

Prairie Hosta Herald

October 2010 Volume 8 Number 8

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 Annual Meeting and Banquet

Sunday, October 24, 2010

*I Hotel & Conference Center- Northeast Entrance -South
First St. & St. Marys Road*

University of Illinois Campus — Champaign, Illinois

11:30 - 12:30 AM – Cocktails (Cash Bar)

12:00 PM – Brunch Buffet

1:00 PM – Annual Meeting & Featured Speaker - Alma Mater Room

Dave Wanninger is a Horticulturist with Roy Klehm's Beaver Creek Nursery, a wholesale nursery in Northern Illinois. Dave will speak on "Plants in the Shade" and he will discuss new introductions to the nursery trade. If you have heard Dave before you will not want to miss his enthusiasm as he discusses his love of plants.

\$25.00 Per Person - Members may bring guests, subject to seating availability. **\$10.00 Per Person** - Annual Meeting and Speaker only seating after 1:00 PM. Contact Karen Meyer, 356-1145 if you can attend and you may pay at the event.

Officers for 2010

President - Susan Weber

1st Vice President - Programs - Richard Isaacs

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 -

Newsletter- Rick and Barb Schroeder

Philanthropic - Susan Weber

Plant Sale - Mike Weber

Publicity/Educational - Fran Smith

Leaf Show - Mary Ann Metz

Trips - Rick Schroeder

Raffle - Lisa Weber

Please volunteer and help these chairpersons.

Future Meetings

Once again we have reached the end of our 2010 meeting year with the Annual Meeting the last event. Next March, in our first issue for 2011, we will list the dates and programs for you to mark on your calendar.

One item that you can mark now is a planned two-day trip to the St. Louis area. So far Rick is working toward visiting four gardens with one of them being on Sunday before we visit the St. Louis Botanical Garden. In addition there is a nursery near some of our gardens and the area where we could stay plus it is on the way to the botanical garden. The dates will be June 11 & 12, 2011 as these dates miss the St. Louis Cardinals home games.

Election of officers for 2011

The nominating committee has recommended the following for society offices:

President - Siska Kallio

2nd Vice President - Membership - Susan Krumm

Treasurer - Jamie Isaacs

These nominations were presented at the August meeting and will also be presented and voted on at the Annual Dinner. Susan and Jamie are presently serving in the offices they are nominated for. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the Annual Meeting prior to the election.

New AHS Website

Check out the new and improved AHS web site. It can still be found at www.hosta.org.

This site is really improved and updated and takes you to the home page of each local society. There is a section being developed for members only and will require a password for access. You will find many items not previously listed on the web site and there is even a section being developed for site sponsors. Check it out and become a member.



H 'Blue Bayou' in Don Dean's garden.



Oct 16 - 10-4 - Your pet holiday photo shoot for donation to county Humane Society
Oct 23 - 10-11 - Build a bird winter shelter

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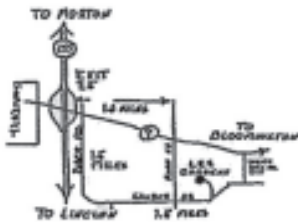


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Remarks by Susan

What a fall this has been. The days are getting shorter and hotter. We are trying to just go ahead and put the garden to bed, but some things are really thriving because of the warm weather and others are looking worse than dead because of the drought. Once I go back to teaching, I don't get out to the garden as much as I do earlier in the summer, but this year I have been awful about going out there. I do look out from the deck however and see that the pots are still so colorful because others in my family are so faithful at watering them. I promise I'll get out there just as soon as the "crisp" fall air sets in. Until then, I pretty much have to eat ice cream to stay cool.

The beds at the University of Illinois arboretum have been built and are awaiting spring planting. I have had kind offers from several people to overwinter some things, and I'm going to ask for space in the first newsletter next year to ask you for some specific plants after we have done a little more planning. We have planted one thing – a Japanese maple – because the U of I watering truck had to be watering some newly planted grass nearby and we thought we could get the tree started.

This will be my final letter to you as President of the Hosta Society. I am hoping that many of you will be at the banquet so that we can welcome in the new slate of officers; if you haven't signed up yet, please consider doing so as I know we will have a great time and a very informative speaker. For the past two years, it has been a pleasure to get know more people and work with a truly delightful Board. I have had a lot of fun and know that Siska, as IPHS's new president, will have the same good times and rewarding experiences that I have had. You are a wonderful group and I truly enjoy seeing each and every one of you every time we get together. Have a restful winter, and I hope to see you all next spring.

Future Conventions

The 2011 AHS Convention sponsored by the New England Hosta Society, June 22-25, 2011

The 2011 Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention will be in Madison, WI, July 7-9, 2011

The 2012 AHS Convention sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Hosta Society, June 13-16, 2012

The 2012 Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention will be in Rochester, MN, July 2012

Editor: I get a lot of questions about over wintering of your hostas that you have growing in pots, either decorative or nursery pots. This has been run before but I thought it was a good time to run it again for some of our newer members. This is especially useful for the members that have acquired a collection with no place to plant and now you are looking at all of those black pots sitting in the back of your yard. Never fear, they will survive if you do some of the following ideas. Many of the hostas I have in decorative pots are still in the black nursery pot and it will be removed and "planted in the ground next to the pot" or put in the holding area and surrounded with dirt and covered. If your hostas look like many of ours this time is getting close. Remember, the average frost date is October 14 and once that begins to happen many of them will go quick.

Over Wintering Hostas in Nursery Pots

It happens to all of us. At some point in our gardening life, we don't get all of our plants planted. Fall comes, big end of season sales, life happens, then winter shows up and we still have plants sitting in black nursery pots. Not only are you looking at money spent, but you really wanted those hostas. And now you need them off of the sidewalk so you don't hit them with the snow blower.

Hostas can be over wintered in those pots in a few different ways. As temperatures drop, the plant will start to go dormant. The leaves will yellow and die back. Cut off the leaves and discard; don't compost. Be sure to sterilize your tools between plants in a 10% bleach solution to avoid spreading anything contagious. Allow the plants to continue getting the same moisture as the in-ground plants. Don't let them dry out prior to storage as they will need some moisture to get them through the winter. Check the pot bottoms for slugs and their little white pearl slug eggs so they don't over winter with the hosta.

Plants in gallon pots will survive better than in smaller pots due to the increased insulation of the soil around the roots. Soils that are too heavy with clay or peat will hold too much moisture and can cause root rot.

Tip-'em - If you are over wintering the pots outside and you don't have a cold frame, one way is to dig a shallow trench before the ground freezes. After the hostas are dormant, place them in the

trench at an angle to keep water from pooling on the surface. They can also be leaned against something like a landscape timber. You will want to keep the pots from thawing and freezing, so a cover of pine branches can be used. Or, a white insulating blanket designed just for this purpose can be placed over the pots and secured. Black plastic would cause too much heat and thawing could occur.

Bury 'em - Dig a hole to bury at least 3/4 of the pot in the ground. Again, a white insulating blanket over the pots and a piece of plywood weighted down over that to keep out extra moisture and critters.

Stash 'em in an unheated building - An unheated garage, shed or barn works very well for winter hosta storage. In this environment they can be put on shelves or on the floor. Place the pots in the coldest part of the building, such as the north side, to reduce the chance of premature thawing. A little mouse bait would be a good idea if the area is not critter proof or patrolled by a cat. About mid winter, or if the pots appear very dry, you will need to add some moisture, but not too much. This can be done by placing a few ice cubes in each pot, or a snowball if available. The normal winter temperature fluctuations should cause the ice or snow to melt slowly enough to add some moisture without drowning the roots.

Spring Thaw - Now things will get interesting. You will have to be aware of the spring temperatures. If it gets too warm where the plants are being stored, they will prematurely sprout. Then you will end up with pale, gangly leaves that will be too tender for outside fluctuating temperatures. Ideally, you should move the pots back outside, or uncover if already outside, prior to their spring thaw so that they wake up slowly and naturally. You should be able to cover up the pots if it rains and then freezing temperatures occur. You don't want ice pooling in the top of the pot.

Be aware that not all hostas emerge at the same time. Just as in your garden, some will lag behind. Give the plants a chance, have a little faith, and make yourself the same solemn promise you did last year: **"This year I will get everything in the ground by Labor Day"**. Good Luck!

Mary Bardens

Planting Instructions

Published with permission by Bob Solberg, Green Hill Farms

Hostas perform best when planted with ferns and other perennials in prepared beds. They can also be tucked into the landscape on a hole-by-hole basis if an area of at least 2-3 feet wide is prepared to a depth of 9-12 inches. When planted in the woods with wild-flowers it is important to remove all surface tree roots within 2 feet of each hosta clump.

Bed Preparation: The most important ingredient in successful hosta growing is bed preparation. Good hosta soil should remain moist after a good rain yet drains well. It should have enough organic matter to provide plenty of air spaces for vigorous root growth but be firm enough to discourage voles and other rodents. It should have high fertility and a light covering of mulch to keep the soil cool in summer and retain moisture. Here is how we do it at Green Hill Farm.

First the area to be planted is completely tilled with our old Troy Built tiller to its maximum depth of 8-9 inches. We remove all the surface tree roots that the tiller finds. If the soil is poor and/or hard, we will frequently add 4-5 inches of purchased topsoil, a good sandy loam, and till it in to the existing soil. Then 3 inches (about 30% of the total bed) of organic matter is spread over the bed and tilled in with some 10-10-10 fertilizer to “feed the bark”. We usually use coarse pine bark nuggets in our beds that are locally available in bulk, but well-rotted sawdust, compost or manure will also work well. The coarser the organic material is the larger the air spaces in the soil will be and the longer they will remain in the soil.

The addition of gravel gives the bed mass, moderating soil temperatures as well as making it firmer. Also, it is a vole deterrent. If you can dig in your bed easily with your hands then the voles can too. We no longer spread gravel over the entire bed and till it in to a depth of 4-5 inches, although it has worked well for us in the past. We just add gravel where we plant our hostas and other perennials that voles might eat.

Finally, after a good rain to settle things a little, the bed is ready to plant.

Hole Preparation: Hostas do not grow deep into

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Hosta and Garden Web Sites

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

For those of you that are new, or maybe an “old timer” wanting to know what your hosta is, check out this site and the thousands of photos on file. In addition there are links to disease and pest issues, chat rooms, how to grow and select hostas and a wealth of information at a touch of your mouse.

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

A great place to get questions answered or check out the new hostas on the market. Post your photos or check out those that posted by other hosta lovers.

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

This is a must place - the actual location near Mansfield, Ohio, to visit after you check out the web site.

Growing Seeds - www.hostaseedlings.com

If you want to share your experience in seed growing or get questions answered check out this site. Another good site to check out for seeds that grow is www.hostaseedgrowers.com, they give ratings on seeds that are fertile or not and hints to growing.

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

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

Check out Bob’s catalogue as well as his information on hostas

Mickfield Hostas of England - check this site for individual photos of the leaf of the hosta you are interested in - a great site to identify a hosta. - <http://www.mickfieldhostas.co.uk/a.htm>

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the soil, usually no deeper than one shovel depth or so. Wide holes are better than deep holes, since hosta roots usually extend as far or further from the center of the plant as the foliage does. Dig a hole wide enough to accommodate all the roots of the hosta to be planted without cutting or folding them. Make a small mound in the bottom of the hole to rest the crown upon and cover it with about an inch of 3/8-inch gravel, either crushed granite or pea gravel. Take the bare rooted hosta and run its roots down the hill. Cover the roots and crown with another inch or so of gravel, making a hosta and gravel sandwich. Loosely fill the hole with soil that has been amended with some slow release fertilizer or manure (especially if planting in the spring). Do not pack the soil around the plant. Water thoroughly and mulch with a thin layer of pine bark, shredded oak bark or what ever is your local favorite. Remember to keep the mulch off the hosta petioles in order to discourage fungal diseases. Also, deep mulches encourage voles.

When to plant: Hostas can be successfully planted any time that the ground can be worked. The best times to plant hostas are when they are actively making new roots, in the spring after the first flush of leaves has hardened off and in late summer once the hottest weather is past. Here in North Carolina that is usually early May and late August. Most plants that we ship to retail customers are sent during those optimum times. Planting at these times allows the plants enough time to establish a good root system before the droughts of summer in the first case and before they go dormant for the winter in the latter.

Containerized hostas can be planted with a minimum of shock throughout the spring, summer and into fall. They should be completely bare rooted before planting and their roots untangled. If your hostas arrive bare root they will probably appreciate being soaked in a bucket of water for several hours to rehydrate them before planting. Pinching a leaf or two will also reduce desiccation shock and usually stimulate another flush of leaves. Hostas usually acclimate completely to their new homes in 1-2 weeks and should be kept moist during that period. A top dressing of fertilizer will also encourage rapid new growth.

Finally, for hostas to achieve their maximum

potential, the soil must be able to readily take up the water and nutrients that they need. Good bed preparation in the beginning makes all the difference. This however is not the end of the process. Over time tree roots will reinvade your beds robbing your hostas of water and heavy rains will compact the soil making it hard for any water to penetrate deep into the bed. Alas, then the beds will need reworking. Remember, a garden is never completed; it is always a work in process.

Bob's tips on planting are from the March 2010 issue of "The Green Hill Gossip". The "Gossip" is available from Bob for \$4.00 per year and if you don't get the newsletter you should. Contact Bob via email at greenhill@mindspring.com or 919-309-0649. The "Gossip" is also the catalogue for hostas he has available. Or, check out his website at www.HostaHosta.com.

Membership Renewal Time

Once again we have reached that time of year to renew our membership. The 2011 membership renewal form has been sent via Email or snail mail to you. Please complete and send back to Susan Krumm as soon as possible. You may bring the form and your check to the Annual Meeting if you wish.

Please complete, be sure to include your email address as we need to verify any update you may have. Remember, newsletters are sent as PDF files via Email so you get the full color of each issue. You may mail your renewal to:

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