

# Hosta la Vista

February '17

*Until we meet again*



## President's Message

Why are hostas so popular? They are America's biggest selling perennial plant but how can that be? They only come in three pretty dull colors. OK, there is a bit of white in a lot of them and a tiny bit of red in a few, but they are not exactly bright. Their flowers are not spectacular and only a few of them are scented. They die back in winter and leave an untidy brown patch in the garden. They don't come true from seed. You cannot go into a nursery shop and buy a packet of 'June' seeds.

Virtually every four legged vegetarian eats them and a couple with only a single foot too.

They are very slow to emerge in spring, way behind some beautiful ephemerals. Snowdrops are very early risers and those beautiful *hepatica*, *anemone*, and *thalictrum* are close behind. But those flowers only last a very short while and by the time our hostas have lumbered into the daylight they are gone.

The slow emergence of the hosta is to its advantage. The tightly wrapped nub of new leaves protects them against a late frost and as the spring rains arrive they expand like a butterfly's wings and quickly reach their full potential. I often say that the hosta is a 'guy plant'. You can lay on the sofa all winter watching sport and then in spring crawl across to the window and look out at your pristine hosta garden. You have not needed to lift a finger.

Once up there is nothing ephemeral



about them. They majestically fill huge spaces in our flower beds, look wonderful for months, look pretty good until late October and, in this part of the world at least, who cares that they disappear in winter.

The fact that they do not come true from seed is also an advantage. Paul Aden once told me that the English stopped propagating hostas when the seeds came up 'all different'. Those differences have helped to create over 7,000 (fairly) unique hosta cultivars that range in size from 2 inches to 3 feet high, six inches to five feet across and an array of color combinations that belies their tiny palette.

We all know that there are some wonderful hostas out there.

Will they be able to maintain their number one status? In the last decade the majority of hostas on sale originated in laboratories, in tissue culture. The arrival of plants grown in test tubes changed the industry.

But the world of hostas is changing. Only a few people are now in control of the mass production and marketing of hostas and we, and the nurseries, get offered only what they choose to produce and what they think that we might like. The nature of the business means that these hostas only stay in circulation for a few years until they are replaced by the newest and brightest. It also means that the price of new hostas is in the

hands of only a few people and hostas will be getting more expensive.

The worry is that the good old standbys will die out. No one will be tissue culturing 'Blue Angel' and 'Francee' when the new 'Frilly Red Knickers' is available. It is already almost impossible for a new hostophile to buy 'the green one with the big white, fragrant flowers'.

As a Society we try and provide our members with good new hostas. We are able to buy hostas from some of the wholesalers and we bulk order, on behalf of members, plants from some of the very good nurseries. We make them available to our members from the hoop house and at our sale.

But we cannot source those old favorites because they are rarely available, so we want to propagate our own. We are going to ask the membership to donate mature hostas, in whole or in part, to the Society. The plan is to divide them up, line them out, grow them on and have them available in a couple of years time. Just like they used to do in the Good Old Days.

The hobby also needs a National Collection of Hosta Cultivars, to make sure that the older varieties do not die out and are not lost to hybridizers, but that is a big topic for another day.

*Mike*



# HOSTA COLLEGE

Each year during March, the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of the American Hosta Society hosts a gathering of approximately 500 enthusiastic gardeners from the Great Lakes, Midwest and other parts of the US, Canada, and even Europe. This gathering is called Hosta College, and it takes place at Upper Valley Career Center in Piqua, Ohio.

Hosta College begins on Friday night with several different activities from which participants can choose. The vending area offers a large selection of plants (even though it may be snowing outside!), garden accessories, tools, and other garden-related merchandise for shoppers. The Bookstore features gardening books at fantastic discounts, stationery, society clothing items, and other Hosta College souvenirs. The auditorium and other areas provide slide presentations, talks by gardening experts, and opportunities to socialize with new and old friends from Hosta College. An auction of rare and unusual plants will be held on Friday evening. On Saturday, following a brief period for shopping in the Vending or Bookstore, classes begin at 8 a.m. Students attend 5 classes they have chosen from a program of over 70 classes taught by a faculty of approximately 50 volunteers. Mid-day each student has lunch from a delicious buffet included in the registration fee. At the end of the day students take a brief break and then return for a banquet and talk that concludes the Hosta College experience.

### To Register for Hosta College

Registration opens for Hosta Society Members:  
Opened Feb. 4 and closes Feb. 28 at midnight.  
Registration fees are \$42 for Hosta Society members,  
\$55 for non-members.

**New Login to Hosta College:** <https://www.ihostohio.org/glhcl>  
If you are new to Hosta College, click "Site Registration" first and setup your password.

**To view Class List press the hot link  
"Click Here To See Our 2017 Class List"**

Once you have chosen your classes, return to home screen and click on LOGIN link to Register for your classes.

Print two copies of your invoice page. Mail in one copy with your payment and keep the other copy for your records. Click on "Webmaster " (at the bottom of each page) if you have questions.

**Friday evening auction, raffle, vendors and bookstore are open to the public at 6 PM.**

**Saturday breakfast, classes, lunch, door prizes, raffle, vending, and bookstore.**

Hotels are on your own and the choicest will fill up, so again, don't delay, but grab a coffee and just sit down in front of that computer and get 'er done.

# Hosta Teas

Following our successful winter 'Hosta Breakfasts' we are continuing with 'Hosta Teas' to help us through the summer

Each garden is usually open for four hours between 1pm and 5pm. Members are encouraged to visit during the afternoon but not for the entire four hours. Just drop in and take a look around. Light refreshments are usually available throughout and when possible somewhere to sit and gossip is provided.

We invite our members via flyer, newsletter and send reminder by HOSTA FLASH. It's just a nice bit of socializing between meetings... and a great chance to nose around a garden!

We have some fabulous gardens lined up this year—details and descriptions later:

**June:** *The garden of Peg Riexinger in Lancaster*

**July:** *The garden of Geoff & Sue McCreary in Northeast, PA (we'll make it an excursion!)*

**August** (no tea - Garden Writers Convention)

**September:** *The garden of Barbara Evans in Williamsville*



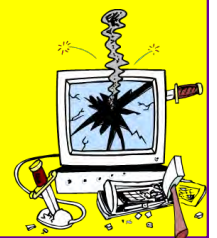
Three fabulous gardens - all different and all inspiring.

### AHS E-membership

The American Hosta Society has again gifted our Society a free eMembership. This membership will give someone the annual password that in turn gives access to the "members' only" section of the AHS web site at [www.americanhostasociety.org](http://www.americanhostasociety.org).

Full members and emembers are able to read the Annual on-line Hosta Journal, receive regular eNewsletters and see the contents of previous hard copy Hosta Journals.

The AHS hopes that when you see the quality and quantity of information available to members eMembers will immediately want to join the AHS proper (\$30.00 yearly) and receive the hard copy Hosta Journal twice yearly.





*We will raffle the eMembership among non AHS members at our February meeting.*

The next meeting  
of the WNY Hosta Society is the  
“ **Almost**” **Valentine**’ s  
**Day Meeting**

**Sunday, February 12th—1:30-4:30**

**East Aurora Senior Center**  
101 King Street - East Aurora 14052

*(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. Senior Center will be on your right next to the fire hall.... Park behind—NOT IN PLAZA).*

Doors open at 1:30  **Program commences at 2 pm** 

PROGRAM  
**SHADY CHARACTERS**

Kathy Guest Shadrack  
*Common and Not So Common Plants  
For the Sun-Challenged Garden*

B-MOVIE  
Sue Sickels  
**Mapping and Labeling**  
*Some ideas for bringing order to chaos*



**plus**



Short business meeting  
& review of 2017 calendar

**plus**  
Refreshments  
door prizes,  
and the usual fun and frivolity

**BE THERE  
OR BE SQUARE**



# 2017 CALENDAR

Subject to addition and change, of course....

Sunday February 12 <sup>h</sup>	Members' Meeting, East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, March 4th	Hosta Breakfast—10 am Forestview, Depew
Saturday March 17 & 18	Hosta College, Piqua, Ohio
Thurs, March 23rd to 26th	Plantasia Hamburg Fairgrounds
Saturday, April 1	Final winter Hosta Breakfast
Sunday April 23rd	Members' Meeting, and Naylor Creek hosta pick-up East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, May 13th	Hoop House - <b>Season Opener</b>
Saturday, June 3rd	Hosta Tea - <b>Peg Rixinger Garden</b> - Lancaster
June 07-11	Hosta Convention - Indianapolis
June 24 & 25	Garden Art Sale & Plant Society Ave - Botanical Gardens
June 23 & 24	<b>Hosta Tailgate - MI - (NEW)</b>
July 1	Hosta Tea - <b>McCreary Garden</b> Northeast, PA
August 4-7	Garden Writers Convention
August 20th	Members' Picnic Eagle Bay Hosta Garden
Saturday August 26th	Public Hosta Sale - Botanical Gardens
September 2nd	Hosta Tea - <b>Evans Garden</b> Williamsville
Saturday September 16th	Fall Hosta Forum, <b>PEACE, LOVE, PLANTS!</b> Edinboro, PA
November 4th	Hosta breakfast
Sunday November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Members' Meeting, East Aurora Senior Center

Additional plans are in the works -  
your suggestions **always** welcome.



# Save THE Weekend!!

## June 24th & 25th

For several years now the Society has been involved with the **Plant Society Avenue** that is held in conjunction with the **Garden Art Sale** the last weekend in June. The Avenue consists of booths manned by the more active of the groups, clubs and Societies that promote plants, flowers and gardens in the Region.

Typically we set up our booth, show the visiting public some well-grown hostas, chat about their diversity and how easy they are to grow and encourage members of the public who show an interest in becoming members.



BUFFALO-STYLE  
**Garden  
Art Sale**

The Sale will now be held on *both* days of the last weekend in June. It will be held on the green in front of the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, perhaps the best backdrop in the entire region. We hope to

encourage even more vendors to bring their garden related wares from near and far.

There will certainly be more plant societies this year. There are at least four societies that are headquartered at the Botanical Gardens and most if not all of them will be joining us. Together with the Erie County Master Gardeners and the Botanical Gardens themselves we will have a wonderful display in June.

If that were not enough, to continue the theme of Gardens Buffalo Niagara – *putting gardens first* (the newest name for the Garden Festival) which this year is education, we are going to invite the various plant societies and the Master Gardeners to give short talks about their favorite plants to an enthralled public throughout both days.



## The WNYHS 2018 Wall Calendar

Did you LOVE the 2017 Hosta Wall Calendar? Do you have it hanging in a prominent place in your home and/or office? Did you gift it to all your friends? Well, we have gotten nothing but rave reviews and we are going to do it again!

Originally, we were going to have a hosta-related picture that was connected in some way to each of the twelve months; snow in the winter, hostas going dormant in the fall, but more recently we decided to have pictures of hostas and hosta gardens throughout the year to keep us cheerful when our plants are dormant.. I'm currently looking at a lovely 'Liberty' that is brightening up my dreary February days.

We want this calendar to be available for sale at the Fall Hosta Forum in September and at our November meeting. It will make an ideal Christmas gift for friends and family not yet convinced that the Hosta is the greatest of all plants and will brighten any member's home.

*So, we need your  
photographs.*

We need to select at least 13. They need to be high resolution, in landscape format **and submitted to the Board by July 1<sup>st</sup>**. We will send reminders during the spring and early summer and if you have any questions about the resolution required we will be ready to



## FEBRUARY MEETING

We need the following for the February meeting:

***Sweets for the Sweet***

**Volunteers to bring desserts/refreshments -**

We like to keep the coffee and soda available at our meetings along with cookies and more. If you are able to bring something along to add to the hostality table please call

**PAT GURNEY- 716-649-7780**

Or [gpdchestnut@aol.com](mailto:gpdchestnut@aol.com)

**YOU....**

Make sure you come—and bring a friend!



# THE HOSTA OF THE YEAR

Each year, the American Hosta Growers Association (a trade organization of growers specializing in hostas) selects the best of the **best and honors one variety as "Hosta of the Year"**. These hostas special selections are acknowledged for being unique, easy to grow and loved by many. They can also be confidently recommended as a good choice for collectors, beginning hosta growers and seasoned hostaphiles alike.



The 2017 Hosta of the Year (HOTY) is 'Brother Stefan' (Petryszyn '98). This is a cross of 'King Tut' x 'Mildred Seaver'. This might be Olga Petryszyn's most famous introduction to date. Large, heavily corrugated gold leaves with a wide, dark-green margin. Moderate grower that forms a spectacular specimen in time. White flowers in early summer.

Olga named this hosta in honor of her beloved **brother**. Olga also chose 'Brother Stefan' as her hosta when she won the Eunice Fisher Distinguished Hybridizer Award in 2013.

Siting this hosta where it can receive a bit of morning sun will bring out the best color. You **can't go wrong with 'Brother Stefan'**.



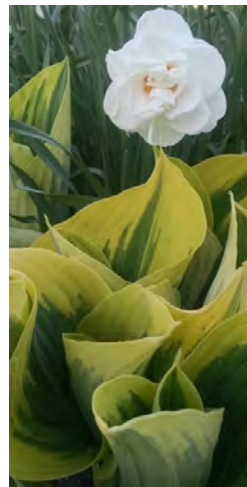
## AKA, The Vernal Equinox

The First Day of Spring  
March 20, 2017 at 6:29 AM

We've been waiting for this ever since the Fall Equinox! But what does it actually mean?

Astrologically, spring starts at the same moment worldwide every year regardless of time zone. At the Vernal Equinox, the sun crosses the celestial equator on its way north along the ecliptic. Days and nights are of approximately equal length. On the equinox, earth's two hemispheres are receiving the sun's rays about equally because the earth's tilt is zero relative to the sun.

A minority of scientists speculate that in places where there is nearly zero acceleration "self moving objects" may be detectable during the equinox. They are proposing to revise Newton's second law under these condition.



More importantly, what does it mean to us gardeners and hostaphiles? This the time to starting watching for signs of spring that are taking place in your location. I like to watch the budding forsythia. Just before it starts to bud out is the perfect time to start your spring chores. Some of those chores might include applying pre-emergent weed control to your beds and to apply all-purpose fertilizer. Some of us like to get a jump on slugs by spraying a 10% solution of ammonia and water or perhaps a solution of castor oil to deter voles. Then there's repellent to be applied if you have populations of deer or rabbits. They all love our hostas as much as we do! You may also want to do some pruning, but be careful that you are doing it properly and that spring is actually the correct time of year to prune your particular plant. Then, how about some starting to collect seeds to start for your vegetable or annual garden. Maybe you'd like to start some hostas from seeds. It's time to get your garden stuff together and ready to roll.

Before you know it, it will be summer and all your planning, preparation and hard work will pay off with beautiful gardens.

*Dianne Giordanno -*

## OUR OPEN GARDEN BOOK

If you have not already been contacted, you will soon be getting a telephone call from Board member, **Marcia Sully**. Marcia is taking care of her tropical and succulent gardens in Florida while we deal with the snow. Who wouldn't? Each year about this time she telephones all our members living in the Buffalo Niagara region to ask them if they would like their garden included in the Open Garden Book.

For the past 10 years we, along with our friends in the Buffalo Area Daylily Society and the Western New York Iris Society, have produced an Open Garden Directory. It lists the gardens of members from all three Societies who are willing to have other society members visit and admire their garden by invitation. It works like this; we list the geographical area the garden is in, the name of the gardeners, their telephone number and a short description of their garden. *We do not show street addresses.*

If a member would like to visit a certain garden they need to contact the garden owner and make a mutually agreeable arrangement. Only then is the address divulged. And, we **only** distribute the booklet to the members of the three plant societies. We agree that this is a very secure way of publicizing our gardens and encouraging our friends to visit.

*This year we intend to rush headlong into this new digital age and also ask members if we may publish their email addresses and encourage contact via email.*

Marcia Sully is calling you from Florida which is a **239** area code. She worries that people are not picking up because they think it is a telemarketer. Marcia is therefore leaving lots of messages. *She asks that members always call her back, or email her (MSully04@aol.com), even if it is only to say that they do not want their garden included or that the entry from last year's book is good and can continue into 2017.*

The phone call is also a way to make contact with our members and check that we have the right telephone number and street address. Don't worry, your address is only shared with Kathy - who maintains the membership list and sends out those amazing hosta flashes and newsletters.

So, please respond when Marcia calls. And we hope that you'll be a part of this fabulous program!



## PHOTO WORKSHOP

We all love to take pictures of our gardens and even the gardens of others. It has been suggested that we hold a **Photographic Workshop** in the summer. Our problem is that we do not have a professional photographer among our members who could pass on her wisdom. But, we have always been firm believers in group therapy and so long as we have several members who know how to take pictures and other members who are anxious to learn, it seems to be a good idea to hook up the two groups and see what happens.



*With that aim in mind we are going to try and hold a photographic get together at Smug Creek in mid to late June. June is a very crowded month, particular as it is when many of our hostas are at their best, and we have yet to determine exactly when it will be held but it would probably be for a few hours in the early evening of a weekday or weekend.*

*The board would like to hear the preferences of those who would like to take part. Please email me at H8staman@aol.com or speak up at the February meeting.*

## GLOVES AND MARKERS

The more astute among you will notice that our B-movie this month is going to be about garden mapping and labeling. This seems like a good time to remind you that we DO offer plant labels to our members at a very good price.



Jackie Adams has KINCAID LABELS (stainless steel and the best labels out there) for sale whenever our members gather, and winter is a great time for getting a leg up on labels.

We also have those fabulous ATLAS GLOVES -- all sizes and colors.

## The Fall Hosta Forum

This year's FALL HOSTA FORUM is coming together very nicely!

As you know, the FHF is a one-day symposium co-sponsored by the WNY Hosta Society and the Daffodil and Hosta Society of Western PA. We are in our **20th year** and so this year we wanted to make a SPLASH - and I think you'll agree that we have!

The formula for the Forum is four speakers; two hosta and two non-hosta., loosely formed around a theme. This year's theme will be "Peace, Love, Plants", taking the music theme we used last year forward 10 or 20 years. The point of the theme is really to tie the day together and to have a bit of fun.... So drag out the tie dye and bell bottoms. Find yourself some love beads and we are going to have a groovy old time.

### The Set list for this year includes:

**Barbara Tiffany - Mill Fleurs Gardens** - designing a garden with hostas

**Jonathan Hogarth** (all the way from England!) - growing and showing hostas

**Paul Zammit - Horticulture Director of the Toronto Botanical Gardens** - getting color into a foliage garden

**Karen Perkins - Garden Visions Epimediums** (just guess what she's talking about!)

And we've made some changes in the overall program, based upon those surveys that our regulars have diligently filled out.

We are not having a sit-down formal dinner again this year, but rather lighter fare, pizza and salads.... But you will still have an opportunity to visit the vendors and socialize

Instead of a gift hosta, each Friday night attendee will receive a **\$5 voucher**, good that night at any of the vendors. We will have a Friday night program on propagation.

And we are flattening the pay structure so to make it less of a puzzler - but you still get a discount for donating.

Oh, we were close to a sell out last year and we will DEFINITELY sell out this year with all these rock stars...

**So.... LET'S GET DOWN AND GET  
FUNKY!**

## NAME TAGS

**We believe in nametags...** we believe in being able to call people by their names - and the reality of those names not always being on the tip of our tongues. Name tags are a wonderful thing and some of us wish that the entire population wore them at all times in a large font.

We have always asked you to write yourself a name tag once you signed in at our meetings - but Board member, Dave Whittemore, has come up with an even better solution! A permanent nametag - on a lanyard - that we can wear loud and proud every time we come to a WNY Hosta activity!

**This is how it works.** We will have your new nametags at the February meeting. We will have (we hope) a lanyard for each person, plus (we hope) an insert that you can put into the transparent pocket (two, actually... one facing front, one back so that when the lanyard flips, we STILL know who you are).

Your given name will be in a font that we should be able to read from outer space. Your surname a bit smaller.

You may take them with you.... BUT, from this moment on, if you show up without a nametag, you will not be eligible for HOSTA BUX. An incentive to put them with your most precious things and to wear them to every hosta event.

**Oh... and did we mention - NO CHARGE!**

**So yet another benefit of being a WNY Hosta member... a fancy new nametag.**

Without Valentine's Day,  
February would be... Well,  
January.

JIM GAFFIGAN

## Western New York Hosta Society

Mike Shadrack, President  
8399 Zimmerman Road  
Hamburg, NY 14075  
H8staman@aol.com

We're on the web  
**WWW.Wnyhosta.com**

Next meeting: February 12TH  
Mid-Winter  
Valentine's Meeting

### **20 YEARS OF HOSTAS OF THE YEAR 2017 TO 1997**

1997 PATRIOT  
1998 FRAGRANT BOUQUET  
1999 PAUL'S GLORY  
2000 SAGAE  
2001 JUNE  
2002 GUACAMOLE  
2003 REGAL SPLENDOR  
2004 SUM AND SUBSTANCE  
2005 STRIPEASE  
2006 STAINED GLASS  
2007 PARADIGM

2008 BLUE MOUSE EARS  
2009 EARTH ANGEL  
2010 FIRST FROST  
2011 PRAYING HANDS  
2012 LIBERTY  
2013 RAINFOREST SUNRISE  
2014 ABIQUA DRINKING GOURD  
2015 VICTORY  
2016 CURLY FRIES  
**2017 BROTHER STEFAN**

*If you have the heart of a collector, this is a good collection to have - all good growers and all readily available at a reasonable cost.*