



# *Shady Business*

*Newsletter of The Potomac Hosta Club, Inc.*

*Volume 30, Number 4, December 2016*

*[www.potomachostaclub.com](http://www.potomachostaclub.com)*

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([tandjhilt@verizon.net](mailto:tandjhilt@verizon.net))

## **President's Letter**

I want to thank the members and board members for your ideas and efforts to help keep the Potomac Hosta Club growing forward. We always need volunteers and ideas – so make this year the year that spend a little time helping your club get even better and grow in membership in 2017!

The club now owns a commercial grade canopy that protected our hostas at the two plant sales we participated in, the Vienna Garden Faire and Green Springs Park Plants sale. The volunteers enjoyed the shade as well.

Don't forget that this year the American Hosta Society Convention **early** registration ends on January 15, 2017. By registering early you receive a free convention t-shirt PLUS a free Giantland Hosta, made possible by Land of the Giants Hosta Farm and The First Look Organization.

I hope you will consider gifting a membership to the Potomac Hosta Club as holiday gifts. A membership is a great value for your gardening friends. We have a special card for those memberships that are gifts.

*Susan*

**'Hosta Gardeners have it made in the shade.'**

## Welcome Aboard!

The Potomac Hosta Club would like to welcome the following new member:

- Martin Gedra, Bethesda, MD

### Combatting Foliar Nematodes: Suggested Protocol Using NEMAKILL®

By Warren I. Pollock, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

(Reprinted courtesy of Mr. Pollock and the Delaware Valley Hosta Society from their Fall 2016 newsletter.)

The American Hosta Society Foliar Nematode Research Project is now completed. Two articles on the studies and findings were published this year in *The Hosta Journal (THJ)*. Cindy Deutekom and Rob Mortko, the current and previous AHS Vice President Genus Hosta, respectively, who have been directly associated with the studies, authored a progress report in the Spring 2016 issue (47[1]:10-11). And Prof. P.S. Grewal and Dr. R. An, the principal researchers at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville (now at Univ. of Texas Rio Grande Valley), authored a final project report in the Fall 2016 issue (47[2]).

For most gardeners, probably the most important findings of the studies are the following:

- Foliar nematodes (*Aphelenchoides fragariae*), microscopic worm-like animal, overwinter as juveniles and adults in the soil, dry leaves and on dormant buds (crowns) of a hosta. They do not overwinter in the crown or roots, nor do they overwinter as eggs.

As the soil warms in spring, under humid/wet conditions, overwintering nematodes move upward in thin films of water on the outer surfaces of petioles and leaves, eventually invading leaves. Once inside leaves, they feed on tissue, resulting in first yellow, then brown and finally black lesions (scars) between veins. They can exit the leaf at ruptured scar tissue and spread to other plants nearby by rain/overhead watering.



- Treatment of dormant hosta buds while the plant is in the ground with either boiling water or NEMAKILL® solution in the spring can significantly reduce foliar nematode infection in the leaves in the subsequent and fall seasons.

Hot water has been a recommended treatment for many years. Several *THJ* articles in the past discussed submerging an entire infected hosta clump-roots, crown and leaves-in 120°F water for 15-20 minutes. Unless done exactly and with extreme care, the live plant can be badly damaged, even killed.

### NEMAKILL

NEMAKILL is an organic liquid containing 32% cinnamon oil, 8% clove oil, 15% thyme oil and 45% inert ingredients such as fatty acid salts, i.e., horticultural soaps, and water. It is manufactured by ExcelAg, Miami, Florida ([www.excelag.com](http://www.excelag.com)). The distributor for the smallest size container, 1-quart, is The CISCO Companies in Indianapolis.

[www.ciscoseeds.com/grow7](http://www.ciscoseeds.com/grow7); 1-800-888-2986  
X310: Kathie Lawrence

(Editor's Note - Price per quart as of September 1, 2016 is \$97.24. At present, it cannot be ordered directly from the web site. Call Ms. Lawrence to place an order.)

NEMAKILL is a contact nematocide. It is not a systemic nematocide. That is, NEMAKILL is not absorbed by the plant and therefore does not kill nematodes inside the leaves. So, if you apply NEMAKILL to hosta leaves already containing foliar nematodes, these nematodes will not be killed because the nematocide is not in contact with them. Effective treatment with NEMAKILL occurs when the hosta is dormant and nematodes on the dormant buds are exposed to the nematocide.

For treatment of hostas, a dilute solution of NEMAKILL is applied. Instructions on the container are: 1 tablespoon (0.5 fluid ounce) per 1 gallon water. However, this makes a solution less than 5% (v/v) – which is the concentration Grewal and An used in their studies. To make a 5% solution, mix 19-20 milliliter (*Editor's Note - Approximately 2/3 fluid ounce*) NEMAKILL per 1 gallon water.

The 2016 *THJ* articles do not describe a comprehensive protocol for applying NEMAKILL. Based on discussions with DVHS president Dave Teager, a member of the project's scientific committee, and DVHS member Eve Thyrum, who is test treating a severely infected hosta, the following is suggested. (Note the procedure requires repeated applications during the year and treatment for several consecutive years.)

## APPLICATION PROTOCOL

**1. LATE SUMMER.** If foliage has unsightly nematode scaring, remove and carefully dispose of all infected leaves as well as surrounding mulch.

**Do not** use for compost; discard as trash. Thoroughly clean hands and tools with hot water and soap.

Then DRENCH CROWN and SOIL around it with NEMAKILL solution.

**2. FALL.** Thoroughly clear the ground of all dried-up foliage, plant debris and any mulch. Do not use for compost; discard as trash. Keep the ground clean throughout winter and early spring.

After clean-up, DRENCH DORMANT CROWN and SOIL around it with NEMAKILL solution.

**3. NEXT YEAR.** Depending on the weather, in late WINTER or very early SPRING, before buds emerge from the crown, DRENCH DORMANT CROWN and SOIL around it with NEMAKILL solution. Also, thoroughly soak any pips.

**4. TWO WEEKS LATER.** Depending on the weather, DRENCH CROWN and SOIL again with NEMAKILL solution. Also, thoroughly soak pips and any petioles and leaves.

**5. TWO WEEKS AFTERWARD.** DRENCH CROWN and SOIL again with NEMAKILL solution. Also, thoroughly dose pips, petioles and leaves.

**6. LATE SUMMER and FALL.** Repeat steps 1 and 2.

**7. NEXT YEAR.** Starting in late WINTER or very early SPRING: Repeat steps.

**8. FOLLOWING YEAR.** Repeat steps.

## HANDLING NEMAKILL

The manufacturer's instructions recommend applying NEMAKILL early in the morning or in late afternoon. The dormant crown and surrounding soil must be thoroughly soaked with NEMAKILL solution. This means saturating the ground to perhaps one-inch depth. This may require 1/3 gallon or more of NEMAKILL solution for each hosta.

If the plant is in a container, pour NEMAKILL solution on soil until it runs out the drainage hole. Repeat after 10-15 minutes. Or submerge the container in a vessel containing NEMAKILL solution for one minute.

The label on the container says NEMAKILL is “slightly toxic.” Frankly, I don't know what this means. I recommend NEMAKILL be considered a potentially harmful chemical. Proper safety goggles-better yet full face shield-and thick nitrile/rubber gloves-preferably with long sleeves-should be used. Avoid contact with skin, eyes and clothing. Contaminated clothing should be washed before reuse. Unless wearing special boots, avoid stepping or standing on soil or pavement wet with NEMAKILL.

## EFFECTS OF NEMAKILL

It is important to note what Grewal and An claimed: NEMAKILL can significantly reduce nematode infection. They do not claim that NEMAKILL can 100% eliminate foliar nematodes in hostas growing in the ground or in containers.

In other words, though nematode infection in a hosta can be significantly reduced with NEMAKILL treatment, remaining nematodes in the plant may still result in leaf scarring. Nematodes reproduce extremely rapidly. Several treatments of the dormant crown may be needed to significantly reduce the infection so there is no noticeable leaf damage that year. Even so, there still may be nematodes that overwinter. So in the next year and year after, without treatment there may be leaf scarring again. That is why the protocol requires treatment for several years.

If your hosta foliage criterion is aesthetics, that is, no visible foliage damage, this probably is attainable, but likely requires repeated NEMAKILL treatments. But, if your criterion is a nematode-free hosta (or perhaps even “nearly” nematode free ) and the plant previously was heavily infected and leaf scared, the bar may be too high for a contact nematocide.

Cindy Deutekon ([cindydetekon@gmail.com](mailto:cindydetekon@gmail.com)) is collecting NEMAKILL experiences. Please supply her with details of what you did when and what you observed when. She has a list of questions that need answering; please contact her for details. I suspect a report will be issued when a sufficient number of field experiences are documented. Examination of the information might indicate fewer drenches are needed.

Comments on this article and the suggested protocol are welcome. My email address is [giboshiwip@aol.com](mailto:giboshiwip@aol.com).



## The Dreaded Foliar Nematodes ... Or is it?

### A Report on Bacterial Leaf Streak in Hostas

*(Reprinted courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange from the Georgia Hosta Society's newsletter, Georgia Hosta Notes, Volume 32, Number 2, March 2016.)*

*(Note: This is an interesting article and may save PHC members many anxious days thinking they have nematodes amongst their hostas when they actually have a bacterial infection. It certainly is worth a look at the Hosta Library website mentioned below to get more information on this issue. The Editor)*

Bill Meyer, AHS member from Waterbury, Connecticut who now manages the well known *Hosta Library* web site, recently posted an article on the web site about the affects of bacterial leaf streak on hosta leaves. Per Mr. Meyer's article, bacterial leaf streak looks surprisingly similar to foliar nematode damage and may in fact account for much of what we have assumed in the past to be nematode infestation in our hostas.

Hosta foliar damage from bacterial leaf streak looks similar to but may appear earlier than the tell-tale signs of foliar nematode infestation. Indeed, it takes close inspection of your hosta leaves over time to reveal the differences.

Quoting Mr. Meyer:

“When foliar nematodes infect an area between the veins on a hosta leaf, the tissue slowly turns yellow then brown as they multiply and kill cell after cell with their feeding. After a month or so, the area becomes uniformly brown with no living cells left. With the bacterial infection, the area between the veins quickly takes on a waterlogged appearance similar to the edema seen early in the spring. The bacteria have destroyed the cells and released their contents. The waterlogged area quickly turns brown and may not completely fill the space between the veins, and may cross a vein. Another common symptom is a fan pattern at the base of the leaf with multiple veins involved. The brown stripes also can appear much earlier than nematode-caused ones.”





**Bacterial Leaf Streak:** Note how bottom stripe mimics nematodes perfectly.

Photo: Carol Brashear

Mr. Meyer is hopeful that much of the supposed nematode damage we experience may turn out to be a bacterial infection instead because he thinks that bacterial leaf streak may be easier to control than foliar nematode infestation. Let's hope that he turns out to be right. He gives some possible ways to control bacterial leaf streak in his article along with much more information than is presented here. His article can be found on the *Hosta Library* web site, [www.hostalibrary.org/articles/Bacteria.htm](http://www.hostalibrary.org/articles/Bacteria.htm). We encourage all GHS members (as well as Potomac Hosta Club members) to read the article and then observe symptoms in your own gardens this summer in order to help answer the big question. **Is it nematode damage or is it bacterial leaf streak?**

### What can we expect in the future of hostas?

#### One opinion: you ain't seen nothin' yet!

by Harold McDonell- Editor, *Georgia Hosta Notes*

*(This article is reprinted courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange and the Northern Wisconsin Hosta Society from their newsletter, Northern Stars, Volume 20, Issue 2, March 2016.)*

From time to time I hear people in the hosta world grumble that perhaps we have taken hostas as far as they can go, that no more major advances can be made to keep hostas at the top of the shade



**Bacterial Leaf Streak:** This fan pattern is common with bacterial leaf streak.

Photo: Carol Brashear

perennial pop charts. I beg to disagree. Evolution is anything but finite for any living thing, hostas included.

A few years ago some people in the daylily world were also saying that daylilies had reached their pinnacle of development. Since then, through the imagination of hybridizers with great eyes for spotting seemingly insignificant little differences and then diligently working to exploit those differences, we now have daylily blooms with colors never imagined a few years ago, with eyes and edges one could only dream of, with myriads of patterns that make psychedelic look calm, with new flower forms that excite even the most jaded daylily collector. And, the hybridizers will enthusiastically tell you they have only scratched the surface of what could be.

### What can you do with a leaf?

The same can be true for hostas. Well, you say; how much more can you do with a leaf? Who knows? However, every few years something like *H. 'Praying Hands'* comes along to challenge the notion that form is finite. We already have experienced the rise of miniatures to prominence that I'm sure most of us would never have expected 25 or 30 years ago. Unusual leaf patterns continue to be found. Elaborate ruffling of hosta leaves, like that seen on *H. 'Neptune'* has been appearing more and more in recent years. Red petioles and now pink, purple and yellow petioles and scapes continue to be developed and

refined. The color red is expanding well into the leaves now, thanks to our diligent hybridizers. How about purple tinted hosta leaves? It is no longer considered impossible.

### **The floral presentation**

Then there is the hosta floral presentation, perhaps the most neglected aspect of our favorite plant to date. How many hostas do you have that, while they may be beautiful plants, their scapes and/or blooms are such that you tend to remove them even before they bloom? I have a few of those ... quite a few! However, not everyone has been satisfied with this status quo and more and more hosta hybridizers are beginning to pay attention to advancing the quality of the floral display. In the future, I am satisfied that you will see new hostas that will make you excited about hosta flowers.

Of course, better scapes that are more proportionate to the plant and not flopping all over the place will become more important. More attention will be paid to the form of the flowers. Most exciting, much more attention is already being paid to the subtle differences in flower color and pattern and some of our hosta hybridizers, just like those visionary daylily hybridizers, are working with those subtle differences to create some really exciting new looks for our flowers. Expect prominently striped flowers in the future.

### **Dividing Hostas**

*(This article is reprinted courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange and the North Coast Hosta Society of Ohio from their Fall 2014 newsletter. Since many of the newer members of the Potomac Hosta Club often ask about how to divide a hosta, I thought this might be a good primer – with illustrations! The Editor)*

In the late summer of 2014, in lieu of a workday, the North Coast Hosta Society of Ohio decided to have a get-together for fun and friendship. The pizza party included a demonstration of how to divide a hosta given by Barb Rauckhorst, which is printed.

To demonstrate division, Barb started with a *H. 'Harpoon'* which she had pulled out of the pot and washed the roots. She then worked the plant apart looking for good spot to cut. Once located, she cut completely through the roots with a sharp blade. Last step was to gently pull the divisions apart. It is best to keep about three eyes for best growth.

Even the presentation of the individual flower on the scape is garnering more attention.

### **What about color?**

Then there is the advancement of new colors in hosta flowers. Not much longer will we have to be satisfied with white, lavender and purple. Did you know that a yellow-flowered hosta is just around the corner? It is! I expect that true blue and true red flowers will be available sooner rather than later. It just depends on how many hybridizers take up the challenge and some are already reaching some degree of success.

Yes, there are some exciting new developments coming to our beloved hostas. We have not reached the pinnacle yet, nor will we ever. Just keep dreaming and eventually our enterprising hybridizers will make those dreams come true!

*Harold McDonell, a daylily hybridizer who gave up fighting the shade on his 5-acre wooded plot in Georgia, has been growing hostas since 1986. He starts about 3,000 seedlings a year, but few go very far in the evaluation process. "With less than 300 named varieties in my collection, hosta gardening is a wonderful retirement hobby, and it will stay just that! The same goes for seedlings: I don't want hybridizing to become a job." He is a founder of the Georgia Hosta Society, and its current newsletter editor.*



Barb then pulled a *H.* 'Sweet Home Chicago' from a pot and demonstrated the same technique without having first rinsed the dirt off the roots.



## Avoiding Spring Frost Damage

by Ray Rodgers

*(Note: Although this article first appeared in Shady Business several years ago, with Winter's first icy blasts now bearing down on us, I thought this would be timely reminder on how best to protect our hostas. This article is provided courtesy of the North Coast Hosta Society of Ohio from their newsletter of Spring 2012. The Editor)*

### The anticipation and excitement of early spring

Spring is a joyous time for gardeners, a time of great anticipation as we start wandering around our gardens looking for signs of new beginnings. Such excitement must be tempered with the realization that freezing temperatures are always a possibility until approx. mid-May in Central Illinois. The average last frost date for Peoria is May 8. Every year, I hope spring will come in gracefully, without the major temperature swings we have come to expect. Unfortunately, this rarely has happened.

Last year was a prime example. After efforts to protect my rapidly unfurling hosta leaves on a couple of occasions, I thought those days were once again behind us when we reached the month of May, only to be surprised by an unexpected (to me) frost, that damaged gardens throughout the area on the night of May 2/May 3.

Every spring, I give credit to *H. 'On Stage'* as being the smartest hosta in my garden: as it is the last hosta to emerge from winter dormancy, making it much less susceptible to frost damage.

**When hostas should be protected** - It is important to realize that hostas, even completely leafed out, can withstand temperatures below freezing (32° F). I have repeatedly read that hostas can handle temperatures down to 28° F for short times with minimal or no damage.

During winter, if I find exposed hosta buds, I scrape a little mulch or soil mix from the surrounding area over them for protection. In very early spring, if shoots are starting to emerge, I often cover them in the same manner, in an attempt to slow their progress and provide additional protection.

If shoots are a few inches or more tall, yet leaves have not started to unfurl or are still in the early stages, and temperatures below 30° F are forecasted, I suggest providing additional protection via a choice of mulch or dried leaves piled around and over the emerging shoots. Alternatively, one of the protective methods described below can be utilized.

The more leafed-out hostas are, the more susceptible they are to frost damage. In these cases, covering via one of the methods described below is the best alternative.

One must consider the uniqueness of their gardens and plant placements when determining whether to protect or not. Of course, part of the decision process is how much trust one has in the accuracy of the forecast. Isn't that a scary thought!

**Plant protection** - If one decides to protect, there are many options. Basically almost anything that can cover a hosta will help. It is important not to let the leaves touch the covering material as they are more likely to sustain freeze damage at that contact, if the temperature gets low enough.

There are many methods for protecting your plants via covering. Materials include:

- Plastic pots (crumpled newspaper covering drainage holes improves protection)
- Newspapers
- Cardboard boxes
- Frost Cloth\* (fabric material available through nursery supply companies. Search the Internet for options.)
- Bed sheets\*
- Bath towels\*
- Light blankets\*
- Burlap\*
- Garbage cans
- Bushel baskets
- Wheelbarrows turned upside down

\* Need to be propped up and anchored down. I try to keep a bundle of sticks or stakes around for props. I have also used covered sawhorses over larger hostas. Bricks and rocks are good anchors



and also work well to hold down plastic pots during windy conditions.

Polyethylene film or similar materials, including plastic bags, should be avoided as condensation buildup on the inside can increase the likelihood of damage to hosta leaves. These materials are also a danger once the sun comes out. .

Another method is to keep a continuous spray of water on plants when the temperature is below 28° F, as water is warmer than the air.

**The morning after** - After all the chosen plants are protected from the impending freezing temperature (usually during the night), one must address the uncovering task the following morning. Keeping the plants covered until the temperature climbs back above freezing is the best option. But, if one has to go to work, family or neighbors may have to be called upon for help. If the forecast calls for temperatures to remain in the danger zone, keep the plants covered.

**How cold is too cold** - This somewhat depends on the number of hostas one has to protect. If hostas are completely leafed out and the temperature dips into the low 20s F, protective measures may reduce the severity, but it is unlikely that they will prevent freeze damage.

**What should be done to frost damaged hostas** - If hostas are hit by damaging frosts it is best to cut off and discard the most significantly damaged leaf tissue (sanitizing the cutting tool between plants), keeping as many of the undamaged leaves and petioles as possible to allow the continuation of the plant's food making process. At some point, if enough leaves are removed, hostas will force a second flush of leaves from smaller and previously dormant buds. This flush will likely produce smaller leaves.

Even worse than hosta leaves turning to mush, is the possibility of the crown being damaged, which if not attended to, typically allows rot to set in. The crown of the hosta is the base where the roots and shoots join. Crown rot can happen in early spring when water stands around the crown or by the plant freezing after it breaks dormancy. If hostas sustain significant leaf damage, be sure to check the crown for soft areas. If discovered, this tissue should be removed back to solid tissue to

prevent further rot and possibly the death of the plant.

**Which hostas are most frost sensitive** - Late freezes can be a problem with any variety, especially the ones that break dormancy early. The species *H. plantaginea* and its sports have the reputation of being the most frost sensitive. It is widely believed all fragrant hostas have *H. plantaginea* in their lineage, making them candidates for protection. *H. plantaginea* is one of the only species that will continue to produce new leaves all summer long. This is an advantage when the original spring foliage becomes damaged. Contrarily, I have read that hostas in the Sieboldiana Group and Tokudama Group are slow to recover from frost damage, as they tend to push only one good flush of growth in a season, also making hostas with these lineages good candidates for protection. A few other of the more sensitive hostas include *H. montana* 'Aureomarginata', 'Sagae', 'Lancifolia', and 'Chinese Sunrise'.

**New purchases** - If hostas are purchased prior to mid-May, I suggest leaving them in pots so they can easily be moved to a protected area when frost warnings occur.

**Is it worth the effort** - Protecting hostas from freezing temperatures is certainly a hassle. Each of us has to determine for ourselves whether it is worth the effort and when to take protective measures. In my opinion, we must always be aware of the possibility of freezing temperatures and react accordingly to preserve the beauty of our gardens.

## **2017 Hosta of the Year: 'Brother Stefan'**

Each year the American Hosta growers Association selects the "best of the best" and honors one variety as the "Hosta of the Year." These special selections are acknowledged for being distinctive, easy to grow in all parts of the country, and beloved by many. They are a good choice for beginning collectors and gardeners alike.



**H. ‘Brother Stefan’**

Photo taken from [www.plantsdelight.com](http://www.plantsdelight.com)

Introduced and named by top hosta breeder Olga Petryszyn as a birthday present to her brother, H. ‘Brother Stefan’ has it all. Although slow growing, this hybrid of H. ‘King Tudt’ x H. ‘Mildred Seaver’ forms a 22-inches tall by three-foot wide clump of thick, heavily-corrugated, golden foliage edged with a wide border of blue-green. In late spring, two-foot scapes of white flowers top the plant. Truly a gift for any garden.

## **THE GRAINETHUMB: TRUE OR FALSE – MISCONCEPTIONS IN THE GARDEN**

By George Graine, Fairfax Master Gardeners

*“Garden gurus who promote unscientific wisdom with little regard to consequences are here to stay.”* G. Graine in VMGA Report, May/June 2016

*(Note: George is a long-time member of the Potomac Hosta Club and a member of the Virginia Master Gardeners Association. The Editor)*

Did you ever receive advice on digging a deep plant hole - to China! Did you put aside all of that “bad” dirt from the hole you dug, only to fill it

with some kind of super-duper soil “amendment” that came from the garden center or the farmer down the road? Did you hear that it is a good idea to prune off some of the roots and at the same time take off some of the top most branches of a shrub or tree before planting? All of this is bunkum. It is wrong, wrong, and wrong and if you did any of these things, then a book by C.L. Fornari called *Coffee for Roses...and 70 Other Misleading Myths About Backyard Gardening* (St. Lynn’s Press, 2014) is a must read. Prior to this myth-busting book, Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott wrote two volumes about *The Informed Gardener* (Univ. Washington Press, 2008 and 2010). Dr. Jeff Gillman wrote two “truth” books about garden remedies (Timber Press, 2006) and organic gardening (Timber Press, 2008). Also, Dr. Gillman partnered with Meleah Maynard and wrote *Decoding Gardening Advice: The Science Behind the 100 Most Common Recommendations* (Timber Press, 2012).

Many of us are aware of some gardening myths but a whopping 71 myths in one book deserves a new look with easy to understand straight talk without horticultural jargon. Chances are there are some folks still laboring under some old and unfounded or pre-conceived rationale for doing something “wrong” in their landscape. This could be misleading and possibly promote some garden inferiority. Fortunately, Mother Nature can be forgiving, but why risk the chance when you can garden the right way from the git-go. To be sure, C.L. (as the author likes to be called) does not back up the assertions (read garden myths) with bibliographic references. She does confirm much of the information contained in the texts noted above regarding best management garden practices and those that could be harmful. Thus there is no need to duplicate scientific evidence about what works and what is a myth.

Here is a true life example. Grainethumb saved his neighbor many bucks because an itinerant tree cutter wanted to fertilize trees growing in his forested area. Say what! Nature has been taking care of these trees, at no cost, for many, many years. This is just a single example of ignoring a basic ecological principle. Surely you do not need a scientific explanation for this common sense situation. My neighbor sent this “gypsy arborist” on his way and to perhaps an unsuspecting home

owner who did not question the practice of do-no-harm, i.e., nature often does very well on her own without human intervention.

The chapters in C.L.'s book are a collection of myths and grouped so you can quickly turn to those areas of personal interest. This includes:

- annuals and perennials
- vegetables
- shrubs, trees and vines
- compost, soils, mulch and fertilizer
- insects, diseases and other problems
- random folklore

She goes beyond the facts and will delight you as the story unfolds about why something happens and what to do or not do as appropriate.

Recently, upon perusing the internet several "formulas" from a so-called garden guru popped on the monitor. It is worth sharing them with you so you will get the full thrust of the nonsense that is being promoted.

>>>Lawn freshener tonic: 1 can of beer, 1 cup of dishwashing liquid, ½ cup of ammonia, ½ cup of weak tea water, all mixed in a 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, and applied to the point of run-off.

>>>Summer soother tonic: 2 cups of weak tea water, 1 cup of dishwashing liquid, 1 cup of hydrogen peroxide and then applied as above

>>>Improved mulch: 1 cup of ammonia, 1 can of regular (not diet) cola, 1 cup of antiseptic mouthwash, 1 tbsp of dishwashing liquid and then applied as above

>>>A favorite home remedy insecticide is tobacco juice because nicotine is all natural. Oh really!

At the moment there is continuing controversy within the horticultural community and chemical producers about applying neonicotinoids (neonics for short) because it is thought that these types of chemicals are killing pollinators, particularly bees. Nicotine is a serious poison. Is it any wonder why you should not smoke when working especially in your vegetable garden.

No doubt C.L. could have written about many more myths. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that to stop at page 146 was an editorial decision. One hopes that C.L. will write a second garden

myths book because there is still a proliferation of gardening untruths being presented as if they were scientifically accurate. We need to combat the unscientific "wisdom."

## 2017 AHS Convention: "Hosta Hysteria"



The American Hosta Society's 2017 convention, "Hosta Hysteria, is to be held Wednesday through Saturday, 7-10 June 2017, in Indianapolis, Indiana, hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society. Ten gardens with bus transportation are scheduled, along with optional tours and a "Gardener's Marketplace" of unique and interesting vendors. "Early Bird" registration is set at \$269 per person. The meeting will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. Details can be found on the convention's website, [www.indyhosta2017.com](http://www.indyhosta2017.com).

## Discover Hostas..... Join the American Hosta Society

The American Hosta Society is a non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to educational and scientific purposes, and especially to promote, encourage and foster the development of the genus *Hosta*. Members of the AHS receive *The Hosta Journal* mailed twice a year and have access to a third issue online in the "Members Only" section of the AHS website. This publication offers the latest information on care, feeding, and hybridizing; pictures of new cultivars; and news of upcoming meetings and conventions. Additional membership benefits include:

- An opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions, which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's

clinics, and a chance to see the latest and best hosta in the hosta show.

- A Biennial AHS Membership Directory.
- The privilege of visiting display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members.
- An invitation to exhibit your favorite hostas and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional cut-leaf shows.
- Developing friendships with people who share an interest in growing hostas.
- Access to “Members Only” section of the AHS website.

New members are also eligible for the **AHS Voucher Program**, which is a \$15 voucher redeemable on purchases at a number of participating nurseries. AHS members can also participate in the **Members-Only Plant Program**, which is the exclusive right to purchase a new, first-time and top-shelf plant for \$20 plus shipping. The initial offering, *H. ‘Sterling Medallion’*, one of Don Dean’s best blues, sold out in the first few weeks, interest was so strong in this new program. The second plant will be introduced in 2017 from Doug Beilstein, former AHS president, current Board Member and a well-known hybridizer. So don’t delay, **Join the AHS NOW!!** Details of these two programs and membership forms can be found on the AHS website: [www.americanhostasociety.org](http://www.americanhostasociety.org) under “Membership.”

#### AHS Membership Fees

Individual: 1/3/5 years at \$30/\$80/\$129  
Family: 1/3/5 years at \$34/\$90/\$146  
e-membership-**NEW**: \$20 annually

**Club Publicity:** With regard to publicity, we are asking all the PHC officers and board members to do what we can to ensure that articles or notes about the Club are inserted in local news outlets, homeowners’ associations newsletters, bulletin boards and the like. We also need the Club’s membership to help us with this effort. If you know of an outlet for publicity for the Club, we will provide a note or article for inclusion. For assistance with this, you can contact Susan Hedrick at [hostaclub@gmail.com](mailto:hostaclub@gmail.com) or Tom Hilt at [tandjhilt@verizon.net](mailto:tandjhilt@verizon.net).

## Volunteers

**This note has finally become a permanent feature in the newsletter and only you, as members, can make it go away.** The club needs volunteers for the many activities we are involved in, so as a member, that means you! As we head towards Spring, the Club will be entering our busy period with a multitude of hosta-related events that should command your attention – and hopefully, your help. We’ll be looking for you! For your information, a list of prospective 2017 activities is listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have questions, you can always contact Susan Hedrick on 703-866-2211 or at: [hostaclub@gmail.com](mailto:hostaclub@gmail.com) or Tom Hilt on 202-546-4199 or at: [tandjhilt@verizon.net](mailto:tandjhilt@verizon.net).

## Support for Our Professional Members

These commercial members not only bring another level of expertise to the PHC, they also support our efforts to bring members the newest hostas at reasonable prices.

**Bridgewood Gardens**, Chick Wasitis proprietor, Strasburg, Virginia;  
[www.bridgewoodgardens.com](http://www.bridgewoodgardens.com)

**Claythings**, LJ Pendlebury, proprietor, Alexandria, VA; [www.claythings.net](http://www.claythings.net)

**Green Hill Farm**, Bob and Nancy Solberg proprietors, Franklinton, North Carolina;  
[www.hostahosta.com](http://www.hostahosta.com)

**Heather Hill Gardens**, Bonnie Ruetenik proprietor, Fairfax Station, Virginia;  
[www.heatherhillgardens.com](http://www.heatherhillgardens.com)

**Possess the Land Nursery**, Addie Drayton proprietor, Oxon Hill, MD;  
[possessthelandnursery.com](http://possessthelandnursery.com)

**Wade & Gatton Nurseries**, Van Wade proprietor, Belleville, Ohio,  
[wadeandgattonnurseries.com](http://wadeandgattonnurseries.com)

## PHC Membership Dues:

The current dues for 1 year/3 years are:

Households	\$10/\$25
Senior Households (65+):	\$5 Annually
Garden Clubs, Plant Societies:	\$15/\$40



## Upcoming Events For 2017

- **Hosta College: *Friday and Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at Piqua, Ohio***; the college is sponsored by the Great Lakes Region of the American Hosta Society and held annually. Further details, the Class List for 2017 and registration information is available on-line at: [www.ihostohio.org/glhc](http://www.ihostohio.org/glhc).
- **The PHC Annual Meeting and Plant Sale: *Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM***; the location is yet to be determined as this newsletter went to print.
- **Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) Plant Sale: *Dates yet to be publicized, usually held in mid April*** at the National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue, Washington, DC 20002.
- **Town of Vienna Garden Faire: *Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 AM to Noon***, on the town green, 144 Maple Street, Vienna, VA.
- **Green Spring Park Plant Sale: *Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM***, at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, VA.
- **PHC Garden Strolls: *Scheduled for Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>***; **the Club needs volunteers who would like to show off their gardens and all your hard work.**
- **AHS Annual Convention: *Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, through Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>***, in Indianapolis, Indiana, hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society; see Page 11 above for details.
- **Hosta Bingo: *To be held July 9<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>***, with the location still to be determined.
- **PHC's Annual Picnic and Plant Auction: *Scheduled for Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, from Noon to 2:00 PM***, with the location to be determined.
- **Dixie Regional Hosta Convention: "Shady University – A Fall Hosta Retreat," *Friday-Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>***, to be held in Peachtree City, Georgia, approximately 25 miles south of Atlanta; when available, additional details will be published in the newsletter.
- **Fall Hosta Forum: *Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>***, at Edinboro University, Edinboro, Pennsylvania. This one-day event is jointly sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania and Western New York Hosta Societies, with noted speakers on hostas and other plant/garden issues of interest. Specific details for 2017 are not yet available; if you are interested in this event, check the website [www.wnyhosta.com](http://www.wnyhosta.com).

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**Potomac Hosta Club, Inc.**  
**Tom Hilt, Newsletter Editor**  
**1366 East Capitol Street, NE**  
**Washington, DC 20003-1533**



**2016 End-of-Year and 2017 Preview Edition**