



*Photo by Tammy Borden*

***Hosta 'Golden Harmony'***  
**Herb King 2018**  
**Green Bay AHS Convention Gift Plant for 2019**



## ***Message from the Interim President***

**Mary Schwartzbauer, Hastings, MN**

As I sit down to write this message, I am shaking my head because I am perplexed about what item on my to do list I should, or more accurately, can, do when I am done with this.

Let me explain. It is the Monday after Easter and it is raining out (so that eliminates blowing the leaves out of the garden beds). Two Mondays ago, we hit our first 70 degree day here just south of the Twin Cities. Two days later, Wednesday, the snow started and kept on into Thursday, dumping 8" at my house and up to a whopping 20" to the suburbs to our west. Yikes! Then last Monday it again hit 70 degrees but on Wednesday instead of snow we got 4" of rain!

Now it is Monday again and since it is raining, I am wondering if that means on this Wednesday it will snow again?! There seems to be a pattern, but it is supposed to be nice the rest of the week and I think again hit 70 degrees on Wednesday so maybe the cycle is broken and I can finally get to the yard work! Spring! I've been jealous seeing people like Harold McDonnell posting on Facebook hostas up and unfurled in his Georgia garden for what seems like months already! We have a shorter season up here and our fingers get a little itchy!

Speaking of itchy, I'm also getting itchy to see what Green Bay has in store for us at the National Convention this year. Working with the Midwest Regional Hosta Society to bring us a combined event is new and should be exciting. As the event is officially 'sold out', others must think so too. If you didn't get registered before things were full, you can get put on the waiting list should someone have to cancel, but there of course is no guarantee. Visit the website and contact Tammy or Jen and good luck! We hope to see everyone there!

It would seem that almost all of us must now be in the spring swing of things. Hopefully our plants survived the many challenges of winter and the thawing season, and the fresh air fills our hearts with joy as we look forward to another growing season.

Sincerely,

Mary Schwartzbauer  
Interim President



# *Hostas and Associates*

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

## The Japanese Hostas, Part 5

### *Hosta longissima* (Mizu Giboshi)

by Glenn Herold

Though hostas are native to Japan, China, and Korea, the majority of species come from Japan. This article is the fifth in a series which will talk about those species. Previous *eNewsletter* articles have covered *Hosta alismifolia*, *H. nakaiana*, *H. pycnophylla*, and *H. longipes*. 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. longissima*, Mizu Giboshi, which is translated from the Japanese as "Water Hosta."

As the name suggests, *Hosta longissima* prefers moist to wet soil. It is native to the swamps and wetlands of Honshu Island in Japan. Because of this need for water, it is difficult to properly site in the garden. If its water needs are not properly met, the foliage may die back during dry spells, something that inevitably happens during most summers. In my garden, I have sited it near a downspout and sump pump discharge area. So far, this has proved to be fairly successful.

*Hosta longissima* is a small plant, growing to about 4 to 7 inches high and 15 to 17 inches wide. Leaves are the narrowest of all hosta species, rarely exceeding one inch in width. They are a medium green color and slightly shiny on the top and underside. Flowering occurs in late August and extends for only about two weeks into early September. Flowers are pale purple and are fertile.

There are two varieties of *H. longissima*. Variety *longifolia* (which goes by two common names in Japan: Nagaba Mizu Giboshi, meaning Long-leaved Water Hosta, and Hosoba Mizu Giboshi, meaning Narrow-leaved Water Hosta) has leaves that are 8 to 11 inches long and lack a discernible petiole. Scapes are 12 to 23 inches tall, but has only 4 to 5 flowers per scape, fewer than most hostas.

Variety *brevifolia* (Saji Giboshi, meaning Spoon Hosta) has 3 to 6 inch leaves which have a distinct petiole, and generally boasts more flowers per scape, up to 10, than var. *longifolia*. It is often confused with a narrow-leaved, late flowering form of *Hosta sieboldii*, but *H. sieboldii* has leaves that are generally wider (1 1/2 inches) and the plant is taller, up to 13 inches. *Hosta sieboldii* is also significantly easier to grow, not requiring the constant moisture that *H. longissima* requires.

There are a number of *H. longissima* sports in existence. 'Asahi Comet' has a pale yellow margin which changes to white during the growing season. Similar to this is 'Asahi Sunray,' which has a chartreuse margin that changes to yellow. A reverse variegation is found in 'Asahi Star,' which has a gold center and green margin. The variety that sported these cultivars is unknown.

Several sports arose from *H. longissima* var. *longifolia*. 'Fukurin Hosoba Mizu,' 'Hanazawa Fukurin Mizu,' and 'Shirofukurin Hosoba Mizu' all have green centers and white margins. 'Kinakafu Nagaba Mizu' has a gold center and green margin. All of these are of Japanese origin.



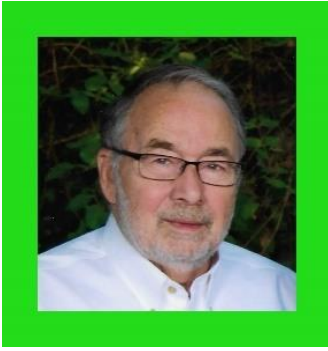
Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery used *Hosta longissima* in his breeding program a couple of decades ago. His cross of (('Swoosh' x *longissima*) x 'Red Neck Heaven') x 'Elvis Lives' resulted in a number of plants that he registered. They include 'Deliverance' ('05), 'Electrocution' ('05), 'Eruption' ('07), 'First Lady' ('07), 'Frenzy' ('07), 'Skinny Dippin' ('06), and 'Swinger' ('15). Many of these have a white to yellow margin, but 'Skinny Dippin' is a medium-green with a wavy margin, and 'Eruption' is a nice blue color. Perhaps the one that inherited the most characteristics of *H. longissima* is 'Electrocution,' which has narrow, twisted leaves and a border that changes from yellow to white.



Though *H. longissima* hasn't been used extensively in breeding, a few other hybrids do exist. Bob Savory crossed it with *H. clausa normalis* to obtain 'Purple Lady Finger' ('82), which has narrow, dark green arching leaves and dark purple flowers. Some say it looks more like a grass than a hosta. Scott Crabb crossed 'Let's Streak' with *H. longissima* to get 'William Bedard' ('04). It is a dwarf green hosta with wavy foliage and a creamy edge. It produces light purple flowers and red seed pods.

There is a niche for breeding hostas that will tolerate wet, poorly drained soils. Will you be the one to fulfill this need? Look no further than *Hosta longissima* to start your breeding program.





# Go Hostas!

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

## Slug and Foliar Nematode Abatement Programs

*SPRING IS HERE!* So I assume you've initiated your Slug/Snail and Foliar Nematode Abatement Programs.

If your FN program uses Nema Stop™, previously labeled NemaKill, there is a lot of information on foliar nematodes and this chemical in *Go Hostas!* columns in the September 2018 and January 2019 issues of the *AHS eNewsletters*. In particular, the January issue has the latest information for applying Nema Stop. It supersedes information in "Combatting Foliar Nematodes: Suggested Protocol Using NEMAKILL®" published in the *Delaware Valley Hosta Society Newsletter* in 2016. Also, *please* keep records as described in January *Go Hostas!* of what you did, when you did it and the results. And *please* supply these details to PureGrow USA who markets Nema Stop. Your experiences are needed to keep the application technology updated.

The March 2019 issue of *Go Hostas!* describes applying dilute solution of ammonia for slug/snail mitigation. It also describes making and applying garlic solution to combat slugs/snails. If you're using—or will use—these methods, please contact me. I'd like a follow-up item early next year.

## Blue Hostas: Why are they blue? How to care for them.

by Vladimir Mirka

*Vladimir Mirka is a keen hosta collector (1000+cultivars, a large number in containers) residing in Kladno, Czech Republic. I've had a wide-ranging email correspondence with him for the last couple of years initiated when I wrote an item about his sport H. 'Bohemia Fatty Manzo' with photos of his extensive garden in the Spring 2017 issue of The Hosta Journal (Volume 48, No. 1, pages 55-57).*

*"Bohemia" is his hosta introductions' moniker. Bohemia is one of three historical territories of the Czech Republic. Kladno is in Central Bohemia, which surrounds the capital city Prague. Kladno is in the west of Prague.*

*The weather in Kladno, Vladimir thinks, is similar to the inland areas of Massachusetts. However, most significantly, the sun isn't so strong. So hostas that would be planted in shade in the USA can be planted in sun in his garden. He says the dramatic temperature changes in winter make overwintering pots difficult. In the past he has had about 600 hostas in containers.*

*Vladimir Mirka is a retired physician, an anesthesiologist. For the past nine years he has been hybridizing and photographing hostas. He enjoys studying hostas and has carried out experiments on the different leaf appearances of cultivars grown in sun versus shade. He is a frequent contributor of technical articles to Eurohosta BLOG, an online publication of Eurohosta, the nursery of Milan and Dana Zubrik in Niar nad Hronom, Slovakia.*



*Kladno is about a 3-hour drive to Eurohosta. (Some geography info: The federal state of Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, officially the Slovak Republic, in January 1, 1993.)*

*In the March 2019 issue of Eurohosta BLOG, Vladimir has a most interesting article, "Blue Hostas: Why are they blue? How to care for them." I thought the information would be of interest to AHS membership and requested permission from the Zubriks to include a condensed version in Go Hostas! Notably missing herein are the six large photos of blue-leaved H. 'Skylight', 'Blue Vision', 'Venetian Blue', 'Hadspen Blue', 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' and 'Halcyon'.*

*The remainder of this item is Vladimir's text abridged and includes two of the original photos. The photo by Dana Zubrikova (Mrs. Zubrik) has no caption. Do you know what hosta it is? If yes, please contact me.*



Leaves of blue hostas are basically dark green. The blue color is visible due to a layer of wax on the leaves' surface. This phenomenon is unique in the plant world since hostas are shade tolerant, and most plants with a blue surface coating, as seen in many cacti, yuccas, agaves, etc., have it as protection against the sun.

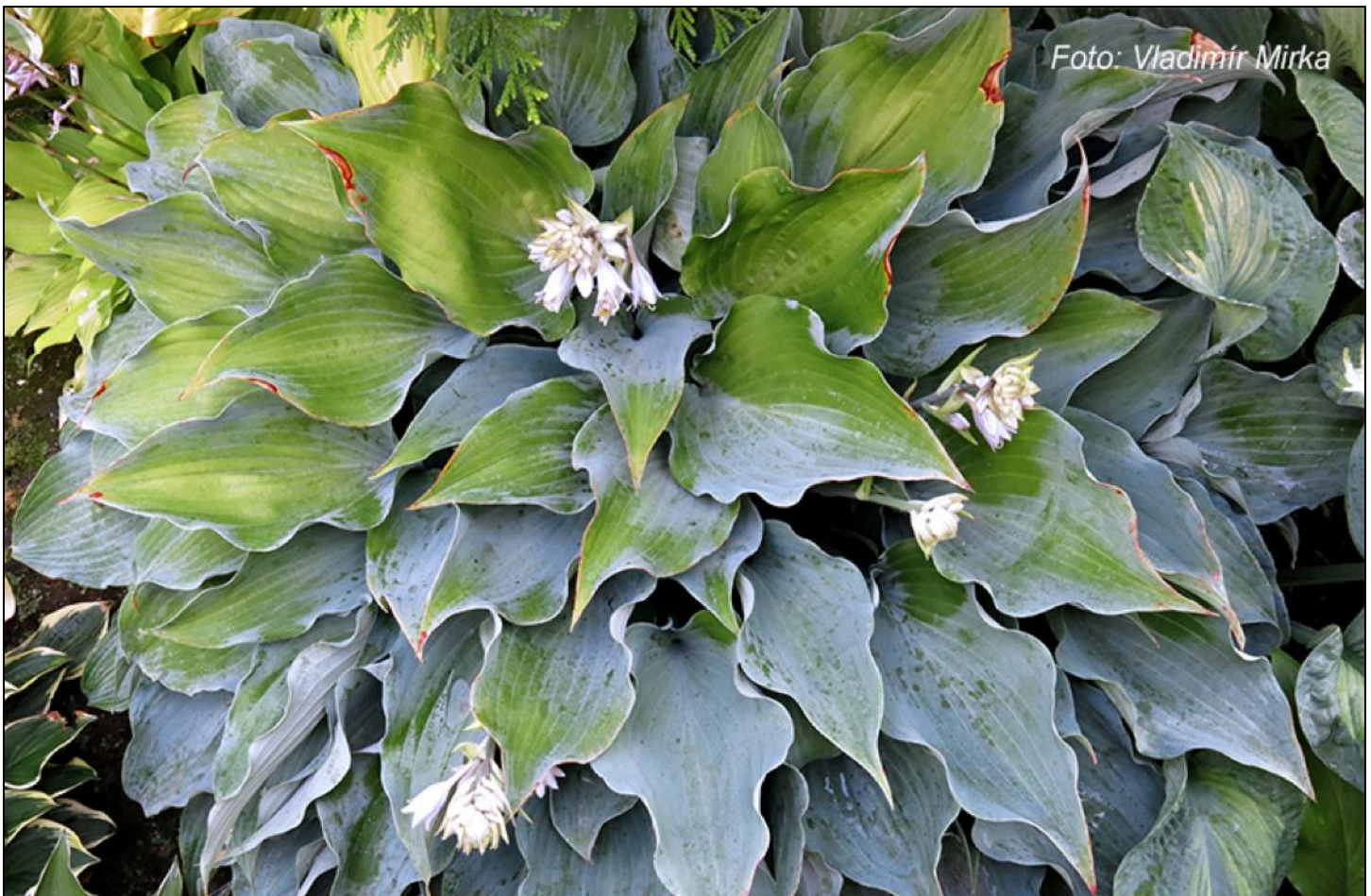
Most blue hostas are resistant to slugs and snails, because the wax is bitter and they do not like it. Some hosta cultivars have a thick wax layer; on other cultivars it is thinner. The thicker the wax layer, the more intense the blue color that the hosta develops. Also, the color is longer lasting. In direct sun—under the influence of heat, the wax layer degrades and gradually disappears. That is why most blue hostas are green-blue or just dark green from mid-summer until autumn. Try it yourself: Slightly wipe the wax layer from the leaf with your finger and the leaf will become green. It is that easy to remove.

Blue hostas perform best in temperate climates, with a wet and long spring and cooler summer. In very warm regions, in the south, where the year goes straight from mild winter to hot summer, the blue color lasts for just



a short while. Blue hostas generally perform better in somewhat colder climates. In Central European conditions, blue hostas are brightest from the end of May until the middle of June. Then the blue color slowly disappears.

Blue hosta cultivars are shade tolerant plants. The more sun they have, the sooner they lose their wax coating and keep their blue color for a shorter time. Extensive irrigation can increase the duration of their nice blue color. Be careful not to irrigate from above, as water can wash the wax layer down from the leaves. Apply water carefully close around the roots if you want to keep the wonderful bright blue color as long as possible. Older plants have a thicker wax coating, so that older well-rooted clumps are more intensely blue than young plants of the same cultivar.



This blue hosta was exposed to full sun for a long time and the protective wax layer on the leaves was burned by the sun. The green parts of the leaves are wax free. Leaves that were in shade remained blue.

It is not true that there are no beautiful blue cultivars among the older cultivars, or that all of the new blue cultivars are ideally blue. Between the older and new hosta cultivars there are plenty of truly beautiful blue types.

I have divided blue hosta cultivars into three categories and listed some representative cultivars in each category. The division is highly subjective. You may have different experiences in your garden. Often under

certain circumstances and under specific suitable light conditions, BLUE-GREEN HOSTAS will develop a wonderful blue color—the nicest in the garden! As a rule, these hostas will hold a beautiful blue color a bit shorter than those from the REALLY BLUE HOSTAS category.

### **REALLY BLUE HOSTAS**

These hosta cultivars keep a beautiful blue color from the beginning of spring. The intensity of the blue color culminates in the period from the end of May to the middle of June, after which the blue gradually weakens. In many cases, these cultivars are almost blue until the autumn. Many growers think *H.* 'Halcyon' is the bluest-leaved hosta. The huge, heavily corrugated leaves of *H.* 'Elegans' are a favorite among the blue giants. *H.* 'Skylight' probably has one of the most brilliant blue hues. No hosta garden can be complete without *H.* 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'.

'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'  
'Big Daddy'  
'Blue Jay'  
'Blue Vision'  
'Camelot'  
'Deep Blue Sea'  
'Flemish Sky'  
'Fragrant Blue'

'Hadspen Blue'  
'Halcyon'  
'Elegans'  
'Love Pat'  
'Prairie Sky'  
'Skylight'  
'Winfield Blue'

### **GREEN-BLUE HOSTAS with a prevalence of blue**

Under suitable conditions, these cultivars are often very beautiful. Their color may last a little shorter than REALLY BLUE HOSTAS. After the culmination of the blue color intensity in June, the color of their leaves turns to a blue-green or greenish blue. Many of these hosta cultivars are real blue jewels and their beauty should not be underestimated. Included in this category would be most blue hosta cultivars. It's hard to find a favorite among them. *H.* 'Krossa Regal' and 'Blue Angel' will not disappoint. The true-blue color of *H.* 'Lakeside Beach Bum' and 'Mystic Star' can be amazing at the end of May. Leaves of *H.* 'Salute' are upright and those of *H.* 'Neptune' are lanceolate wavy. The choice is yours.

'Beauty Little Blue'  
'Big Mamma'  
'Blue Angel'  
'Blue Cadet'  
'Blue Diamond'  
'Blue Mouse Ears'  
'Blue Umbrellas'  
'Blueberry Muffin'  
'High Tide'  
'Krossa Regal'

'Lakeside Beach Bum'  
'Lederhosen'  
'Millennium'  
'Mystic Star'  
'Neptune'  
'Queen of the Seas'  
'Salute'  
'Sapphire Pillows'  
'Sky Dancer'  
'Yankee Blue'

### **BLUE-GREEN HOSTAS with a prevalence of green color**

These cultivars have a thinner protective wax coating which breaks down faster even in colder and less sunny conditions. Therefore, they show a blue color only for a short time and most of the year are a blue-green. They are not completely green as the blue shade is always apparent on their leaves. They are a beautiful addition to every garden and are often exceptional in their shape with red petioles or wavy edges. Leaves of *H.* 'Red Cadet'



have vitality and red “legs,” leaves of *H. ‘Phantom’* are a gorgeous delicate shade of blue-green and leaves of *H. ‘Frisian Waving Steel’* are a wrinkled restless form.

‘Blue Lady’

‘Frisian Waving Steel’

‘Church Mouse’

‘Mikawa-no-yuki’

‘Party Favor’

‘Phantom’

‘Red Cadet’

‘Restless Sea’

‘Ruffled Mouse Ears’

‘Snowden’

### **Why are my “blue” hostas not blue?**

Maybe because you grow them in too much sun. A bit of sunlight does not injure any blue cultivar (especially morning sun), but intense afternoon sun quickly melts the wax layer and blue hostas soon lose their color.

You irrigate the plants too often over the foliage. Frequent irrigation from above can wash the wax layer from the leaves and this can make your blue hostas lose their color. It’s very easy to damage this layer.

### **Van Wade’s Hosta Nursery Closes**

At the end of March, this announcement was posted concerning Van Wade’s outstanding hosta nursery in Bellville, Ohio, known to hosta enthusiasts worldwide:

“It is with great regret that Wade & Gatton Nurseries will be closing as of March 29, 2019 due to the loss of Van R. Wade, sole proprietor of Wade & Gatton Nurseries in April of 2017, and after the closing of his estate and business in January of 2019. Due to unforeseen circumstances after Van’s death, the family feels that we cannot continue.”

“We have appreciated your friendship, business and support during the past years and could not have succeeded without your help. We hope that our friendships will continue on into the future as that is the most important asset to our past and future!”

“We will greatly miss all of our friends, employees, customers and suppliers, but we feel this is in the best interest for us and our families.”

I visited the extensive hosta collection at Wade and Gatton Nurseries 8 times from 1986-2008—and came away each time with WOW! exclaimed more enthusiastically and louder than before. The number of hostas expertly grown and artistically displayed was overwhelming. I think it correct that it was the biggest and best hosta collection in the world.

One cultivar in particular got everyone’s attention. It was Van Wade’s clump of *H. ‘Sum and Substance’*. Mark Zilis in his popular, highly authoritative 2014 field guide published by Q&Z Nursery said it’s the largest hosta he measured in any garden: 48 inches high by 114 inches wide!

Mark further mentioned that this mound not only is famous for its dimensions, but also for the special “fertilizer” that Van placed at the bottom of the planting hole. “When you visit the magnificent Wade & Gatton Nurseries hosta collection,” Mark said, “ask Van about his ‘secret to success.’” Since this isn’t possible anymore, I’ll tell you here: Reportedly it was a dead groundhog! Furthermore, three S&S plants were grouped together in the hole. Also, the large bed had a huge amount of high-content compost, was annually supplemented with fertilizer

and was usually watered daily from an overhead irrigation system that turned on at 5 o'clock when the nursery just closed.

I choke up when I think Van Wade's hosta collection will no longer be available to visit. There should be a high-priority effort to document this acclaimed resource, such as a video of the site and its special attractions, narrated by a hosta authority, preferably several. This would be a well-appreciated project for The American Hosta Society to undertake and have available, for example, on flash drive. But it must be done soon, *very soon*. It is doubtful that the pristine condition of the collection will continue to be maintained.



*H. 'Sum & Substance' giant clump in Van Wade's nursery, now closed.  
(AHS File Photo)*

# GO HOSTAS!



# Dare to be different in your hosta garden

By Larry Tucker



**Beware, there's a moose loose in the garden!**

For most of us, gardening is a chosen pastime. For some, it's an honorable profession. But for a few, gardening is a creative passion that stirs us to dream and dare to be different.

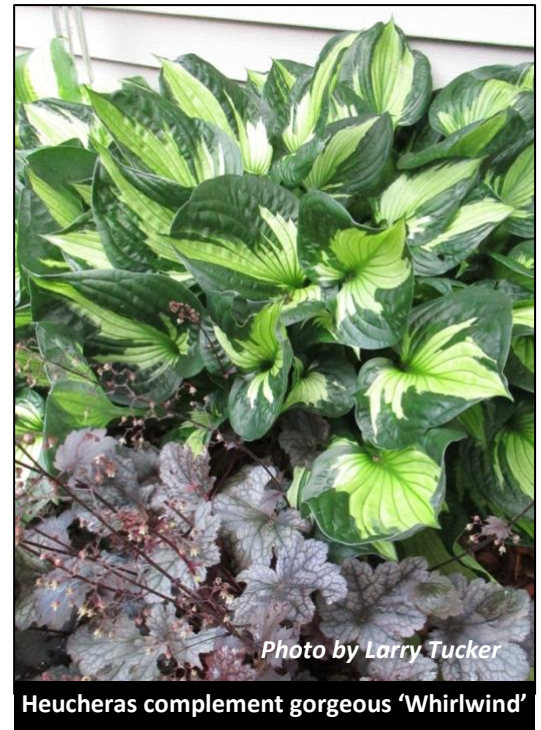
I salute hosta hybridizers for their countless hours, days, months and years spent gambling on what they hope will be different and desirable cultivars. These creations are the first link in a chain that leads to our gardens. As hostas mature, some are superior, even trend-setting, because of unusual characteristics or color. *Viva la difference!* New and improved specimens are what keep today's hosta world dynamic.

The end game, however, is how we display and enjoy these plants. Row upon row of collectible hostas in the landscape can be boring. Instead, more attention should be paid to showcasing them in special containers or framing them with complementary companion plants. Some hostas, especially those that boast grandiose height or

width, dominate their designated space. Smaller cousins may need a boost—on a pedestal, perhaps—to be eye-catching.

If you haven't toured regional or national gardens lately, you're bypassing the main events, which hold oodles of ideas on how to improve your own garden. Lost your initiative? Excuse me, but now is the time to recapture that flagging passion. I have yet to meet a serious gardener who isn't curious. I've always found that hosta garden tours hold more gifts than the opportunity to view well-grown plants. Other points of interest are a garden's footprint and layout, hardscape and softscape, artistic accents, sunny and shady venues, arrangement of plant structure and size, coordination of species and related cultivars, plus visits with host gardeners about how they developed their attractions.

In shaping a half-century of gardens, Shari and I have borrowed many grand ideas and come up with a few of our own. We doubled the size of a backyard garden nook by moving a giant dining room mirror outside, thanks to a garden display at the Chelsea Flower Show. We created a miniature hosta planter with purchase of an old iron pig trough, thanks to similar prominence on an AHS garden tour. We remodeled an old hose reel into a



Heucheras complement gorgeous 'Whirlwind'

garden table, turned a retired aquarium stand into a potting bench and built a tool-studded gate, thanks to ideas harvested in our travels. We collected vintage metal milk delivery cartons to house and hide ugly black-plastic pots filled with humongous hostas. We removed dual heating elements and converted a vintage kerosene stove into a hosta pot stand. We also elevated a corner of the garden and planted an apple tree, under which hostas thrive. In studying the garden watershed, we and installed a rock-based dry stream bed to drain the terrain of rain—complete with an underground reservoir and bubbling fountain. In our newest garden, a patio plot, we created a cascade of hostas in ceramic blue pots. No telling what schemes are next.

Available space, type of soil, overhead canopy and climate may have placed limits on the location of your hosta garden. Like me, competition from shallow-rooted trees or voracious voles may have already influenced your decisions to plant in sunken pots or above-ground containers. Whatever your circumstances, work with nature to create a showplace for healthy, happy hostas. In the meantime, maintain horticultural diversity with trellises, pergolas and arbors for climbers, berms and fences for vertical backdrops, paths and intersections for horizontal flow, and ponds and patios for destinations, such as a garden “room” the Tuckers developed to feature white-blooming plants. Finally, add a few accents to promote your personality—pithy signage, a fairy garden, a bottle tree, whatever tickles your fancy.

Transforming your landscape could improve habitat for birds, bees, butterflies, bats, cats, frogs and other critters that pollinate plants or prey on pests. You may also attract friends eager to borrow innovative ideas to enhance *their* gardens. Just put your mind and body in a rejuvenation mode. This may require some down-to-earth mental and physical exercise. The benefits far outweigh the effort. With a little imagination,

you could look at it as recreation, but before long you’ll see re-creation—because you dared to be different.



## FEATURED LOCAL SOCIETY



Fred Anderson, President  
2723 Smallwood Drive  
Knoxville TN 37920

Website: <http://easttnhostasociety.weebly.com>

The East Tennessee Hosta Society is loosely based in and around Knoxville, TN. We also have members from surrounding towns – Sweetwater, Harriman, Maynardville, Dandridge, and Maryville among others. Our membership is made up of people of all types with a common love of gardening in general and hostas in particular, this includes all shade loving companion plants. We are fortunate enough to still have a lot of the founding members still in the club. Our club has about 50 members who are mostly active. Yearly dues are reasonable at \$12 for singles and \$18 for couples.

During the cooler months of February & March we have classroom meetings in the greenhouse class rooms at the state botanical gardens. From April to October we have a monthly outdoor garden activity such as garden tours. Our monthly activity is always followed by socializing over drinks and snacks. We usually go to a neighboring town to visit different gardens and to meet new people once a year.

The last meeting of the year in November is our Annual General Meeting and our end of the year party; we do not meet in December & January. We only do one fund raising event during the year and that is a plant sale on the first Sunday of May, known as our Tailgate Sale. These funds go to “Tranquility – the Cornelia B. Holland Hosta Garden” at the University of Tennessee Gardens where we meet. Cornelia is also a member. This is an AHS Hosta National Display Garden with over 500 varieties and was recognized by the AHS in 2015.



President Fred Anderson ready to take new memberships



We are fortunate to have founding member Brian White from Brian White Nurseries to source a lot of our specialty Hostas from. He is a great source of information to us. Another founding member, who was President & Newsletter Editor for so many years, is Elin Johnson. She contributes articles to gardening magazines. Our web site and Facebook page languished for a long time before new member Mary Albrecht joined and refurbished this role which is key to communicating with the public and new members joining.

Our club produces a newsletter every month from February to November to inform members on what is going on and what is coming up. I have been doing this for the past couple of years and thought I was the only President that took on this extra role but have learned since that I am not the only one. :)

Every year in August – Bob Solberg visits us and shares some interesting visuals and information. This is combined with a tour of my gardens “Anderson Estate”.

Our motto is: *Gather Friends Like Flowers*

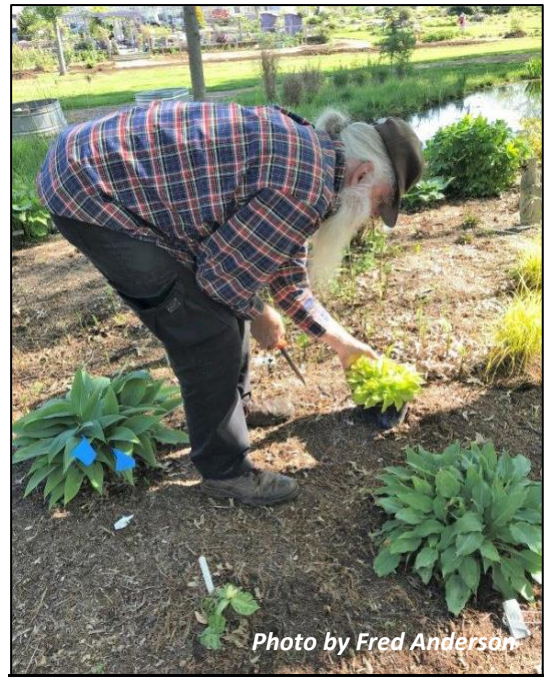


Photo by Fred Anderson  
VP Bob Goeltz inspecting a Hosta at Tranquility



Photo by Fred Anderson

Howard Luttrell's garden many years ago. Howard was an AHS Master Judge





*Photo by Fred Anderson*

**Sandra Anderson and Judy Kopp fighting over a Hosta at a Hosta garden moving sale**



*Photo by Fred Anderson*

**Fred and Sandra Anderson gloating over their Hosta purchases at Elin Johnson's moving sale**



*Photo by Sandra Anderson*

**Bob Solberg enthralling the members of the ETHS with a presentation from his recent trip to Japan**





*Photo by Fred Anderson*

**Almost ready to open the gates for the first customers**



*Photo by Fred Anderson*

**A sampling of supporting vendors to the Hosta Tailgate Sale**



# Book Notice

by Clyde Crockett

## HOSTAS

### Grow your Hostas per species habits

Written by Reggie D. Millette. (Quebec: Millette photomedia 2013)

The title raises an interesting question: why should we care about the species parentage of our hostas? I should be one to question such!

I have always been fascinated by Hosta species and some technical discourses on whether this or that plant we called *sieboldiana* is truly a species or not. To many, these kinds of analyses belong in dusty textbooks but here from the founder of the Quebec Hosta Society we get some fresh insights and answers.

In his introduction to Millette's work, the esteemed hosta expert Mark Zilis informs that if the grower knows the heritage or parentage of the plant, the better we know under what sorts of conditions it will succeed in our gardens. So, for example, the first species and its hybrids that is featured by Millette is *plantaginea*. Where is the best location for the hundreds of hybrids of such? Well, we look at where the species came into being—in this case in East China: hot and humid. So, that is where its many sports and seedlings are likely to perform well. Another example is *montana*—shady areas is their home. In this book we get similar data about sports, hybrids, and crosses of these and ten other species with the information of their inherited characteristics and thus the best way to treat them in one's garden. Each species is followed by photographs and lists of their relatives to guide the gardener.

There are also chapters on insect pests, diseases and viruses as well as on hybridization, miniatures and landscaping with Hosta varieties, even including a section on how to plant a hosta. Although the book's main focus is blurred by these extraneous topics, it is a study which would appeal to those who are particularly interested in the more scientific aspects of the genus. It belongs in all complete Hosta libraries.

Happy Gardening,

Clyde





## Profiles

**Elaine Cole**  
**AHS Treasurer**  
**New Brighton, MN**



**My Journey to Hosta:** On one of our first dates in 1991, my husband, Foster, took me to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. He was very excited about showing me the Hosta Glade. It's the only garden I remember seeing there and I thought it was dull Dull DULL! It was just green and there were no showy flowers.

In 1992 we purchased our typical '70s, St Paul suburban home. The entire back yard was so choked with buckthorn that we didn't see three mature oak trees hidden in the thicket. It took three years to clear the buckthorn.

I think water management is the most interesting aspect of our garden. The back yard has a twenty-two-degree slope, starting at the edge of the house and running upwards before flattening at the edge of a townhome development on the next street. All runoff from a 4-plex focuses at one point before heading down what we started to call The Hill. During heavy storms, it looked like a fire hydrant had been opened at the top. Through painful and painstaking trial and error, Foster constructed a dry streambed big enough to handle the flow. He also built hard structures – terracing, stairs, landings – to facilitate circulation. By the time the hardscaping was finished, we had more than 17 tons of manageably large rocks delivered, plus we had scavenged many smaller ones from nearby road construction sites.

The faux streambed is bracketed uphill by check dams to slow the water coming from the town homes. (I got the idea for the check dams from the internet, before that was A Thing. Thank you, City of San Diego for publishing contractor guidelines for storm water management online!) The downhill bracket is a faux pond. The stream formerly stopped with a dead end at the lawn and it just didn't look right. Adding sedges simulated water, providing a more natural ending for the dry stream, also reducing the runoff into our downhill neighbor's yard from very visible to invisible. The pond is ringed with pollinator plants. Both the evolving design process and the effects have been gratifying.

Initially I fell under the sway of a native plant crowd, so for several years we attempted to garden strictly with natives, having several excellent native plant nurseries nearby. However, we grew tired of the native plants, considering The Hill to be messy and just not very interesting.

Then in 2000, I was looking at the newspaper one morning and noticed the American Hosta Society was hosting a leaf show at their convention in town. Not knowing what a leaf show was, but being intrigued by the novelty of it, we sallied forth. Oh, my goodness! Hosta had gotten a lot more interesting since that visit to the Glade nine years earlier. There was so much more variety in size, shape, and color. Flowers were unnecessary.



Surprisingly the one that I still remember as the most fetching was green, rather than variegated, 'Lakeside Coal Miner.' Our disaffection for natives and leaf show intrigue collided, and we began removing natives and adding Hosta to the mix.

Now we still have natives around the perimeter, in the shadiest areas. We are adding more understory trees and shrubs and waiting for the large Hosta varieties to grow larger to reduce the area requiring maintenance. I am a water miser, so our Hosta are not as large as they could be unless we have a rainy Spring.

Our Hosta collection is not extensive. We probably have fewer than 50 varieties, a number that shocks both Hosta Cognescenti (so few!) and Hosta Ignorati (so many!) We also have a variety of ferns and martagon lilies. In a tiny, moderately sunny area, Foster grows a variety of greens, which give us great pleasure so long as the season allows.

Along the way, we joined The American Hosta Society, then the Minnesota Hosta Society. I have utilized my twenty-five-year background in corporate finance for both societies, acting at various times as Treasurer and on the Audit Committee.



Streambed, softened by hostas, check dams barely visible where stairs and rocks converge.





The Diamond Post yard art was created by a cousin who is a theatrical lighting designer to provide a backdrop, a place for the eye to stop.



Martagon lilies, hostas, and ferns in the front yard.





Foster with the all-important rain barrel for his water-stingy wife, and our greens.



Native woodland phlox backs up the Hosta softening the streambed.

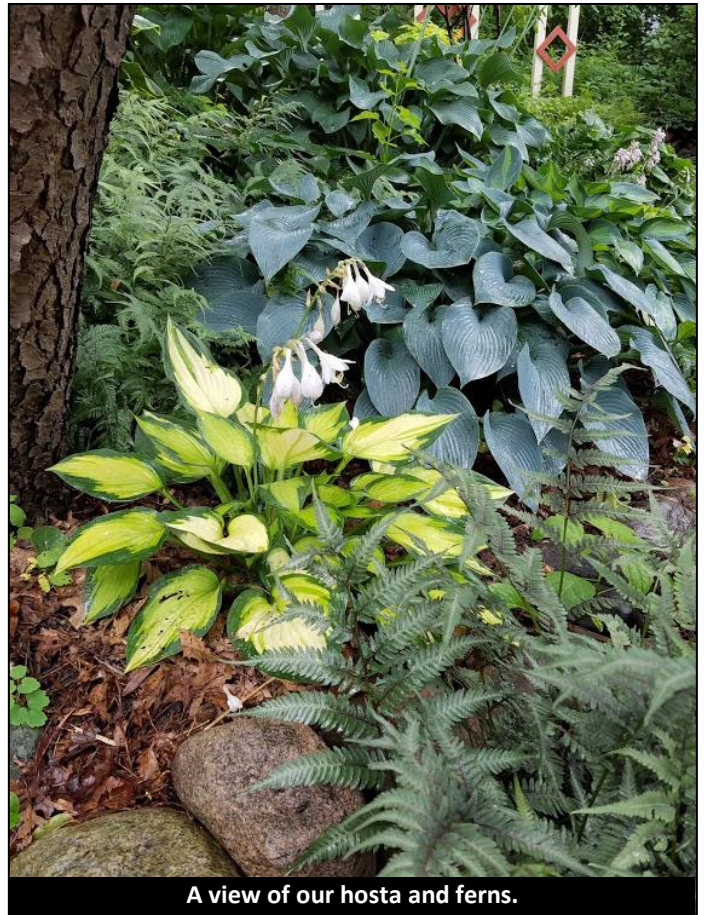


May, when the hosta are just starting to pop.





I call this bed "Halcyon Friends and Family"



A view of our hosta and ferns.

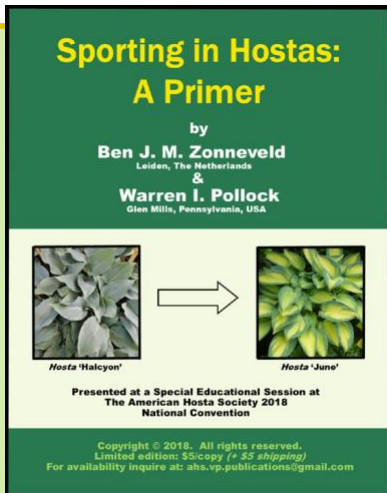


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**Print and mail the application form on the next page, or to join online, go to:**

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**Mail application to:**

Sandie Markland  
 AHS Membership Secretary  
 P.O. Box 7539  
 Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

[http://AHSmembershipSecretary@charter.net](mailto:AHSmembershipSecretary@charter.net)

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