



## **Hosta Hillside: *Preserving the Legacy of Hosta Icons***

(the story of how you can help begins on Page 26)



## *Message from the President*

**Andy Marlow, Hopkins, MN**

“Hello. My name is Andy and I am a hostaholic.” That would be my self-introduction, if instead of being the American Hosta Society, we were Hostaholics Anonymous. Come to think of it, with a catchier name like Hostaholics Anonymous, we might get a lot more notice in the mainstream press.

I have been growing hostas for the entire 40 years we have lived in our current house. To be absolutely correct, hostas were growing here without much help from me for the first few years. Then I met Dr. Bob Olson at the Men’s Garden Club of Minneapolis. (Lest I be accused of overt sexism, the club is now the Men’s and Women’s Garden Club of Minneapolis and the women members have taken the reins of leadership quite firmly in hand ) This doctor, instead of offering me treatment, actually infected me with hostaholism. Isn’t that against the Hippocratic Oath? Anyway, it’s been fun ever since. I should note that Bob Savory, noted hybridizer, was also a member of that garden club, but he was much more sedate and less inclined to arm twisting than the other Bob.

I am currently being affected by several other hosta conditions. The first one is hosta hangover, but it’s good one to have. It’s the result of having attended Hostaffinity 2019 in Green Bay, WI. Despite their slightly weird devotion to the Green Bay Packers football team, the Green and Gold Hosta Society put on quite a convention. I’m still feeling the glow. The only flaw was the weather, well beyond the control of convention organizers. Everything else went smoothly and I hope we Minnesotans can do as well next year as we host Hosta Vision 2020 in the Twin Cities.

In addition to the excellent speakers, great hosta show, huge vendor area and the chance to hobnob with my fellow hostaholics, three of my favorite Minnesotans were honored by the attendees. The aforementioned Dr. Bob Olson was given a Lifetime Achievement Award for his roles in AHS leadership and his decades as editor of *The Hosta Journal*. Cindy Tomashek of the Shades of Green Hosta Society of Southeast Minnesota was presented the Alex J. Summers Award for of having given outstanding service to The American Hosta Society and the development of the genus Hosta. Finally, Mary Schwartzbauer was installed (once again) into the very best position on the AHS Executive Board—Past President. It’s a job to which I aspire! We all owe a great debt of thanks to Mary for stepping up and shouldering the responsibility of AHS President a second time under some pretty tragic circumstances.

The next condition I (and my garden) are suffering from is hosta depravation. I just had cataract surgery and my very persnickety doctor says no bending with my head below my heart and no stirring up dust near my eyes for at least two weeks. Minnesota’s growing season is so short, I hope I can start weeding before the first frost. The weeds are already huge and will just get huger (if that’s a word) before my prescribed absence is terminated. Then I intend to terminate a few unwanted plants!

Finally, I am suffering from too many hosta hats syndrome. I am not only AHS President, but also president of the Minnesota Hosta Society, treasurer for the Hosta Vision 2020 national convention, and photo editor of *The Hosta Journal*. Fortunately most are temporary conditions. My term as MHS president if up at the end of the

year, the convention will have come and gone a year from now, and the AHS president's term is only two years. But I believe being photo editor of *The Hosta Journal* is a life sentence (er, I mean long term commitment).

I know this last may sound like I am complaining, but I'm not. My fellow hostaholics are some of the nicest, friendliest and positive people I know. Every chance to be with them is a blessing, and too many hosta hats syndrome is a quadruple blessing!

Sincerely,

Andy Marlow  
President, American Hosta Society



# *Hostas and Associates*

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

## The Japanese Hostas, Part 7

### *Hosta kikutii* (Hyuga Giboshi)

by Glenn Herold

Though hostas are native to Japan, China, and Korea, the majority of species come from Japan. This article is the seventh in a series which will talk about those species. Previous eNewsletter articles have covered *Hosta alismifolia*, *H. nakaiana*, *H. pycnophylla*, *H. longipes*, *H. longissima*, and *H. montana*. If you missed any of the past articles, you can find them on my blog site: <https://thecottagegardener53012.wordpress.com>.

Today we will discuss *H. kikutii*, Hyuga Giboshi, which is translated from the Japanese as "Hosta from Hyuga."

*Hosta kikutii* is one of the five most common hosta species in Japan. The others are *H. longipes*, *H. montana*, *H. rectifolia*, and *H. sieboldii*. The native range extends approximately 600 miles. Because it inhabits a wide range of environments, much variation exists within the population, resulting in several named varieties and forms. In the southern part of its range it is sometimes called by the Japanese name that translates to "Hosta growing in Sunny Places," because that is where it is found. In other places it is found growing in ravines and in cracks of rocks. *Hosta kikutii* exhibits a rapid growth rate, making it a fine specimen for most gardens. The name *kikutii* honors Akio Kikuchi (1883-1951), the Japanese botanist who did much of the early research on this species.

The typical variety is referred to as *H. kikutii* var. *kikutii*, and is found primarily in Western Kyushu, mostly in river valleys and on wet rocks. Leaves are lightly rippled, elongated, and lance shaped. Height is up to about 16 inches. The backs of the leaves are shiny, often with a whitish cast. Flowering is late, usually from late August into mid-September. Flowering scapes have large, leaf-like bracts that start out green and change to white. Scape height is about 26 inches. A key identification characteristic of the species is the pointed flower bud that somewhat resembles the beak of a crane. Flowers are usually a light lavender color, though at lower elevations it leans toward white. *Hosta kikutii* is known for its clustered flowers at the tip of the scape. Mark Zilis has observed up to 80 flowers in the top 4 1/2 inches of the scape. The plant is fertile and produces many seed pods.

A variation of *H. kikutii* var. *kikutii* is the form *leuconota* (Urajiro Hyuga giboshi.) Leaves of this plant are whitish-backed and it has near-white flowers in September. This form was once known as *H. kikutii* 'Pruinosa' and *H. kikutii* 'Urajiro.'

*Hosta kikutii* var. *yakusimensis* (Hime Hyuga giboshi) is found primarily in Southern Kyushu and Yakushima Island. It has slightly rippled narrow leaves and pale lavender flowers. Leaf width is about 1/3 the length. *Hosta kikutii* var. *tosana* (Tosa-no giboshi) is known for its shiny oval leaves. The width of its leaves is about 1/2 the length. *Hosta kikutii* var. *polyneuron* (Sudare giboshi) is found in the Satsunan Islands region of Japan. Leaves are oval, but may exhibit either smooth or rough undersides. Flowers are light purple.

*Hosta kikutii* var. *caput-avis* (Unazuki giboshi) is found in West-central Shikoku. There are two different forms of this variety, one of which is dwarf. The typical form grows to a dense 19 inch mound. The dwarf form tops

out at 8 inches and is found in Mie Prefecture. Flowering scapes hang either horizontally to the ground or downward. This characteristic makes variety *caput-avis* ideal for growing on hillsides or at the edges of walls. The dwarf form, known as Ko unazuki giboshi, is somewhat rare in cultivation.

Many sports of *Hosta kikutii* have been found in Japan. They may be white streaked, gold streaked, gold centered, or white margined. Some examples: 'Kifukurin Hyuga,' sometimes referred to as 'Kifukurin' or 'Albomarginata,' has a dark green leaf center with a greenish-yellow margin. 'Kishiro-nakafu Hyuga' has a yellow center and green margin. 'Yoshinogawa' is a *H. kikutii* var. *polyneuron* sport with green and white streaked leaves. An interesting sport is 'Katsuragawa Beni' which was found on Shikoku Island. It has red petioles, a characteristic that is rather unusual in the species.

Some of the interesting hybrids that have been introduced include the following. As you can see, various species have been crossed with *H. kikutii*, but primarily green-leaved plants have been obtained:

'Fatal Attraction' - ('Dorset Clown' x *kikutii*) Green with a creamy edge.

'Glacier Cascade' - (*kikutii* x *hypoleuca*) Lance-shaped green leaves with a white back.

'Harvest Delight' - A plant that exhibits characteristics typical of the species, but was crossed with *H. longipes* f. *hypoglauca* to obtain 'Red October.'

'Harvest Desire' - (*H. longipes* x *H. kikutii*) Shiny green lightly rippled and cupped leaves

'Hillbilly Blues' - ('Hirao 59' x 'Hadspen Blue') A plant that has both *H. sieboldiana* and *H. kikutii* blood on it. As you can guess from the name, it is one of Tony Avent's introductions!

'Roy's Pink' - (*H. kikutii* x *H. rupifraga*) Medium green leaves with pinkish flowers

'Stingray' - (*H. kikutii* x *H. montana*) Green leaves with a heavily rippled margin.

'Summer Dress' - ('August Moon' x *H. kikutii*) Greenish-yellow changing to golden-yellow leaves. Wavy margin. Scapes top out at 6 feet.

A number of sports of *H. kikutii* var. *caput-avis* have also been found in the wild. 'Furi Unazuki' has a white margin and green center. 'Kinokawa Unazuki' has mottled foliage. 'Kishira-nakafu Unazuki' has leaves with a light green center and dark green margin. 'Kishiro-shimafu Unazuki' leaves are creamy-yellow streaked.

Seedlings of *H. kikutii* var. *caput-avis* include:

'Green Fountain' - Large mound of cascading long wavy green foliage.

'Incoming' - An open pollinated seedling with dark green wavy, corrugated leaves. Flower petiole is purple.

'Koyurugi' - (*H. hypoleuca* x *H. kikutii* var. *caput-avis*) Chartreuse with green streaks

'Red Neck Heaven' - Another creative name by Tony Avent! Leaves are white-backed. White flowers and a red petiole.

'Tristesse' (*H. kikutii caput-avis* x *H. pycnophylla*) Rippled margin and a twisted tip

'Uncle Albert' (*H. hypoleuca* x *H. kikutii caput-avis*) Glossy, cupped leaves with a white back. Dark purple spotted scape.

When you look at the myHostas database you can see that *Hosta kikutii* has not been used as much as many other Japanese species in hybridizing. But this variable species is full of desirable characteristics: Ease of growth, fertile, lance-shaped leaves, glossy, small to medium size, horizontal scapes, late bloom, etc. It makes a great plant on its own, but can contribute much to a breeding program. Sometimes greatness can be achieved from the common.



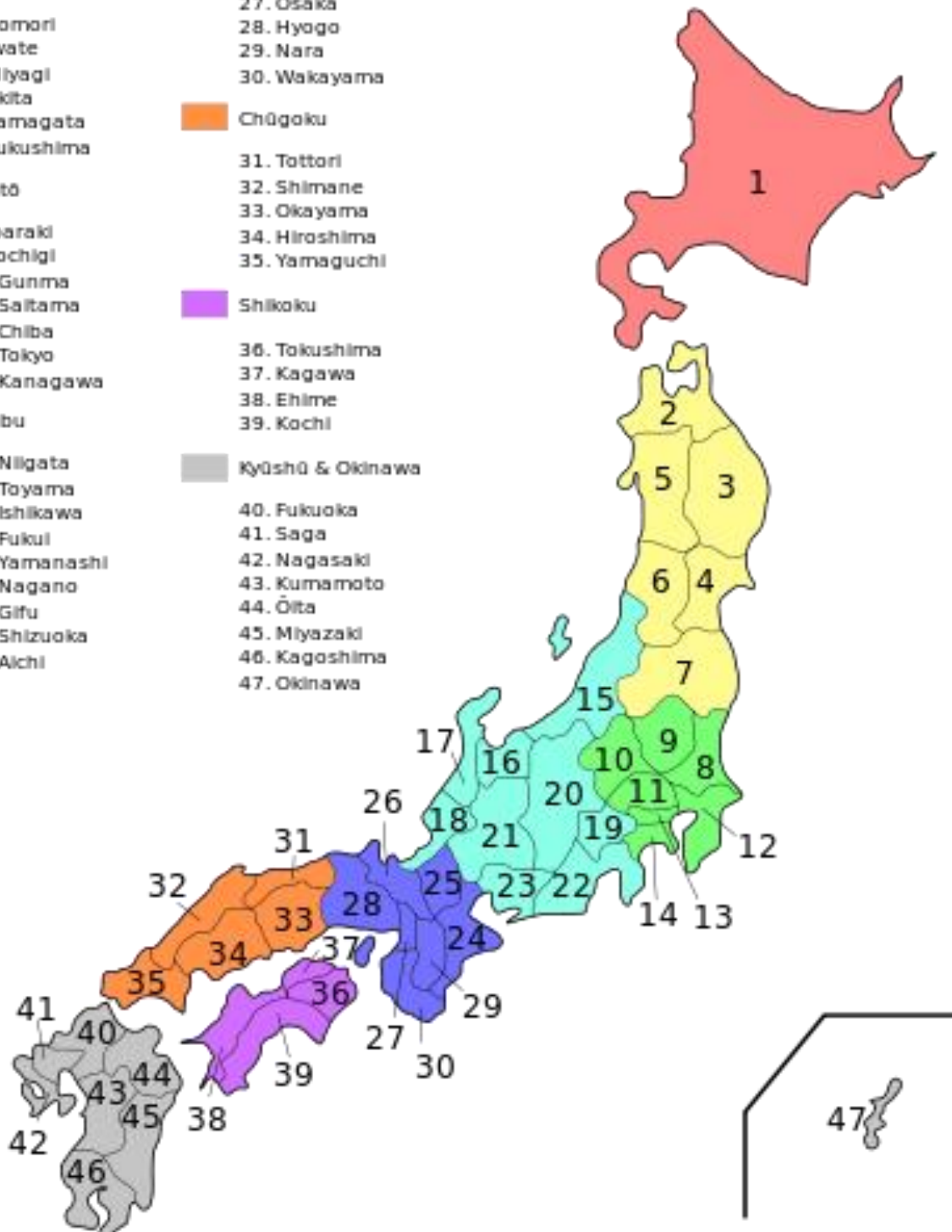
*Hosta kikutii* var. *yakusimensis*  
(Photo by Glenn Herold)

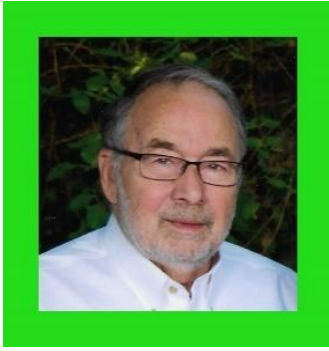


*Hosta kikutii* var. *yakusimensis*  
(Photo by Glenn Herold)

# Regions and Prefectures of Japan

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Hokkaidō |  Kansai             |
| 1. Hokkaidō  | 24. Mie  |
|  Tōhoku   | 25. Shiga  |
| 2. Aomori  | 26. Kyoto  |
| 3. Iwate   | 27. Ōsaka  |
| 4. Miyagi  | 28. Hyogo  |
| 5. Akita   | 29. Nara   |
| 6. Yamagata  | 30. Wakayama   |
| 7. Fukushima   |  Chūgoku            |
|  Kantō    | 31. Tottori  |
| 8. Ibaraki   | 32. Shimane  |
| 9. Tochigi   | 33. Okayama  |
| 10. Gunma  | 34. Hiroshima  |
| 11. Saitama  | 35. Yamaguchi  |
| 12. Chiba  |  Shikoku            |
| 13. Tokyo  | 36. Tokushima  |
| 14. Kanagawa   | 37. Kagawa   |
|  Chūbu    | 38. Ehime  |
| 15. Niigata  | 39. Kochi  |
| 16. Toyama   |  Kyūshū & Okinawa |
| 17. Ishikawa   | 40. Fukuoka  |
| 18. Fukui  | 41. Saga   |
| 19. Yamanashi  | 42. Nagasaki   |
| 20. Nagano   | 43. Kumamoto   |
| 21. Gifu   | 44. Ōita   |
| 22. Shizuoka   | 45. Miyazaki   |
| 23. Aichi  | 46. Kagoshima  |
|  | 47. Okinawa  |





# Go Hostas!

Warren I. Pollock  
Glen Mills, Pennsylvania  
[giboshiwip@aol.com](mailto:giboshiwip@aol.com)

**IF YOU HAVE A FOLIAR NEMATODE (FN) ABATEMENT PROGRAM USING NEMA STOP®, THIS IS A FRIENDLY REQUEST TO SHARE YOUR FINDINGS.**

Nema Stop (previously called Nemakill) is a commercial organic product found to kill foliar nematodes in the large AHS-funded research program published in Fall 2016 (Volume 47, No. 1) issue of *The Hosta Journal*.



**Hosta leaf infected with foliar nematodes. Note discolored tissue between veins.**

*(Photo from Grewal-Ang article in 47.1 THJ.)*

Nema Stop is marketed by PureGro USA, a manufacturer of organic products ranging from nutrition to pesticides to herbicides. For information about this foliar nematicide, visit [www.puregrousa.com](http://www.puregrousa.com). Select “Products” and “Pest and Disease Control.” Select “Learn More,” “Details,” “Benefits” and “Directions” on the product pages. For the concentration of Nema Stop that’s needed to be applied, see information in “Directions.” It includes *when* and *where* to spray the leaves and petioles.



Please **provide feedback to PureGro USA if you have an active Nema Stop foliar nematode program.** This information will help establish a more detailed FN application process, in addition to PureGro providing a FAQ section for customers to reference. There are two ways to do this:

**Customer Review** – You can find this on Puregro USA’s product page, once you select “Learn More.” At the bottom of the description, there is a section highlighted “Customer Reviews.” You can select “Write a Review” to proceed. The intent of this section is to guide other potential users on users’ experiences. This includes a starred rating option 1-5.

**Customer Feedback to PureGro** – There are a variety of ways to do this. You can select “Contact” at the top of the navigation page on PureGro’s website, which enables users to send a message to PureGro, or email to [info@puregrousa.com](mailto:info@puregrousa.com).

Information in the following format is recommended:

- Your name and location? – Do not provide if you prefer anonymous feedback.
- How did you apply Nema Stop? How much was used? How much was sprayed and where? How much did you soak soil if soil drenching? How often did you apply Nema Stop and when?
- What were your findings? How did you observe the hosta’s health? Did you see existing lesions cease to expand? Did new leaves appear free of lesions?
- Provide other observations
- *PROVIDE PICTURES.*

***PureGro USA will gather information and display an aggregation on its website—either via FAQ section or through a blog post that will be shared with The American Hosta Society.*** Names of people furnishing input will be kept confidential.

***PLEASE SUPPLY FEEDBACK. THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO MOVE FORWARD IN OUR KNOWLEDGE OF FN ABATEMENT.***

Should you have questions and need to contact PureGro USA, contact its customer support line: 469.432.0712. Danny Cepeda, VP Market and Business Development, is the primary contact at PureGro USA; he can be reached at [dcepeda@puregrousa.com](mailto:dcepeda@puregrousa.com).

**WHAT IS SIZE OF ‘EMPRESS WU’ IN YOUR GARDEN?** This inquiry is directed to everyone receiving this AHS *eNewsletter*.

Simply, I’m inviting those with ‘Empress Wu’ in their gardens to measure the clumps and report their height and widths in inches. Use a metal tape measure for dimensions.

*And*, I’m also asking you to submit a photo of your clump. Also, about how old is your clump?

*Also*, please measure the size of the largest leaf in your clump. What is its length and width in inches? What’s the dimension from where the petiole meets the leaf blade to the tip of the leaf? It’s the width at the leaf blade’s widest location.

***OH! YES!*** Please include a photo of the leaf blade, too.

## **WHY THE INQUIRY?**

*Hosta 'Empress Wu' is advertised as "the largest known hosta in commerce!" I don't question this. But just how large is 'Empress Wu' in gardens.*

In the last 10-15 years, I've received a lot of information on *Empress Wu* from gardeners illustrating that this usually giant hosta is not as large in their gardens as the photos and advertisement for this popular hosta indicate. A prime example is the photo below from my files. Yes, the clump is large, but not as exceptionally large as many people think *'Empress Wu'* is.



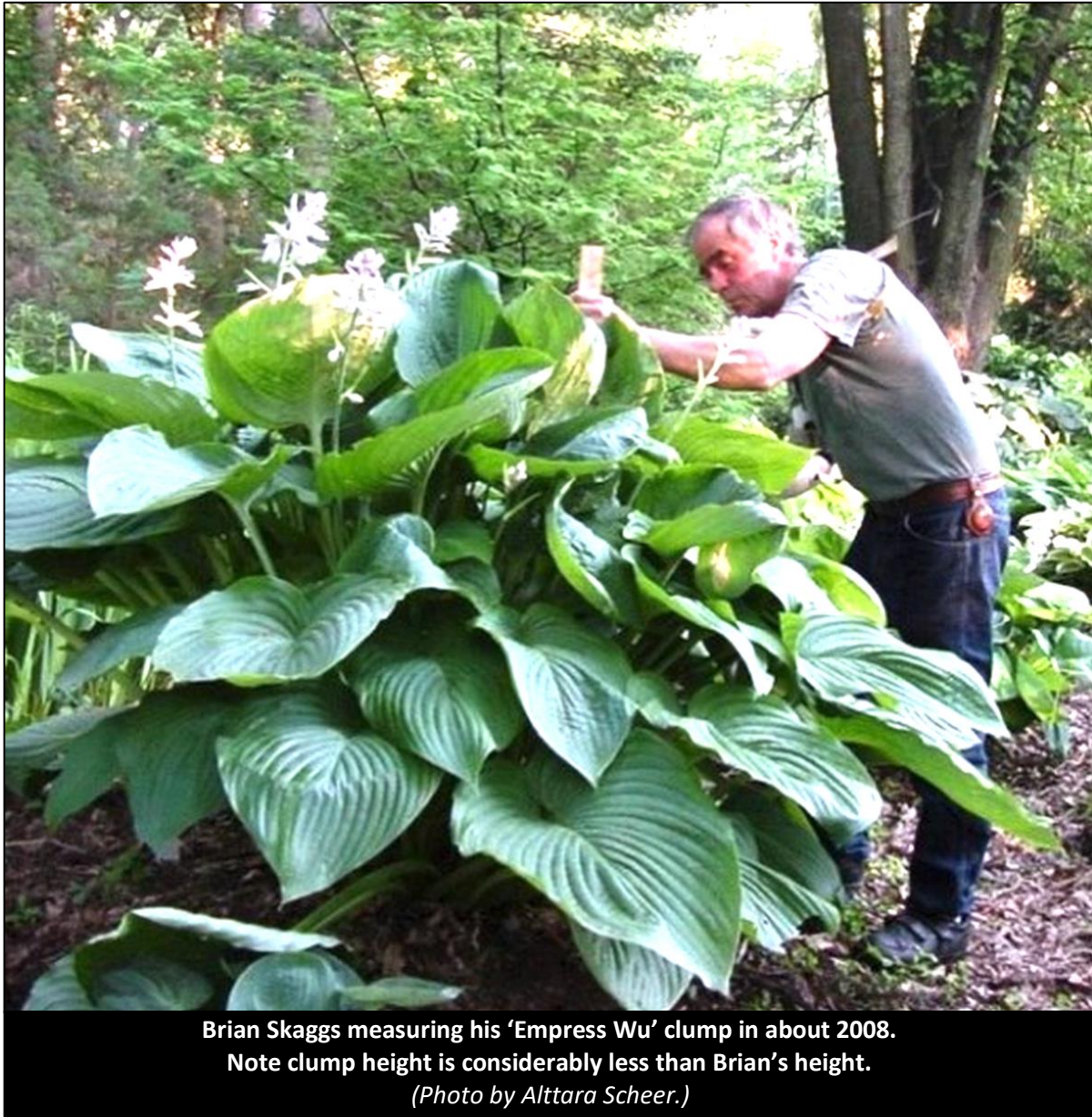
***H. 'Empress Wu' growing in unknown garden in 2018. This clump is believed to be 6 or 7 years old started from a one-gallon container. Note the clump's height and width in comparison to the gardener's size. Specially note the size of the leaves near the bottom of the clump and at clump's height. (Photographer unknown.)***

Here is some *'Empress Wu'* backstory: In 2008, Brian and Virginia Skaggs, residents of Lowell, Indiana, registered *'Empress Wu'* as a 6-year-old clump. Thus this hosta likely was hybridized in about 2002.

*H. 'Empress Wu'* is registered as a seedling of Jackson, Michigan's Clarence Owens' *H. 'Big John'* × *H. 'Big John'*. Clump height cited in the registration is about 50 inches tall and 108 inches across. In 2008 Brian Skaggs filed for a U.S. patent; PP20774 was granted in February 23, 2010.

The Skaggs' original cultivar name was *'Xanadu Empress Wu'*. Walters Gardens, Inc., Zeeland, Michigan, who has exclusive asexual propagation rights, shortened the epithet to *'Empress Wu'* believing it to be a better marketing name.

The classic photo of Brian measuring the height of his 'Empress Wu' clump is the official clump photo in both the AHS Registry and U. S. patent. It was taken by Alttara Scheer of the Fraternal Order of the Seedy Fellows. Both Alttara and Brian were active *FOoSF* members. This image (see below) was Walters Gardens' "official photo" for 'Empress Wu' from when it introduced the hosta in about 2008 until about 2016.



In 2010 I had a telephone discussion with Brian about 'Empress Wu'. At the time I didn't appreciate the importance of that event because just a year later (May 11, 2011) Brian Skaggs passed away; he was 63. An U.S. Marine Corp. Vietnam veteran, he was employed by The Home Depot in its nursery department in Orland Park, Illinois. Brian and Virginia Skaggs were married 17 years.

It would be most interesting to know what the original 'Empress Wu' in Walters Gardens' advertising photo looks like today. After Brian's death, Virginia moved to Michigan and many of the prize specimens in their Lowell, Illinois, garden were acquired by hosta enthusiasts. Many, I was told, had been divided.

Most important, Brian told me he thought a prime reason his 'Empress Wu' clump was tall was the restricted, shady area it was growing in. He said there wasn't much "open space" around it, so it grew upward seeking light. Had it been in an "open area," he thought it would not have been as tall and probably considerably wider across.

Also important, Brian claimed it was his watering that significantly contributed to the clump's size. He stressed this repeatedly in our conversation. Even if it rained the night before or early in the morning, he abundantly soaked the clump before going to work. He also said he fertilized the clump in early spring, even though his soil was quite fertile. Further, he said he spent considerable time composting leaves, turning them over with a Bobcat® and using them as a thick mulch.

In 2016, some five years after Brian died, Walters Gardens changed its now classic "'Empress Wu' photo" to have a young, smiling blond-haired girl as the person representing the hosta's clump size'. I'm told she is the daughter of a Walters Gardens' employee, and was 6 or 7 years old when the photo was taken. Though perhaps that old, in my opinion she seems a bit tall for that age.

(This brings me to an experience I had many years ago when I was employed by a large chemical manufacturing company. I was assigned to a project that was developing a new product. It wasn't a nylon or Daron®-type textile fiber or a Corian®-type countertop, but a special high-temperature metal for military jet engine blades.

A Madison Avenue advertising agency was hired for its branding/marketing expertise. I recall the first meeting we had with the firm. The representative said, "Too bad your intended product cannot benefit from a young, attractive, big smiling, golden-hair girl in its promotion. It's called the SHIRLEY TEMPLE EFFECT - and it works every time. Everyone likes and is attracted to a 'Shirley Temple cutie.' (Folks readily accept the advertisement.)"

So, who did Walters Gardens choose to represent the size of 'Empress Wu' after Brian Skaggs no longer was on the scene? Yes, of course: A "Shirley Temple!" And she *is* a cutie! Shoeless, too!



**Walter Gardens' advertisement for 'Empress Wu' from about 2016 to 2019 with 'Shirley Temple cutie.' (WGI photo.)**

This year, Walters Gardens changed its advertisement for 'Empress Wu'. Who is this nursery now using? Of course: It's another "Shirley Temple!" And she's a cutie, too. I assume she is the daughter of a Walters Gardens employee, also.

Returning to what is the size of 'Empress Wu' in your garden, I do realize that hundreds of AHS members might be sending me photos and dimensions. I don't have plans of how I am going to handle the information. If I'm overwhelmed—and I hope I am, I'll be asking folks for help.

The photo of 'Empress Wu' in a garden that I showed earlier is the type of images I have in mind. Of course I need actual dimensions as well.

I hope you will participate. Please submit the information before Tuesday, September 2, 2019. My email address is [giboshiwip@aol.com](mailto:giboshiwip@aol.com).



Walters Gardens' 2019 advertisement representing size of 'Empress Wu'. (WGI photo.)

#### **VAN WADE'S NURSERY REMAINS OPEN FOR SALES.**

The May 2019 AHS *eNewsletter* states that the late Van Wade's Wade and Gatton Nurseries in Bellville, Ohio, had closed for sales. The Wade family has decided to keep it open for container sales in the polyhouses for at least this year.

They are open—by appointment only—from 1:00 to 4:00 except Sundays. The current plan is to keep open until all the potted plants are sold. ***They are not digging or selling from the gardens.***

The nursery is at:

1288 Gatton Rocks Road, Bellville, Ohio, 44813.

Call 419-883-3870 or email [wadeandgatton@yahoo.com](mailto:wadeandgatton@yahoo.com) for an appointment.

## STEM BLIGHT

Many gardens have had a lot of rain this year resulting in serious STEM BLIGHT problem. The problem is also called Southern Stem Blight, petiole rot and mustard seed fungus. It is caused by the fungus *Sclerotium rolfsii*. MOST IMPORTANT, IT IS NOT LIMITED TO SOUTHERN STATES OR WARMER REGIONS. The problem is often noticed as 1/32-inch -diameter brown, tan or whitish spheres near the ground in late June and July.

An excellent description with treatment is in The American Hosta Society's booklet "Hosta Adventure: A Grower's Guide," Third Edition, published in 2017. After removal and discarding the top layer of soil, including the tiny spheres, the recommendation is to drench the remaining soil with fungicide that contains tebuconazole.

"Bayer All-In-One Rose and Flower Care," available in most nurseries, contains tebuconazole. It also contains a fertilizer and insecticide.



Stem Blight. Note small spheres near the ground.  
(Internet photo; plant is not a hosta.)

# GO HOSTAS!

# FEATURED LOCAL SOCIETY

## **Illinois Prairie Hosta Society**

Mike Weber, President

Website: [www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com](http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com)

The *Illinois Prairie Hosta Society*, a Champaign-Urbana area society, was formed in July 2004. Annual dues are \$15 per family. Membership averages 120 members, with monthly meetings held March through September with an average of 35 - 45 in attendance. Their newsletter, *Prairie Hosta Herald* is published 7 – 8 times a year and is distributed electronically to the membership. Each meeting features a plant raffle of 3 – 8 plants that encourages attendance and helps to provide funds for the society. Also, most meetings feature some type of education program from designing gardens to tips on how to plant, soil needs, taking care of trees, and any other facet of gardening.

The objectives and purposes of the Illinois Prairie Hosta Society are to bring together, for their mutual enjoyment, people who are interested in growing Hosta as a hobby, promoting the development of better Hosta, and encouraging wider use and appreciation of Hosta in our area.

In 2011 the IPHS and the U of I Arboretum joined together to create an official AHS National Display Garden for Hostas and Companion Plants that the community could enjoy. The garden was officially dedicated in June 2014. They continue to collaborate on design and new additions regularly. This is a garden that will continue to evolve as time passes. The garden is located at the Arboretum on Lincoln Avenue in Champaign. It is North of the Japan House and South of the North entrance to the Arboretum along the Kari Walkway.

The IPHS holds a plant auction on a bi-yearly basis along with a garage sale also on a bi-yearly basis. They have also had plant sales in the past as a fundraiser. In September an annual meeting and banquet are held typically featuring a nationally known speaker.

Past events have included multiple bus trips to regional gardens and even two-day trips to Missouri and Ohio.



**Official AHS Display Garden Signage and a small section of the gardens.**  
(Photos by Danny Lawson)



**Members enjoy a meeting at the home of Maureen Cohen on Maynard Lake in Champaign.**  
*(Photo by Jim O'Donnell)*



**Members enjoy an ice cream social and meeting at the University of Illinois Arboretum Garden.**  
*(Photo by Jim O'Donnell)*





**Members discuss gift plant at the annual dinner held in the Virginia Theater in downtown Champaign.**  
*(Photo by Jim O'Donnell)*



**Two more views of the IPHS AHS Display Garden.**  
*(Photos by Danny Lawson)*

# How to Register Your Hosta

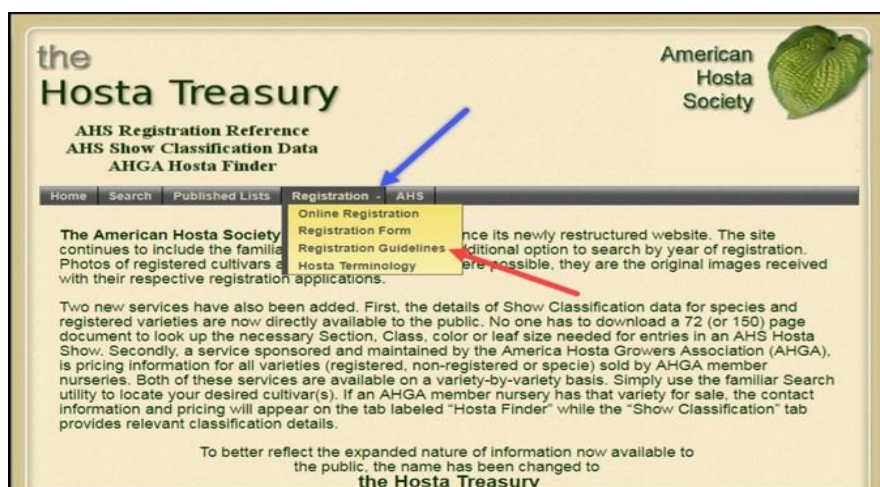
Text and Photos by  
Gayle Hartley Alley, International Registrar Genus *Hosta*

You have a great new hosta cultivar AND, you have a great name to go with this exciting new plant. What next? If you want to protect the name you've chosen and assure that it will not be used by anyone else, you should register your plant with the International Registrar Genus *Hosta*. Luckily, I am the current Registrar and I'm happy to assist anyone desiring to register their hosta. Email is the best pathway to converse with me. My email is [GiboshiGayle@gmail.com](mailto:GiboshiGayle@gmail.com).

To protect your chosen name, it's not enough to merely place a label on your cultivar or to list it in a nursery catalogue. At the same time as your perfect name appears in catalogue A, another nursery thousands of miles away, or even just a few doors down, could be using the exact same name, leaving the public confused about which plant is which. This also applies to online websites listing hosta varieties for sale. More than one nursery (or person) can be using the same plant name with nothing to protect the original user of that name, or to assure the public they are getting the hosta they desired.

The registration process protects your chosen name by providing a published, widely distributed, detailed description of your plant's defining characteristics. And, beginning this year, *the Hosta Treasury* website will be publishing the registration photographs as well. The published registration provides security to the person who registers their cultivar and provides confidence to the private gardener that they are indeed purchasing the desired cultivar. My goal as Registrar centers around assuring that *One Name* is applied to *One Plant* and one plant only, which reduces confusion in the marketplace as well as in our private garden spaces.

Many seem surprised to discover that registering their cultivar is a fairly simple process. I tell potential registrants that their first step is to make friends with *the Hosta Treasury* website. You can find *the Hosta Treasury* at the following address: <http://www.hostaregistrar.org/>. Once there, please take the time to peruse everything it has to offer. The *Home* page summarizes the services offered, but for assistance with how to register a hosta, the best place to start is with the tab labeled *Registration* (blue arrow in Figure 1).



Selecting this tab will reveal a drop-down menu where you may access the current registration form, submit an online registration application, review hosta terminology and most importantly, download a comprehensive set of instructions on *How to Register a Hosta* (red arrow shown in Figure 1).

On the next screen is a link to download the complete instructions and information needed to register your hosta.



If you have followed along so far, and have decided you want to register your favorite hosta, I highly recommend following the 'Path 3' method outlined within the instructions. See how devious I can be? Now you have to go to the website and download the instructions above to find out what 'Path 3' is all about. Please do just that - - and while you're there, take a look around. If any of the information provided on *the Hosta Treasury* is unclear or incomplete, I would be thrilled to hear from you. Only through feedback from actual users can I improve the services offered and make the website as user friendly as possible. Remember, for questions and improvement suggestions, email me at [GiboshiGayle@gmail.com](mailto:GiboshiGayle@gmail.com).

## *Gayle Hartley Alley*

*Gayle Hartley Alley* has been serving as the Hosta Registrar for the last three years, replacing the prior registrar on 1 January 2016. Gayle spent 33 years as a CAD Designer working with engineers, technicians and other designers across nine Department of Energy sites. She helped to define, build and implement secure nuclear deterrent systems, and in her later years served as mentor, trainer and liaison between disparate DOE sites.

As an introduction to the world of hostas, Gayle and her husband joined their local **Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society** and she quickly assumed the role of VP - Program Coordinator. In that capacity, Gayle became acquainted with many hosta experts whom she solicited to serve as guest speakers. One such enthusiast (Larry Tucker) took a liking to Gayle and recommended her as a potential candidate to serve as the International Registrar Genus Hosta.

Phil and Gayle live on 150 wooded acres which provides endless opportunities to plant yet more hostas (they have over 1200 distinct cultivars to date). They have a wonderful website which shows stunning displays of their hostas and various interesting projects: [www.hostaalley.com](http://www.hostaalley.com).

# Book Notice

by Clyde Crockett

## The Book Of Little Hostas

Written by Kathy Guest Shadrack and Michael Shadrack

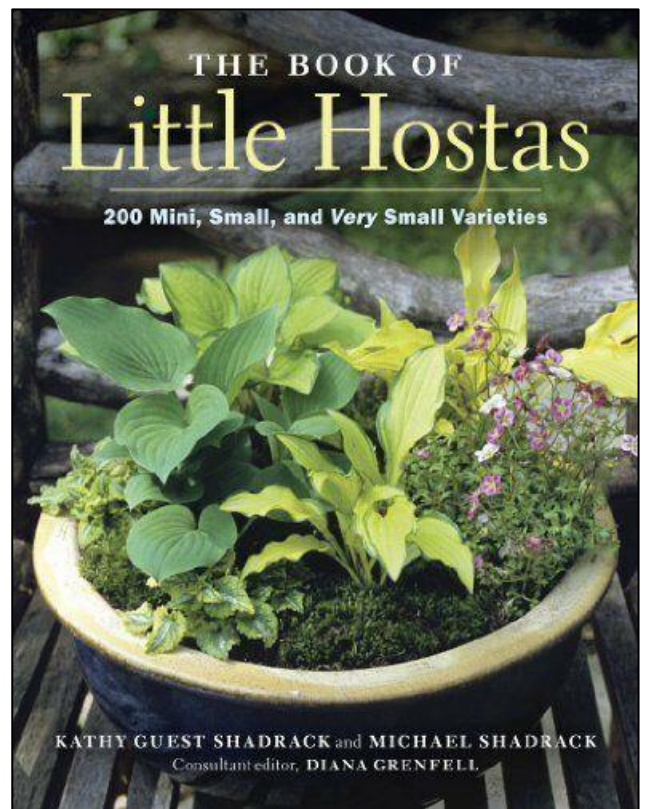
Consultant editor, Diana Grenfell (Portland, London: The Timber Press, Inc. 2010)

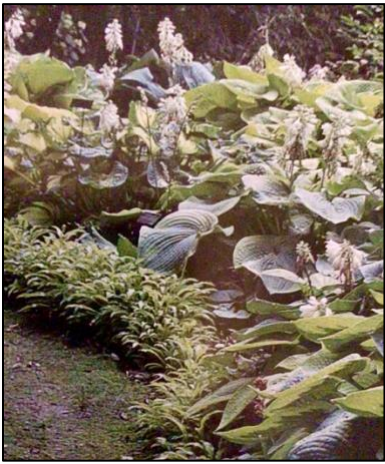
A confession: I never cared much for the little hostas - I was so impressed with the dominating biggiest - the sieboldianas, montanas and such. Ever been in that frame of mind? Some questions I had in respect of what I called the minis included, among others: Why grow the small ones? Do they need special treatment because of their sizes? And, for this gardener, the important question - how do you display them?

In this book we find a thorough dissertation on the answers to these questions plus additional and interesting in-depth suggestions and advice likely to awaken an appreciation for the little ones and possibly to create a desire to start collecting them en masse.

At the outset there is another question: What are we talking about by the use of the term "little hostas"? "There have been a plethora of terms used in the popular lexicon, such as "small," "dwarf," "tiny," "miniature," and other rather imprecise descriptions. This treatise has adopted a simpler and identifiable categorical system based in part on an effort by the American Hosta Society to simplify descriptions for sizes with an addition by Diana Grenfell, the well-known English horticulturist: "Small", which includes small hostas represented by *H.* 'Golden Tiara' and similar others; "Smaller", such as *H.* 'Baby Bunting'; and, "Smallest" or "Mini," like *H.* 'Tiny Tears' and its ilk. These categories, based on blade sizes, are not only useful for scientific purposes but let the catalog purchasers know what they are getting and whether the plants, such as the "small" ones, can compete with the big ones in the garden or need a special area where it is not drowned out, so to speak, by that *H.* 'Niagara'.

Chapter Two, "It's a Small World After All," provides responses to the question - Why grow the diminutive ones? The dominant reason is easily answered by the 200 photographs scattered throughout the book: (No, you don't have to wait until the end to get to the pictures!) They are just as colorful and variable as the large beauties and, to boot, quite adaptable, doing very well in small lots, on window sills, container grown, and able to form small-

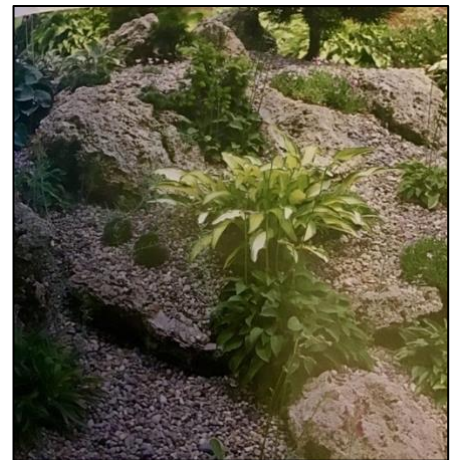




sized landscapes amongst miniature trees and other ornaments. Too, if a bed contains only the little types, the time devoted to weeding and watering your mini patch is considerably reduced.

Chapter Three, “How to Grow and Care For Your Little Hostas,” notes that one’s soil where big cultivars grow luxuriantly might require amendments for the babies to thrive. Various treatments are set out including the incorporation of pine bark, coconut dust (rather than the familiar peat moss) for retaining moisture and for good soil texture, and particulates for the critically important good drainage. An example is the familiar coffee grounds. The chapter stresses what one might consider the dominant theme of this book - the desirability of dedicating an area where only the little hostas are grown. Not only does this prevent their being overwhelmed by the larger types but such can be the catalysts of enticing vistas. Various types of areas are recommended including raised beds, tiers and rockeries with illustrations and simple directions for creating them are provided. Although this chapter is mainly concerned with little hostas ,it includes advice and suggestions that could be helpful to the growing of all sizes: siting, fertilizing, winter care, dividing, diseases, labeling, record keeping and how to avoid that bane to many - competition from tree roots.

Besides the use of raised beds and rockeries, Chapter Four, “Creating a Place for the Little Hostas,” introduces other interesting and innovative ideas for displays. As noted above, our subjects need, like Virginia Woolf, a room of their own. This could be a terra cotta container embellished by colorful rocks set out on a patio table. One might even create a garden in a window box. Other displays suggested include a woodland setting, plantings in driftwood and hollowed logs or as a border, placement in a rockery and in deck boxes. Container planting is highly recommended as are troughs, trays and other large containers.



To keep your little hostas company in their dedicated bed, smaller familiar companion plants are recommended in Chapter Five. Noting that miniature varieties are becoming increasingly available, some suggestions for your mini landscape include dwarf conifers, small trees and shrubs, mosses, ferns and other shade tolerant plants such as astilbes, ivies, primulas, and many others that might surprise you.

If you want some great ideas about all aspects of little hosta culture, this book is a must read. As well- known hosta maven Bob Solberg said, “The hosta world has been waiting for a book like this!” Additionally, the 200 photographs, among the best that I have seen, will be a great aid in adding to one’s want list. The authors should also be commended for the clarity and fluidity of the text which make it a delight to read.

I began with a confession and will end with one: I cannot get the tune “It’s a Small World After All” out of my head as I stroll by some small gems recently displayed in my garden. (I didn’t forget to raise the bed!)

Happy Gardening,

Clyde



# Profiles

## **Tammy Borden** **AHS Executive Vice President** **New London, WI**

I'm a farm girl at heart. I suppose that's where my love of nature and working the soil comes from. My parents immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1951 and eventually settled in Northeast Wisconsin where they ran a dairy farm. My mother was always busy milking cows, but still found time to tend the flowers that bordered the farmhouse. I can still remember the smell of peonies and those dark purple iris that she brought with her from the house they had in Milwaukee when they first arrived. I now have some of those same iris in my gardens.



As a little girl, I couldn't wait until spring when I could escape across the muddy, plowed fields to my sanctuary in a nearby forest. I could spend hours among the ferns, mossy granite rocks, trillium, trout lilies, bloodroot, and other native ephemerals blooming in the shadows. Perhaps that's why, today, I enjoy shade gardening so much.

The first home my husband, Paul, and I owned was on a small city street and was more than 100 years old. In between tearing down walls, jacking up the foundation, and completely remodeling every room, my love of gardening grew. The backyard had towering spruce trees that shaded the yard, and my attempts to grow sun-loving perennials were unsuccessful.

Surrounding the foundation of the home were several established "green" hostas that thrived in the shade and even in those few-and-far-between areas where the sun showed itself. I wasn't really familiar with hostas at the time, but I later learned the variety was named H. 'ventricosa.'



Me with brother on farm.

Back then, in the 1990s, I began looking for more hosta varieties. Soon, I owned all 10! Ha! Seriously, those were all I could find. My first acquisitions included Abiqua Drinking Gourd, Sum and Substance, Blue Angel, Montana Aureomarginata, Elegans, Great Expectations, Krossa Regal, Wide Brim, Paul's Glory, and Summer Fragrance. My collection slowly grew from there and eventually topped 50 varieties by the early 2000s.

In 2004, my husband and I finally finished remodeling that old house and we moved to our dream home north of town in the country nestled in the woods. The towering hardwood trees and ephemeral blooms reminded me of my childhood

strolls through the forest. The previous owner's idea of landscaping was a single blue spruce tree, a flagpole, and landscape rocks that bordered the house. To me, it was a blank canvas that I could make my own. I transferred all 50 varieties and planted them in rows along the woods until I could plan out my garden beds.

After taking a Master Gardener class, I found new friends who also loved hostas, and my collection continued to grow as a result of swapping and learning about new places to find different varieties. The "friendship" plant was living up to its name. And, once I discovered mail order hostas, it was game over!



Garden tower with *H. Kalamazoo* atop in a container. Other hostas shown include: *Corn Muffins*, *Spartacus*, *Niagara Falls*, *Golden Scepter*, *Cup of Grace*, *Garden Treasure*, *Silver Bay*, *Halcyon*, and *Queen of the Seas*.

As years went by, I designed garden beds alongside the woods and around the house. It wasn't too long before I discovered a major challenge. While the trees provided beautiful, high shade, some also had gnarled roots that choked out anything planted beneath them. As I watched some of my beautiful hostas diminish each year, I tried an experiment and planted some of them in containers. Through some trial and error, I eventually learned to use a light potting mix with good drainage. Soon, my containers outgrew those in the ground. The only challenge is hauling more than 50 containers into my unheated garage for overwintering.

I was able to solve some of that challenge, too, however, by burying some hostas with the pot directly into the ground in areas where root competition is fierce. I've had great success with this technique and just need to lift the pots a couple times each summer to make sure those pesky tree roots haven't found their way through the drainage holes. In fall, I just cover the buried pots with shredded leaves and wait for spring.

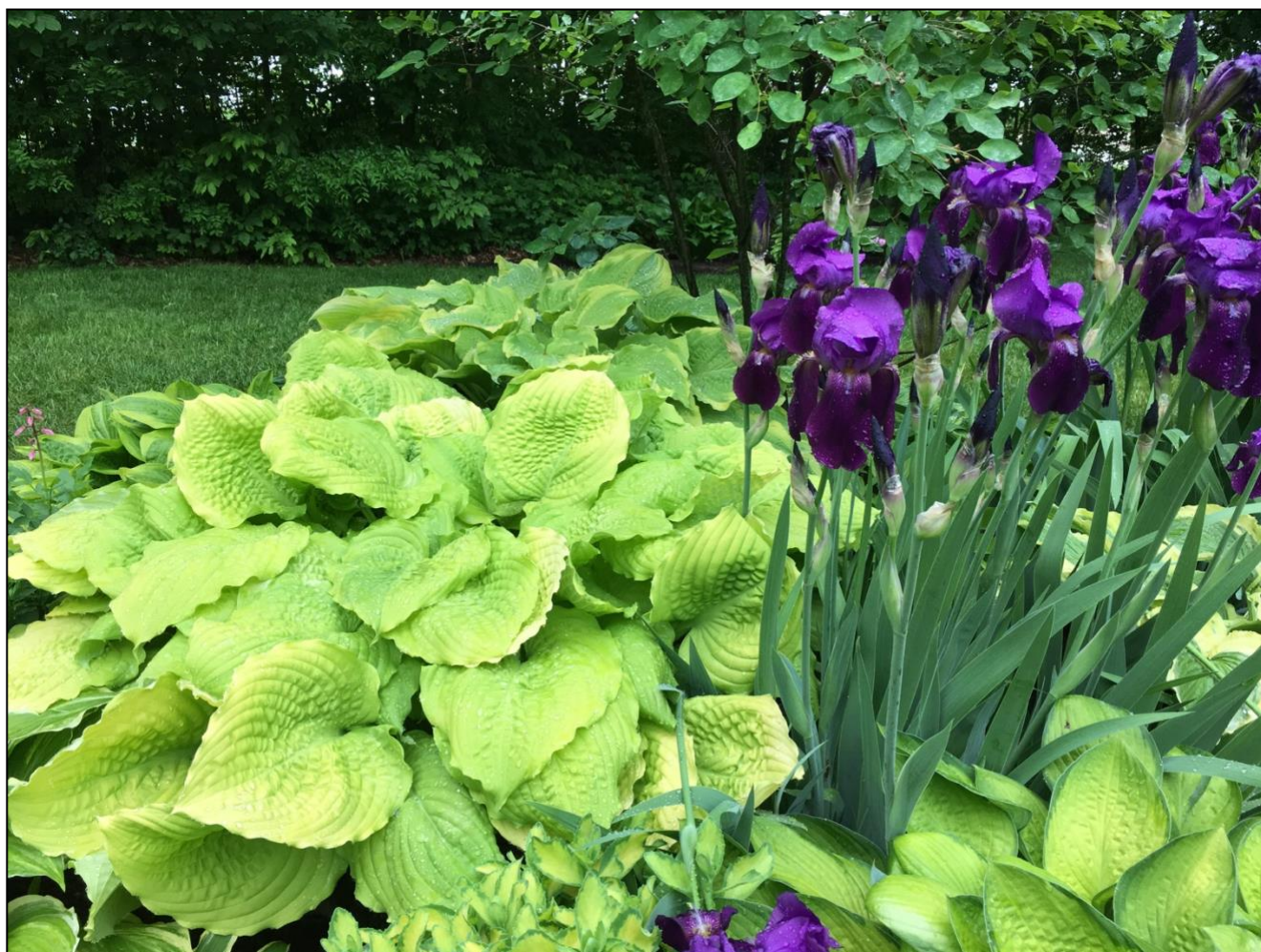
My most recent hosta bed is located in full sun. I did a lot of research to determine which varieties could tolerate such conditions, and many of them are thriving and growing twice as quickly as they did in the shade. Some of the varieties that fare well in my sun garden include *Amazing Grace*, *Dream Boat*, *Paul's Glory*, *Winter Snow*, *Liberty*, *Moonlight Sonata*, *Hyuga Urajiro*, *Eye Declare*, *Bridegroom*, *Leaping Lizard*, *Montana Aureomarginata*, *Fallen Angel*, *Seducer*, *Beyond Glory*, *Emerald Charger*, *Tropical Dancer*, *Faithful Heart*, and many others.

In all my garden beds, I try to be very strategic about placement of hostas based on their form, color, and size. I also try to incorporate various companion plants, accent trees, and accessories. It's tempting to fill every open spot with another hosta variety, but there are times when the silvery leaf of a *Brunerra* or the lacy fronds of a *Japanese Painted Fern* may be more appropriate.

I also try to create height in the garden to help draw the eye upward. This can be done with plants such as *Martagon Lilies*, *Pagoda Dogwood*, or *Phlox*, or it may be strategically placed birdhouses, an arbor, or driftwood stuck in the ground. The key, to me, is to be selective about including garden accessories and to truly have them

accent the garden rather than become a distraction. I would much rather have someone express their delight over how artistic my garden design is rather than just comment on how many hostas I have. But that doesn't stop me from wanting more hostas!

As a member of the Green and Gold Hosta Society of Northeastern Wisconsin, I truly enjoy connecting with other members to visit their gardens and talk about our newest acquisitions and garden challenges. One of the most challenging yet most rewarding experiences was being a part of the 2019 AHS Convention planning team and being a tour garden. It truly was a labor of love over the course of several years and, through that time, our team shared many joys and trials of life and grew closer. I'm excited about my new role as Executive Vice President of the American Hosta Society and can't wait to contribute to future AHS activities and events. More so, I can't wait to meet new friends.

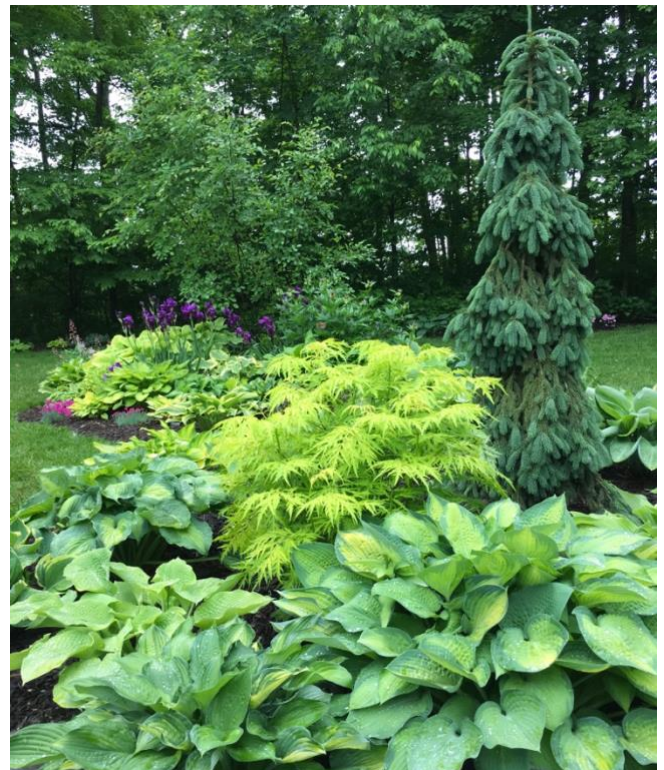


Purple iris from Tammy's mom accent the bright yellow of Dawn's Early Light in her full sun garden.





Companion plants like Globemaster Allium and Variegated Comfrey accent hostas, including Ventricosa Aureomaculata, Purple Flush, Wahoo, Cherry Berry, On Stage, and others.



Full sun garden featuring Paul's Glory, Phyllis Campbell, Rosedale Golden Full sun garden featuring Paul's Glory, Phyllis Campbell, Rosedale Golden Goose, Beyond Glory, and others. Also shown: Lemony Lace Elderberry and Weeping White Spruce.



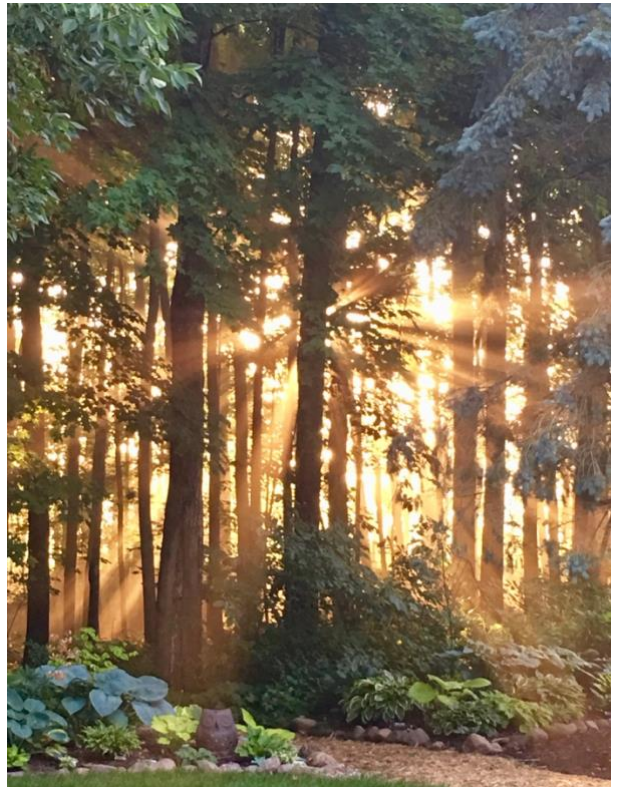
'Liberty' with Oriental Lily.



Martagon Lilies rise above hostas providing height to the garden.



Clockwise from bottom: Rainbow's End, Blaze of Glory, Bridal Falls, Irish Luck, Dark Shadows.



A foggy morning captures the sunrise through the forest surrounding Tammy and Paul's home.



Tammy and Paul's home.

# Hosta Hillside:

## *Preserving the Legacy of Hosta Icons*

Text and Photos by Michael Greanya

The Benedict Hosta Hillside, created and maintained by the Michigan Hosta Society (MHS), was formally designated as an American Hosta Society (AHS) National Display Garden in 1995. It was the second AHS National Display Garden to receive such a distinguished designation - the Minnesota Hosta Society was the first at Eden Prairie.

Planning and creation of the Hillside actually took place years prior by a trio of Jackson, Michigan men, Jim Wilkins, Gil Jones, and Clarence Owens, with a vision that this previously overgrown, abandoned rock garden a little over an acre in size and filled with poison ivy and weeds, might actually be redeveloped into something beautiful. The focus was to be hostas, "The Friendship Plant" . . . and lots of them! The proposed garden was situated on a hillside overlooking a small, secluded lake called Hidden

Lake, making the site a beautiful setting. The dream to create a spectacular public hosta garden became a reality when the Benedict Hosta Hillside was formally created at Hidden Lake Gardens. Hidden Lake Gardens is a Michigan State University Horticultural Garden, located in southcentral Michigan 60 miles south of the MSU campus; today Hosta Hillside displays over 1,000 hostas!



**Official AHS National Display Garden signage near entrance.**



**Hybridizers beds along the road.**

Ten years after its creation, MHS made the decision to honor our Michigan hybridizers by allocating them special areas at the Hillside to feature cultivars they named and introduced. There are 17 hybridizer beds located within Hosta Hillside. Interestingly, not all beds feature plants from true "Michigander's". Several people outside of Michigan have been so actively involved with the Michigan Hosta Society and Hosta Hillside, that the MHS "adopted" them and their plants are now located in beds designated in their honor as well. Some of those adoptees include "Indiana" Bob Balitewicz, and of course Van Wade.

Van Wade and Herb Benedict are names that are iconic in the world of hostas. They have done many things to help promote the genus hosta and are known by most everyone who has been involved with hosta and the AHS. They are both regarded as pioneers in the propagation of hostas and have each either registered or named about 270 hostas each. These two pioneers are unfortunately gone now, but their impact on our society will not soon be forgotten. Now, as we move forward with newer

people with their own breeding programs and many great new introductions coming from this new generation, we shouldn't forget what it took to get to where we are today and give thanks to our pioneers like Van and Herb.

While some of the hostas from a generation ago may lack the pizzazz of today's cultivars, they are nonetheless part of the steps necessary to get to where we are today with breeding programs. **Preservation of our past is important. For this reason, the Michigan Hosta Society has established a goal of collecting registered and non-registered hostas from Van Wade and Herb Benedict and featuring them in special beds honoring these men.**

With a generous donation of 100 hostas from the Wade family, we are well on our way of creating one of the finest collections of Van's plants anywhere. The Wade family (Brian and Cheryl) brought every hosta from the Wade and Gatton Nursery that they could find that Van either registered or named (non-registered). There are still many plants of Van's that are unaccounted for that we would like to find. In addition to Van's plants, the Wade family also donated 30 Herb Benedict introductions.

The MHS now has almost 120 of Van Wade's hostas and approximately 68 of Herb Benedict's plants. The Wade family's donations were planted this spring in a prominent location at the entrance to Hosta Hillside with room for additional plants for both Van and Herb. The Benedict bed has been moved and expanded to accommodate many new plants.

**We hope to expand the collections, but we need your help. There are members of our organization who have been collecting hostas for decades. If you have any of Van or Herb's plants that we do not already have and would like to help us expand our collections, help us by donating a piece of your plant. Join us in making the collection of these pioneer's plants the largest collection of their hostas in any public garden and assist in the preservation of their hybridizing efforts for everyone to see.**

Please contact Mike Greanya at: [mfg10@comcast.net](mailto:mfg10@comcast.net) , Co-Chair of Hosta Hillside for a list of hosta we are missing. Shipping information and additional details can be discussed through email or by phone. If you would like assistance with shipping costs, the Michigan Hosta Society will gladly help you.

**We appreciate your support and look forward to working with you!**



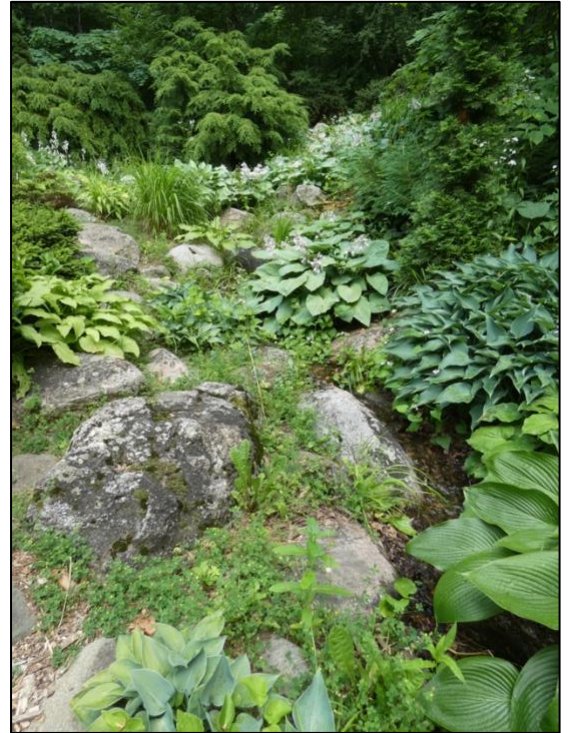
View from road through Hosta Hillside to Hidden Lake.



Stream outlet into Hidden Lake.



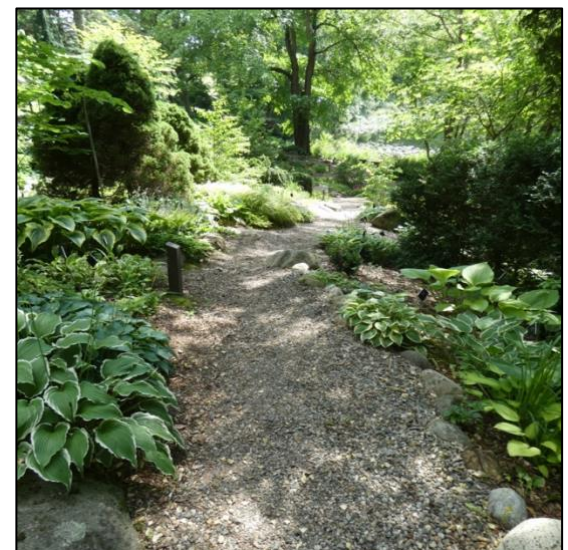
**View on new Van Wade hosta bed.**



**Stream cascading through Hosta Hillside.**



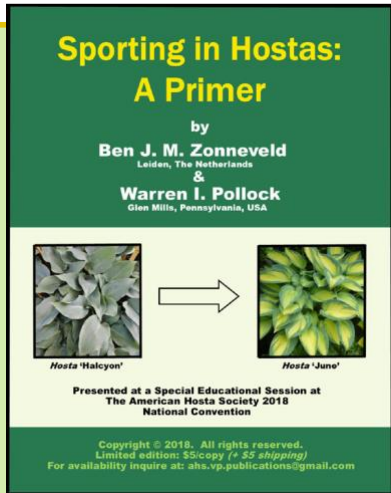
**Entrance into Hosta Hillside.**



**Pathway meandering through Hosta Hillside.**



**Patio we built overlooking Hosta Hillside.**



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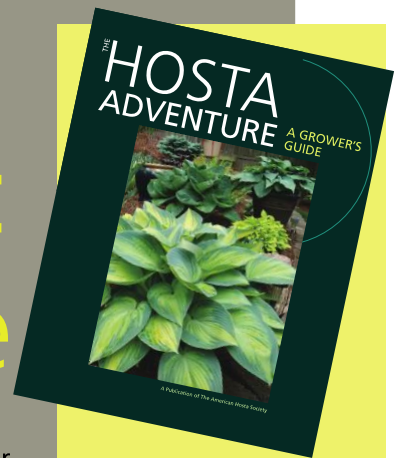
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The American Hosta Society (AHS) is a society dedicated to the study and improvement of the genus *Hosta* and the dissemination of general and scientific knowledge about hostas. There are many benefits for the members that result from these efforts, both social and in nursery trade. AHS members receive several publications a year, including two colorful issues of *The Hosta Journal* (mailed), six *eNewsletters* (emailed), along with *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:**

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Warren I. Pollock  
Clyde Crockett



**Contributing Authors:** Andy Marlow, President  
Rick & Barb Schroeder, Illinois Prairie Hosta Society  
Gayle Hartley Alley, International Registrar Genus *Hosta*  
Tammy Borden, Executive Vice President  
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