



Shady Business

Newsletter of The Potomac Hosta Club, Inc.

Volume 28, Number 2, July 2014

www.potomachostaclub.com

Officers & Directors

OFFICERS

President:

Susan Hedrick
703/866-2211

Vice President:

Karen O'Meara
703/281-4334

Secretary:

Juliana Hilt
202/546-4199

Treasurer:

Jim Turcol
703/293-9447

Immediate Past President:

Sandie Markland
252-441-1947

DIRECTORS

Jay Aldhizer
Gerald Fitzgibbon
Jim Hedrick
Alma Kasulaitis
Shelly McAllister
Bonnie Ruetenik

Membership Secretary:

Tom Hilt

Newsletter Editor:

Tom Hilt
(tandjhilt@verizon.net)

President's Letter

This spring has had its challenges. The weather this year gave us some trouble first at our "Spring Meeting" on March 30th as our guest speaker Janet Draper was injured a month before and James Gagliardi, also of the Smithsonian, spoke in her place. Also on that day we had rain, sleet, hail then snow. Ten days later was the plant sale at River Farm. Due to the missing spring only so many hostas were ready but we had some Fairy Garden supplies to supplement the sales. The sale at Green Spring Park went well and the Behnke Garden Party resulted with a new member!

The Dixie Region Convention in Wake Forest, NC, on May 30 and 31st, was great fun. I hope many of you will be able to go to the American Hosta Society National Convention next year in Raleigh, NC, on June 18-20, 2015. For most of us the trip to Raleigh will only take about four hours. A lot less than the 15 hours plus we drove to the AHS National Convention in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but well worth it!

Our next Members Only Event is H-O-S-T-A Bingo. Come and welcome our new members. Just a reminder that this is a Members Only event, BUT you can bring in new members! New members are always welcome. We do need help with setup so if you are available please come by noon.

The honor roll list of volunteers – Marjie Morris, Faith & Jerry Bange, Martha & Lois Workman, 'Fitz', George Graine, Linda & Leo Stoltz, Jay Aldhizer, Taffy Turner, Alma Kasulaitis, Pat Myler, Billie Trump, Julie & Tom Hilt, Joyce Chandler, Lynda Shaver, Kathy Gibbs, and *new members Janice Jacob, William Bowman, Elizabeth Hipfel and new business member Addie Drayton at Possess the Land Nursery.*

Follow us on Facebook <Potomac Hosta Club on facebook>. You do not need to have a facebook account to see our page. We have the latest pictures and current event information. If you are on facebook please [Like Us!](#)

Susan

'Hosta Gardeners have it made in the shade'

2014 HOSTA BINGO

Sunday, July 20th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

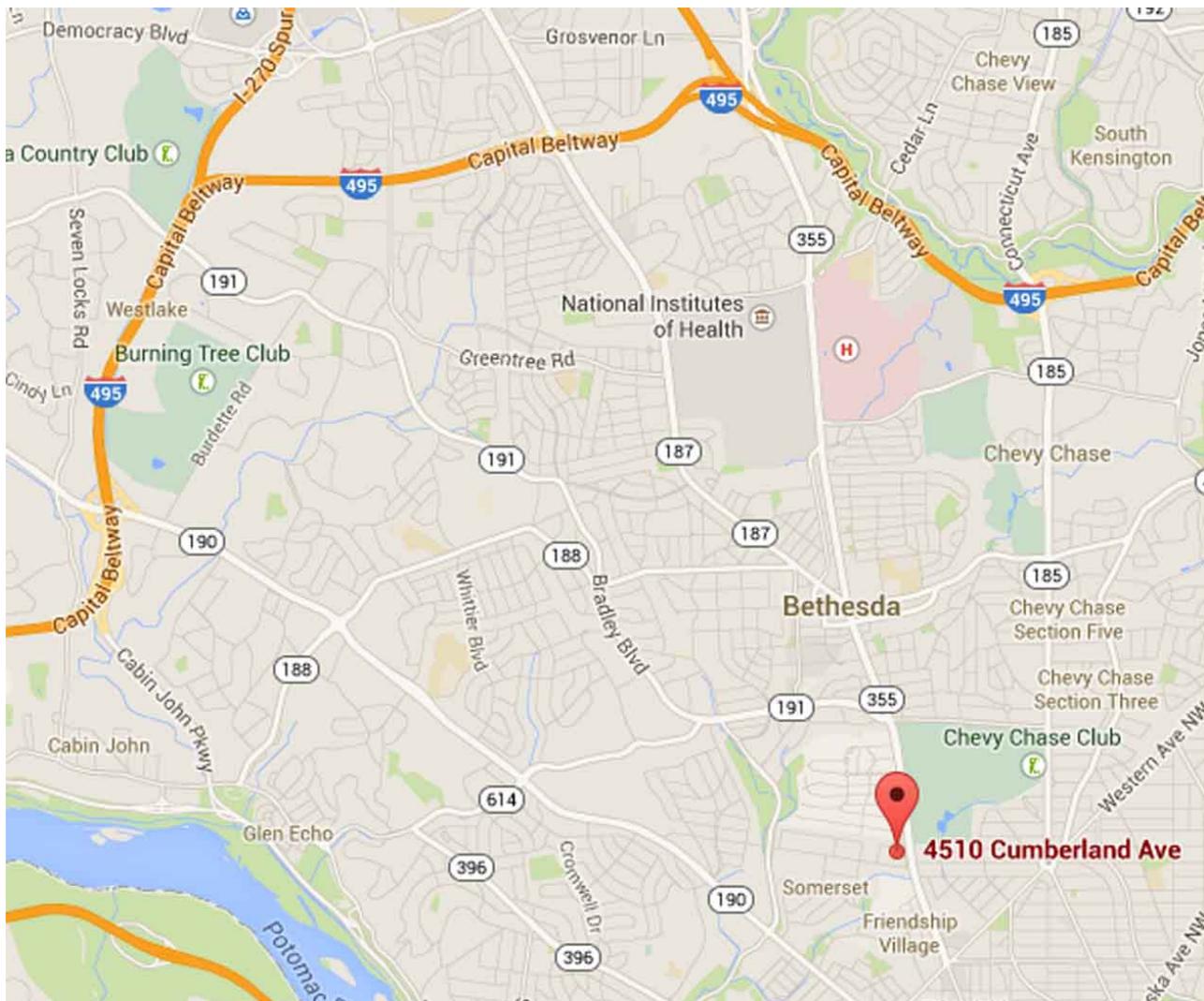
This is a “Members Only” event; please bring a dish to share – drinks will be provided.

Address is 4510 Cumberland Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland

Our kudos to Club member Janet McGhee, who discovered a location in Maryland in which we could once again host Hosta Bingo. Thanks, Janet!!

Directions: The easiest access is from the north side of the Beltway/I-495 onto Wisconsin Avenue. Take Wisconsin/MD Route 355 approximately three miles south through Bethesda to a right turn onto Cumberland Avenue. You will see the Chevy Chase Country Club on your right just before you reach Cumberland. If you hit Dorset Avenue, you have gone too far.

There is on-street parking. This is the Town of Somerset Town Hall and inside in front are offices for the town staff, while the back room is the one we have for hosta bingo. A bathroom and kitchen are on the right hand side.



New Members – Welcome Aboard!

William Bowman, Washington, DC

Jill Diskin Washington, DC

Addie Drayton, Oxon Hill, MD

Rich Galloway, Silver Spring, MD

Freeman Hardy, Silver Spring, MD

Elizabeth Hipfel, Annandale, VA

Elaine King, Silver Spring, MD

Tatiana Lisle, Springfield, VA

Mickey Medlin, Centreville, VA

Lynn & Ed Mills, Fairfax Station, VA

Augusto “Tito” Rivera, Rockville, MD

Volunteers

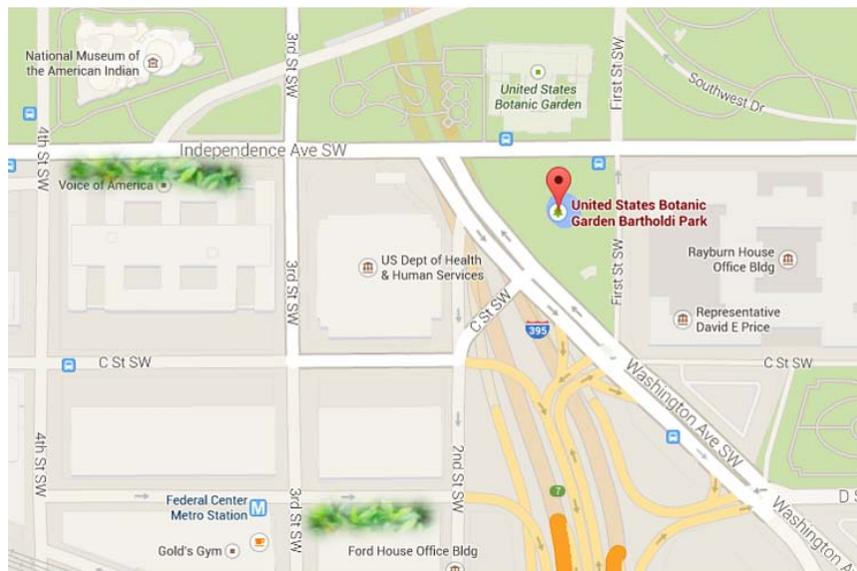
As always, we need Club members to volunteer for the many activities in which the the Club is involved. So, please take a look at the list of 2014 activities, and as we identify activities for 2015, keep those in mind for future assistance. The Club needs your involvement to keep it together as a club, so if you can help, contact Susan Hedrick on 703-866-2211 or at: hostaclub@gmail.com or

Karen O’Mara on 703-281-4334 or at:
raykaren4334@cox.net.

Hidden Garden Gems: The U.S. Botanic Gardens’ Bartholdi Park

by Tom Hilt

I’m sure many, if not all of us, have been to the U.S. Botanic Gardens at the foot of the Capitol Building on Independence Avenue SW. But have you walked across the street to visit the Botanic Garden’s cousin, Bartholdi Park? Tucked into a small triangle bordered by Independence Avenue, Washington Avenue SW and the Rayburn House Office Building, over the past several years the Botanic Garden and the Architect of the Capitol’s office have turned this area into a little gem and definitely worth a look if you’re in the area. And if you take the Metro to get there, via the Blue, Orange and Silver Lines’ Federal Center SW stop, you’ll pass by a nice little cluster of hostas lining the north side of the Gerald Ford House Office Building. This is directly across the street in front of you as you come off the Metro’s escalator. Also, with some time to spare, take a stroll along the northern side of the Voice of America building on Independence Avenue SW, which also sports a variety of hostas for landscaping. So, the next time you’re poking around DC, stop by to explore these garden treasures in our nation’s capital!





Hostas in front of the Ford House Office Building.

Bartholdi Park



Entering the park toward the Rayburn House Office Building.



The park's fountain adds a calming effect.



The park hosts a variety of flora.



Bartholdi Park's big cousin across the street.



Spring adds color to a sun-drenched park.



Hostas outside the Voice of America building.

(Note: I would like to make "Hidden Garden (or Hosta) Gems" a regular, or at least periodic, feature in Shady Business. So, if you know of places or parks in the Washington area that feature hosta displays or other hidden garden treasures, but are not widely publicized, please let me know and we will feature them in future editions. Thanks, The Editor)

2015 AHS Convention



The American Hosta Society's 2015 convention will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, from Thursday, June 18th, through Saturday, June 20th, hosted by Bob and Nancy Solberg of Green Hill Farm, Franklinton, NC. As Bob noted in the March 2014 edition of his and Nancy's *Green Hill Gossip*, he really wasn't interested in doing a national convention again, but "late at night, after a few adult beverages," he acquiesced, with wife Nancy also chiming in, "we'll do it!" Well, after that, how could he refuse? So, this one will be a little shorter than normal and will probably entail convention goers driving to the various gardens, but we did that in 2013 at the Milwaukee convention and I think everyone had a great time – or at least, the Club's Secretary and Newsletter Editor did. Details should be forthcoming on the

American Hosta Society's website at:
www.americanhostasociety.org.

Speaking of Viridescence

by Rob Mortko

(Courtesy of the Mid-South Hosta Society from their newsletter, Hosta Hotline, Volume 15, Number 15, June 2014.)

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 viridescence 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.

2014 FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM SALE



All the little hostas neatly tucked away...only to be sold later in the day!

Mulch: How much is enough?

(This article is courtesy of the St. Louis Hosta Society from their newsletter, Shady Notes, Volume 15, Number 2, March 2014, taken from the May 2011 newsletter of the Northwest Indiana Hosta Society.)

Most of us use some form of mulch to control weeds, retain moisture and keep the soil cooler during our long, hot summers.

The American Hosta Society recommends not applying more than 2-3" of mulch. Too much can lead to vole problems by providing a covering that is warm and easy to tunnel through. Keep the mulch away from the petioles to avoid rot and other diseases.

But how do I know how much to buy? Use the following calculations.

- Length in feet X Width in feet = Total square feet
- Length in feet X Width in feet X Depth in feet = Total cubic feet
- The most commonly sold bags contain about 2-cubic feet
- 27 cubic feet = One cubic yard
- One cubic yard will fill roughly 1/2 a pick-up truck bed

Example: A hosta bed 10 feet by 12 feet with a 3-inch layer of mulch

- $10 \times 12 \times .25 = 30$ cubic feet
- Divide by 2 = 15 2-cubic-foot bags
- Divide by 3 = 10 3-cubic-foot bags
- One cubic yard will cover 160 square feet at a depth of 2"
- One cubic yard will cover 108 square feet at a depth of 3"
- One 2-cubic-foot bag will cover 7 or 8 square feet at 3" deep
- One 3-cubic-foot bag will cover 10 square ft at a depth of 2"

Yellow Hostas, Love at First Sight

By Bob Solberg, Courtesy of the *Green Hill Gossip*, March 2014 edition

I have said many times that as hosta folks we all seem to go through the same series of predictable phases of collecting. Variegated hostas especially those with white or yellow colored leaf centers first attract us. Then we get the inevitable hosta blues that may last for years, filling our gardens with every blue hosta we can find, searching for the bluest of all. Then one spring all that blue looks a little too peaceful and calm and suddenly gold fever strikes. Yellow hostas are all we see.

This infection usually lasts only for a year or two at the most.

By now our hosta collector's eye has matured and, believe it or not solid, green hostas become very interesting. Puckers, ruffles, and the subtle shades of green interest us more than riotous color. Then our interest wanders one of many ways. For me, crazy as it sounds, I am not a big fan of variegated hostas. Streaked hostas do not increase my pulse rate. White-centered hostas fill me with dread; I fear for their lives. I like solid colored hostas best and of them I have a thing for the yellow ones.

It probably began when I started growing hosta seeds. Grow some seeds of a yellow hosta and you will germinate yellow ones, blue ones, usually, and green ones. What a deal. I started with 'August Moon', still an underused parent, but it was when I began to create my own line of yellow hostas that I really fell in love with them. There is always something special about your own kids.

So here is the somewhat ironic tale of my love for yellow hostas. It started with two really nondescript late flowering hostas. I am crazy busy running a nursery through the month of June but things slow down to near normal in the heat of July. Only then can I turn my full attention to hybridizing hostas so I have always used late flowering hostas as parents primarily. (My 'August Moon' seedlings were produced from a re-blooming plant in the nursery.) So, it was a cross of the fairly newly discovered at the time *H. yingeri* and a yellow form of *H. tsushimensis*, now called 'Ogon Tsushima', that was the starting point for most all of my bright yellow hostas.

That first cross produced two hostas that I named, 'Whiskey Sour', which favored its *H. tsushimensis* parent, with bright yellow spring color and puckers, and 'Sun Catcher' that looked more like *H. yingeri*, with heavier substance and more sun tolerance. While unique, they looked like they could be improved so I crossed them together with their siblings, a F2 cross. They tended to become green in hot weather so I wanted their prodigy to stay yellower longer and they also had bright red color on about half their petioles. I thought it would be nice to enhance that, too. So I was selecting now for two colors, yellow and red.

The two best seedlings from the F2 cross became 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie', again the most *H. tsushimensis* looking seedling and 'Sun Worshiper', the *H. yingeri* representative. The yellow was much better and the red now extended up the petiole to the base of the leaf blade. I loved the yellow but most visitors only saw red. Always sensitive to my customers' preferences, I realized that this bright red color was something new and should continue to be enhanced if possible.

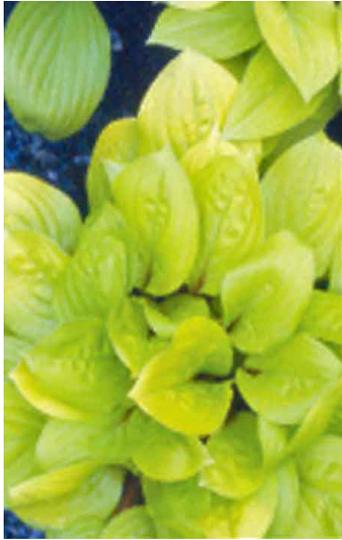


H. 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' (Photo: B. Solberg)

As luck would have it, I had also been fooling around with some rather ratty looking second generation seedlings from *H. clausa normalis*. I wanted that bright red color on the base of the flower tube to find its way into the flowers of my seedlings. Why not try to put it on the leaf petioles, too? One yellow seedling had good red petioles but lacked vigor, substance, and wanted to run all over the garden. I decided to cross it with 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' and its siblings. I had now, more or less unwittingly, crossed three Korean species, combining their genes for producing red in hosta leaves.

Maybe 100 seedlings resulted from four crosses. The crosses with 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' proved the most interesting and resulted in a great diversity of leaf shapes, from narrow to round. The addition of the *H. clausa normalis* genetic material had not only intensified the red in the petioles and flower scapes but also pushed the red

up into the leaf along the midrib. Four hostas from this cross made it into trade, little ‘Smiley Face’ with its unusual thick, round leaves and pink scape and petioles, ‘Lemon Ice’, the largest of the four, with bright red emerging buds and bright yellow leaves in spring, ‘Peach Salsa’, with its light yellow leaves and bright red scapes, and my favorite, ‘Mango Salsa’, not quite as yellow but with more narrow ruffled leaves with good substance and blood red petioles and scapes full of pretty purple flowers.



H. ‘Smiley Face’ (Photo: B. Solberg)

From the first cross of this long line of yellow hostas several of the seedlings showed some red color on the tips of leaves, at least for a few weeks in early spring. Some of the seedlings from the other three crosses of the ‘Strawberry Banana Smoothie’ siblings and the *H. clausa normalis* seedlings produced hostas with persistent red on the tips of leaves and in the case of ‘Beet Salad’ a thin red edge on the leaf margin. ‘Beet Salad’ is green, not yellow but has located red pigment in the vein that surrounds its leaves and has wonderful dark red scapes. It also passes red edges on to its seedlings!

So what started as a plan to create hostas that stayed bright yellow in the shade became the quest for the red leaf hosta. Ironically, it is a green hosta, ‘Beet Salad’ that seems to have gotten us there, but that is a story for another day. For me, every spring I fall in love with my bright yellow



H. ‘Mango Salsa’ (Photo: B. Solberg)

Korean hostas again. It doesn't hurt that they are accessorized in red but unlike many of you, I still see the yellow first, and last.

Yellow hostas come to life in early spring and stand out against the blue and dark green hostas. Some, by summer, begin to take on light green, like *H. ‘Kiwi Acid Yellow’* located to left of center in the Schroeder garden photo. If you don't have many yellow hostas in your garden you need to get some this year.

Kinkaid Gardens Stainless Steel Plant Markers

Most of us have seen those snazzy looking plant markers in commercial settings and display gardens, particularly if you have attended an AHS annual convention and trooped through a number of hosta gardens with professional-looking metal plant markers. Many of these are Kinkaid plant markers and the **manufacturer is now offering discounts on purchases of markers and related equipment for garden clubs and their members**. If you are interested, go to the Kinkaid website at: www.kinkaidplantmarkers.com and see what they have to offer. If you do buy, when ordering use the code: HOSTA-PHC and you will receive a discount of 50 cents per bundle of 25 markers and the Club will also receive a rebate for the same amount over the course of the year. If you are going to buy markers, check it out, it may prove worthwhile.

Potomac Hosta Club Volunteer Garden
June 1st 2014: Lynn & Ed Mills



Lynn & Ed Mills'
Garden - 2014



Growing Hostas From Seeds

by Rob Mortko

(Courtesy of the Western New York Hosta Society from their newsletter, Hosta la Vista, February 2014.)

Everyone seems to have their own technique for planting hosta seed, and yet there is general agreement on a number of key points.

Start the seeds in flats with a clear plastic dome (or similar high humidity setup). Wash the flats and use a sterile soilless mix to minimize fungal problems. Cover the seed lightly to a 1/8" to 1/4" depth. Germination typically occurs in 12 to 15 days. Target an air temperature of about 75 deg F. Heating mats can be useful when working in cooler basement settings. And don't forget to label if you are planting various hybrid crosses!

Timing on starting seed is a variable with some starting in October or November while others wait until February.

Lighting is critical when gardening indoors (although not relevant to seed germination). Use supplemental lighting (cool-white fluorescent tubes) to give 16-24 hours of daily lighting. Maintain the lights about 2" above the dome or (later) 2" above the plants. Never let the seedlings dry out. Keep the soil moist but not soggy. Grow until the tops of the plants touch the dome. Then transplant (typically at the 2 or 3 leaf stage) and begin using a water soluble fertilizer. How much water soluble fertilizer you use will depend on how much you want to push the process.

Culling can be a painful process but most seedlings will be rather plain looking. Unfortunately many characteristics (other than color) take time to develop. Balance your culling habits with the number of seedlings you are managing.

Before moving seedlings to the spring garden, don't forget to harden them off - just like a tomato plant that was started inside. Seed is available from a number of commercial sources. Seed can be stored in plastic photo film canisters and placed in the freezer until ready for planting.

Summer Alert: Beware of the Drought

by Rob Mortko

(Courtesy of the Central Illinois Hosta Society from their newsletter, Great Expectations, Volume 20, Issue 4, June 2014.)

(Note: Rob wrote this article in expectation of a dry summer, which may not have been the case given all the rain the midwest has received so far this spring and summer. The Editor)

Most reference books on hosta will report that they are quite adaptable to dry shade conditions once they have become established. While this may be true, there is also a practical limit to most generalizations.

During the growing season the hosta rhizome or crown is building reserves that will be used the following spring. Large amounts of water are also required to replace the natural transpiration that occurs with the large leaves. If we (as we typically do in the Midwest) encounter a prolonged spell of hot, dry weather, the rhizome will spend reserves to support the plant.

Ever wonder why a hosta appears OK at the end of the year, but appears much smaller and/or less vigorous the following spring, or (even worse) fails to reappear altogether the following spring? This is most likely the result of a decline in the crown mass the previous summer.

So what to do if we do encounter a typical Kansas City summer with day upon day of hot temperatures and extended dry spells? Avoid the stress by watering deeply at least once a week during the summer if we don't receive any help from Mother Nature. Optimum moisture is reported between one and one and a half inches of water per week during the growing season. This is especially important if your hostas receive significant levels of direct sun exposure.

Watering time is also important. Watering in the morning will help discourage both slugs and fungal activity. Use of soaker hoses works well. When watering blue leafed hostas avoid overhead watering of the leaves which can slowly destroy the glaucous bloom (i.e., the waxy covering that makes a green hosta appear blue). Residual water

droplets on any leaf which is followed by sun exposure can also result in leaf burn.

Fall Hosta Forum:

Scheduled for **Saturday, September 20th**, at **Edinboro University, Edinboro, PA**. Sponsored by the Daffodil and Hosta Society of Western Pennsylvania and the Western New York Hosta Society, this year's theme is: "DAMN RIGHT, I've got the Blues!"



Speakers include: Don Dean, "Got the Blues;" Rick Goodenough, "I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues;" Oscar Cross, "Chasing the Blues;" and Laura Deeter, "Continual Color with Continual Hassle." Registration is \$60 for WNY/WPA members and \$70 for non-members, which includes lunch and the four speakers. There is additional Friday night dinner and entertainment for early arrivers. For more information and registration forms, visit the Western New York Hosta Society's website at: www.wnyhosta.com.

American Hosta Society Membership

The American Hosta Society is a major partner with most, if not all, of the country's various hosta clubs and societies and is the primary source for much information about all things concerning hostas. Their hard-copy *Hosta Journals* are works of art and a point of light for hosta lovers suffering through the winter doldrums. And they also host some pretty darn good annual conventions, so there's more than enough reason to join. However, to encourage even more members they are now offering a **new benefit for membership: starting in 2015 they will select a hosta available only to AHS members in limited quantities and at a reasonable cost**. The special cultivar will be a **limited-edition run**...on a first come, first served basis. Another reason to join, which is easy at the AHS website: www.americanhostasociety.org/membership.

Support 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

Claythings, LJ Pendlebury, proprietor, Alexandria, VA; www.claythings.net

Green Hill Farm, Bob and Nancy Solberg proprietors, Franklinton, North Carolina;

www.hostahosta.com

Heather Hill Gardens, Bonnie Ruetenik proprietor, Fairfax Station, Virginia;

www.heatherhillgardens.com

Possess the Land Nursery, Addie Drayton owner, 705 Shelby Dr, Oxon Hill, MD; e-mail address is: creativeaddie@yahoo.com

Wade & Gatton Nurseries, Van Wade proprietor, Belleville, Ohio,

wadeandgattonnurseries.com

Club Publicity: As we all know, the Club needs to recruit new members, which means we all have to publicize the Club wherever and however we can. To this end, 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 Gerald Fitzgibbon at mikefitz2@hotmail.com ; Susan Hedrick at hostaclub@gmail.com; or Tom Hilt at tandjhilt@verizon.net.

PHC Membership

The current dues for 1 year/3 years are:

Households	\$10.00/\$25.00
Senior Households (65+):	\$5.00/\$12.50
Garden Clubs, Plant Societies, and Businesses:	\$15.00/\$40.00

Make checks payable to the **Potomac Hosta Club** and send to:

Tom Hilt
1336 East Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20003-1533

2014 Upcoming Events

- **Hosta Bingo: *Members Only Event! Sunday, July 20th, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM*** at the Town of Somerset Town Hall, Chevy Chase, Maryland; see details on Page 2 above.
- **Annual Picnic: *Scheduled for Sunday, August 31st***, from Noon to 3:00 PM, at Fort Hunt Park, Mount Vernon, Virginia
- **Fall Hosta Forum: *Saturday, September 20th***, at Edinboro University, Edinboro, PA. For more information and registration forms, please visit the Western New York Hosta Society website at: www.wnyhosta.com. The one-day event is jointly sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania and Western New York Hosta Societies, with noted speakers on both hostas and other plant/garden issues of interest. For details see Page 11 above.
- **National Capital Area Garden Clubs' Flower Show: *Saturday and Sunday, October 18th and 19th*** at the National Arboretum; this is a judged flower show and is open to Potomac Hosta Club members who may be interested in participating. Details are at: www.ncagardenclubs.org and click on "Review the Flower Show Schedule."

2015 Prospective Events

- **Hosta College: *March 20-21 at Piqua, Ohio***; the college is sponsored by the Great Lakes Region of the American Hosta Society and held annually. The Class List for 2015 will be released on 1 January 2015; for details see: www.ihostohio.org.
 - **The PHC Annual Meeting and Plant Sale: *March 29th, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM***; guest speaker to be announced.
 - **American Hosta Society Annual Convention: *Raleigh, NC, on June 18th through 20th***, hosted by Bob and Nancy Solberg; details should be forthcoming on the AHS website: www.americanhostasociety.org. Also, see details on Page 5 above.
 - **Green Spring Park Plant Sale: *May 16th***, at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22312.
 - **PHC Annual Picnic: *August 30th, from Noon to 3:00 PM***; location and details to be announced.
-

Potomac Hosta Club, Inc
Tom Hilt, Newsletter Editor
1336 East Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20003-1533



2014 Hosta Bingo Edition