

Hosta la Vista

March/April '21

Until we meet again



President's Message



With a fair wind and a bit of luck we seem to be moving away from it at last. I mean both winter and the pandemic.

The snow is at last leaving us and moving downhill but for too many weeks it has been laying too deep to get out there and look after the gardens. The dormant hostas are doing just fine under their warm blanket of snow and we can expect 'Minnesota hostas' in the summer, but we (that would be the Royal "we") have not yet been able to remove fallen trees and branches or repair damaged deer fencing. At one point, I was up to my hips and could not move forward or back. The deer have trouble walking through three or four feet of snow too, but they have discovered that they can walk along the ice- and snow-covered creek bed.

The deer have no grass anywhere locally and are reduced to eating the low branch tips from the fruit trees in the orchard, the hydrangeas and the conifers in the gardens and almost anything in the woods that pops its head up through the snow. No problem really but we cannot let them get the impression that they are allowed because we don't want them back when our perennials are sprouting. As Kathy said, 'I almost feel sorry for them', but the 'almost' was in upper case.

So, what to do? Before that really heavy snow, deer repellent was sprayed on nearly everything above ground that could be reached. As soon as possible we will be out there sprinkling Milorganite on top of the snow in the vulnerable places. In previous years we have learnt that this deer repellent works on the snow surface for a while and, as the snow melts, it falls to the garden surface where it continues as a fertilizer but is not much of a deer repellent.

The deer fencing needs to be repaired soonest. In hindsight we should have been less ambitious with the fencing and brought it much closer to the edge of our cultivated gardens. That would have made it way shorter than it is (in length, not height) and made access to it much easier. The fishing wire we use works pretty well but, in most places, it has now been supplemented with the commercially available plastic netting deer fence.

Both styles are very susceptible to falling timber and the

snow settles on it and eventually the weight breaks the fence. I have only ever seen three totally effective deer fences. There is a famous hosta garden that is surrounded by a wall of concrete re-enforcing mesh held erect on 4 x 4 timber posts. Effective, but a little ugly. As we drive around WNY we often see the fences erected to protect the hundreds of ornamental trees being grown by several tree farms. They seem to work and because they go underground, they also keep out the rabbits. But if you want to see a wonderful deer fence locally you need go no further than Sue Sickels's hosta garden. Her fence is both totally effective and very easy on the eye. Members might be able to get a close up of it when we visit the hoop house in May.

Obviously, there is not much we can do to prevent winter but there is much we can do to slow down and hopefully eliminate COVID-19. I am not going to get political, and it is proper that we should all have our opinions, but good and sensible behavior is a must. The vaccinations are a bonus for some but we all need to wear a mask in public, maintain physical distancing and frequently wash our hands.

As a society we have obeyed all the rules. We have not met as a group for nearly a year save for the Members' only hosta sale. This was a triumph of forward planning. We had lots of members attending, everyone obeyed the rules and no one got sick. We intend to do something similar in May this year but will be some added elements. In addition to hosta sales we will be dedicating the hoop house to Dolores Galbo. It is also our intention to have three or four practical demonstrations of hosta cultivation and care going on in the horse barn. Rain on the day is going to be a big problem, and we might need a rain-day date, but we are a 'Society' and we need to get together with our friends soonest.

See you there.

Michael Shadrack

President.

**BE RESPECTFUL
BE RESPONSIBLE
BE KIND AND
BE SAFE**

Your New Hostas

If you ordered hostas from Naylor Creek last December, they will be available for distribution on April 24th and 25th at our house: 8399 Zimmerman Road, Hamburg 14075. 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 potting 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.

DIGGING TO SHARE

Many people divide their hostas in the spring, before the leaves fully unfurl when you can see what you're doing and the plant is growing vigorously.

Because of the concern we now have about jumping worms, we ask that you use only soil-less potting mix when potting these hostas. There are many varieties on the market... and, of course, BM1 is one example (also Promix, and various brands sold by your local nursery or box store).

Thank you!

MEMBER OPPORTUNITY!!!

The WNY Hosta Society has again been given a very generous opportunity to purchase potting soil at a very reasonable price. The potting soil is a little coarser than ProMix with better water retention. It comes in large, 3 cu ft compressed bales and we are able to purchase at about 1/3 less than retail.

Logistically, we will purchase the soil on your behalf and have it for pickup at Henry's Garden, 7884 Sisson Hwy., Eden. Cost is \$20 per bale.

The BM1 must be PREORDERED AND PREPAID - order from us and checks should be made payable to "WNY Hosta Society", and mailed to 8399 Zimmerman Road, Hamburg, NY 14075. Orders no later than 4/14 - payment no later than 4/18. **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BUY IT OUTRIGHT AT HENRY'S. PREORDER ONLY.**

Mike or Kathy:

716-941-6167

H8staman@aol.com or Irisborer@aol.com

The 2022 WALL CALENDAR

The WNY Hosta Society 2021 calendar was changed to a once-a-month free .pdf from Dave Whittemore. With the uncertainty of last year and this year, it made no sense to publish. BUT JUST YOU WAIT!!!

Of course, we are going to have an AMAZING calendar for 2022 - and we hope for many years to come. We would like the finished product available for sale at the 2021 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, seems like you'll still have time to take the perfect hosta photo! Be creative!

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.



HOOP HOUSE SALE

Hoop House Sale

Thanks to some shrewd planning by the Board, and sheer hard work by our crackerjack team of hosta wranglers, the hoop house is full to bursting with potted hostas. We generally offer our members a chance to purchase some of our bounty at a May Members' sale. Additionally, with our hoop house moved, our intention was to have a dedication ceremony last year where we would christen it in memory of a woman who was devoted to managing the hoop house; Dolores Galbo.

And we are reinstating that plan THIS year.....

For the record, these are the rules.... That will be repeated whenever we are "free to move about the cabin..."

HOOP HOUSE SALE RULES

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.

Nametags... remember your nametags

Watch for a HOSTA
FLASH - mini newsletter
for further information....
We will celebrate Dolores
first, then open the sale.



NAYLOR CREEK HOSTAS

Remember that we will have your pre-paid Naylor Creek hostas available for pickup the weekend of 4/25 & 4/26 at our garage:
8399 Zimmerman Road, Hamburg 14075

If you are unable to do so, PLEASE LET US KNOW and other arrangements will need to be made. Reminder by HOSTA FLASH.

PRELIMINARY

2021 Calendar

Sat., March 20	Virtual Hosta College Www.hostacollege.com
Sat & Sun, Apr 24-25	Plant Pick-Up /BM1 pick-up (see newsletter for details)
Saturday, May 15	Hoop House <i>Dedication and Season Opener - plus potting & dividing demos</i>
Saturday, June 12	Hosta Tea - Murray's Hosta Farm Orchard Park
June 26 & 27	Garden Art Sale - Botanical Gardens
Saturday, July 10	Hosta Tea - Stoffel Garden, Alden, NY
July 15-17	AHS Virtual Convention
Saturday, August 7	Hosta Tea - Dragon's Den - The Kreutzer Garden, Cheektowaga
Sunday, August 15	Hosta Picnic Eagle Bay Hosta Garden
Saturday, August 28	Public Hosta Sale
Saturday, September 18	Fall Hosta Forum, Edinboro, PA Roaring Twenties
Saturday, October 2	Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
Saturday, November 6	Hosta Breakfast Forestview, Depew
Sunday, November 16	Hosta Annual Meeting East Aurora Senior Center

All planned activities are subject to whatever safety rules are in place and the above dates are very fluid, depending upon conditions.

And don't forget OPEN GARDENS, the BUFFALO GARDEN WALK 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)

Stand-Out Hostas

The second in the series by Mike Shadrack

“Damn right I’ve Got the Blues”

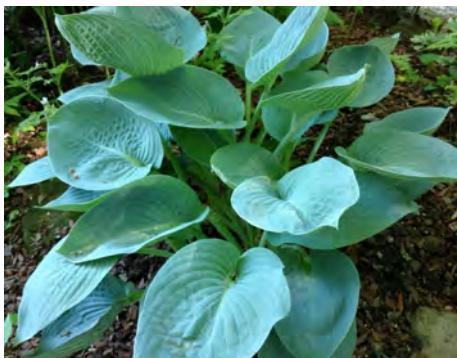


The boisterous H. **‘Blueberry Waffles’** is a large blue hosta that does really well around here. It took a little time to present itself properly but once it did, wow. The plant stands two- and one-half feet tall and some of its leaves are enormous.

The leaves, which are a delightful pale shade of blue, are heavily veined and intensely corrugated. They often have the look of crumpled paper.

H. **‘Tarheel Blue’** is probably the best medium sized blue in our hosta garden. The plant grew well and quickly established itself.

The shade where it grows is very deep and the powdery-blue coloration really shines. It grows to about 15 inches tall but the leaves are large for a medium sized hosta. They are deeply veined and somewhat cupped. The clump is very flat so, at maturity, it needs space.



Nearly everybody is going to say that H. **‘Blue Mouse Ears’** is their favorite little blue hosta so forgive me if I go for something different. H. **‘Baby Blue Eyes’** is a pert little hosta standing only six or so inches tall. The leaves are of



good substance and are dramatically pointed and slightly wavy and cupped. In the right location it is a fairly fast grower (for a blue) and increases well although too much

sun will turn those blue leaves a little greener.

“On the Edge”

I know that it is a very old cultivar but H. **‘Francee’** is the first hosta I ever bought and what a plant. In the hands of others, it has produced, to date, 80 sports. These include Hostas **‘Patriot’**, **‘Pathfinder’** and **‘Revolution’**. All those years ago I mis-read the label and for a long while I called it Hosta Fransec. A medium sized green hosta with a crisp white edge, it grows well and presents



itself proudly in the hosta garden. There are lots of green hostas with a white edge but I promise you that this is one of the best. The reason that these very old hostas are still available is because they are so good.

H. **‘Little Wonder’** is one of my favorite little hostas. It rarely grows more than eight inches high and the mid-green leaves have a prominent white margin. The two things that I really like about this plant is that the clump, even when it gets quite large, is very tight. There is little space between the leaves and each has to fight hard for its place in the light. Secondly, the variegation is very regular. The bright white edge is pretty much the same width throughout the plant. If there is to be a downside it might be that the purple flowers are held on very tall scapes which look a little out of proportion.



...See page 6

MY VIEW

- Barb Whittemore

We have all heard that Hosta is the friendship plant, and this simple statement was proven after a recent event that happened on Facebook. In March, 2020 a group was started called "View from my Window". The start of the COVID lockdown was underway, and the idea was to connect people from all around the world. Plan was to take a photo of what you saw, through your window every day, in the hope of encouraging people who could no longer travel or see new sights. It was very successful, so much so that membership was capped at over 20 million, and a book was published at Christmas that listed all those postings. I sent in a picture in August, 2020, but never heard a word, probably due to a waiting list of pictures. In January, it was reopened for a week, and I resubmitted my picture along with an updated caption.

On 2/22/2021, my View was posted on Facebook, much to my surprise. As I write this, there have been over 25,000 "likes", and over 5,000 comments. I have heard from all over the world, from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Brazil, Britain, Japan, Iceland, all over Europe, Israel, Canada, Mexico, and more, along with every state in the US. Hosta was the key, so many people would say "I love Hosta" and talked about their collection. There were comments from people living in the SW of the US who had to look up what Hosta was, and then wished they could grow them. People who moved south and took their heirloom hosta's with them. They sent me pictures of their gardens, asked for advice, complained about slugs, snails and deer. I even heard from gardeners in Russia who had their collections and same problems. What a wonderful plant that we all had in common! Comments from people in Britain about gardening, their love of hosta, and problems with slugs were enjoyable, and I had fun telling them that the president of the WNY Hosta Society was a retired policeman from London!

I also heard from people who knew us, such as an elementary school friend of Dave who now lives in Oregon, relatives and friends from all over. People who had once lived in WNY were excited to see a picture from home, commented on the lack of snow in the picture, and usually ended with GO BILLS. Folks who live near Buffalo, from Cleveland, Erie, Rochester, NY City and Hamburg were all friendly and interested. I invited everyone to Open Garden's in July and if everyone comes who said they would, we will need help!

....See page 6

2021 Hosta of the Year 'Rainbow's End'

(Hansen 2005)

With the increasing number of hosta cultivars being introduced each year it is increasingly difficult for nursery owners and gardeners to choose just the right hostas for their sales areas and gardens. To this end the American Hosta Growers Association established the AHGA Hosta of the Year in 1996. It is selected by a vote of AHGA members. Award winners are hostas that are good garden plants in all regions of the country, are widely available in sufficient supply, and retail for about \$15.00 in the year of selection.



H. 'Rainbow's End' photo Walters Garden

Color - Medio-variegated

Size - Small (11"ht x 21"w)

Habit - Mounding

Bloom - Purple

Parentage - sport of 'Obsession'

This yellow centered TC sport of 'Obsession' features very thick, dark green leaves with a flared center pattern. The bright yellow center becomes white by summer. Pale purple flowers on red scapes in late summer

Spring is nature's
way of saying "let's
party"

- Robin Williams

For many years H. 'Paradise Expectations' was the biggest hosta in our garden. This huge Dutch sport of H. 'Great Expectations' is also a good looker. The large blue-green leaves are framed by a wide creamy-yellow border and dip their pointed ends towards the ground. Planted towards the rear of the hosta bed it is guaranteed to catch the eye. A fairly fast grower with heavy substance this hosta, I regret to say, is way better than its English mother.



The Open Garden Book

(AKA The Members' Garden Directory)

The 2021 Members' Garden Directory is actually the 2020 Members' Garden Directory updated. We were unable to print it last year and so - with the world cautiously coming back to life, we decided to update what was already in place.

This book is the result of hard work by Marcia Sully, Pat Gurney, Judy Johnson and the Wagners who telephoned every member (sometimes more than once) during the winter months, plus Kathy Shadrack who spent hours transcribing it all and putting it together, Mike Shadrack proofed and organized it all and Pat Gurney who also arranged for the printing. We again have advertisers in the book and we are grateful for their contribution - we hope you pay them a visit too.

Your Directory 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 offer their gardens in the book by visiting a few of them this summer.

And of course... support our advertisers!

... MY VIEW (continued)

I am slowly getting through the comments and pictures. It is a pleasant chore and I am jazzed up for the upcoming gardening season. I am so proud of our association with the WNY Hosta Society as we have found new friends, learned so much, and had fun!



It is nice to know that despite everything that has happened to drive people apart this past year, a simple plant is the thing people all over the world have in common. Hosta: "The friendship plant".

WE'RE GOING
Virtual!

Join us!
JULY 15–17, 2021

AHS2021.org



AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY NATIONAL CONVENTION
KALAMAZOO, MI

- **Registration is now open!**

Visit the convention website at www.ahs2021.org to register for the event being held July 15–17.

You'll also learn more about all the great activities and opportunities, like:

The convention gift Hosta 'Silly String' (mailed to each registrant)

- Schedule for speakers, workshops, judges clinics, and more
- On-demand, professionally recorded virtual garden tours
- Seedling photo competition
- And much more!

As a reminder, registration is \$49 per household. More details about other activities are coming soon, so keep checking the website for updates.



Hosta 'Silly String'

A PERENNIAL PLANT STUDY: IRIS by Marilee Farry

This surely is an odd inclusion in the HOSTA NEWS! Your editors have kindly allowed me to address my fellow members of the Western New York Hosta Society and share this interesting iris plant. Currently, I am a member and judge of the American Iris Society (AIS) and the current president of the Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS), located in Buffalo and the surrounding areas. Gardeners tend to have their plant favorites, and I tend to enjoy perennials. Bulbs, hostas, daylilies, and irises are my favorites. Plus, every spring, I throw many annual seeds. Most gardeners choose a favorite plant and remain with it. Unlike most, I tend to choose a particular perennial, learn all I can about it, plant and grow it, but then move onto another plant to thoroughly investigate. I am also a member of the American Horticultural Society and a judge of the American Garden Clubs, Inc.

The first plant I studied and still enjoy in my garden is the genus *Hosta*. My initial beautiful hostas were 'Frances Williams', 'Halcyon', 'Hadspen Blue', 'Gold Standard', 'Patriot', 'Sagae', and 'Liberty'. Also, 'Sum and Substance', 'June', 'Praying Hands', 'Halcyon' and 'Spilt Milk' are some of my larger hostas that bloom every year. Presently, I am enjoying mini hostas and awaiting several new ones from Naylor Creek Nursery via the WNYHS.

During the last several years, I have dedicated my time and energy to the genus *Iris*. Irises that are recognized by the American Iris Society are grown from seed and develop rhizomes. Reticulatas, that peek through the snow, are bulbs and are not registered or awarded by the AIS. There are many classes of the genus *Iris* and they are divided into bearded irises and beardless irises. It is said, there are irises blooming somewhere every month of the year! And under various temperatures, light, water, and soil conditions, different iris classes do grow everywhere throughout the United States. New iris species are still in modern times, being discovered and classified through genetic study.

In western New York, there are over twelve classes of iris that grow and bloom. They range from ground-cover crested Evansias; five Bearded irises of various heights, up to 40 inches. Beardless iris classes from Siberianans, Louisianas, Pseudatas and Japanese Ensatas; Spuria irises that grow over 48 inches or more; Novelty; and Reblooming irises, can be grown here. The various iris classes bloom from late April/early May to late September/early October. Because irises have different bloom times; various flower colors; unique forms, heights, sizes with their green spear-like foliage; they complement many plants, especially hostas. The genus *Iris* truly adds so very much beauty to all types of gardens.

For any iris information and/or interest in attending a WNYIS meeting: please call me at 716-668-1789 or email me at (farmare@aol.com) - Marilee Farry

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: ?? TBA

Spring Meeting

All the pieces for this year's Fall Hosta Forum are in place. In fact, they are precisely the same as LAST year's. We are still waiting to hear the availability of the University space... stay TUNED.

We have two of the most highly-regarded hosta personalities in the world, plus two additional speakers in great demand everywhere. Plus our Friday night has evolved - based on your survey responses we have changed to a vendor preview with sandwiches and salad and a \$5 voucher for the vendors...

So, get yourself ready for another FABULOUS Forum.

registration forms & information
will be on the website - or we can
mail so one if you ask...

2021 FALL HOSTA AND GARDEN FORUM

Sponsored by: Daffodil & Hosta Society of Western PA and Western NY Hosta Society

The Roaring Twenties



Don Rawson (hostas)
All the way from Michigan

Tim Boebel
Hydrangeas for the North

John Totten/Linda Kramer
Native Plants

Noah Schwartz (hostas)
Also all the way from Michigan

September 18th
Edinboro, PA

Details: www.wnyhosta.com