

Hosta la Vista

April '17

Until we meet again



President's Message

Last year was an interesting one for gardeners. The fairly mild winter with less snow than is usual in these parts meant that the perennials did not get that calm, consistently cold spell that gives them a chance to quietly recharge their batteries. Then the drought through spring and summer made it difficult for those of us growing hostas. Hostas like plenty of water in a well drained soil and without a lot of applied irrigation they did not get that last summer.



newly emerged butterfly's wing will absorb blood. If there is yet to be a leaf, the applied water is likely to rot the crown.

Last year, many local wells, often used by gardeners for irrigation, ran dangerously low. Some may have even got to the stage where to bathe or water the plants became a choice. Some members with mature hosta gardens decided not to water their hostas unless a particular plant looked distressed. Provided these were mature and had been encouraged to grow deep roots the decision worked out fine. But, to grow well and to their potential hostas need water.

I was once talking with the owner of a beautiful hosta garden in Canada. He said, "If you are growing hostas on a budget (and he looked down his nose at me, as if he knew that I was) then invest in water." He was right and that comment has been with me ever since.

The ideal growing conditions for hosta are a paradox. They can live in shade, but quite like the sun. The light and warmth of a good summer brings out their best flowers but they need a dark, cold winter dormancy period to make them big and healthy in the spring. Sometimes the shade provider, be it tree, shrub or building, prevents much of the rainfall reaching the plant. They like lots of water but do not like to sit in it. Good drainage is a must.

Newly planted hostas especially need plenty of water. I was once told to water heavily but not too often. This allows the water to drain deep and the roots to go deep in search of it. Once the hosta is deep-rooted it is more able to contend with a future drought should one occur.

Hostas planted in pots need special attention and the potting soil should never be allowed to dry out. Bare rooted hostas should be allowed to sit in watered for a few hours before planting and the potting mix should be damp when first used. The watering regime needs to be strict, and hostas in very small pots need almost daily attention. A word of warning, *do not over water potted hostas before the leaves begin to emerge.* As the leaves grow they will absorb the water and expand like a

I have spoken to many people who, like me, find standing idly spraying their hostas with the hose very therapeutic. It is a wonderful way to both enjoy hostas and to check on their well being. The problem nowadays is that it takes so much time. I have looked at sprinklers but the trouble with our hostas is that they are not of uniform height. I worry that if I rely on a sprinkler there will be plants tucked behind larger plants that find themselves in a dry spot. At least with the hose I can make sure they all get enough.

This year the early signs are that there will be enough natural rainfall to please our favorite plants. The region is enjoying above average rainfall, the wells should be full, there does not seem to be a late frost warning in the forecast and the plants seem to be emerging strongly

So, let us look forward to a warm damp spring and a pleasant hot summer punctuated by the occasional heavy cloud burst. And, while we are dreaming, lets buy a lottery ticket.

Michael Shadrack

President.



YOUR New Hostas

If you ordered hostas from Naylor Creek last December, they will be available for distribution at our April meeting. They will arrive bare root. So, what to do. Perhaps these tips will help the newer hostaphiles!

Plant your bare root hostas as soon as possible. Given Western New York weather, it might be better to pot them and leave them potted until all danger of frost has passed before putting them in the ground.

Soak the roots in tepid water for a couple of hours before planting. Use a rich soil mix that will drain well (ProMix or BM1 is a good choice). Dampen it before using it. You can form a small cone in your pot and spread the roots over it. Back-fill with your soil mix firmly, but not hard enough to damage the roots. Add water to prevent any air pockets near the roots. When you finish, the hosta crown should be level with the surface of the soil.

Water slowly but thoroughly. Do not water again until the soil becomes dry. One of the most frequent mistakes people make with newly planted bare root hostas is overwatering. Remember, some plants will emerge more quickly than others. Don't overwater the slower plants because you may cause them to rot.

If there is a threat of frost after potting or planting outdoors, protect new growth with an upside down bucket or pot or bring the newly planted pots into an unheated garage or shed.

Borrowed from the Mississippi Valley Hosta Society Newsletter

HOSTA FLASH!

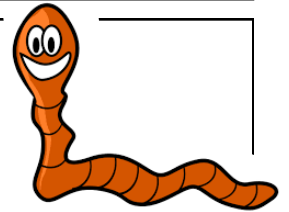
Our **HOSTA FLASHES** have turned out to be a wonderful way of telling the membership what is going on, offering deals, reminding them of events and so on. This is like a hosta/horticultural newsbulletin.

If you are NOT a subscriber, please make sure Kathy has your e-mail address. Contact her at:

Irisborer@aol.com



foliar nematodes in Hostas



It is that time of year again. If you have foliar nematodes in your hostas and if you want to treat them with Nema-kil then now is the time to be thinking about it.

Research funded by the American Hosta Society resulted in the recommendation that the use of a product called Nema-kil can be effective in reducing considerably the infection in both potted and garden planted hosta. But it is not an easy path to salvation.

Newly emerging hostas that we know have a nematode problem need to be drenched in a very weak solution of the chemical. Later in the season the plants will need to be sprayed once or twice with the same weak compound. Whilst not a total cure in garden plants the system does seem very effective at reducing the infection.

Small quantities of Nema-kil and instructions on dilution and use will be available at the April meeting.

The 2018 WALL CALENDAR

The WNY Hosta Society 2017 calendar was a great success! Members took photos in their yards, a committee selected the best of those submitted, Dave Whittemore put the calendar together and we almost completely sold out of our modest first effort.

Of course, we are going to repeat the process for 2018 - and we hope for many years to come. But this year, we need to step up the pace. We would like the finished product available for sale at the 2017 Fall Hosta Forum in September. We would also would like to have even MORE hosta pictures to select from to be included and we will need them earlier.

So please get out and about with your cameras this summer and take some interesting pictures of hostas and hosta gardens. They will need to be sent or given to Dave Whittemore by the end of July so that there is plenty of time for the complicated production process.



The next meeting
of the WNY Hosta Society is the

Spring Meeting

Sunday, April 23rd —1:30-4:00

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 1:00

Program commences at 2 pm



ROCHELLE SMITH

“Verticle Hostabilities”

B-Movie

Kathy Shadrack

Planting a bare root hosta

Short business meeting
& review of 2017 calendar

Plus

Door prizes
drag and brag
hostality
Fun and Frolic

Spring is almost here



OUR SPEAKER - ROCHELLE SMITH

Vertical Hostabilities

How can you untangle the options about using vines in your garden for a vertical element among your hosta and in your garden? Are you ready to weave through the twists and corkscrews of this entwined subject while selecting out the characteristics you want for your designed space? Let's spend an hour together with more than just a photo list of different species, let's interlace it with talk about different growth habits, soil and light requirements, bloom time and, of course, maintenance! Join us to braid in a few ideas for vertical vines in your garden space!

Rochelle Smith is an Assistant Professor at Finger Lakes Community College and has 14 years of college level instructional experience and 20 years of experience as a guest lecturer. Rochelle holds degrees in chemistry and landscape architecture as well as numerous additional certifications. Rochelle is two term past president of the Master Gardeners of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County and has owned and operated an environmentally sensitive landscape care and design firm in Western New York State.

For her landscape architecture Master's project Rochelle developed the guidelines for the city street tree master plan for the City of Rochester, New York following the 1991 ice storm. Her subsequent designs for that project have resulted in the planting of over 12,000 new street trees.

In addition to being the Horticulture Program Coordinator, Rochelle teaches classes in Basic Horticulture, Plant Materials, Soil Science, Landscape Design, the Art and History of Horticulture, and Turfgrass at Finger Lakes Community College. She speaks to a wide variety of groups in Western and Central New York State.

NAYLOR CREEK HOSTAS

Remember that we will have your pre-paid Naylor Creek hostas at this meeting for pickup. If you are unable to attend the meeting, PLEASE LET US KNOW and other arrangements will need to be made.

GARDEN GLOVES

Want Gloves?
Special spring offer
Two Pairs of our wonderful
Atlas gardening gloves

Only \$7.00
Get them at the meeting.



Donation Day

The Hosta World is changing. Thirty or so years ago we went through a revolution. The plants we loved began to be produced by tissue culture, produced in test tubes in laboratories and not in gardens and fields. In a short while hostas new to the market arrived quickly in bulk and because of that, they became cheaper for gardeners to buy.

Before then hostas has been almost exclusively produced vegetatively, grown in the ground. It took time for them to bulk up and increase of stock was achieved by division of parent plants. New varieties took several years to reach the market and when they did there were only a few of them and they were very expensive. Paying \$100.00 for a good new hosta was normal rather than exceptional.

Tissue culture labs large and small flourished and the pace of new introductions matched the speed of production. Hostas sport in the test tube in the same way that they do in the ground, only in a faster time scale. H. 'June' came to us from a tissue culture lab. Over time, many laboratories failed in the cut-throat business world, bowed to overseas competition or simply moved their skills into a different area. Soon, in this country anyway, only a few large systems producing hosta remained, although competition was still strong.

Sadly in recent years the number of businesses producing quality tissue cultured hostas has reduced considerably and there is far less choice on the wholesale market. Those labs that still produce hosta in quantity obviously push their resources towards the newest varieties that they hope will attract ready buyers from the nursery trade. Generally, they are not likely to waste time producing varieties like *plantaginea*, 'Halcyon' and 'September Sun' for example. Everyone already has them in their gardens.

But do they? Not, we think, most of the buyers who come to our annual plant sale. Those older, well-established plants are exactly the ones they are looking for. The varieties that can be recommended because they grow.

Our members have most of these old plants already growing in their gardens. They have been growing them for years. These hostas may be getting a bit large these days. Maybe our members are becoming tired of them. Maybe space is required for some of those newer, flashy varieties now available.

But help is at hand. You now have an opportunity to move some of those older plants out, or cut back a few, to make more room. *If you have a hosta that you need to move out or divide we would like you to donate it to the society so that we can divide it further and re-pot it ready for our sale in August.*

At the April meeting we will have some large pots and some large woven animal feed bags. It will be a simple matter to dig up the plant you want to donate, as soon as the spring shoots begin to appear, and drop it into a pot or bag. Provided the root ball is surrounded by earth the hosta will not need to be planted.

All you then need to do it bring it to the Hoop House Open Day on May 13th and donate it to the society. We will be most grateful and our hosta buying public will be impressed. It is what they call a win, win, win.

PRELIMINARY 2017 Calendar

*We've spent some time looking at the calendar already... all these dates are subject to change, but it's going to be a **BUSY** year!!*

Sunday April 23rd	Members' Meeting, and Naylor Creek hosta pick-up East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, May 13th	Hoop House - Season Opener
Saturday, June 3rd	Hosta Tea - Peg Riexinger Garden Lancaster
June 07-11	Hosta Convention - Indianapolis
June 24 & 25	Garden Art Sale & Plant Society Ave - Botanical Gardens
June 23 & 24	Hosta Tailgate - Michigan (TBA)
July 1	Hosta Tea - McCreary Garden 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 - Evans Garden Williamsville
Saturday Sept. 16th	Fall Hosta Forum, PEACE, LOVE & PLANTS Edinboro, PA
November 4th	First Hosta Breakfast
Sunday November 12 th	Members' Meeting, East Aurora Senior Center Botanical Gardens

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

And don't forget **OPEN GARDENS**, the **BUFFALO GARDEN FESTIVAL** and all the other green activities that occur during our too short season... we'll try to keep you up to date (especially with e-mail blasts)

Hostas in troughs and trays

By Mike & Kathy Shadrack

Small hostas are ideally suited to troughs and trays especially if carefully planted with a number of small companion plants. Whilst the tray should not be too small the size chosen will depend on whether you want to leave the tray in a permanent position once it is planted or to move it around for maximum effect. A container about eighteen inches wide can be moved during the season should more or less sunshine be required to grow the plants to their maximum potential or to bring it to greater prominence at the height of its growing and flowering season. Larger troughs, whilst more permanent in nature, can still be replanted, totally or in part, occasionally to vary their appearance. Trays and troughs left out all year will need to be frost proof and probably protected from the severest weather.

Ideally the trough or tray chosen should be between four and six inches deep and have vertical or nearly vertical sides. This shape will give a good depth of potting soil right up to the edge and allow for an imaginative arrangement of plants. Those trays that have sloping sides look very attractive but the depth of the planting medium at the edge is very shallow and it is only towards the center that there is sufficient depth for vigorous future growth. Small hostas need to be planted in at least four inches of good, well-drained soil or potting compost.

Deeper trays and troughs (and even large pots) need not be entirely filled with potting soil. It is good practice to fill the bottom of the vessel with Styrofoam chips and then with a layer coarse, lime-free gravel leaving only space for four or five inches of potting soil above. This arrangement will not only make the finished tray lighter and therefore easier to move around but it will also provide good drainage which is essential for maximum growth.

Once filled a tray or a trough can be used to create a lovely miniature garden that includes several small hostas or simply filled with a variety of hostas that look well together. Two types of small



hosta are particularly good for this type of arrangement, those that form a tight even clump and those that are more upright in habit.



H. 'Little Wonder' (Lachman 1989) is typical of the small hosta that forms a tight dome of small, variegated leaves. Typically it grows seven or eight inches tall and has a spread of less than 12 inches. The dark green leaves with their crisp white margins are three or four inches long and just over an inch wide. The flowers are mid purple and held on fairly tall scapes. The advantage of this and other tight clumping varieties is that they can be planted near the edge where their leaves will hang over sides of the trough thus breaking up the outline.

The upright habit of some hostas are better suited to the center of the trough or the rear of an arrangement. These include *H. 'Pinwheel'* (Savory 1983) that grows about seven inches tall with a spread of less than 10 inches when mature. The leaves are white with an irregular mid-green edge and the distinctive twist that lead to the variety's name.

Groups of hostas in these small trays look better together if there is some contrast in both color and form. The wide selection of plants available makes this simple so it is relatively easy to select one or two dark green varieties against which a variegated hosta will effectively stand out.

Green hosta recommended for trays include *H. 'Rock Princess'* (Maekawa/Japan NR) that grows rapidly into a tight six inch high mound of mid to light green sharply pointed leaves, with a slightly wavy margin, that are held upright on short petioles. The flowers are very pale lavender. *H. 'Tiny Tears'* (Savory 1977) is so small that it is particularly suited to a trough garden where it is less likely to be lost among larger companions. Only growing to about two inches tall with medium green heart shaped leaves it will need a space about six inches wide when it matures. The flowers are a dark purple and although held fairly high they offer a nice contrast against the foliage.

Hoop House Sale

Hoop House Sale – Hurry while stocks last

Thanks to some shrewd planning by the Board, and sheer hard work by Jackie and their crackerjack team of hosta wranglers, the hoop house is full to bursting with potted hostas.

We feel that we may even have too many and so we are holding a ...

Hoop House Sale

Saturday, May 13th
9am to 12 noon only

Lasting Dreams Daylily Farm
6425 Abbott Road, Orchard Park

The notion behind these sales is to give our members first dibs on the exciting (and CHEAP) hostas we are growing for our public sale in August.

The rules, there has to be rules! Members **ONLY**. Six plants maximum per member. Real money, no hosta bucks. The management reserves the right to withhold some of the hosta for future sales.

Hurry while stocks last

Please note.

Park carefully and quietly in the road.

Those of you who have been paying close attention will realize that this is also the same day/time/place when we are asking for your donations.

Bring your extra pots too, please - the bigger, the better

If there is then a small corner of the trough still vacant a contrasting yellow hosta than can be recommended is *H. 'Dragon Tails.'* (Zumbar NR) This variety has a looser form that allows its distinctive leaf shape to be clearly seen. The plant grows up to eight inches high and if left un-checked can grow a foot across. The narrow, distinctly rippled leaves are bright chartreuse yellow. This hosta contrasts well against darker companions and a deep brown potting soil.

Several miniature companion plants can add both color and variety to the hostas. These include miniature Heucharas, such as "Champagne" and "Onions", Ajuga "Chocolate Chip" or "Appleblossom" and perhaps even some of the new varieties of dark leaved strawberries. Early spring bulbs and violas will also give interest to the planting as the hostas begin to emerge.

Height can be added by using dwarf conifers such as Sawara cypress 'Blue Moon' or *Chamaecyparis pisitara* 'Golden Mop' or small hardwoods such as dwarf Elm 'Jacqueline Hillier' or Ilex c. 'Dwarf Pagoda'.



Any spaces still found between the selected plants can be filled with moss, small stones, a shallow mulch of a contrasting color or simply left bare.

Once planted with hostas and small companion plants a tray can be left for two or three seasons before it will require attention. By this time some if not all of the chosen plants will have grown too large for the space provided and the hostas will



need dividing to re-stimulate their growth. With a little effort, fresh potting soil, new companions and a light mulch will give the old tray a fresh look for a few more years to come.

The Open Garden Book

The 2017 Open Garden Book will be distributed at the April Members' meeting.

This book is the result of hard work by Marcia Sully who telephoned every member (sometimes more than once) during the winter months, Kathy Shadrack who spent hours transcribing it all and putting it together and Mike Shadrack who has been gamely folding and stapling in order to meet the April 23rd deadline. We have MANY more advertisers in the book this year and we are grateful for their contribution.

Your Open Garden Book gives you details of the members' gardens that you can visit throughout the summer - not only hosta members, but also daylily and iris members too. It is up to you to contact the garden owner by phone or e-mail to arrange your visit.

Remember too that every time you visit a member's garden and get your book signed *you qualify for a ticket in the prize draw that takes place in November.* Draw tickets mean PRIZES.

Please support those who enter their gardens in the book by visiting a few of them this summer.

MEMBER OPPORTUNITY!!!

The WNY Hosta Society has been given a very generous opportunity to purchase potting soil at a very reasonable price. The potting soil is the equivalent of ProMix and is called "BM1". It comes in large, 3 cu ft compressed bales and we are able to purchase at about 1/3 less than retail.

We need to assess interest in such a purchase. Logistically, we will purchase the soil on your behalf and have it labeled with your name for pickup at our Smug Creek (8399 Zimmerman Rd., Hamburg) location. Cost will be somewhere around \$25 per bale.

Please let us know **NO LATER THAN APRIL 23rd** how many bales you wish to purchase.

Mike or Kathy:

H8staman@aol.com or Irisborer@aol.com

Your spectacular NAMETAGS

At our February meeting, members were treated to our brand new fancy nametags and lanyards. Every single member of the WNY Hosta Society is entitled to receive one free nametag and lanyard as a benefit of membership.

The idea is this... the nametags are created for easy reading and consistency. They are the same front and back (because you know how these things flip). Some of us have difficulty remembering even our grandchildren's names, so this saves embarrassment and makes for a friendlier atmosphere.

They are yours to manage.

Ah, but there's a catch
There's ALWAYS a catch

Once you have your nametag, you are expected to wear it to every meeting and activity - and when you do... you'll get HOSTA BUX. When you don't.... No bux for you!

And if the dog eats it and it needs to be replaced, we are going to have to charge for the replacement... Seems fair.



So wear it loud and proud...but wear it!

APRIL MEETING

We need the following for the April meeting:

**Volunteers to bring
desserts/refreshments -**

Please call: Judy (649-2764)

YOU....

Make sure you come—
and bring a friend!

