

Hosta la Vista

Nov. '14

Until we meet again



President's Message

It is often said that to grow hostas all you need to do is dig a hole, throw one in and stand back. One of the appeals of our favorite plant is that you can lay on the sofa all winter and in spring stagger across to the window and there before you is the new hosta garden ready to delight you for another season.



Sadly it is not *really* quite that easy. There are a few tricks of the trade, old wives tales and folklore to which we should pay attention to get the best results through the growing season.

If you are troubled by slugs be sure to sprinkle a few slug pellets as soon as the snow has gone. Yes, even before the hostas begin to emerge.

If deer repellents are used, we are told to change the product once or twice during the season as deer become used to the smell and taste.

We are told that lots of rainfall or heavy watering in the spring will pump up our hosta leaves and produce a good-sized plant. The down side to this is that if we then fail to continue heavy watering throughout the summer, the plant's leaves will begin to shrivel and droop. Think of a balloon slowly deflating. Leaves pumped up with water that are not kept 'full' begin to look sad. It might be best therefore not to over water in spring and create problems later in the season. I worry that Mother Nature does not know this!

Who would have thought that trampling on newly sprouting hosta shoots might actually benefit, rather than harm, emerging plants?

Hostas are not supposed to be 'heavy feeders' but that does not mean we should starve them. Hostas given regular fertilizer definitely grow more vigorously than those left to feed on water-soluble soil content.

Should we cut or leave the flowering spikes on our hostas? Does removing the flowers divert energy to the rest of the plant? Many folks cut them back as soon as they appear, others leave the flowers but cut the petioles before the seed pods begin to form whilst most of us leave them be. Various experts give differing opinions on what is best for the plant so in the end it really boils down to what is best for your garden. If you like the flowers, leave them. If you feel that the flowers detract from the foliage, by all means remove them you will not harm the plant.

We are told to wait for the leaves of hostas to rot down in the fall and simply pull them away from the crown rather than cut them off with scissors or pruners as soon as the season has finished. Cutting then

creates an open wound that might encourage fungus or bacteria to enter the crown. Some hosta folk leave the flower spikes on the plant through winter. They do not rot away as easily as the leaves and therefore require cutting or breaking. Provided the snow is not too deep, leaving the stalks on the plant through the winter reminds the gardener where the plant is and indicates the position of the newly emerging shoots in the spring.

Recently we were told that if you are going to store hostas in pots over winter, it is better to leave it as late as possible before moving them to the storage location. The thinking behind this is that if you leave the pot in the open until it has begun to freeze before stacking it or covering it you are less likely to attract mice or other vermin to the area. Hopefully by the time it has become that cold, the vermin have already found homes for the winter somewhere else and will not nest between your pots where they can spend the winter devouring the crowns.

Finally (for now) *hostas are allowed to touch*. Although when a hosta garden is newly planted sufficient space needs to be left between them to allow for growth, it is not necessary to have them very wide apart. They can be easily moved as they grow and, in fact, we are told that they respond well to being transplanted. If planted too widely apart it can be many seasons before they need to be moved and it is not easy to dig out a very well-established large plant. Better perhaps to dig and move them several times as they mature before finding their final home.

One of the joys of being a member of a Hosta Society is that there are usually members who very willing to share information and answer your questions. In this issue of our newsletter you will find more 'how to' tips about growing hostas. Winter is coming. Relax.

Mike Shadrack

President WNYHS

Editor's note: You might want to put this issue in a safe place... lots of good information on tricks and tips for growing hostas worth keeping!

Make sure you check in at our Website for the latest news

www.wnyhosta.com



PRELIMINARY

2015 Calendar

We've spent some time looking at the calendar already... the meeting dates have not yet been set, but we thought you'd like a peek at what is already in place....

Saturday January 3rd	Hosta breakfast—10 am Gardenview, W. Seneca
Saturday February 7th	Hosta Breakfast -10 am Garden View, W. Seneca
Sunday February 15th	Members' Meeting, East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, March 7th	Hosta Breakfast—10 am Garden View, W. Seneca
Saturday March 21st	Hosta College, Piqua, Ohio
Saturday, April 4th	Final Hosta Breakfast—10 am Garden View, W. Seneca
Sunday April 19th	Members' Meeting, and Naylor Creek hosta pick-up East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, May 16th	Hoop House Launch Party Lasting Dreams
June 15th – 20th	AHS National Convention Raleigh, NC
June 28th	Garden Art Sale & Plant Society Avenue
July 10th-12th	Hosta Tailgating - HERE!
August 9th	Members' Picnic Eagle Bay Hosta Garden
Saturday August 22nd	Public Hosta Sale - Botanical Gardens
Saturday September 19th	Fall Hosta Forum Edinboro, PA
Sunday November 8 th	Members' Meeting, East Aurora Senior Center

Mark your calendars

~ note: if we DON'T have you on our e-mail "**Hosta Flash**" list, please send your address to "irisborer@aol.com". Things tend to shift... and new opportunities arise, and this is the best way to be able to notify our membership quickly!

BUT WAIT.... THERE'S MORE!!

We can't fit everything in the calendar

- Hosta Teas (to complement Hosta breakfasts) - TBA
- Hoop House Launch Party - new this year
- Hosta Tailgate hosted by WNY - all hands on deck!

ELECTIONS

Our November meeting is also the time of year when we elect our new Board. Three of our hardworking Board members are up for re-election this year. **Carol Abendschien** has decided to stand down. We shall miss not only her valuable contributions but also her good sense and wise counsel. We have had one nomination to fill that position; **Dave Whittemore**, a familiar face at our meetings and activities.

DAVE WHITTEMORE



Dave and his wife Barb are the owners of Whit's End Gardens in the Village of Hamburg. We have been members of the WNY Hosta Society for over four years and members of the Hamburg Garden Walk Committee for over seven years. Our gardens have been open for the Hamburg Garden Walk, National Garden Walk as well as the WNY Hosta Society open gardens. Dave is a retired Field Service Engineer with 3M and currently works part-time as free-lance Graphic Designer. Our gardening interests include a large collection of Hosta and Astilbe as well as many other perennials. The garden includes many miniature conifers which complement an operating train layout, waterfalls and numerous other miniatures.

This past year saw significant increase in the number of daylilies in our garden. The gardens give us a great opportunity to combine our hobbies which allows us to work and play together. We will be married forty years (in December) and have three children and 5 grand children.

Dave is also a member of the Board of Directors for JP's Foundations which sponsors a 5K race called "Run the 'Burg for Autism" every June and serves on the Historic Preservation Commission for the Village of Hamburg.

The slate we will present for your vote at the meeting will be:

Officers

President: Mike Shadrack
Vice President: Ran Lydell
Treasurer: Dolores Galbo
Secretary: Marcia Sully

Board Positions

Jackie Adams
Dianne Giordano
Mike Sheehan
Dave Whittemore

Thank you everyone for your nominations and consideration!

The next meeting
of the WNY Hosta Society is the

FALL MEMBERS' MEETING

Sunday, November 9th

Doors open 1:30

Meeting 2:00-4:00

East Aurora Senior Center

(Route 400 to Maple exit – right. Maple to the end left onto Main, then second right – S. Grove – past the Roycroft to the stop sign, then left on Oakwood. The Senior Center is on the right next to the Fire hall. - Park behind - not on the plaza.)

THE MAIN EVENT

Hostas in the English Garden

By our own Mike Shadrack

Plus the 'B' Movie

The Missouri Botanical Garden

Jackie Adams

MEETING

Welcome

Annual Meeting & Elections

2015 Calendar of events

Open Garden Book Prize Draw

Refreshments

Fun and Laughter

← Parking at the East Aurora Senior Center →

Parking is at a premium at the Center and there have been problems (mostly during the week). Please take note when attending our meeting.

Park in the lot along the fence to the back corner only.

Street parking on both sides of King St is allowed - **after** you pass the entrance.

Other street parking in the area is permitted.

- ◆ Do not park along the side or in front of the fire hall
- ◆ Do not park in the Oakwood Plaza



Hospitality

We need **YOU** to help with
hospitality for this meeting.

Please contact

Dolores @ 693 0376

If you can bring something



Our speaker this month will be our own, Mike Shadrack. Mike is a speaker in demand throughout hostadom. He has been growing hostas since 1986 and has been a member of the American Hosta Society since 1992. Mike is the co-author of several books on hostas, including The Color

Encyclopedia of Hostas, the New Encyclopedia of Hostas, the Pocket Guide to Hostas and the Book of Little Hostas.

The Talk "Hostas in an English Garden" is really an excuse to explore some famous and not so famous gardens in England while looking for the illusive hosta. Fear not, we eventually find a few but along the way some interesting facts about gardening in the English climate are revealed by a seasoned, some would say aged, traveler.

OPPORKNOCKITY TUNES

By popular demand (at least among hostaphiles) we are repeating an offer we have offered for the last four years,putting together a **group order** for Naylor Creek (www.naylorcreek.com) hostas (and epimediums, arisaemas too). Here's how it works... Naylor Creek offers an **EARLY BIRD SPECIAL** for orders placed by 12/14 and totaling \$200 - a 10% discount and free shipping. We are extending that offer to our membership so that by joining our group order, by even ordering *one tiny hosta*, you will reap the benefit of the 10% and free shipping.

SO.... Here are the rules - please put together your order and bring it to the meeting - or otherwise get it to us **NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1ST**. We will place one order (and bill you when we get confirmation). **Please note - as soon as we place the order they charge our credit card. Please, please please pay promptly!**

We will ask Naylor Creek for delivery in time for our April meeting. We're sure to exceed the \$200 minimum so get your orders in! What a deal! (If you didn't get a Naylor Creek catalog and don't have a computer, we will have a **few copies** at the meeting. Otherwise <http://naylorcreek.com/>

HOSTA BREAKFASTS

For more than 3 years now the WNYHS has held **Hosta Breakfasts** on the first Saturday of each month throughout the winter. They have proven to be a wonderful way of meeting our hosta friends during the non-growing season.

Our location is fairly central, the place is hospitable (even to a group as loud and as strange as us), the food is cheap and the people amazing.

It is the people and the friendship that make our breakfast meetings so good, but another thing that helps is that attendees are asked to bring to the table something that they can pass around and talk about. I don't mean a bottle of sweet and sour sauce - I mean something horticultural. It can be a plant, a seedling, a catalogue, a magazine, a book, a favorite garden tool, a new deer repellent, even an enormous bunch of flowers plucked from the garden that very winter morning (as Ran did one early winter's day).



We usually have between 16 and 20 folks and the biggest turn out so far has been 34.

There is only one rule. If you intend joining us you must let me know, either by phone on 716 941 6167 or by email at H8staman@aol.com before 5pm on the previous Friday as I have to book the places with the restaurant.

So.....the dates are: December 6th. For 2015 - January 3rd, February 7th, March 7th, April 4th.

The Garden View Restaurant

1744 Union Road,
West Seneca, NY 14224

We will be in the noisy corner.

A **Hosta Flash** will be sent to all those members on our email list as a reminder a few days before each breakfast. So, no excuses. See you there.

In FACT, these have been so successful, last year we replaced the breakfasts with a monthly HOSTA TEA in a members' garden during the summer months. We are still working on finding gardens for 2015 (let us know if you're willing).

Thank you!

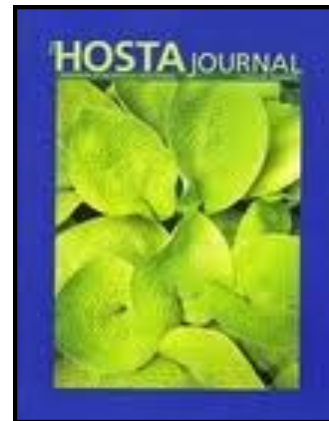


2015 HOSTA FINDER

We will be taking orders for the 2015 Hosta Finder at the November Meeting. This is a "source book" for locating the hosta of your dreams... along with average price you can expect to pay. We should have them in time for the February meeting. Cost will be \$14.50 each if we have orders for at least 10.

Why Not Join The American Hosta Society

Now is a very good time to join the American Hosta Society if you have not already done so.



Membership costs \$30.00 and **membership application forms will be available at the meeting.**

The membership year runs from January 1st until December 31st. In return for your \$30.00 you will get: *two copies of The Hosta Journal, access to the members' only portion of their website www.hosta.org, that includes a new online journal every year and, if that were not enough, a \$15.00 voucher that you may spend at any of the participating nurseries, which includes our very own Eagle Bay Gardens.*

PLUS - a brand new members only hosta will be available for sale beginning in 2015. The first hosta is STERLING MEDALLION and it is DROP DEAD GAWJUS... silver blue. Limited quantity available.



H. 'Sterling Medallion'

Those wishing to join at the meeting - Mike or Kathy will be happy to take your application - will be given a free copy of an historic Hosta Journal just to whet their appetites.

HOSTA COLLEGE

The Great Lakes Region Hosta College next year will be held at the usual venue in Piqua, Ohio on Friday and Saturday, March 20th and 21st.

For those not familiar with the Hosta College Format, it usually consists of a Friday Night lecture and auction and then all day on Saturday a huuuuge variety of classes on all kinds of topics allow attendees to choose subjects that interest them from the list available. There is an optional banquet on Saturday evening.

For more information, please talk to Marcia Sully, Kevin Plumley or Dolores Galbo - or visit the Hosta college website at: <http://ihostohio.org/portal/glhc/>

Open Garden Book

The November Members' Meeting is the traditional time to produce your Open Garden Books and to enter the draw to win a prize. Throughout the summer members have been visiting other member's gardens and many will have been clever enough to get their Open Garden Book signed by the garden owner. For each signature members will get a free draw ticket. And what do draw tickets mean? Draw tickets mean prizes. (Editor's note – Please appreciate the use of member's, members' and members in the above paragraph.)



NOT TONIGHT, DEER

Mike Sheehan's Deer Repellant

To 1 Gallon of water
add:

2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
2 Tbsp. liquid dish soap
2 cups of hot sauce
(Frank's or any)
2 beaten eggs mixed
with 2 cups of milk (strain through a sieve)
1Tbsp. garlic powder



Mix well and spray on plants you wish to protect. Spray when no rain is expected for a day or so. This will last about 3 weeks without a heavy downpour rain. It will smell for a few hours and will not color or harm the plants.

Important: Thoroughly rinse sprayer with water after. This will keep it from clogging up with the egg.

I mix 4 gal. at a time, but must be used immediately.

Also we spread the fertilizer 'Milorganite' and use 10% Lavender scented **Fabuloso** liquid soap in water, sprayed on the plants in between the other treatments with a 95% success rate. Pretty damn good, considering we have deer all around us regularly.



VOLE PATROL

If you've ever put a lovely large hosta to bed in the winter and then in the spring found a half-tunnel and a label where it used to live, you have known the heartbreak that are voles. I have lost hostas, expensive lilies and rare irises to these rodents. But I have escaped their appetites for the past 2 years using the following 2-step program. STEP ONE.... I water each potted hosta and each crown before putting it to bed for the winter with the following solution: 1tsp castor oil, 1tsp Dollar Store dish soap to a gallon of water. I mix in a watering can (2 gallons at a time) and water each plant until I feel they have been soaked. This is supposed to be deterrent enough. But just in case.....

I go to the Dollar Store (Dollar Tree in my case) and buy wire baskets in two sizes, fruit baskets and trash baskets. Using landscape pins (I order 500 at a time from AW Leonard), I pin these securely over the crowns of the most precious plants. Since voles travel along the surface of the soil, this seems to deter them.

Maybe it's coincidence... maybe I've just been lucky since I've started using my 2-step program - but I'm not going to test my luck!!



A BUDDING ADVENTURE

By Ran Lydell

The recent loss of yet *another* Tissue Culture hosta producer, raises the question “where will a supply of new hostas come from”? It may be important, as a result, to understand some of the multiplication methods that predate TC.

Here is a brief history and “how to”.

In the 1960's , the founder of the American Hosta Society, Alex Summers, started exploring the best methods of multiplying hostas rapidly. At the base of almost every leaf petiole (in the fall) is a developing bud. On a fair-sized section, there can be from 4 to 12 of these buds. Peeling away the leaves to the base will expose these. By cutting each bud out very carefully, making sure to have a few roots attached, he could obtain several potential new plants. The buds could be set out and after a couple of years, dug and sold. This method is usually called “**the Summers method**”.

During this time, a grower in Ohio, Henry Ross, discovered that he could simply insert a sharp knife all the way through the base of a hosta, pulling the knife down completely through the root and still leaving the upper part attached. On larger plants this could be done in several directions. Unlike the Summers method, with “**Rossizing**”, the entire plant was replanted, and then divided and set out separately in the spring. This method is still used by some growers today.

The next stage in the development of this system came from Another Ohio grower, Bill Zumbar. Bill advocated only making a shallow cut between each bud, leaving the xylem & phloem (in the center) attached.

This method known as “**Zumberizing**”, has the advantage of leaving the interconnected center buds still feeding together from the whole root system. Bill also added another

system to this process. That of dipping the knife in fungicide (before each cut) to provide a deterrent to fungus attacks on the fresh cut.

The last method I will discuss is my own. I call it “**bud isolation**” This method, takes the best from the other methods and adds some important changes. Using “bud isolation”, a shallow cut (about 1/8 inch deep) is made into the surface tissue. This starts at a point above and around the top of the bud. The cut is made from that point, down each side of the bud and through the root base. The knife needs to be clean and sharp, and treated with a fungicide just before each cut.. The best time is generally September in the north. The plant is then planted out . In spring several new plants (usually good sized) will start to emerge. They can be re-dug and divided in April/May.

This method is superior because the bud is marginally disconnected, but the “food” necessary to produce large buds is available. This system produced larger new plants and more of them, but to understand why, I went to my friend Jim Hawes. Jim explained that the shallow cut, “isolated” the bud causing it to react as though it were the last one! Chemicals in the awakening plant cause it to develop a larger size. More buds grow and each tends to be larger.

“Bud isolation” can also be a hybridizer’s tool. By taking and growing buds from successive plants with leaf color patterns that you want to isolate, you can (after several successive repeats) eventually “get” the new form you are after.

Try this on a “disposable” plant you can fool with and see how well it works. You may not replace a TC lab, but you *can* produce nice plants.

Editor's note: if you came to this year's picnic, you saw demonstrations of all of these propagation techniques (plus the English method of stomping your hosta crown in stiletto heels). As we loose more and more labs and rare hostas become harder to obtain, these methods become more important in order to keep supply lines filled. We asked Ran, an old hand at “loaves and fishes” to share his expertise.

Hoophouse

The Society's Hoop House has been moved from Pam Hoffman's Mystic Meadows Daylily Farm in South Wales to Carol and Anthony Haj's Lasting Dreams Daylily Farm in Orchard Park. The Hoop House has happily nestled at Pam's for many years but she intends relocating soon, so it had to go.

It has not been an easy move.

We moved all the hosta out of South Wales for our sale and then those not sold went to the new location direct from the Botanical Gardens. I visited the hoop house several times to try and work out how to dismantle it so that it could easily be rebuilt. I don't think our English houseguest, Roger, who many of you met at the lunch, expected to have to earn his keep in such a way, but both of us went there twice in the rain and unbolted, unscrewed and undid as much as we could.



One Saturday, in the rain, we were helped by member **Bob Weigel** who, with greater skill and better tools, managed to dismantle what was left. Roger and I then hired, on another wet day, an enormous truck from U-Haul and managed to move much of it to Lasting Dreams. Sadly Roger had to return to England and I was bereft. Luckily a Hosta Flash summoned some *real* help and the crew of **Randy Vogel, Peter Ehlinger, Nancy Klass, Marcia and Dave Sully, Tom Koscielniak and Carol and Anthony Haj** spent another wet Saturday putting the thing back together.

Without Randy Vogel's professional skills, expertise and equipment we would never have achieved. We really just fetched and carried for Randy while he worked his butt off making sure everything was perfect and secure. Never has the hoop house been so solid. A hurricane in Orchard Park would fail to move it. Randy deserves our humble thanks and much more than his three Hosta Bucks.

Jackie Adams and I have twice returned to Pam's and cleared everything from the site. *Thank you Pam for a many years of happy occupation under the watchful eye of the three curious donkeys.*

Sadly it is now too late in the season to put the covers on the hoops so we will do that in the spring. Look out for the opening party announcement.



The Western New York Hosta Society will be hosting the fourth edition of the Great Lakes Region Hosta Society event called **Tailgate**. The purpose of the event is to bring our GLR society members together to enjoy local gardens, area attractions and, of course, friendship. Previous Tailgates have had well over 100 visitors, bringing members from other societies within the Great Lakes Region including Black Swamp HS, Daffodil & Hosta Society of W. PA., Greater Cincinnati Daylily HS, Hostas of Kentuckiana, Indianapolis HS, Miami Valley HS, Michigan Hosta Society, Midland HS,

North Coast HS of Ohio, and the Northwest Indiana HS.

This event will take place on July 10-12, 2015, beginning with a gathering at the Erie County Fairgrounds (we have the picnic grounds reserved) You may bring a lawn chair or sit at our picnic tables at the shelter, which will open at 3:00. Our suggestion is to pick up takeout, or bring your own food to grill on site before 6:45 that afternoon. Grills will be provided. Meet new friends or visit with old acquaintances at the shelter.

At 6:45 we will register for the 7:00 GLR auction. The only requirement to participate in the auction is to bring a plant or garden item to donate to the event. Our auctioneers will be Ran Lydell and Mike Shadrack, so you know this will be entertaining!!

Friday, from 10 AM to 5:30, several nearby gardens will be open for touring. On Saturday and Sunday, even more area gardens will be open to everyone! In fact, on both days, the Village of Hamburg will have open gardens, as well as vendors in the village park. Many of our WNY members will open their gardens, both in the Southtowns, as well as the Northtowns. As plans develop, our website, www.wnyhosta.com will have up-to-date information and maps for the weekend. Check in often for updates or come to our club meetings for specific details. Please indicate if you would like to have your garden open for this Tailgate 2015 event when you are called this winter about participating in our Open Garden Directory listings. This event will replace the July Hosta Tea.

Come join us for fun, friendship, and great gardens, showing our Great Lakes Region visitors our Western New York hospitality.

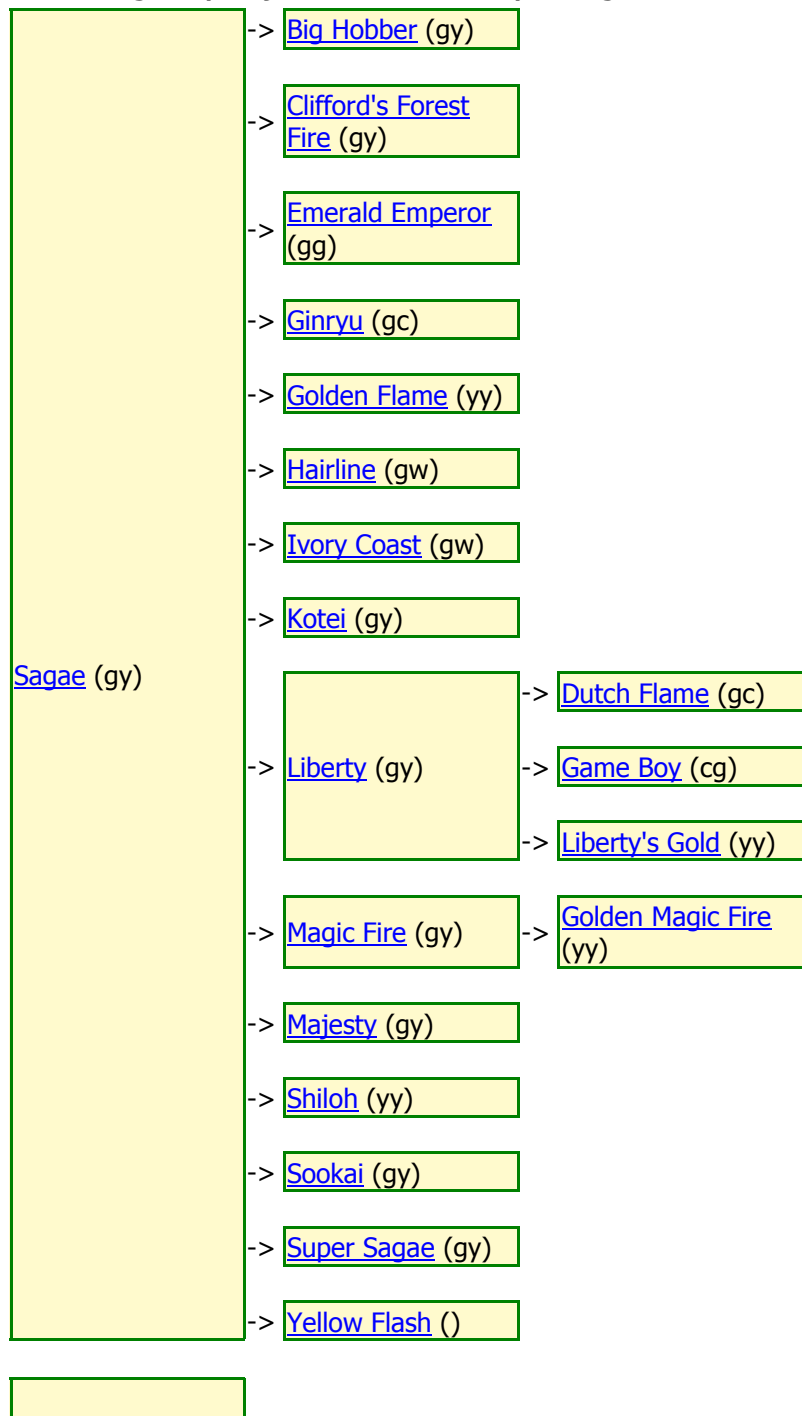
Hosta sports.

Hostas are well known as plants that have a propensity to sport – to change their leaf color, sometimes their shape and sometimes their size. It is how a large proportion of new hostas are found, saved and propagated.

Our Belgian friend Hugo Philips maintains a wonderful web site www.myhostas.be part of which lists all the hosta sports currently known and their origins.

Here is an example, the sports of that wonderful large hosta, H. 'Sagae'

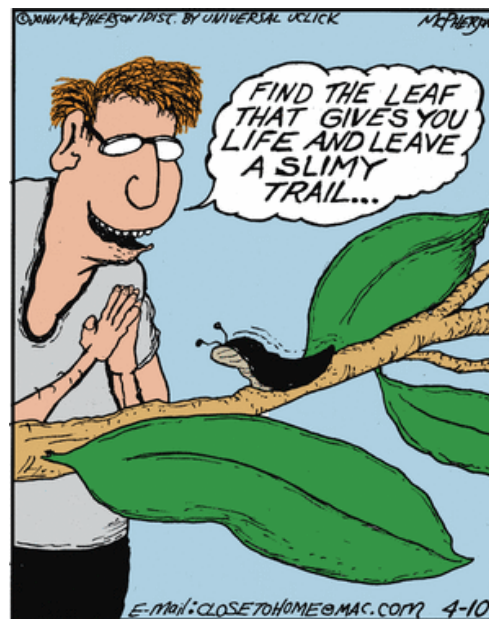
Hosta 'Sagae' (Kenji Watanabe 1996) - Origin: fluctuans sport



Editor's notes: the initials next to the names are colors (if you didn't figure that out for yourself)

We plan to make this "sport spot" a regular feature in the newsletter.

Maybe you'll want to collect a full sport "dynasty". Hugo's site is pretty fabulous if you have the time....



Reginald Thorwald: the Slug Whisperer.

An interview with a slug



"Hi Slug. How's tricks?"

"Not good. It is no fun being the bottom of the food chain and no one likes us."

"Well, you don't make friends easily. You eat our hostas."

"It's your fault, everything is too clean. We would much rather harvest nice soft algae. We don't mind if it is on the outside of a pot, a stone, a pathway or even the plastic floor covering. But you gardeners clean up so well that all we have left to eat are leaves."

"Yes Slug that is the problem".

"We should not all be tarred with the same brush. Some of us slugs are beneficial. That story about Banana Slugs on the West Coast eating chickens is malicious gossip and simply untrue"

"But Slug, you have to admit that you do eat Hosta leaves".

"Snails are far worse. I don't like snails. They are so superior just because they have houses. I was mugged by a couple of snails once. I tried to report it but I couldn't remember what had happened. It all happened so fast".

"Well those of us who garden need to do our best to keep the plants looking good".

"It used to be easy for us. All those nice thin Fortune leaves. Lovely grub and an easy chew. Then along comes that clever Mr Smith and breeds all those thick-leaved tardiana's Have you any idea how hard it is the file through one of those leaves? You hostaphiles are all too mean. You wont share with the likes of us. A few slug holes in a leaf wont kill the plant you know".

"But they might kill a very small hosta. A few holes can be a big percentage of a little leaf".

"Is that my fault? Grow bigger plants".

The Slug continues sadly "As winter approaches we do our best to find a nice little sheltered spot where we might just survive the winter cold. We aren't doing any harm. We don't even eat when it's cold. But you come along and flick us off without a thought. It is impossible for us to survive winter out in the open. Sometimes when the snow has gone we find candy on the floor. There are already too few treats for the likes of us gastropods. It smells so good but if we eat just a tiny bit we quickly get ill, shrivel up and die. I am sure that is against the Geneva Convention"

"But not all of you, some of you are still sleeping".

"Yes and I was taught by Fathermother to leave that stuff well alone but these kids today just wont listen. They go to the big lettuce in the sky without even getting the chance to breed".

"And there's a thought. It can't be so bad for you guys. You're hermaphrodites. That has to be loads of fun".

"No its not. It is just an excuse for the bully-boys of the undergrowth to shout after us "Go screw yourself"

HOOKE★R FORMULA

The 'Hooker Formula' was developed many years ago by George W. Hooker, a retired chemist living in New Brighton, Pennsylvania. The original formula called for measurements in coffee cans and orange juice cans. All the ingredients plus some water were mixed together to make the stock. Then the stock was further diluted and slowly poured around the roots of the plant. Mr Hooker, who was active in both the American Hemerocallis Society and the American Rose Society passed away in 1978*.

Notice: this formula was based on Mr. Hooker's individual soil needs. You should have your soil analyzed and if needed, adjust the ingredients to match your own soil's particular needs. Here's an updated version which is loosely based on the Hooker formula. I mix this in a 5-gal bucket and use it throughout the garden - on daylilies, hostas and whatever...

- 5 Tbsp Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (24-8-16)
- 1/3 cup Epsom salts
- 1 Tbsp Iron Chelate
- 1/3 cup fish emulsion
- 5 gallons of water
- 2 tsp systemic insecticide (original called for Cygon... Bayer product might be a good substitute)

Put the ingredients into the 5 gallon bucket, then add the water using a garden hose making sure the ingredients are well mixed and dissolved. Apply 2-4 cups to each clump, more or less, depending on the size of the clump.

Western New York Hosta Society

Mike Shadrack, President
8399 Zimmerman Road
Hamburg, NY 14075-7143

h8staman@aol.com

We're on the web
Www. Wnyhosta.com

Next meeting: Anniversary Meeting!

11/9/14– East Aurora Senior Center

Our own Mike Shadrack!!

Elections

The English Method

As has been mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the recent loss of one of the industry's major producers of new, tissue cultured varieties of hostas is likely to see a change in the availability of new hostas and how they are introduced to the market.

Before tissue culture became so widely used to produce hosta we used to grow them, divide them, line them out, grow them some more and split them again before there were sufficient to sell. A much slower process. There evolved some quite bizarre ways of speeding up that process and getting hostas to market faster. One of those methods is forever known as 'The English Method'.

Hostas, in common with many plants, have an axillary bud in the axle at the base of the leaf. This is nature's way of having a back-up in case something goes wrong with the original leaf or shoot. A good example is the Oak tree in England. When the leaves first emerge in spring millions of tiny caterpillars feast on them and pretty much defoliate the tree. These caterpillars in turn become the food source for the thousands of young birds hatching at the same time. The secondary or axillary buds then sprout and the tree is re-leafed for the season ahead.

Normally these axillary buds are prevented by hormones from sprouting but if disaster strikes they can be stimulated into growth. The English Method provides such a disaster and stimulates those secondary buds to grow thus speeding up the growth pattern of the whole plant.

The English Method suggests that you can trample on the newly emerging hosta shoots. Smash them up a bit. This will trigger the plant to activate those axillary buds and, whilst the plant will be less attractive, there is likely to be an explosion of growth. During the next growing season it should be possible to divide the plant into more, smaller plants to line out and grow on. More than if the plant had been left undisturbed.

Now, I am not suggesting that you do this at home in you favorite flowerbed but a little experiment somewhere might prove interesting.

