

Prairie Hosta Herald

March 2009 Volume 6 Number 1

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.

The Fun of Hybridizing or Get as Serious as You Want!

Speaker: Olga Petryszyn

Saturday, March 21, 9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

**Parkland College Tony Noel Center
Champaign, Illinois**

Kick-off your 2009 gardening year with "The Hosta Lady", Olga Petryszyn. Olga is one of the top ten hosta hybridizers in the United States and a Master Judge. As a true artist, Olga pours a lot of creative passion into making new cultivars for others to enjoy. Her favorite hostas are the really big ones—Olga maybe petite but her hostas are GIANTS! During her IPHS program Olga will give a demonstration, slide show, and allow time for Q & A. Please join the fun; we know you are just itching to get your hands dirty!

In addition, Barb Schroeder will introduce convention chairpersons who will briefly discuss their status for the upcoming convention. We have a convention DVD that was sent the various regional hosta societies and it will be shown to our members at this meeting. This will be your chance to ask more questions and also volunteer for various tasks that will be going on during the 3-day event.

Officers for 2008

President - Susan Weber

1st Vice President - Programs - Cynthia Helms

2nd Vice President - Membership - Susan Krumm

Secretary - Vickie Morris

Treasurer - Jamie Isaacs

Past President - Barb Schroeder

Board Member at Large - Fran Smith

*Membership - Single \$10, Family \$15 and
Commercial at \$25 per calendar year.*

For more information contact

Vice President - Membership:

Susan Krumm, 508 James St, Champaign, IL 61821

krumms@comcast.net

Web Site - <http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com>

Committee Chairs

Allerton Hosta Garden - M. Metz and Karen Meyer

Audit - Fritz Drasgow

Hospitality - Sue & John Maggio

Newsletter- Rick and Barb Schroeder

Philanthropic - Susan Weber

Plant Raffles -

Plant Sale - Mary Ann Metz

Publicity - Fran Smith

Leaf Show - Mary Ann Metz

Trips - Rick Schroeder

Please volunteer and help these chairpersons.

Future Meetings

Each year this column lists the meetings for the year. Please mark the following dates on your calendar and plan to attend the events. Cynthia has some great programs lined up for 2009, our convention year. Be sure you note some changes in time for meetings.

Saturday, March 21, 9:00 AM - Parkland College, Tony Noel Center - Olga Petryszyn, hybridizer from northwest Indiana will be our speaker.

Saturday, April 25, 9:00 AM - Illinois Willows, Seymour - Kent Miles will give us a tour of farm and cut flower production.

May Date TBA - Lincoln Square Village - Annual IPHS Plant sale with C-U Herb Society, Grand Prairie Friends & C-U Bus & Prof Women

Thursday, May 21, 4:30 PM - Hidden Acres Nursery, St. Joseph - Mary Ann Metz will present "Gardening with Annuals"

Saturday, May 23, 7:30 AM- Car Pool trip to Whiteside Garden, a Charleston garden, lunch in Effingham, a Effingham garden, Avalon Acres and a nursery at Altamont.

June 11-13 - IPHS sponsored Midwest Regional Hosta Society convention at the I Hotel and Convention Center

Saturday, July 25, 5:30 PM - Sue & John Maggio, SW Champaign host the annual potluck dinner with Greg Smith of Arborsmith speaking on pruning trees and shrubs.

Saturday, August 22, 9:00 AM - the Issacs, Lozzi and Uhlarik families host us at Sullivan with a garden tour and speaker Tony Bratsch, Effingham Extension, talking about the Emerald Ash Borer.

Saturday, September 19, 1:00 PM - Sleepy Creek Vineyards, Fairmount - Dawn & Joe Taylor tour of vineyard and wine production.

October - Fall Banquet and Annual Meeting, date and time to be announced.

New Members

We welcome the following to the IPHS:

**Barbara Socha, 107 W. Jefferson St,
Philo, IL**

Hope for the Future!

By Diann Thoma

This article might be about what you wish you'd done last year. Or maybe we start with the question, "Why did I choose to live where the winters are very long and extremely cold and now it's still winter and my garden has been brown, tan, black, and beige for three months??" It might end with a pitiful cry of "Woe is me!" but we're going to deal with that right now. It's early March, and regardless of the lion, the lamb, and the freezing inhospitable interminable winds, we want green, we want colors, we want to know there's hope for the immediate future!! Well, yes, there is.

As I write this, it is February 27 in Champaign. My coppery-orange witch hazel, *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Jelena', has been blooming for a week. This particular shrub is vase-shaped and vigorous (according to Dirr—mine are still young and slow), could grow to 8'x10' without pruning, and received the Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit in 1993. Witch hazels' bloom time varies from January to March, and most of them have fabulous Fall color too. The shape, ultimate size, vigor, and flower color vary (there are a great



hamamelis-Jelena

Continued on Page 5

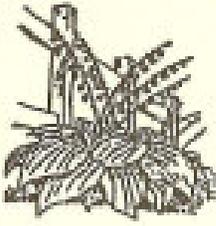
Future Conventions

**The AHS 2009 Convention will be in
Lansing, Michigan on June 24-27, 2009**

**The 2010 Midwest Hosta Society Con-
vention will be in Des Moines, Iowa**

**The AHS 2010 Convention will be in
Bloomington, MN**

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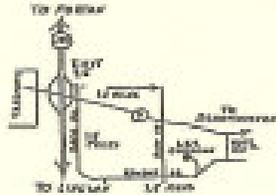


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Notes from Susan

I just wanted to welcome everyone back to the 2009 season of IPHS. Obviously, this will be a very busy season for us, and much of our activity will be devoted to helping Barb Schroeder and the Regional Convention Committee accomplish their tasks. I'm sure that we will find this year a challenging one in many good ways. I think my first challenge will be to assess the damage done by the really cold winter that was our lot this year. However, I always look at "death" in the garden as an opportunity to create anew, and maybe find a space for those specimens I could not consider before Nature's hand decided to do a little designing of her own!

As the new president, I want to express my sincere gratitude and warmest regard for the officers and committee chairpersons that have come before me, both those who are remaining, and those who have served their term. IPHS would definitely not be the organization that we are if it were not for you. I especially want to thank Mary Slack as she and her family move on to Colorado. Since the founding of the Society, Mary has worked diligently to keep our funds accounted for and in order; she will be much missed by us and many others I'm sure. I also want to thank Barb Schroeder and all the officers and committee chairs who helped Susan Krumm, Jamie Isaacs and me transition so smoothly into our new positions. Finally, to those of you who have offered to fill committee chair spots, your generosity with your time and your enthusiasm for hosta is one of the things which makes this Society so rewarding. If I had not known what a stable organization this was, I never would have taken over the responsibility of president.

I'm looking forward to greeting all of you in person in April; Susan Krumm will be chairing our first meeting in March and Jamie will present her first treasurer's report at that time. Until then, here's hoping for a happy spring clean-up and a weather-perfect spring for us all.

Susan



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Hosta and Garden Web Sites

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

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

Wade & Gatton Nursery – a must visit - <http://www.pal-metto.com/hosta/wade/wade.html>

Country Arbors Nursery - membership gets you a 10% discount on Hostas - <http://countryarbors.com>

Green Hill Farms, Bob Solberg - www.HostaHosta.com

Shade Loving Companion Plants For Hosta

By: Florence Kruer

All of the plants listed below grow in shade, unless part shade is indicated and they all like moist, fertile soil with lots of humus.

Solomon's Seal, of the lily family, sports dainty bell-shaped white blooms which dangle along arching stems around May. It grows from 18 to 36" tall and its leaves are bright green edged with white. In October and November the leaves turn bright yellow, providing interest when other plants look spent. It has no serious pests and can be divided in early spring or fall. It tends to spread, so give it lots of room.

Begonia grandis (Hardy Begonia) has angel wing foliage which is red tinted with soft blue-green leaves. The airy sprays of pink flowers shoot up above the foliage and last from late summer until frost. It reaches a height of about 24." It can be moved anytime during the growing season.

Dicentra (Bleeding Heart) - The King of Hearts variety bears rose pink heart shaped flowers on steel blue fern -like foliage. It reaches a height of 15" and likes part shade. This variety blooms all summer. There are other varieties that bloom in early spring only and grow 24 to 36" tall, bearing either white or pink blooms.

Nandina domestica grows 3 to 6' tall and provides special interest in those bare beds during



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the winter months with its lush clusters of red berries and lacy colorful leaves. This is invasive! It grows from part sun to shade.

Anemone hybrid blooms in late August and September and is available in a variety of white and pink-toned blossoms. Each flower spike has a couple dozen blooms. It grows 24 to 36" tall and likes part shade. It is propagated from its long hairy roots which have tiny nodules and can be found along with bulbs in garden centers. However, we have had no success with the bare roots. It is best to purchase a named potted plant.

Spigelia marilandica - The variety Indian Pink produces spikes of bright red flowers with yellow throats. It grows 2 to 2-1/2' high and blooms June to August. This is a native wildflower and is a striking plant. It may not be readily available. Check at native plant sale events.

Ferns - There is a large variety of native ferns which go really well with hosta because of the extreme contrast in foliage. Of special interest are a couple of my favorites

Autumn (Japanese shield) fern - In spring 18 to 24" fronds unfurl in bright copper. They green up for summer and then turn russet - orange in the fall. They do best in part shade.

Silver painted fern is available in a number of varieties. It grows about 18" tall and likes part shade. It looks just as its name indicates.

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

Sweet woodruff is an herb and does well as a delicate ground cover for a small area. It provides a carpet of tiny white flowers and pale green delicate leaves which seem to grab your attention. Its other use is making May wine, popular in German restaurants in the spring.

Plumbago is another care-free ground cover. Its foliage is 8 to 12" tall with peacock blue blossoms and it blooms from midsummer to late fall. It grows in part shade. Do not confuse this one with the tropical variety which grows much taller and is not hardy in our zone.

The list of shade plants which would do well as hosta companions goes on and on. A few more well known ones are Lenten rose, astilbe, foam flower and huechera.

From the Delmarva Hosta Society

Continued from Page 2

many cultivars) and some have wonderfully-scented flowers, too. They can add an ethereal winter presence in the front of your shrub border, especially if backed by evergreens; or you can use them as specimens in the garden as well. My next addition will be *H. x intermedia* 'Barmstedt Gold' if I can find it. Chris Lane, author of an inspirational book, *Witch Hazels*, says, "In my opinion, [Barmstedt Gold] is perhaps the finest cultivar of *H. x intermedia* to date. Tim Brotzman agrees that in North American, this is probably one of the very best witch hazels." I wish I'd planted it three years ago....

The day before yesterday, when the weather was stupendous (it's all relative, isn't it?), I was out cleaning parts of the garden. I cut back the nasty hellebore foliage from last year, brushed away the rotting leaves from my



Continued on Page 7

rotting leaves from my neighbor's diseased sycamore that I hate, and lo! fat green bud-stems are coming up! Here is an easy perennial, blooming in March, that likes part shade and dry-to-medium moisture conditions. In fact, the only *Helleborus* I've ever

Speaking of Viridescence

by Rob Mortko

We have all come to appreciate that foliage color is a dynamic variable in growing hostas. And we can generally deal with that. But what about those variegated cultivars that start the year with a glorious combination of variegated color only to end up all green by mid-season?

For example both 'Fortunei Albo-Picta' and *ventricosa* 'Aureomaculata' start the season with an attractive cream colored center along with a dark green margin. But by late May they are essentially a solid green color. The very popular 'Whirlwind' does the same thing even if it does give us a little longer show of variegation into early July before turning all green.

So what's up with all this? The American Hosta Society defines the term viridescence as "having leaves which begin the season lighter colored and become more green as the season advances".

Viridescence is just another reason to know our hosta cultivars well before purchasing and planting. Just like knowing what the mature size will be, knowing that a specific variety is viridescent will help us manage our expectations down the road. It may even be a deciding factor in whether we opt to purchase a specific cultivar or not.

Is viridescence a "bad thing"? Does it make a specific hosta a poor choice? The current popularity of 'Whirlwind' (a perennial top 25 favorite in the AHS Popularity Polls) would seem to indicate "no". But that is a decision to be made at the time of purchase right along side with size and color considerations.

The more we know about each hosta cultivar the better we can manage our own expectations. Don't be surprised or disappointed later by not knowing your hosta cultivars before you buy.



Midwest Regional Hosta Society 2009 Convention - Friday Seminars

PRESENTERS & TOPICS

(Subject To Change, Schedule To Be Announced)

-
- **James Bier**, Cartographer, Japanese Garden Designer & Builder – ‘*Japanese Garden Design*’
 - **Glenn Herold**, Horticulture Professor Illinois Central College — ‘*My 25 Favorite Plants*’
 - **Sandy Mason**, Horticulture Educator University of Illinois Extension — ‘*Gardening Smarter Not Harder*’
 - **Mary Ann Metz**, Landscape Design Consultant — ‘*The Shade Side of Peonies*’
 - **Mike Shadrack**, Author, Photographer — ‘*Hostas in the English Garden*’
 - **Mike Tiffany**, Plant Pathologist Agdia Marketing Services — ‘*Viruses In Ornamentals and HVX Demo*’
-

We wanted you to get an idea of the seminars that will be going on Friday during the convention. To attend you must be registered for the convention. There is an IPHS registration that does not include the bus trip, check out the web site and get signed up early.

2009 Midwest Hosta Society Convention Update

The committee has been meeting regularly since we accepted hosting the convention here in Champaign in 2006. The first two years we met intermittently. In July of 2008 we started meeting monthly and very soon will meet weekly. At the January committee meeting in 2009 we started feeling the urgency of our planning, we are now counting days not months. We are in full gear now and diligently getting things in order. The committee has made a few changes since we started. As you know Mary Slack is moving and that left us with a big hole in Treasurer duties, Registration and Auction help. We are all going to miss her. Siska Kallio and Jamie Isaacs have agreed to do Registration and I have stepped in as Treasurer. Mike has been very successful in getting us 11 vendors plus Mark Zilis and Mike Shadrack will be here selling their books. Yes, Mark's new book will be out in March and he will be here to sign and sell them. Mike is also currently busy getting donations for the auction. The auction has always been a great attraction to the convention, raising many thousand dollars to help support the Midwest Newsletter and the Winter Scientific meeting held in January. Whit and Cathy have been collecting donations for our raffle. They have secured some very unique and one of a kind items.

Mary Ann has started getting her volunteers for the leaf show which is a big part of the convention and requires a lot of work and volunteers. Rick has the tour gardens lined up, buses contracted and lunch planned. Rick has also gotten over 8 gardens volunteered to be open Sunday morning for departing attendees and our members to visit. Bev is busy getting volunteers assigned to all of our functions. Some opportunities are registration, raffle, auction, leaf show, hospitality and more. They range from greeting and directing people to selling tickets or registering hosta, all fun functions. Bev will also be handling the local publicity. Deb has been a big help with publicity, seminars and web site content along with working on signs, decorations (along with Mary Ann and Ruth) and many more things as we move closer. Ruth is in charge of evening hospitality at the hotel. This involves refreshments in the evening and helping me with dinner menus. I have been coordinating our needs with the I Hotel and now taking on the treasurer duties also.

We hope that you will keep June 11-13 on your calendar and either register to be part of all the great activities and/or volunteer to help IPHS. Please note the listing above for the Friday schedule and the great seminars that Deb has lined up. I am very proud to tell you that everyone on the committee has been working very hard to make this one of the best regional conventions. Something everyone in IPHS can be proud of and enjoy. Please visit the web site at <http://mrhs2009.com> or <http://illinoisprairiehostasociety.com> to see in more detail what will be happening and when.

Sincerely,

Barb Schroeder and Committee

Continued from Page 5

killed—and frequently, I might add—is *H. foetidus*; so, avoiding that one, I can vouch for the incredible fortitude of this genus, though mostly I grow *H. orientalis*, *x sternii*, and *x hybridus* cultivars. Although the flowers grow above the foliage, they usually nod downward, so plan on chucking them under the chin for full appreciation. (They're also good cut flowers, especially if you put them on the mantel and sit in a low chair....) Here you will find delight: colors range from a green-white to dark red, pink, true white, and true green; some are solid colored, some flushed in the center or edged with a different or brighter color, and some are speckled; some are even double-petaled (and not cheap). All these flowers last for over a month; actually, they last longer if you let them (like hydrangea flowers) and they sometimes seed around, though not rampantly. One teeny negative thing about hellebores is that they are very slow to mature and also that you can't be positive on flower color until they bloom, so I advise purchasing larger plants that are in bloom or you may be very old and very surprised and possibly disappointed when the flowers finally come.



Narcissus-Delnashaugh

white, yellow and white, white and orange, (etc., etc.) and those with truly luscious, fluffy, multi-petaled centers. However, in spite of the fact that their foliage is already arising out of the slushy mush of freezing winter, they will not be blooming until early April and sometimes later.

But oh, those crocus! Many do indeed bloom in March. They inspire a close look and great thankfulness for their blooming bravery along still-frozen pathways. Just when we are truly positive (or is it negative?) that nothing in our gardens will ever come back, they send up flowers from among tiny grass-

like leaves and bloom in yellow, purple, blue, white, mauve....

The blue *Scilla siberica* (Siberian squill) are also coming up under Fall detritus, spreading down the incline around the pond. They self-seed with abandon, but the rare blue of their flowers makes it hard to do the deed of deadheading (yet I usually do). Their blooms will be ready towards the end of March or early April.

Iris reticulata is another March bloomer, and its leaves are also just starting to emerge. These have such beautiful flowers, blue to purple with yellow "beards," and grow low to the ground—another jewel to plant along a frequently-traveled path.

There are other March flowers that I don't happen to grow, though some are in the "been there, killed that" category: *Erica carnea* (spring heath), *Galanthus elwesii*, *G. nivalis*, and *G. plicatus* (species of snowdrops), *Puschkinia scilloides* (striped squill; "oides," which I love to say ["oy-dees"], means "like"—so this species is "like the squill," aka *Scilla*).

Am I brilliant or what? No, I am cribbing from my garden and from a wonderful book, *Gardening with Perennials Month by Month* (2nd ed., revised and expanded) by Joseph Hudak. Hudak's timeline is based on Zone 6 Boston, MA. Although I didn't use her books here, Pam Duthie, our keynote speaker at the 2007 IPHS banquet finale, has a book on month-by-month perennials (*Continuous Bloom*) and another for trees and shrubs (*Continuous Color*). (I buy used hardcover books at www.bookfinder.com.)



Spring is coming!

Our hostas in the garage are popping up, get your tools ready!