break eventually, but you don't want to make it a given. If you are going to move it for winter (see below), make sure the full pot won't be too heavy for you. You can always fit a good-quality plastic nursery pot into a ceramic pot and move them separately, if you need to. Don't plant hostas in pots that are too big, but there should be room for roots. Roughly, it should be at least half as deep as the hosta mound will be tall. And make sure that the pot has good drainage. Drill extra holes if you need to.



A common way to grow mini hostas is in hypertufa troughs. This is a porous concrete mixture, usually lightened with peat moss. If properly cared for, these can last for years. Note that in any case, you will want to make sure

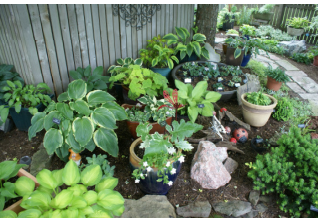
that your container, once in place, can drain easily. Don't set them right on the ground, as the drain holes will quickly plug. You can find attractive pot feet or set them on inexpensive paving stones. Second, use a well-draining potting mix. There is a lot that can be said about this. Many growers will use a mix that contains a lot of pine bark fines (a fine-grind mulch, really). You may even find a "nursery mix" at the garden center. Note that this material breaks down fairly quickly, so you'll have to replot more frequently.

Another recommendation is to use commercial potting soil mixed with poultry grit, about 3:1 by volume. You may have to go to a farm/feed store to find some; the grade of

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

grit really doesn't matter. However, this is heavier than the potting soil you're used to, so it does make the pots heavier. Other people like to use the Organic Mechanics potting mix, which is based on grain hulls, and so is both light and quick draining. Once you have selected your hosta(s), pot and potting mix, put some kind of open mesh across the bottom drain holes, to limit how much potting mix leaks out. (such as the plastic mesh sacks you might get in buying onions or the plastic screen that comes under your pizzas) Partially fill the container and place your hostas as you would typically plant in a pot, being sure to untangle the roots and spread them out in the pot. If you're creating a miniature garden (sometimes called a trough garden), use your creativity.



You can also include some companion plants, choosing ones that will have the same winter needs as the hostas. The downside to a quick-draining soil mix is that you must not neglect the watering!

Water the plants in well after planting, then water frequently during the growing season, every day or two during hot periods. Frankly, opinions are quite mixed on using moisture-retaining additives in potting soil. If you have used such products and like the results, then give it a try. Fertilize lightly, even if you don't routinely fertilize your in-ground hostas, but stop by mid-August to let the plants head for their winter nap. Come winter, you will have some work to do.

The hostas will go dormant, perhaps sooner than those planted in your garden. Don't worry; you'll probably find they come up a little earlier in spring. Once the plants are dormant, they need almost NO



water. It is very important that the containers not get water-logged during winter, when freezing temperatures are likely. Remember that hostas require a cold dormancy period, generally about 30 days of temperatures below 40 °F. This means that your basement is likely far too warm. Ideally, move your containers to an unheated shed or garage. Less ideally, move them to a protected location outside, and cover them with a good blanket of leaves or even a white plastic sheet. If your plants are in nursery pots, some gardeners will lay them on their sides before covering with leaves. Remember: cold is not the enemy, water is. And, it must be said, so are critters: voles just love to find your hosta pots and stay fat and happy all winter eating through them. If your plants are inside a shed, it's easier to protect from rodents.


Hornbaker Gardens welcomes nationally known hosta expert

Bob Solberg

of Green Hill Farm in North Carolina

Sunday, July 18

Garden Center open 10 am to 5 pm



9:30 am to 10:30 am
Meet and Greet with Bob

11:00 am
"Growing Hostas in Containers, at Home and in Japan" presented by Bob Solberg

Lunch Break

1:00 pm
"Growing Hostas in Containers, at Home and in Japan" presented by Bob Solberg

3:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Meet and Greet with Bob

\$2 off all hostas

Registration required at www.hornbakergardens.com/events

Free event - Lunch \$10

Hosta Floral Arrangement Contest
Door Prizes • Photo Contest



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Princeton, Illinois 815-659-3282

Do note, though, that such winter storage means all your companion plants must also go dormant, able to survive several months in the dark. During winter, if there is an extended warm spell where temperatures will be above 50 °F for a few days, you can water the pots, making sure they'll be pretty dry before freezing temperatures return. If you have snow piles around and know the temps are climbing, put a handful of snow on the pot. Not enough to cover, just enough to seep in as it melts. Keep an eye out for invasion by voles, using poison bait if you must. When temperatures warm in spring, you can resume gentle watering until the plants break ground.



(Continued on page 4)

Officers and Committees

Officers for 2021

President—Mike Weber
1st Vice President—Programs—Joyce Beitel
2nd Vice President—Membership—Karen Semple
Treasurer—Harry Baxter
Secretary—Kathy Robinson
Past President—Rick Schroeder
Board Member at Large—Mary Munoz

Committee Chairs

U of I Hosta Garden—Susan Weber
 Audit—Fritz Drasgow
 Newsletter—Rick Schroeder
 Historian—Jim O'Donnell
 Public Relations—Liza Weber Schaffer
 Hospitality—Joan Price
 Plant Raffle/Auction—Mike Weber

U of I Arboretum Walkway Project

The walkway project in the hosta garden and arboretum is moving forward. The plan has been submitted to the U of I architectural committee and it has been approved. Estimate of costs are in final stages and work toward acquiring materials is in the process. As noted in the last newsletter the stone entrance at the south end of the garden has been completed. Some plants have already been moved and we will need to move some additional ones to make room for the walkway. With the moisture we have had recently we should be able to move them with minimal problems (will need to continue watering after moving).

During two recent visits to check plant locations (Barb is making maps of each bed) we noted walkers were using the proposed walkway area instead of going under tree limbs and were not using the previous areas the arboretum was trying to protect. The new berms on the east and west side have discouraged walkers from using those areas. . In addition they now see a part of our hosta garden and perhaps spend more time checking out the plants.

A special thanks to Jeff Kirby for furnishing a Oak Leaf Hydrangea that he and I placed in the garden to discourage another path through the hostas.

IPHS Meeting dates/locations for 2021

Below is the early planned meeting dates along with program and location. You will note, like last year, many will be non-contact via ZOOM. As we are able to move to outdoor settings we will have less Internet type meetings. Please put these dates/times on your calendar, all are subject to change and final notice will be send via Email the week before.

August 18th—at 6:00 PM Joyce Beitel will host us in her garden. Laura Hayden will present a program “Photographing Your Garden”. This is something many of us forget to do, record your garden and the changes you make over the years.

September—Annual Meeting—planning for the Holiday Inn as last year. Date/time TBD based on state of current health recommendations.

(Continued from page 3)

Protect the emerging plants, if you can, from spring freezes, since your container hostas will likely be up before those in your garden. Watch for signs of crown rot, which is more likely to be a problem with your larger plants than with your minis. Be a little stingy with water at first, until the plants are leafing out.



One last point: when should you repot? You will find that the potting soil, especially if you have added soil conditioners, will break down over time. In most cases you will need to repot about every three years, perhaps less if your hostas grow vigorously or need some special care. Often you can simply lift the plant from the pot and put fresh potting mix beneath, but do consider a complete refresh of the mix, bare-rooting your Hosta (dividing if needed) and repotting. This will give you an opportunity to redesign your troughs if you have multiple

plants in one container.

Enjoy your Hosta containers! © 2014-2021 by Delaware Valley Hosta Society

Summer Hosta Notes by Bob Solberg

Summer (Period of bloom and seed set) June-July -August

The time of bloom in hosta species and their cultivars varies from late May or June to September. A particular hosta will normally bloom once for about 3 weeks during the summer, producing a flower scape from the growing bud that just finished producing the flushes of leaves. The scape has a number of lily-like flowers that are open for one day only and are bee pollinated. (*H. plantaginea* opens in the evening and may be moth pollinated.) Seed pods are formed from fertilized ovaries at the base of the pistil and swell in size. Black, single-winged seeds are usually ripe in 6-8 weeks.

Labeling: Replace the labels that the squirrels have pulled up.

Light: This is the brightest and more importantly, hottest light of the year. The sun is at its maximum height in the sky and often beds that were bathed in shade in early May are now in full sun. Hostas can tolerate direct light but they hate heat! If leaf margins begin to brown, it may be time to move that hosta to a cooler spot in the garden. On the other hand, year by year shade gardens become shadier. Consider removing a branch here or there during the summer to create spotlights of bright light in the garden. Maybe even consider removing an entire tree, but that should probably wait until winter.

Nutrients: Blooming hostas still need nutrients to maintain their foliage and produce seeds but not a high nitrogen diet. If you are liquid feeding weekly, continue if there is ample rain. In times of drought reduce feeding to every other week. Discontinue any supplemental foliar feeding; hosta leaves have expanded to their maximum by now. Remember if it doesn't rain, then your slow release fertilizer is not being released. Irrigation may be a good idea.

Pests: If it turns dry, the deer will show up looking for some lush hosta foliage full of water. Spray deer repellent every 3 weeks or more often and rotate your favorite brands. Leave the electric fence on at all times. Be on the look out for the symptoms of foliar nematodes, those nasty brown streaks. If you have a major problem, remove the most highly infected hostas and water less and feed less. Starve the hostas and stress the worms. Quarantine your garden. If you have a minor issue, remove infected hostas and all the ones touching them. A few years of this may eliminate the problem almost completely.

Protection: Watch for petiole rot. This fungus attacks the base of hosta petioles, secreting a substance that eats through the plant tissue causing the leaves to fall on the ground. This usually occurs in the first hot dry weather of the summer. Pull back mulch. Treat with 10% bleach solution immediately and retreat if necessary. There are also

Trade or Purchase/Sell a Hosta? Plant?

Member Jeff Kirby has a nice Korean spice *Virburnum Carlesii* that he is going to remove (about 3 1/2 x 3). It is still in the ground and will dig for you to pickup. Contact Jeff if you would like to add this to your garden.

jkirby@shout.net

So if you have a plant you are looking for contact me with your wants and I will publish your request in the newsletter. Rickschro1@gmail.com

fungicides (e.g. Terrachlor) that can be applied. Other fungi may attack the hosta leaves, especially in hot, humid climates in wet summers. Apply fungicides (e.g. Daconil) as a preventative in late June every 2 weeks as necessary. Rotate fungicides.

Propagation: Divide hostas as the heat of summer passes. August is the best time to drastically divide and plant or pot hostas. Try to give your hostas 6 weeks before the first frost to establish new roots in their new home.

Water: Like nutrients, a hosta's demands for water are reduced after their leaves are mature. Increased temperatures however, increase the transpiration rate, the rate at which the water is pulled out of the hosta leaves, requiring more water to replace it. Transpiration affects trees to an even greater degree as they pump water up and out of the garden soil. In hot weather sometimes keeping your hostas full of water all day long is a constant battle. Continue the fight. Dry soil may cause your hostas to go heat dormant or worse, dry rot at the bottom of the crown. In heavily shaded gardens, irrigation during the day can cool those hot leaves.

Fun! Cut some scapes after a couple of flowers have opened and bring them inside to enjoy for two or more weeks. Cut and remove the other scapes when 75% of the flowers have opened, unless you wish to save the seeds. Take in a hosta convention, regional events are inexpensive and allow plenty of time to socialize. Visit other local gardens and get some new ideas. Remember to bring a hosta along as a gift. In August begin to plant new acquisitions.

Editor: Hopefully some of you are able to attend the event at Hornbaker's Nursery in Princeton and meet Bob. He is a wealth of information and always ready to answer any question about hostas.

Illinois Prairie Hosta Society

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Savoy, IL 61874

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

Remarks by Rick

Last month Mike noted the importance in watering your hostas, and all other plants, due to lack of rain early this year. Well that changed in the last couple of weeks with from 7 to 9 inches of rain in most of our area. The plants and grass loved it, however, once the end of July and the month of August comes about we will be into a dry period again and since they have enjoyed the recent rain you will need to keep them happy—water them each week!

I hope many of you signed up for the 2021 AHS meeting that will be virtual this year. With garden tours, seminars and other activities that you can “access on line” for \$49 it is a bargain. In addition if you signed up you should have received your convention plant ‘Silly String’, similar to ‘Praying Hands’ but more like ‘Curley Fries’. Ours is potted up already and under the pergola.

In reference to the AHS we recently sent you a link to the AHS newsletter. If you did not get this one let me know.

Each year the plant tags at the U of I Arboretum Hosta Garden get bent or sometimes they walk away to another location. Barb and Mike try to return the tag to the correct plants and this spring she has been working on mapping the garden. Each bed has been mapped and it will listed on the web site in the future. Each time we visit the garden we look to be sure tags are correct but also visible

to those visiting the garden. If you are there sometime and note a tag that is hidden please move it to the front for viewing.

If you missed the last meeting at the home of Jill and Ray Alexander you got a 2 for 1 program. Ray gave us a detailed explanation of how our back “works” and what can cause damage to your spine. He gave us tips on exercise to do each day and before you head to the garden. I must say this is something most of us probably don’t do and should.

Jill explained her new “worm farm” in her compost area. As we all know worms help create “garden gold” from composted material. Look for her article next month. In addition she updated us on the changes in the garden since the Guardia’s lived there. As always, plants die and there is an “opportunity” for something new. She did just that.

If you have been on Master Gardener Walks over the last 20 years you have seen Mary Ann’s yard. I urge you to attend this meeting to see another change, probably version 4.1, or more.

Rick
