



Hosta 'Hometown Hero'
Bev and Dave Stegeman, 2014
In the Country Gardens and Gifts introduction for 2018



President's Musings

Gregg Peterson
President, American Hosta Society

A Happy New Year 2018 to everyone and an early Happy 50th Anniversary to members of the American Hosta Society, which will be celebrated in various formats and venues throughout 2018, culminating with the AHS National Convention on June 20-23, 2018 in Pennsylvania. Learn more about the convention later in the newsletter.

Just two quick thoughts about the extreme winter weather that a large majority of hosta growers have been experiencing. It has been said that hostas need a cold dormancy period and that the longer and colder the dormancy the more robust and larger your hostas will be. As a hosta grower from Minnesota who has worn the mantle of being able to grow large hostas, I am willing to back off this year and tolerate smaller and less robust hostas this spring in exchange for some relief from the brutally cold temperatures!! I also want to state that despite all of the excellent traits that hostas exhibit in their growth, winter interest is NOT one of them! As I look out over my snow-covered garden beds, the few forlorn hosta scapes from some late fall blooming hostas do nothing to beautify the winter landscape.

The local hosta society being highlighted in this issue is the Shades of Green Hosta Society (SOGHS), covering the Rochester and southeastern area of Minnesota. As a member of this society, I have attended a number of events that they have hosted, including their huge hosta sale in the spring as well as several garden tours and local meetings and gatherings, including helping out with their exhibit booth at the Minnesota State Fair. One particular note of interest about SOGHS is that they not only present a wide variety of programs and events for their members, but they also seek out opportunities to help other groups and agencies in the area. These efforts have included the donation of plants and labor to plant a local garden to the donation of money and resources to benefit a particular cause. Hats off to the members of the Shades of Green Hosta Society for all of their efforts!

They are a fixture in vending, not only during most national AHS conventions, but also at Midwest Regional Hosta conventions during the summer. I am referring to Josh Spece and his family members from In The Country Gardens and Gifts. Not only do they bring an impressive variety of both classic hosta varieties and new introductions for people to peruse and purchase, but Josh is a wealth of knowledge about hostas and is more than willing to share that information with everyone. What many people may not realize is In The Country Gardens and Gifts has a very complete website and mail order business, as well as also operating a retail operation near Independence, Iowa. I invite you to visit their website and see all of the exciting new plants as well as visiting with Josh and his family at an upcoming convention or other hosta gathering.

In closing, I want to offer some thoughts from Alex Summers, one of the founders of and the first President of the American Hosta Society. Writing in the 1969 Hosta Journal Bulletin Volume 1, he states "Too often are shady areas devoted to dumb-looking ground covers such as ivy or pachysandra with their year around sameness lending general utility but imparting the vivid personality of a rubber door mat. Surely garden

builders could express their esthetic garden sensibilities better without giving their patronage wholly to dull ivy or drab pachysandra.” I challenge you as a garden builder this spring to go beyond the rubber door mat plants and make your garden a “standout” to be admired by all.

Check out some of the additional articles from Glenn Herold, Larry Tucker and Warren Pollock in this issue. Stay warm and let the countdown to Spring begin!!

Yours in the “friendship” plant.

Gregg Peterson
President, American Hosta Society



Hosta 'World Cup'
The AHGA Hosta of the Year (HOTY) for 2018
Photo by Tom Micheletti



The American Hosta Society **ONLINE AUCTION**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The holidays have been “present” and the concept of gifting is still fresh, to others and perhaps to one’s self in the case of the AHS Online Auction. The annual auction is upon us.

January 13th is coming soon which means that the AHS Online Auction will start SOON! The event will once again run for two weeks, Saturday, January 13, through Saturday, January 26, 2018. We have been receiving donations throughout the past few weeks and are ready to handle more. Many of the annual donors have already sent items, several others have sent a message that items are coming soon, a few that have been missing in action have items coming, and, yes, again, a first-time donor with something different than we have ever offered, special indeed! We are hoping to hear from several others as the days go by and would love to see more first-time participants.

The auction is open to members AND non-members.

It is easy to participate with directions and details posted on the auction pages.

Each year I am personally excited as I see what you all have come up with in the realm of new and exciting, never before released plants. Each year it is moving to have many of our favorite nurseries delve into their new releases, as well as gardeners selecting from their own gardens a favorite or two as an offer. Each year, I am overwhelmed with the generosity from our many donors. Each year, I am grateful for the support by Josh Spece. Our consummate writer, Warren, has come through with some dandy descriptions. This event simply does NOT happen without all of these things coming together.

Never donated an item? No problem. New and exciting hosta, classic hosta that new comers will enjoy as much as you have enjoyed, hard to find collector plants, companion plants, books, garden art, all have been donated and well received in the past. Simply send me both a photo (we can often help if you do not have one) and a description including enough detail for the bidders to understand what the item is. We can work together on the write-up for clarity if need be, our experience on our end may help with follow-up questions that we anticipate bidders may be curious about. We will make it work!

Any descriptions and photos of offerings that can reach us within the next two weeks helps us be prepared for the opening day, January 13th. We will accept donations until the third to last day, January 24th (time to format info is required and bids to be generated). We will continue to post items and process new arrivals throughout the two-week running of the auction.

The **auction is now linked up** and open to establish or test your user name and password. If you are **New** to this event or **forgotten** these from the past, select "New Registration" found as a tab at the bottom of the auction page. Be sure your email address and mailing address, phone, etc. is correct. These are used for all communications. Go to the AHS Homepage at <http://americanhostasociety.org> and click on the *Activities* tab. From the drop-down menu, click "Online Auction". Read each page and click the link on the bottom of each page to reach the actual auction.



username

The American Hosta Society ONLINE AUCTION

Auction Categories

All proceeds from this auction go to the American Hosta Society

HostaLibrary Please Click Links for Hosta Photos
[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [WX](#) [YZ](#)

Category	Items
Hostas	0
Hosta Seed	0
Other Items	0
Non-bid Important News	0

[\[Category List\]](#)  [\[New Registration\]](#) [\[Change Registration\]](#) [\[Closed Auctions\]](#)

Help spread the word to your hosta friends via personal emails, forums, and phone calls. Membership in the AHS is NOT required to take part in this auction. Of course we do encourage and welcome those wishing to become a member. Go to: <http://americanhostasociety.org/Membership/Membership.htm>.

Tips, updates, clarifications, etc. will be posted in the "non-bid important news" section of the auction postings like previous years. Be sure to **keep checking these** since this is where any corrections are posted. Some crucial items of information are posted there now.

Consider continued participation this year or joining in the fun if you have not done so in the past.

Don Dean
Online Auction Chair

FEATURED LOCAL SOCIETY



Shades of Green Hosta Society

of Southeastern MN, Inc.

www.SOGHS.org

<https://www.facebook.com/SOGHS.SEMN/>

*Kathy Rustad - President
4001 10th Avenue NW
Rochester, MN 55901*

The Shades of Green Hosta Society was founded in 2005. The society currently has approximately 180 members. The club holds three membership meetings per year, plus a variety of other events. Meetings are held at a local church fellowship hall, with summer meetings held at local member gardens. Members are asked to volunteer to host garden meetings. Average attendance at meetings is from 60 to 75 members. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individuals or \$15.00 per household. Shades of Green is affiliated with the Midwest Regional Hosta Society (MRHS) and the American Hosta Society (AHS).



Member Garden Tour, June 2017 (Joyce and Terry Grier in Mary and Rich Hurt's garden)

The Shades of Green Hosta Society publishes a quarterly newsletter that is distributed both electronically and in printed versions. About 95% are delivered electronically, while the remainder are print versions. Some articles are written locally, with most articles being reprinted from the AHS newsletter exchange.

Their major fundraising event is the annual plant sale, featuring both hostas and shade perennials. Our Hosta Plant Sale is an annual event and our major fundraiser. Last year all Hostas were donated by the members and what a truly bountiful year! In years past, we often augmented our inventory with purchased Hostas but, as you can expect, this cuts into the profit margin. Once held in mid-May, we started to hold the Hosta Plant Sale the first week of June in hopes of giving our member gardens ample time to sprout up a good inventory to sell. Each year we cross our fingers and hope for warm temperatures so there are no late frosts, as have happened, to damage our hopeful Hostas. Our Hosta Plant Sale has included companion shade plants in the past. Space limitation meant storing some hostas under tables until space was made available, so we will be holding a Hostas Only Plant sale in 2018. Last year we focused on educating members about patented hostas to ensure we did not infringe on any patents. Members were provided information on what hostas we were authorized to sell, and the inventory was closely monitored to hold ourselves to high ethical standards.



Founding Members of Shades of Green Hosta Society

Cindy Tomashek, Karen Noltee, Jean and Gerry Meyer, Dave and Denice Cocker, back row: Nancy McMahon, Nancy Fohrman, Vickie LeCocq, Cory Landgren, Mona Keehn, Jeanne Truedstedt, Yvonne Landgren, Jan Gerke, Barb Armbruster, Les Griebenow, Peggy Marchesani

Other special events include the Snowflake Gala, held in January (this year at the Willow Creek Golf and Country Club on Jan. 18th). The Snowflake Gala is so well received it has a life of its own. A social hour with games (such as unscramble the Hosta names or guess the Hosta name by filling in the correct vowels) and appetizers are followed by dinner and door prizes. This is an opportunity for members to truly socialize, catch-up and relax after the hectic holidays.

The Spring Open House is a great kickoff to the summer events of garden tours, bus and car tours. Besides taking place in the spring garden, the Open House includes appetizers, a workshop (last year Cindy Tomashek taught us how to prepare and present hosta leaves for a hosta show), door prizes, a silent auction (Hostas,

companion plants and garden-related items donated by members) and socializing. Speakers from local, regional or national organizations are featured yearly.



May – Spring open house at Mona Keehn’s home – Cindy Tomashek’s Leaf Prep Talk



July 2017 - Overnight Carpool to Green Bay area (Nancy Peterson and Sue Martino with treasures at Pondsides Gardens)



July 2017 - Member Chris Peterson in her garden discussing a big hosta.

Shades of Green Hosta Society sponsors a display garden at Rochester Community and Technical College. We hope someday this will evolve into a national AHS display garden. The garden is an area designated as the S.M.A.R.T. (Sustainable, Medicinal, Artistic, Resourceful, and Thematic) Garden. SOGHS has also purchased books for local libraries, including Mark Zilis’ *Hostapedia*, and D. Grenfell and M. Shadrack’s *The Color Encyclopedia of Hostas (2nd Ed.)*. Each year, SOGHS provides \$6,000 in scholarships to RCTC students majoring in horticulture.



May 2017 - HOTY sorting and prep gathering. (Dave Cocker, Jan Gerke, Deanna Nash, Chris Parisi, Peg Marchesani and Denise Cocker.) This was taken at Jan Gerke’s House.

Many members are active in the Midwest Regional Hosta Society. Cindy Tomashek is Past-President of MRHS, and Mona Keehn has recently taken over as MRHS Treasurer. Dave and Denise Cocker are regular volunteers at the MRHS Convention live auction. SOGHS was well represented at last year's MRHS Convention in Kansas City.



**June 2017 - MRHS Convention in Kansas City
(Mona and Cindy prepping leaves)**



(Dave and Denise Cocker and Kim Greene touring the gardens.)

The Founder's Day Picnic is held each September at the Tomashek farm in Preston, MN. This beautiful acreage includes many Hosta and flower gardens to tour, a beautiful reclaimed barn to explore and a large, welcoming activity building where a pot luck is served. The afternoon includes a silent auction and new last year was the live auction. Mike Tomashek can be found giving tours of the grounds on his ATV which can venture through the woods and over mowed paths. It's a great setting for members to enjoy good food, friends and the beautiful landscape and breathtaking countryside.



**Founder's Day Picnic at the Tomashek's farm in Preston, MN.
(Greg Peterson, Dave Cocker and Cindy Tomashek working our first live auction)**

Hostas and Associates

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI



Hosta Ancestry DNA: Does Family Matter?

A popular activity recently is to find out your ancestry by submitting a sample of DNA to a testing facility. For less than \$100 you can find out where in the world your ancestors came from, something most of us know already anyway. You may even have received one of these kits as a Christmas present.

This type of research has been going on in the plant world for decades, leading to a determination of the relationship between plants and plant groups. The group responsible for compiling the findings of plant systematists and organizing plant families and orders is the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG).

In the past, classification systems were typically produced by an individual botanist or by a small group. The result was a large number of systems, which did not agree in totality. Different systems were generally favored in different countries. Examples are the Engler system in continental Europe, the Bentham and Hooker system in Britain (particularly influential because it was used by Kew Gardens), the Takhtajan system in the former Soviet Union and countries within its sphere of influence and the Cronquist system in the United States. (I still have my copy of *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada* by Henry Gleason and Arthur Cronquist that I used in my plant taxonomy class at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Copyright 1963!)

In order to avoid this confusion and to provide some semblance of uniformity, the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group was formed. The APG is an international group of systematic botanists who collaborate to establish a consensus on the taxonomy of flowering plants (angiosperms) that reflects new knowledge about plant relationships discovered through phylogenetic studies (the evolutionary relationships between a group of organisms, mainly based on DNA evidence.) Four versions of a classification system have resulted from this collaboration, published in 1998, 2003, 2009 and 2016. The 2016 version contains a total of 64 plant orders containing 416 families, an increase of five orders over the 2009 version.

In APG IV, published in 2016, hostas were placed in the order Asparagales and the family Asparagaceae. Other well-known families of the Asparagales are the Orchidaceae, Iridaceae, and Amaryllidaceae. Since the Asparagaceae family was quite large, it was broken down into seven subfamilies and hostas were placed in the subfamily Agavoideae, which also includes the genera Agave, Camassia, and Yucca. Thus, based on molecular evidence, those three are the closest relatives of hostas.

If you have been into hostas for a long time, you probably remember that they were once included in the Liliaceae, or lily family. This was a very large group, with over 3500 species to its credit. They were originally placed there in 1870 by the English botanist John Baker. This held until 1985 when the Danish botanist, Rolf Dahlgren, synthesized all the molecular and chemical information and broke the Liliaceae into 40 different families in three different orders. Even with today's technology and research techniques, much of his classification system still holds true. Hostas were placed by him in their own family, the Hostaceae.

Where do others place hostas? Cronquist followed Baker and placed them in the Liliaceae. Takhtajan agreed with Dahlgren by placing them in the Hostaceae. APG I and II, published in 1998 and 2003, placed hostas in the Agavaceae family. APG III and IV, using molecular evidence published in the last decade, have them in the Asparagaceae.

Some have speculated that desert-adapted plants, like agaves, evolved from woodland herbs like hostas via an intermediate plant resembling the desert lily (*Hesperocallis*), tuberose (*Polianthes*), or the sand lily (*Leucocrinum*). Pollen studies show a strong resemblance between *Hosta*, *Hesperocallis*, and *Leucocrinum*. The flower spike of hostas is also very similar to those of the desert lily and tuberose.



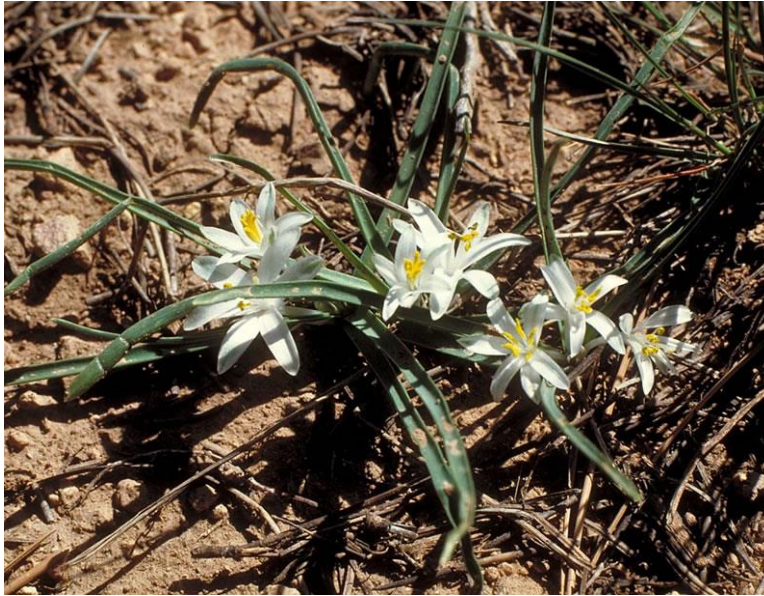
***Agave americana* (Century Plant)**



***Hesperocallis undulata* (Desert Lily)**



***Hesperocallis undulata* (Desert Lily)**



Leucocrinum montanum (Sand Lily)



Polyanthes tuberosa (Mexican Tuberose)

Does any of this really matter to the hosta gardener? Well, probably not, but hosta hybridizers may take note of the fact that hostas are closely related to Agave, Camassia, and Yucca and try to create an intergeneric hybrid. Who wouldn't want to incorporate the drought tolerance of Agaves and Yuccas into hostas, or the outstanding flowers of Camassia into our plant best known for its foliage? In fact, Hans Hansen has already made an attempt with Agave (with limited success.)

We may or may not care too much about our own familial ancestry, but to those who are shaping the look of hostas 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, family does matter.

FEATURED VENDOR



Business name: In The Country Garden and Gifts
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Website: <http://www.inthecountrygardenandgifts.com>
E-mail: josh@inthecountrygardenandgifts.com
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Independence, IA 50644
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In The Country Garden & Gifts began in 1998 by the mother and son team, Sue and Josh Spece. The one-of-a-kind specialty nursery is located in rural Eastern Iowa. Gardening was part of the family from the beginning. What began as Josh's own little corner of the vegetable garden, blossomed into an interest in plants that grew throughout his childhood. Being in a wheelchair creates obvious obstacles in the garden for Josh, but with a little creativity, a lot of determination, and much help and support from family and friends, physical limitations don't get in the way.

Josh blames his love of hostas on his Grandma. She began buying them for her shady yard and would buy two of every variety...one for her and one for Josh. It wasn't long before Josh's collection out grew his Grandma's. In 2012, In The Country relocated to the property next to Josh's Grandma, so two collections became one. Grandma Jo is an integral part of In The Country. She is the head gardener and is known to many regular AHS Convention attendees as Grandma.

In The Country is open for local visitors from April 1st - Christmas, Tuesday - Sunday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm. Adjacent to the nursery is an extensive display garden featuring 100's of hostas, uncommon perennials, dwarf conifers, succulents, and rock gardens. Over the last 10 years, mail order has grown exponentially. Serious gardeners and hosta collectors from across the country visit every year and hosta club bus tours routinely schedule stops. In The Country ships hostas and select companion plants to discerning gardeners across the US from April - October. The website is updated every November with new plants for the coming season. Orders are accepted year around.



Over the 20+ years of being in the hosta business, Josh has been fortunate to develop close ties with many leading hosta aficionados across the country and around the world. In The Country not only offers many tried and true classics, but takes pride in offering the newest and most innovative hostas being developed. Josh also has first-hand experience with hosta tissue culture, giving him a unique perspective of the hosta supply chain.



Don Dean's *H.* 'Country Dreaming'



Don Dean's *H.* 'Country Melody'

Over the last five years, In The Country has begun working directly with top hybridizers to propagate and bring their new hybrids to market. Don Dean's 'Country Dreaming' and 'Country Melody' were In The Country's first exclusive offerings. 'Caid Man' from Jim Heinz and 'White Linen' from Marlys Anderson were exclusive introductions in 2017.



Jim Heinz's *H.* 'Caid Man'

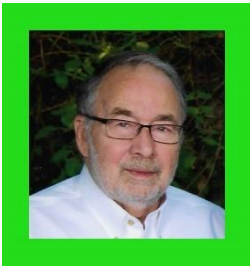


Marlys Anderson's *H.* 'White Linen'

For the 2018 season, In The Country is honored to introduce an intensely blue hybrid from Bev and Dave Stegeman called 'Hometown Hero' (*pictured on the cover*). Josh and Sue know how much hard work goes into developing a new hosta, and they are excited to forge more connections to support the hybridizers who are on the cutting edge of the hosta world. More exclusive hostas are currently in the tissue culture lab for future introduction, including the first selections from In The Country's hybridizing program. Be watching for 'Country Confessions' in the near future!



Josh Spece's *H. 'Country Confessions'*



GO HOSTAS!

Warren I. Pollock
Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

I am writing this in late fall (usually called autumn in Great Britain) near the end of the college and professional football seasons. (I'm talking about American football, of course.) I'm not a huge football fan, but I still watch many contests.

Over the years I've gotten to especially appreciate—and particularly look forward to—the precision cheerleaders. Every team, it seems, has a regiment of women, and sometimes men, who prance, jump and shout in amazingly choreographed routines of encouragement. Each has a rousing cheer or chant. And, it seems, all the cheers have the same action verb: *Go*. Some of probably hundreds of examples are *Go Panthers*, *Go Hawkeyes*, *Go Eagles* (my team), *Go Badgers*, *Go Orange*, *Go Bulldogs*, *Go Steelers*, *Go Wolverines*.

This got me thinking. Why not a similar cheer for hostas?

We customarily call hostas “The Friendship Plant.” This appropriate descriptor was coined and promulgated by the late “Herb” and Dorothy Benedict. But *Go Friendship Plant* doesn't seem to have enough arousal, energy, pizzazz.

I did some wordsmithing and what seemed, to me, to be the best expression is *Go Hostas*. It's simple, direct and certainly easy to remember.

So, I'm proposing this arousing chant for our friendship plant: ***Go Hostas!***

This got me thinking: ***Go Hostas!*** would be a great title for this column. I like it and have chosen it. ***Go Hostas!*** will also be the column's sign off.

***H. 'Curly Fries'* Is NOT a Mini Hosta;** **I repeat: '*Curly Fries*' is NOT a Mini Hosta**

No sooner were the rankings announced of the latest AHS Mini Hosta Popularity Poll—identified as the 2016 poll though voting was done last year, 2017—when I received a handful of emails from mini hosta aficionados telling me they were shocked that *H. 'Curly Fries'* was listed as Number 4. More significantly, they were more shocked that '*Curly Fries*' was even on the latest Mini Hosta Pop Poll. After all the assuring information in *The Hosta Journal* and online Mini Hosta Forum that '*Curly Fries*' is NOT a mini hosta, there it is prominently in the latest mini poll's tally.

Of course, I was shocked, also. (Actually, I was “shocked, shocked.”) I question whether voters paid *any* attention to the extensively published, detailed studies of mature clumps of '*Curly Fries*' growing in gardens across the country. Frankly, I suspect they voted for '*Curly Fries*' because it was listed in the previous year's Mini Pop Poll.

I encourage you to vote in the next AHS Pop Polls, both Mini Pop Poll and the all-size Pop Poll (for which '*Curly Fries*' can be a candidate). I am optimistic that I and other mini hosta fans will not again be shocked with '*Curly Fries*' being on the Mini Poll—at any ranking!



Instead of 'Curly Fries', one might consider *H. 'Munchkin Fire'*, registered several years ago by Randy Goodwin and now popular because of wide availability. Another possible candidate is *H. 'Sun Mouse'*, a new Tony Avent introduction also widely available and popular. But note that hostas in the AHS Pop Polls need to be registered and 'Sun Hosta' wasn't at the end of 2017. I hope it will be in 2018.

2018 AHS National Convention:

Stuff about the Education Sessions

I am on the TEAM organizing the upcoming AHS national convention in Philadelphia, which is celebrating the Society's 50th anniversary. The website is <https://www.ahs2018philly.org/>.

My involvement mostly has been with the Education Sessions. The bulk of them are grouped into what the principle convention organizers dubbed as—somewhat embarrassing and humbling to me—the “Warren I. Pollock International Hosta Symposium.” The “International” part comes from several of the speakers coming from overseas.

On Thursday morning, Mark Zilis, author of today's premium hosta reference books, will discuss yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's hostas. I can't think of anyone better internationally to overview the subject and give us a peek into the future.

Also on Thursday morning, Hugo Philips from Belgium will inform us about some outstanding hosta introductions from hybridizers and “sport fisherman” in Europe, and perhaps a bit about them, too. There is considerable exciting hosta activity in the E.U. We in North America usually only see the “tip of the iceberg.”

Additionally, on Thursday morning June Colley from the U.K. will tell us about hostas in Japan. In recent years she has visited Japan several times, exploring hosta collections in gardens, temples and historic sites and having discussions with hosta enthusiasts. I suspect she'll relate her visit to 100-year-old Kenji Watanabe and his famous nursery, and her tracing the hosta activities of von Siebold (for which *H. sieboldiana* and *H. sieboldii* are named) in Japan in the 1800s.

On Friday, Jonathan Hogarth from U.K. will narrate about mini hostas, especially his 'Blue Mouse Ears' sports collection, and his propagating them aeroponically using mycorrhizae fungus. Roger Smith from Maryland is bringing his aeroponic unit to the convention and Jonathan and Roger will have a demonstration. We'll have a camera projecting on a screen what's happening. Roger is donating the unit to the convention for a raffle. (Lucky winner!)

On Saturday afternoon, after we return from the tour gardens, there's an open forum called “HostaTalk” on topical relevant issues in the hosta world. (We haven't had one of these sessions at a national convention in many years.) It's not a panel discussion but there will be plenty of “experts” in attendance. Though scheduled for an hour, it might go longer.

Some suggested topics: Are We Winning the Battles Against Foliar Nematodes, Hosta Virus X and Fungal and Bacterial Diseases?; Overwintering Hostas In Containers: The ~42°F Rule; Is Trough Gardening Worth the Effort? Growers' Tips; Original Stock (OS) vs. Tissue-Culture Plants; Social Media Hosta Information: How Reliable?; and Registration: Use It or Lose It.

If you have other suggestions for topics, it would be helpful if you contact me (giboshiwip@aol.com) before the convention. **Please bring photos you want to show on a flash (thumb) drive. A computer, projector and screen will be available. There also will be a Dry-Erase board with supplies.**

Next eNewsletter? Expect more stuff about the 2018 AHS National Convention, comments on growing hostas in containers and request for information.

GO HOSTAS!

Hosta detectives sift countless clues to name orphan plants.

**Larry Tucker
Memphis, TN**



“Can you identify this hosta?”

How many times have hosta society or garden club members approached you with a limp leaf or a picture on their phone and begged for help in unearthing the unknown or long-forgotten name of their plant? Success is sometimes possible with a single leaf or a closeup photo, but you’re more likely reduced to “best guess” — the safest answer with scant information.



**Another challenge for the garden detective: “I lost the marker.
Can you identify this hosta?”**

Even experts can be fooled with so many hosta variables and look-alikes. I’m often asked to be a detective, but my mind is defective without access to Larry’s Library or online assistance. There are so many clues to consider in sleuthing a plant’s ID. Among them are: (1) a leaf’s size, shape, color, variegation, substance, topside finish, underside bloom, texture, flat or wavy edge and vein count; (2) a clump’s height, width and growth habit; (3) petiole length, structure and color; (4) type of flower, coloration, fragrance and seasonal bloom adjusted to regional climate. Keep in mind that plant and leaf characteristics can vary by locality.

Much of the identification problem stems from how and where a gardener acquires a hosta. If you’re to succeed in identifying a nameless hosta, don’t be shy about grilling a rookie or sloppy gardener. “Did you buy the hosta and lose the tag?” “Was it a pass-along from a friend or neighbor?” “Did your child or dog pull up the marker?” Also, consider that this hosta may have shrunk after woeful watering or being planted where any hosta would be consigned to hell.

Most hosta lovers haunt reputable nurseries and garden centers, where potted plants are identified by the growers’ plastic tags. That tag should stay with the hosta when you turf it into your garden. If you’re providing an above-ground marker for every new hosta, bury the plastic tag at the same position around each plant. If your above-ground marker disappears, you can dig up the plastic tag to jog your memory.

Hosta veterans (those who have the battle scars from tours of duty in AHS Convention gardens) have seen their share of functional and funky plant markers. Though many “forget-me-not” markers are intrusive in the landscape, they provide reliable ID —especially for chaotic collectors, hopeless hostaholics or those sliding into senility.

Most common markers are metal or plastic, while others may be stone or wood. I’ve used them all with varying success. My favorite hosta marker was discovered in a Minnesota tour garden two decades ago. Fifteen years later, it resurfaced in my murky memory, just in time for tours of the Tucker garden at the Dixie convention. These markers weren’t stuck in the ground, where they often get lost under hosta skirts. Cultivar names were laser-printed on Mylar transparencies and clipped to prominent leaves with tiny clothes pins. At season’s end, I collected these clipped markers and reused them the following year.



Miniature clothes pin clips transparency with name to leaf

Names printed on tape with Brother P-Touch machines usually last several years, but they eventually peel away from the metal or fade in sun, wind and rain. With all my hostas in above-ground blue pots, I now use distinctive copper markers. I first employed a stylus to emboss IDs on these classy tags (recalling a friend’s use of metal tape for heat/AC ducts), but the names weren’t visible enough. I’ve since written hosta IDs with indelible ink of Sharpie Rub-a-Dub pens.

Gardeners who want to avoid the clutter of markers would be wise to map their horticultural collections. That means, of course, that any map would have to be updated frequently with additions to and subtractions from the landscape. (Note to fuddy-duddies: Maps can be created in print or digital form.)



Woodworker makes his own stakes with engraved IDs

However you choose to mark or map hostas to avoid turning your garden into an orphanage, have fun and don’t be disappointed if you’re unable to achieve total success. The best you can do is try. My wife of 50-some years says with a scowl that this old Scot is very trying. Though Shari also speaks a bit of her ancestral tongue, she may not be aware that “success” in Norwegian is *hell*.

***Make plans now to attend the 50th Anniversary
AHS Convention in Philadelphia***

1968-2018



Philadelphia

The 2018 Convention will be held at the
DoubleTree by Hilton, Valley Forge Hotel on **June 20-23, 2018.**

Make your plans now to attend this celebration of the **50th Anniversary** of the **American Hosta Society**. More information will be coming soon. Save the date!

www.ahs2018philly.org



2018 AHS Convention Registration Form
June 20-23, hosted by Delaware Valley Hosta Society
DoubleTree by Hilton Philadelphia – Valley Forge
www.AHS2018Philly.org



Instructions: in Word, type in or check shaded boxes, then print or save file for emailing. Or print blank form (PDF or Word document) and complete by hand.
Each registrant must complete a separate form!

Registrant information

Name (as you wish it to appear on badge) _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone: _____ Home Work Mobile* (Check one)

** If possible provide one smartphone number per travel group, capable of receiving texts, email, etc. We will keep phone and email information private.*

AHS member? Yes No Local society member? Yes No Society: _____

Registration fees: see www.ahs2018philly.org/register for detailed description of categories.

Check one **Registration category (bold)**, plus any *additional items (italics)*. Then calculate and pay the total.

Full Registration includes: Wednesday Vendor Gala; Thursday Breakfast, Lunch; Friday Breakfast, Box Lunch and Tour Garden Buses, Dinner; Saturday Breakfast, Box Lunch and Tour Garden Buses, and Dinner Banquet. To receive early registration rate: payment by *check only*.

Partial "Hosta Widow(er)" Registration includes Wednesday Vendor Gala, Thursday/Friday/Saturday breakfasts, and Saturday Dinner Banquet.

- | | | |
|---|--------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Full Registration (pay by CHECK ONLY before Jan 31) | \$ 299 | Paid by:
<input type="checkbox"/> Check to Delaware Valley Hosta Society
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit card # _____
Exp date _____ Security code _____
Name on card _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> AmEx <input type="checkbox"/> Discover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Registration (pay by credit card* or check) | \$ 315 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partial "Hosta Widow(er)" Registration | \$ 150 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Late Registration Penalty (after May 1)</i> | \$ 35 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Longwood Gardens supplement (worth every penny!)</i> | \$ 38 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Judge's handbook (see Judges' Clinics below)</i> | \$ 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Wednesday Optional Barnes/Philly bus trip</i> | \$ 30 | |

Total of checked boxes \$ _____ Note: Multiple registrations, mailed together, may be combined on a single charge if desired.

** You may pay by credit card prior to January 31 at this price, covering the cost of electronic transactions.*

Meals: see www.ahs2018philly.org/meals for menus.

Friday/Saturday boxed lunches: Vegetarian Meat options (Check one)

Saturday banquet: Short ribs Salmon Crab cake Vegetarian Will not attend (Check one)

Please note if you have any particular dietary restrictions: _____

Please contact the hotel if you have significant concerns about meeting any restrictions.

Scientific presentation, Wednesday evening: space is limited to 70 attendees.

Do you wish to attend Warren Pollock's scientific presentation? Yes No

Hosta Show and Judges' Clinics

Are you an AHS Judge? Provisional Senior Master (Check no more than one)

Are you willing to serve as: Judge Clerk Elther Helper (Classification, placement, show docent, etc.)

I plan to attend: Clinic I Clinic II Clinic III Clinic I *first-timer* (must purchase Judge's handbook)

(Tentative schedule: Clinic I is Wednesday evening, Clinic II is Friday afternoon, Clinic III is Thursday morning)

Hotel information: You MUST make reservations DIRECTLY with the hotel to receive convention rates.

Visit www.ahs2018philly.org/venue or call the hotel at 610-337-1200 and reserve under code AHS-2018 0619 ("Hosta Convention").

Convention room rate valid for bookings until May 29 or until the group block is sold out, whichever comes first.

Submission information

For payment by check, mail to: Convention Registration, 1411 Deer Meadow Ln, Gamet Valley, PA 19060.

For payment by credit card, send form by mail as above or email the electronic form to the registrar at skfugate@earthlink.net.

By doing so, you authorize us to charge your credit card for the total amount above.

Refund policy

Please notify the registrar at skfugate@earthlink.net if you must cancel. Full refund offered before April 30. 50% refund between May 1 and June 9. NO REFUNDS after June 9. Registrations may be transferred without charge up to June 9; please contact the registrar.

Featured Hosta Hybridizer



Name: Olga Petryszyn
Email address: olga.petryszyn@gmail.com
Social media address: The Hosta Lady (Facebook)
Mailing address: 681 Slalom Ln.
Valparaiso, IN 46383

Olga started hybridizing in 1986. She relates, "As far back as I can remember I was amazed with horticulture. My mother taught me how to save seeds from flowers and vegetables. Each spring they were planted. I was hooked. Then my professor at the Art Institute of Chicago, Bill Brincka, and I became great friends. He taught me the finer aspects of gardening and how to hybridize daylilies. Bill started a hosta collection and taught me



how to hybridize them. I used his garden (he and partner Basil Cross) for my first crosses. They had the latest hostas on the market. If a Mildred Seaver hosta was shipped and had seed pods on it, I saved those seeds as well, after asking her permission. Within approximately 5 years, I had my own collection of plants from the seedlings I had grown that I could use to create new plants. There was an extensive gene pool to use. I chuckle when I think back about 25 years. My husband Lew and I were just dating. He came to my home and I walked him around the house

to the back. He stopped in his tracks as he saw a sea of hostas and raised beds under shade cloth. He looked at me and said (almost with fear) 'Is this all yours?' And he thought I was just a real estate broker! Lew (pictured above left) supports my efforts with plenty of encouragement, heavy lifting and joining me at conventions. He leaves the rest to me and says there is only room for one *hosta rock star* in this family.

When asked about her early goals in her hybridizing program, Olga stated, "To create bigger hostas with brighter colors and as much texture as possible, especially ruffles. I looked for vase shaped forms." Over time, Olga has become more extreme in culling, "using only the strongest looking plants. Working on changing the form of the leaves and clumps. Trying for a new blossom color. Not necessarily looking for the biggest hosta."

Concerning her successes, she says, "The introductions speak for themselves as well as the awards." (Olga's *H. 'Brother Stefan'* was chosen as Hosta of the Year by the American Hosta Growers Association in 2017. Olga was the recipient of the American Hosta Society's *Eunice Fisher Distinguished Hybridizer Merit Award* in 2013.) "The success flows by itself it seems. I believe all the interaction with other hosta lovers is key. First off, judging was crucial to know what is happening and what is better than average (Olga is an AHS Show Judge). Then knowing the best hybridizers and paying attention to what they have to say. The few times I spoke to groups was great encouragement for me to get serious about what I was doing. Mentoring others really makes me happy. I think success is seeing what other hybridizers have created along the way that you may have helped.



Olga with *H. 'Brother Stefan'*

Even "Hosta Rock Stars" have some failures along the way. Olga admits, "A couple of times, or more, I let others convince me, or made a decision on my own, to put a hosta on the market or introduce it without taking more time evaluating and growing it on myself. Those hostas turned out to wither away with age, grew weaker with time, or simply refused to want to multiply. This is a real embarrassment to me. I hate the idea of having any of my plants out there that do not perform well. I won't let that happen again". She also indicates, "From the start, I should have drawn a map of the hostas with their crosses and names. I have lost

countless tags.” She regrets, “that I can’t identify them for others, so they know what is in them.” Another bump in the road came when, “one year I heavily watered potted hostas before covering them up with copious amounts of leaves to overwinter. The next spring, I found that about 25% rotted. Lesson learned. Dryer is better.”

Olga will grow and evaluate her seedlings for 8 to 10 years before determining that they are worthy of being introduced. In the beginning, her criteria used in selecting potential new seedlings requires that the seedlings have vigorous growth and strength. Then after 2 years she selects for form and color. About 10% of her seedlings are grown on after the first culling.



When asked how she gets new plants to market, Olga indicates, “First of all, register the hosta, then hope and pray that someone in a marketing position sees the creation in my garden and wants it.” She was asked, is your hybridizing program primarily a business opportunity, or are you mainly involved for your own personal satisfaction? “Personal joy comes first. It satisfies my creative inner bug. I also love to share the process with others. If there is a business opportunity, that is a real bonus to help offset the costs of

gardening and the hired help.” When asked if she thought that most hybridizers make money from introducing new cultivars? She responded, “Heavens no. The tissue culture companies, the growers and retail sellers are the ones that put work and risk into the process for income.” Patenting hostas is becoming increasingly more prevalent. Olga’s experiences with this process was with *H. ‘Coast to Coast’* (above left). It was a choice made by Hans Hansen of Walters Gardens for a PW series. Clarence Falstad did the hard work in the patent process. She says, “That is a task I would never take on alone. The hosta must also go into TC for a couple of years to see if it clones properly before considering a patent.”

As do many hybridizers, Olga donates plants to hosta societies for fundraising. She states, “If a local society or AHS or on-line auctions ask, I do my best to donate. Those winter donations are always the toughest because I never remember in time to see what I have before dormancy. Currently, when I have a garden walk, I show those who are interested the process I use. I especially love showing children the process of hybridizing.”

Olga says, “I am pretty tired of hostas by the time it’s freezing out. The seeds are kept in the refrigerator in a tight container after the pods have been removed. I do not start seeds until Groundhog Day the following year, under conventional shop lights. By then I am looking for new life.” Her current goals include developing hostas with good form, different colored leaves and different colored flowers. When asked about advice for someone new to hosta hybridizing, Olga said, “Decide what hostas you are attracted to. Make sure they are not sterile. Only use strong plants (especially the pod parent). Make many, many crosses. They do not all take. Pay attention to your tagging and record keeping. You want to be able to measure your results with the parentage and teach yourself what traits are coming through. Have other gardeners analyze your work, you might miss something. Be patient. It takes many years to develop a great hosta.

Some of Olga's introductions are pictured here:



'Niagara Falls'



'Manhattan'



'Hoosier Dome'



'Coal Miner'



'Dawn's Early Light'



'Blue Hawaii'



'Key West'



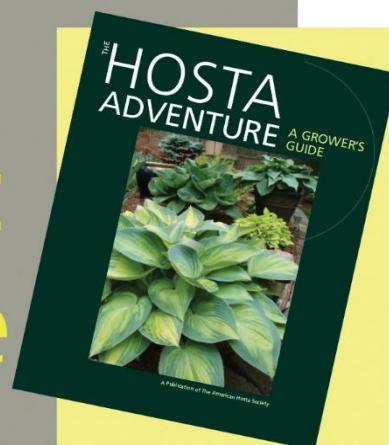
'All That Jazz'

In conclusion, Olga said, "Simply put, this has been one of the best experiences I have ever had. I hope it will last for the remainder of my life, not only for the beauty and love of the plant but more important, the people we mingle and laugh with on the way."

3rd
—
edition

The American Hosta Society's

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Beautifully revised... the third edition of this popular hosta primer. It has been updated with new pictures of popular cultivars and information regarding the latest research on hosta culture and pest control. The 32-page guide, illustrated with dozens of colorful photos, features valuable advice from experts, who provide tips on how best to purchase, plant and propagate hostas. Chapters also address landscaping with hostas, container gardening and growing minis. *The Hosta Adventure* is popular with garden clubs, plant societies and collectors. If you love the "Friendship Plant," you will want to order this updated essential AHS guide.

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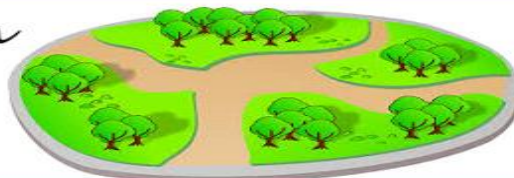


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Watering your Hostas



Hostas love water. In their native habitat they receive over 60 inches of rainfall annually.

In the November eNewsletter, we talked about soil amendments. This time let's look at watering needs for your hosta plants. As you recall, one of the primary reasons for amending the soil prior to planting was to create an environment for your new plant to thrive. Water retention in the soil is aided by that addition of organic matter that we talked about last time

San Francisco Chronicle garden writer Angela Ryczkowski writes, "Working an organic matter amendment like well-rotted compost or aged manure into the soil before planting hostas improves soil drainage, water retention and fertility. A 2- to 4-inch layer of organic mulch like shredded leaves, grass clippings or wood chips spread around -- though not directly in contact with the plant -- conserves soil moisture, regulates soil temperature and adds nutrients to the soil as the material breaks down."

Just how much water should your hosta plants receive? Josh Spece of *In The Country Garden and Gifts*, our featured vendor in this issue, posts on his website, "In an ideal hosta garden, the plants would receive generous watering all season long. A slow, deep soaking of around an inch of water per week through the growing season is perfect. A single deep soak every week is always better than multiple, light waterings. Deep watering encourages the roots to grow deeper into the ground where they can still find moisture during short periods of dryness. Frequent, light watering encourages the hosta roots to grow near the surface of the soil where they can quickly dry out even in short dry spells."

University of Minnesota Extension writers Rhonda Fleming Hayes and David C. Zlesak state, "Hostas require an adequate supply of water to thrive. Hosta leaves have a large surface area and transpire or lose water easily. Consistent, even moisture equivalent to an inch of water per week is considered best for hostas. Deeper watering done with less frequency is better than frequent shallow applications that do not penetrate the root zone. Hostas planted in dry shade will need attentive watering; rain does not always reach under eaves of buildings or through tree canopies in sufficient amounts. Planting hostas beneath shallow-rooted trees, such as maples or spruce will require watering for establishment and frequently thereafter due to excessive competition for moisture. Hostas in sunny locations will also need additional water to compensate for hotter conditions and increased transpiration."

So, at least one inch of water per week is recommended for the average gardener. What about some special circumstances, like sandy soil, a sunny location, or hostas planted under shallow rooted trees? Is one inch per week enough in these situations? What about periods of drought? Let's see what some experts say.

San Francisco Chronicle garden writer Angela Ryczkowski writes, “For optimal growth, all hostas need a minimum of an inch of water per week, coming from rain, irrigation or watering with a hose. Those growing in sandy conditions can use even more water, due to increased drainage.” If you have sandy soil, it is very important to add composted/organic material to your soil. Deep watering will encourage the roots to reach deep into the soil, so they may find water during periods of drought.

Some hosta growers plant their hostas in full sun to encourage maximum photosynthesis and strong root growth. Marlene Rosenberg and husband Jonathan Goodrich along with their son Seth, own and operate Uniquely Hostas in Elroy, WI. Master Gardener Judi Ruedy from Wisconsin writes, “All of their thousands of Hostas are grown in the sun! Yes, in the sun. The key is the reasoning, as we have been told for years, and years, and that is to water, water, water the plants! They say from 1.5 to 2” per week is what is needed to keep them growing well. Not, the 1 inch per week that we always heard. Plus, if you are fighting tree roots then the tree gets all the moisture first. (It is bigger!)” Joey Williamson, HGIC Horticulture Extension Agent, Clemson University reminds us, “Hostas will change color or fade if they are in too much sun. Most blue hostas need shade. In full sun, leaf color is pale and leaf dieback may occur, especially during dry periods. Yellow and cream edges may brown during dry periods. Blue-leafed cultivars fade to green if the waxy leaf covering that gives them their color is rubbed off by rain storms or vigorous watering [or sun exposure].”

Josh Spece has stated, “Hostas can tolerate periods of dryness, if they are otherwise healthy. However, hostas that are never stressed from lack of water will grow bigger, faster and will hold up and look nice longer into the season. Usually, they can fend for themselves, but watering during periods of dryness will certainly help our hostas look and grow their best.”

Most experienced hosta gardeners recommend watering hostas in the morning, so that the foliage can dry out before evening. This may reduce some problems, such as snail and slug infestation. Also, wet leaves are required for foliar nematodes to travel from plant to plant. Some advocate avoiding overhead watering, and instead suggest that watering the soil around the plants is preferable. Depending on the size of your garden, this may or may not be feasible.

A recent garden tour at the American Hosta Society convention in Indianapolis featured a garden that used copious amounts of water for their hosta collection. The hostas in that garden were larger and healthier looking than hostas grown in my garden. Can you water hostas too much? It seems that, if the soil has good drainage, it is difficult to overwater hostas. Of course, if your garden soil was not well prepared prior to planting, and consequently, water pools around your plants, you will find that hostas may develop crown rot or root rot. If your plant is wilting but it looks like it has plenty of water, it may be suffering from too much water. The roots of plants take up water and air to survive and thrive. Overwatering, in simple terms, drowns your plant. Soil that is constantly wet won't have enough air pockets, and plants will not be able to breathe by taking up air with their roots. Once again, organic material in your soil will help you avoid this problem.

How do you know if your plant has root rot? If the plant is slowly wilting and the leaves are turning yellow for seemingly unknown reasons, you will want to check the roots. Remove the plant from the soil and feel the roots. The roots affected by root rot will look black and will feel mushy. Affected roots may literally fall off the plant when you touch them.

Amend your soil with plenty of organic matter when planting and be sure that your hostas get at least one inch of water per week.



AHS Membership



The American Hosta Society (AHS) is a society dedicated to the study and improvement of the genus *Hosta* and the dissemination of general and scientific knowledge about hostas. There are many benefits for the members that result from these efforts, both social and in nursery trade. AHS members receive several publications a year, including two colorful issues of *The Hosta Journal* (mailed), four eNewsletters (emailed), and *The Online Hosta Journal* (posted on the web for members only). These Journals include articles on cultivation tips, propagation techniques, landscape uses, new cultivars and old species, pioneers and personalities, scientific advances, convention awards, gardens, and news about the AHS.

Membership provides an opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's clinics, and a chance to see the latest and best hosta in the hosta show.

Other membership benefits:

A Biennial AHS Membership Directory.

The privilege of visiting display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members.

An invitation to exhibit your favorite hostas and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional hosta shows.

Developing friendships with people who share an interest in growing hostas.

Access to Members Only section of the AHS website.

Another benefit of becoming a new member is you receive a voucher from the AHS Membership Secretary good for \$15.00 towards any purchase at sponsoring nurseries.

For information about this program, go to

<http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/AHSVoucherProgram.htm>

Print and mail the application form on the next page, or to join online, go to

<http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/Membership.htm> .

American Hosta Society Membership Application

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