

# Hosta la Vista

*Until we meet again*

February '18



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**I**t was good to have Bob Solberg come and visit in the fall and to speak at our November meeting. Bob often says that he is the only person in the hosta business who makes his living solely from the hosta plant. He was therefore just the person to tell us, among other things, what to look for in soon-to-be-introduced plants and where the hosta industry is headed.

Many members were already aware that several of the large tissue culture laboratories in the USA that produced hostas have closed and how this may effect the availability of hosta plants in the future. I worried that we were again heading towards the \$100.00 hosta. Bob did almost nothing to dispel those fears. Hostas are going to get more expensive and there are likely to be fewer new varieties to tempt the avid collector.

Kathy and I visited Marco and Joyce Fransen in Amsterdam recently and they too told us of the great difficulty they were having trying to add new hostas to their catalog.

My passion for the hosta began before tissue culture was such a huge part of the horticulture industry. My first major hobby was tropical fish and my family would have told you that it did rather take over most of my spare time. I went from aquarium keeper to fanatic when I realized that if you put two fish together in the right conditions, you can soon have hundreds. There is huge satisfaction in breeding fish.

I first got interested in hostas when I saw a TV gardening show where a lady had surrounded her pond with attractive-looking plants called "hostas". I had a pond and I decided that this was a really good idea, so went off and bought myself of couple of those



hosta plants. (H. 'Hadsphen Blue' and H. 'Francee' for the historians among you).

Those two hostas never did get planted next to my pond and languished for a while in their pots. Eventually I returned to them, decided they needed re-potting and

in doing so I cut them I half. Hey, there were two, there are now four. Not as good as fish breeding but wow, I was on a roll. I could produce hostas and that became the thrill that began my addiction.

That was the way nearly everybody produced hostas at that time. You

*Will expensive laboratory space  
be given to the likes of H. 'Blue  
Angel' and H. 'Sagae'?*

hybridized a good seedling or found an outrageous sport and you grew it quietly for several years, until you could divide your clump(s) into several plants and sell them all at the same time and usually at a very high price because they were new. In the years after that first introduction the price quickly began to drop as others began producing 'your' hosta. I can recall that years ago I bought two brand new hostas at \$150.00 each. (Again, for the historians, H. 'Striptease and H. 'Cascades'.)

Then things began to change. The ability to produce tiny new plants by the hundreds in test tubes became more widely known. Laboratories began producing large numbers of plantlets that

were later grown on by wholesale growers and quickly sold to local nurseries. Both the number of new varieties and the sheer volume reaching the market place increased rapidly and the price, even of a brand-new cultivar, began to drop dramatically. Good news for hosta lovers.

We enjoyed this situation for many years but recently the industry has changed again. Competition among producers and cheap imports from huge laboratories overseas meant that it became more and more difficult for tissue culture producers of plants to turn a profit. Two major suppliers closed and whilst there were many smaller units still flourishing they, at the moment anyway, are not able to take up the resulting slack.

The result is that fewer new hostas in much smaller numbers are being produced and put into the marketplace. The laws of supply and demand mean that unit prices, at every stage of production, are beginning to rise.

Another predicted effect of these changes is likely to be the scarcity of those old but reliable hostas that have been the mainstay of hosta gardens old and new. Will expensive laboratory space be given to the likes of H. 'Blue Angel' and H. 'Sagae'? I think not. I think that the way that these hostas will be produced in the future is the historic method. Plant them in the ground, let them grow on for a few years and then harvest them like any other crop.

Therein lies an issue. I think we must all, hobbyists, gardeners and fanatics alike, make sure that those wonderful garden-worthy hostas do not die out;

that there are always some available somewhere. That way the gene pool contained in that plant is available for future hybridizers and that should the tissue culture business expand once more, good plants are available to kick start the process.

Meanwhile, I found one of the most interesting paragraphs in an article in the recent AHS Hosta Journal, apart perhaps from those announcing the recent major award winners, was the one that read, ".....offered up a total of 10 two-eyed divisions of a similar gold-margined sport..... . All 10 quickly sold at a price tag of \$200.00 each...."

I was wrong about the price, but that's inflation for you. It does seem there will be less new varieties on the market and they will be more expensive. I am really not sure if this is a good or a bad prospect.

*Mike*

## 2018 HOSTA SHOW

### PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES

- all at the Botanical Gardens -

- |             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ June 8th  | Set up                               |
| ✓ June 9th  | Entry and Judging                    |
| ✓ June 10th | Move exhibits and<br>Open to public! |

A hosta show is a great way to get more involved with your plants

## Hosta Show 2018

*By Dianne Giordano*

Although we are in the middle of a dreadful, frigid and snowy winter, our thoughts are turning to Hosta season. Yes, we are beginning to plan our very own 2018 Hosta Show. This year's event will very bring some new ideas to our local show. Some of these changes are out of necessity and some are just to keep it interesting and fun.

We are adding a **new special section** to include only the Hosta of Year of the Year (HOTY) exhibitions. In case you don't know, these plants are selected annually by the American Hosta Growers' Association based on such criteria as ease of growth, affordability and widespread availability. They chose Hosta 'Brother Stefan,' the 2017 HOTY.

We are pleased that our show will include **Hosta Design Exhibits**. A local garden club has volunteered to help us out with the exhibits and perhaps design workshops. We are currently in the process of planning the workshops, but be sure to watch for more information in a future Newsletter or Hosta Flash.

Lastly, due to space considerations, we will limit the number of entries allowed per participant. Show information, including these changes, will be available in the Show Schedule that will be available upon AHS approval.



Hosta 'Brother Stefan'

*(see also article on page 5)*



## 2018 CALENDAR

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

Sunday, February 11th	Members Meeting East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, March 3rd	Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
March 16th & 17th	Hosta College, Piqua, Ohio
March 22nd - 25th	Plantasia, Hamburg Fairgrounds
Saturday, April 7	<b>Final</b> Winter Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
Sunday, April 22	Members' Meeting Naylor Creek hosta pick-up East Aurora Senior Center
Saturday, May 19	Hoop House <b>Season Opener</b>
Saturday, June 2	Hosta Tea - <b>TBA</b>
June 9 and 10	Hosta Show - Botanical Gardens
June 20 thru 23	AHS Hosta Convention Philadelphia, PA
June 30 & July 1	Garden Art Sale Botanical Gardens
July 13 & 14	Tailgate; Columbus, Ohio
Saturday, July 21	Hosta Tea - <i>Twilight Tea</i> Whittemore Garden
Sunday, August 5	Hosta Picnic Eagle Bay Hosta Garden
Saturday, August 25	Public Hosta Sale
Saturday, September 1	Hosta Tea - TBA
Saturday, September 15	Fall Hosta Forum, Edinboro, PA Fun, Fun, Fun
Saturday, October 6	Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
Saturday, November 3	Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
Sunday, November 11	Hosta Annual Meeting East Aurora Senior Center

The next meeting  
Of the WNY Hosta Society is the

## Not Quite Valentine's Day Meeting

**Sunday, February 11th - 1:30 to 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

**Hostas: The Good, the Bad and the Unusual**

An interactive program

**Moderated by**

Sue Sickels and Mike Shadrack

### B-MOVIE

Kathy Shadrack

**Do You Facebook?**

Hosta-ing on Facebook

**Plus**

**Short** business meeting  
& review of 2018 calendar

**Plus**

Refreshments

Door prizes

Hosta bux

And the usual fun and frivolity



**Be there  
Or be square**





## 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 the hosta world. An auction of rare and unusual plants is held on Friday evening. On Saturday, following a brief period for shopping in vending or the bookstore, classes begin at 8 am. Students attend 5 classes they have chosen from a program of over 60 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.

See back page for registration information and gift plants. **Remember that hotels are on your own** and fill up fast, so GET ON IT.

### Naylor Creek

We have paid for the Society's Naylor Creek hosta order and it is scheduled for delivery just before the April meeting.

Thank you all for settling your account with Kathy so promptly.

We can look forward to some lovely new hostas crossing the continent and arriving in Western New York in the spring.

## Hosta Teas

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

What is a hosta tea? It is a planned visit to a member garden, usually with light refreshments. The garden is usually open for four hours between 1 pm and 5 pm, but it's totally up to the gardener. Members are encouraged to visit during the afternoon, but not for the entire four hours. Just drop in, take a look around and enjoy light refreshments and maybe have a relax to gossip for a bit.

Also, the most successful teas include suggestions for other gardens or places of interest nearby as well as possible places to eat.

Members are invited via flyer and newsletter and reminders are sent by HOSTA FLASH. It's just a nice bit of socializing between meetings and a great chance to nose around a garden.

So far this year, we only have ONE garden lined up and we are looking for invitations for JUNE and for SEPTEMBER. If you have not yet hosted a tea and would like to give it a try, please contact: Mike Shadrack - H8staman@aol.com

As mentioned, we DO have one garden lined up this year and the gardener has gotten creative; it's not the first Saturday... it's the 3rd, and it's not in the afternoon, it's the evening. So you can be as creative as you like or you can stick to our pattern.

*And thank you!*

### The dates for 2018 are:

**Saturday, June 2** - TBA

**Saturday, July 21** - Whit's End, the garden of Dave and Barbara Whittemore, *Twilight Tea!* Details to come

*(no tea in August, too much going on)*

**Saturday, September 1** - TBA





## 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 the cookies and more.

If you are able to bring something along to add to the hosta-tality table, please call

PAT GURNEY-716-649-7780 or

gpdchestnut@aol.com

And **YOU**

Make sure you come—and bring a friend!

## Open Garden Book

If she has not already done so, Marcia Sully, who is presently caring for her succulent collection in Florida, will be telephoning you soon to ask you if you are surviving the winter happily and whether or not you would like your garden included in the 2018 Western New York, Hosta, Daylily and Iris Open Garden Book. If she leaves a message on your phone please be courteous and return it, even if it is only to say 'no thank you'.

## THE PROGRAM

### Hostas The Good, The Bad and the Unusual



**Mike Shadrack** – who for once will listen to the opinions of others - and **Sue Sickels**, will moderate.

What is so good about them, what can be so bad about them and why we even love the weird ones. We hope to cover every aspect of the hosta world - and at the same time answer your questions and listen to your opinions. The actual subjects to be discussed are not set in stone and will be what you want to hear about. Sue Sickels is preparing some illustrated answers to probable queries that may well include deer, fertilization, hybridizing, nematodes, selection and the best of the best.

The program is intended to be both informative and fun.

### B MOVIE

February meeting **Kathy Shadrack** will lead listeners into and around the various facebook and social media groups that talk hosta, sell hosta and hosta seeds and give hints and advice on how to grow and care for hosta. There are lots of such groups out there you may want to join a few.



## This year's FALL HOSTA FORUM

September 15th, 2018

## FUN, FUN, FUN



## H. 'Brother Stefan'

2017 Hosta of the Year

In this article I would like to provide more in depth information on H. 'Brother Stefan,' the HOTY 2017 that is the HOTY selected for the 2018 WNYHS Hosta Show special section. But first, I would like to share a little background on where the HOTY comes from and who selects it.

American Hosta Growers Association (AHGA) is a trade association made up of retail and wholesale hosta growers, hosta tissue culture labs and hosta hybridizers. Each year the members vote to select the "Hosta of the Year" (HOTY) based on certain criteria: grows well in all parts of the country, priced approximately between \$15 and \$20, is distinct and recognizable, and is widely available. The first HOTY selected in 1996 was H. 'So Sweet.'

H. 'Brother Stefan' is out of Olga Petryszyn's fantastic hybridizing program. I'm sure that many of you are familiar with Olga's Americana Series that includes 'Niagara Falls,' 'Key West' and 'Mississippi Delta' among many others. Olga began hybridizing in 1986 and shortly after received a small medio-variegated plant from Mildred Seaver who recommended she try working with it. In 1991, Olga crossed Mildred's plant with H. 'King Tut,' a large gold-leaved, seer suckered plant. She selected 7 seedlings to grow on. From those, only one gave her the spectacular results she sought. After growing that one for 6 years it was stable enough for introduction and needed a name. As Olga's brother Stefan, her "favorite mentor and her all American hero and brother," was turning 50 that year, she named it H. 'Brother Stefan.'

Registered in 1998, H. 'Brother Stefan' grows to 25 inches tall and 30 inches wide combining striking color contrast with thick corrugated foliage. The center of the maple leaf pattern is bright gold that is surrounded by chartreuse and the leaf is edged in deep green. Mature leaves show some cupping and some reverse cupping at the midrib.

It was a pleasure to be present at the AHS convention awards banquet in 2013 when Olga received the Eunice Fisher Distinguished Hybridizer Merit award for H. 'Brother Stefan.' Yes, Olga's brother Stefan was seated at her side.

## Western NY Hosta Society

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Hamburg, NY 14075  
H8staman@aol.com

**We're on the web**  
**Www.wnyhosta.com**

Next Meeting: February 11th

Mid-Winter Meeting



H. 'Half and Half'

or



H. 'Afterglow'

**Hosta College Souvenir Plants** *(One per registered attendee)*

## GUEST INFORMATION

### Register for Hosta College

Registration opens for Hosta Society Members: February 3

for Non-Hosta Society Members: February 10

All Registration closes February 24 at midnight

Registration fees are \$42 for Hosta Society members, \$55 for non-members

Login to Hosta College: <https://www.ihostohio.org/glhc/>

If you are new to Hosta College, click on "Registration" then "Site Registration" and setup your password.

To view Class List click on "Hosta College" then "Class List".

Once you have chosen your classes 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 "Contact Us" then "Webmaster" if you have questions.

Once again,  
several members  
of the  
WNY Hosta Society  
are teaching!