



The American Hosta Society

April 2026

eNewsletter



H. 'Leading Lady'

J. Wilkins 1995

(Photo by Mary Vertz)

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President's Message

Chuck Doughty , Holbrook, MA

“Gardening adds years to your and life to your years.” - Anonymous

It is so hard to believe how fast time flies. It was blizzard conditions only months ago and now we are at our peak gardening season. The seasonal transformations are what I enjoy the most. The ability to make your garden, your living artwork beautiful and forever changing to mimic the season. **“My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece.” – Claude Monet**

The seasonal transformation, the forever changing pallet, is the beauty of gardening. One never tires of the challenges, the new varieties, or the test of hardiness for the new plant that you hesitantly purchased last year.

Alan Titchmarsh (English gardener, author and broadcaster) emphasizes the joy of gardening as a journey rather than a destination. He is “spot on”. As we learn new methods, and experiment with new varieties, we never stop learning or testing what may or may not work.

Plants and gardening can improve both physical and mental health. We should not overlook that gardening can be attributed to:

- Anxiety and stress reduction.
- Attention deficit recovery.
- Decreased depression.
- Enhanced memory retention.
- Improved happiness and life satisfaction.
- Mitigation of PTSD.
- Increased creativity, productivity, and attention.
- Reduced effects of dementia.
- Enhanced self-esteem.

And we just thought it was getting your hands dirty....

“The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.” – Alfred Austin

Chuck Doughty



Hostas and Associates

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

Ferns for the Hosta Garden

Photos by Glenn Herold

This article is a spin-off of a presentation I made at the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Winter Conference, held in Brookfield, WI on February 21, 2026.

There are many great companion plants for the hosta garden, including Bleeding Hearts (*Dicentra* and *Lamprocapnos*), *Brunnera*, *Astrantia*, and Hellebores, but most hosta collectors would choose ferns as their favorite. Most ferns, like hostas, grow best on a shady, moist site. They also provide a textural contrast that attracts the eye and come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. Over 10,000 species of ferns have been identified. Though most are tropical, there are plenty of temperate species to choose from. This is to be expected from a plant that has weathered climatic changes for over 300 million years.

The above ground portion of ferns is referred to as the frond and consists of the blade and the stipe. Fronds come in a variety of shapes and textures. Several are simple and undivided, while the majority branch off into separate structures called pinnae. They also vary in texture: some are thick and leathery, such as are found in the genera *Dryopteris* and *Polystichum*, while others are thin and delicate. Examples of species with membrane-thin fronds, which are more prone to drying out, are *Athyrium*, *Dennstaedtia*, and *Adiantum*. Leathery fronds are more likely to stay green through the winter and die down when new leaves are produced in the spring. Even if the blade shrivels up in the fall, it is still best to wait until spring to cut it back, for the stipe may store up carbohydrates and contribute energy for new spring growth. Unlike deciduous trees and shrubs, fern leaves do not form an abscission layer and drop off, but rather gradually decay and separate from the underground stem, called the rhizome.

Probably the most important thing to research when choosing ferns for your garden is the type of rhizome that it has, and, subsequently, the rate of spread. Rhizomes may be long and creeping, short creeping, or ascending at the crown. Plants with short creeping rhizomes or ascending rhizomes make better hosta companions because, like hostas, they stay in place or spread only gradually. Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), though, is an exception. It is considered a fern with ascending rhizomes but is a rapid spreader because it tends to produce vigorous offsets. Avoid it for your garden at all costs. *Dennstaedtia punctilobula*, the Hay-scented Fern, and *Thelypteris noveboracensis*, the New York Fern, are long-creepers that are great for shady hillsides and as understory in a woodland but may be too vigorous for the hosta garden. *Gymnocarpium dryopteris*, the Oak Fern, is also a long creeper, but only about eight inches tall at maturity. I have it creeping throughout my shade garden without problems.



Matteuccia struthiopteris, Ostrich Fern



Dennstaedtia punctilobula, Hay-scented Fern



Thelypteris noveboracensis, New York Fern



Gymnocarpium dryopteris, Oak Fern

There are many short-creeping ferns that are excellent for the hosta garden. *Adiantum pedatum*, the Northern Maidenhair Fern, has delicate foliage that contrasts nicely with hostas. Though it can reach a height of 30 inches, my plants usually stay under two feet. *Adiantum venustum*, the Himalayan Maidenhair, is shorter and not as hardy, but performs admirably in my Zone 5b garden. Both tolerate alkaline soil. The Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium nipponicum* var. *pictum*) and its many cultivars are well-known by most shade gardeners for their leaves that come in shades of burgundy, gray, silver, and green. Some of my favorites are ‘Silver Falls’, ‘Red Beauty’, ‘Apple Court’, and ‘Godzilla’, which at 36 inches is twice the height of the others. Another short creeper, which performs best in warmer areas, is the Autumn Fern, *Dryopteris erythrosora*. Its cultivar ‘Brilliance’ has brighter red, longer lasting spring frond color and glossy green summer color.



Adiantum pedatum, Northern Maidenhair Fern



Adiantum venustum, Himalayan Maidenhair



Athyrium nipponicum var. *pictum*



Athyrium nipponicum var. *pictum* 'Apple Court'



Dryopteris erythrosora 'Brilliance', Autumn Fern

Ferns of the genus *Osmunda* also tend to stay in place with their short-creeping rhizomes. *Osmunda cinnamomea*, the Cinnamon Fern, is a tall plant that thrives in constantly moist conditions. It produces both fertile and sterile fronds. The fertile fronds, containing the spores, which is how ferns reproduce, emerge first and are cinnamon colored. They die down in early summer as the sterile fronds appear. New immature leaves are especially attractive in the species, as is the pale-yellow autumn frond color. *Osmunda claytoniana*, the Interrupted Fern, is so named because the spores are produced on pinnae in the middle of the frond. Average height is about three feet. *Osmunda regalis*, the Royal Fern, also has separate fertile fronds. The broad sterile fronds have well-separated pinnae which resemble plants of the pea family.



Osmunda cinnamomea, Cinnamon Fern



Osmunda claytoniana, Interrupted Fern



Osmunda regalis, Royal Fern

Ferns with ascending rhizomes tend to stay in the location where they were planted. As such, they can be planted with hostas without fear of them taking over your favorite plant. *Athyrium filix-femina*, the Lady Fern, is an extremely variable species with delicate, lacy fronds which, unfortunately, tend to bend over in strong winds. Some of my favorite cultivars are 'Victoriae', 'Fronds Forever', and 'Lady in Red', a cultivar with red stipes. *Dryopteris affinis*, the Scaly Male Fern, is a semi-evergreen plant that can tolerate a lot of sun. Stipes and rachises are shaggy with golden brown scales. 'Cristata' and 'Stableri' are two cultivars that have performed well in my garden and rank among my favorite ferns. *Dryopteris filix-mas*, the Male Fern, is a similar plant, but with thinner leaves which tend to be deciduous. 'Parsley' is an attractive cultivar with crinkled fronds. Another evergreen *Dryopteris* which is easily grown is *D. marginalis*, the Marginal Wood Fern. It has grayish green, deeply cut leathery fronds that provide good interest in the winter landscape.



Athyrium filix-femina 'Lady in Red', Lady Fern



Dryopteris affinis 'Stableri', Scaly Male Fern



Dryopteris filix-mas 'Parsley', Male Fern



Dryopteris marginalis, Marginal Wood Fern

A fern that most gardeners and designers of Christmas bouquets are familiar with is *Polystichum acrostichoides*, the Christmas Fern. This two-foot evergreen plant has branched rhizomes that are not invasive. It occurs on both moist and dry slopes in Eastern North America. The fountain-like fronds provide excellent winter interest. Consider planting it at an angle to avoid water retention and potential crown rot.



Polystichum acrostichoides, Christmas Fern

Ferns provide many characteristics of interest, but perhaps the most recognizable is the newly emerging fronds, called crosiers or fiddleheads, which vary in size and color. All fern fronds mature from the base upward, which is visually seen by the coiled developing leaves that resemble a fiddlehead. Usually, the stipe is fully mature while the frond is still unrolling. Those of the Ostrich Fern are even edible. Some say that fully cooked Ostrich Fern fiddleheads taste like asparagus, spinach, or green beans.



Crosiers of *Osmunda cinnamomea*, Cinnamon Fern

Ferns that are mentioned in this article are just a sampling of species that can accompany hostas in the shade garden. The chart included with this article lists others. With a little experimenting you might even get hooked on pteridology, which is the study of ferns and fern allies. For more information, join the American Fern Society and the Hardy Fern Foundation and learn how to grow your own.

Additional articles on plants and gardening can be found on my blog: <https://TheCottageGardener53012.Wordpress.com>

| FERNS FOR THE SHADE GARDEN | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| by Glenn Herold | | | | | | |
| Botanical Name | Common Name | Height | Rhizome | Zone | Foliage | Comments |
| <i>Adiantum pedatum</i> | Northern Maidenhair | 30" | Short-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | Tolerates alkaline |
| <i>Adiantum venustum</i> | Himalayan Maidenhair | 12" | Short-creeping | 5 | Semi-evergreen | Tolerates alkaline |
| <i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> | Hart's Tongue Fern | 12-18" | Ascending | 4 to 5 | Evergreen | Tolerates alkaline |
| <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> | European Lady Fern | 12-24" | Ascending | 4 | Deciduous | |
| <i>Athyrium niponicum pictum</i> | Japanese Painted Fern | 8-20" | Short-creeping | 4 | Deciduous | Tricolor |
| <i>Blechnum spicant</i> | Deer Fern | to 36" | Ascending | 5 | Evergreen | Acid soil |
| <i>Cystopteris bulbifera</i> | Bulblet Bladder Fern | to 36" | Short-creeping | 5 | Deciduous | Bulblets; Alkaline |
| <i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i> | Hay-scented Fern | to 30" | Long-creeping | 3 | Deciduous | Tolerates dry |
| <i>Dryopteris affinis</i> | Scaly Male Fern | to 5' | Ascending | 4 | Semi-evergreen | Sun tolerant |
| <i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i> | Toothed Wood Fern | to 3' | Ascending | 2 | Deciduous | Wet tolerant |
| <i>Dryopteris erythrasora</i> | Autumn Fern | 18-24" | Short-creeping | 5 | Evergreen | Bronze foliage |
| <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> | Male Fern | 2-4' | Ascending | 4 | Deciduous | |
| <i>Dryopteris goldiana</i> | Goldie's Wood Fern | 3-4' | Short-creeping | 3 | Deciduous | |
| <i>Dryopteris marginalis</i> | Marginal Wood Fern | 18-30" | Ascending | 2 | Evergreen | |
| <i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i> | Oak Fern | 9-12" | Long-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | Acid soil |
| <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i> | Ostrich Fern | 2-6+' | Ascending | 2 | Deciduous | Rapid spreader |
| <i>Myriopteris lanosa</i> | Hairy Lip Fern | 6-12" | Short-creeping | 5 | Semi-evergreen | Blue-green; WD |
| <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i> | Sensitive Fern | 1-3' | Short-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | Drought sensitive |
| <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> | Cinnamon Fern | 3-5' | Short-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | Tolerates wet |
| <i>Osmunda claytoniana</i> | Interrupted Fern | 2-4' | Short-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | |
| <i>Osmunda regalis</i> | Regal Fern | 2-5' | Short-creeping | 2 | Deciduous | Tolerates wet |
| <i>Phegopteris decursive-pinnata</i> | Japanese Beech Fern | 1-2' | Ascending | 2 | Deciduous | Short creeping |
| <i>Polypodium vulgare</i> | Common Polypody | 3-10" | Creeping | 5 | Evergreen | |
| <i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i> | Christmas Fern | 1-2' | Branched rhizome | 3 | Evergreen | |
| <i>Polystichum polyblepharum</i> | Japanese Tassel Fern | 1-2' | Ascending | 5 | Evergreen | |
| <i>Polystichum setiferum</i> | Soft Shield Fern | 1 1/2-4' | Ascending | 5 | Semi-evergreen | |
| <i>Thelypteris noveboracensis</i> | New York Fern | 1-2' | Long-creeping | 4 | Deciduous | Tolerates dry |



Book Notice

Clyde Crockett, Carmel, IN

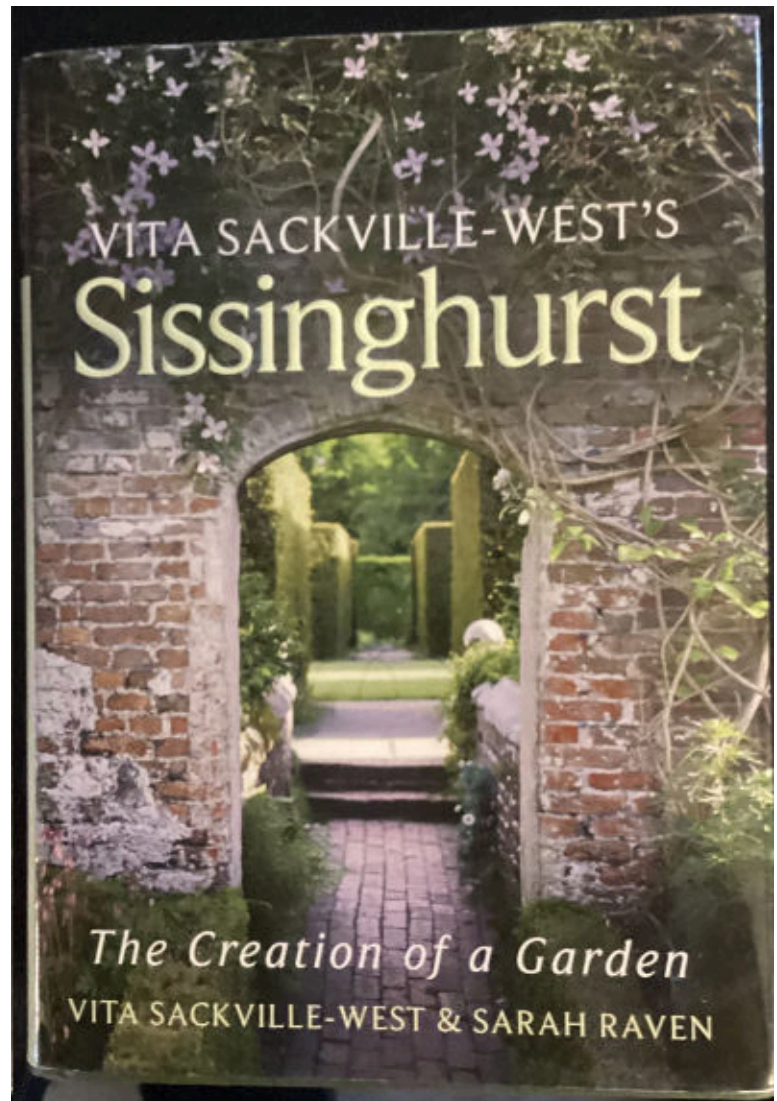
Sissinghurst

The Creation of a Garden

Vita Sackville-West & Sarah Raven
Published by Martin's Press : 2014

Vita Sackville-West is well known for a number of wonderful things—beautiful English aristocrat, prolific novelist, historic friendship with Virginia Woolf, diarist, letter writer, wife and co-gardener of Harold Nicholson and, most famously, the creator, along with Harold, of the English garden known as Sissinghurst, which to many is the most beautiful in the world. With our noticed book we have a delightful account of its creation by Sarah Raven whose husband is Vita's grandson, and by writings of the original creator herself.

I have visited Sissinghurst three times and I noticed like any good garden, that it is still being created. In response to my enquiry, Head Garden Troy Scott Smith informed that a few hostas were planted probably by the 1958 to 1990 head gardeners. Shade plants were originally found in the Nuttery, particularly Polyanthus, but changed to a woodland setting due to soil disease. Despite the absence of our signature genus I think you would enjoy 150 black and white



photographs and 24 color pages of plantations. I think any type of gardener will enjoy these pictures but more than that, the beautiful and interesting descriptions Sarah Raven has given us.



Portrait of Vita Sackville-West, *Lady in a Red Hat*, by William Strang, a Scottish artist

I really don't have much to add except that this is my last *Book Notice*. I hope you have enjoyed a few. I've learned a lot reading each of the books I have featured and by reading the articles by Glenn and Warren. Many thanks to them and to our Editor par excellence, Mary Vertz.

Fond regards to all!

Clyde



Hostas Happenin's

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI



Whether large or small, corrugated or smooth, cupped or flat, I absolutely love blue hostas. They are my most treasured and to a large degree, blue hostas form the backbone of our shade garden.

Stunning bluish-gray varieties pair beautifully with ferns and other shade-loving plants in the garden, enhancing the overall visual appeal of any shady retreat. Their distinct, powdery blue leaves create a serene, structural, and cool-toned contrast in the shaded landscape. As long as hostas have been a commonly cultivated perennial, blue-foliaged varieties have led the list of most popular.

While blue hostas are attractive in and of themselves, they also serve as a neutral background in the garden, making brighter plants with yellow or variegated foliage to pop. Lively-colored flowers such as pink azaleas and bright red impatiens or begonias radiate brightly and draw attention against a cool backdrop formed by blue hostas. The bright white flowers of astilbes and bleeding hearts are perfect complements to silver and blue-foliaged plants, which illustrates the value of having a blue background in the garden.

Incorporating blue hostas into your landscape not only elevates the aesthetic appeal but also creates a harmonious environment. With their serene hues, they are often seen as symbols of calmness in garden settings, creating a tranquil atmosphere in which to relax. Their very presence can transform a space into a sanctuary of peace, and their adaptability ensures they fit seamlessly into various garden designs, making them a must-have for any gardening enthusiast.

Cuticle Wax, an Essential Component

For plants, the cuticle is absolutely essential to surviving life on land. The word *cuticle* refers to the layer covering the epidermis (surface) of a plant. This topmost layer contains and is covered by cuticular waxes. Composed of hydrophobic lipids (water-repelling fatty compounds), the cuticle acts as a protective and self-cleaning barrier against environmental stress, UV radiation, and desiccation. Besides reducing water loss, cuticle wax provides a defense against pests and diseases. The blue color is due to a wax layer covering the leaf. The wax is not a single composition but comprises many different waxes. While the reflective nature of cuticle waxes reduces photosynthesis, it helps to prevent overheating during the warmest times of the day and season.



Photo by Kadi. Used permission.

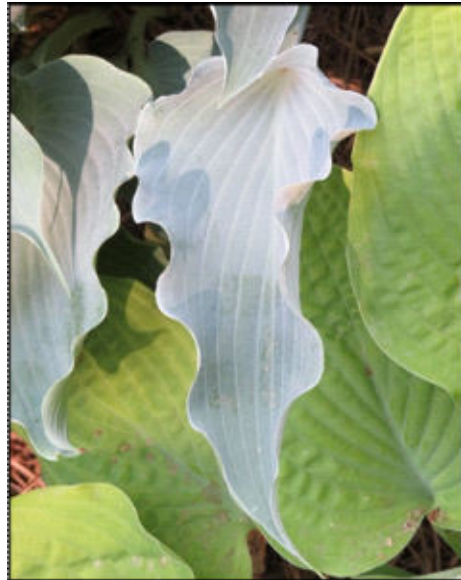


Photo by Don Rawson.



Photo by YPLerou. Public domain.

Cuticle wax is not only useful, but delicately beautiful as well. The fine structure of the epicuticular surface wax can scatter or reflect light, giving a glaucous gray color to blue spruce and many succulents. By scattering light, the cuticle diverts some damaging UV radiation from the leaves. *Dudleya brittonii* (above) is believed to produce the most epicuticular wax of any known plant, featuring the highest ultraviolet light reflectivity. This succulent is covered in a thick, powdery white wax that acts as a sunscreen and water barrier.

Cuticle wax can appear as a white “bloom” on all surfaces of the plant that are above ground, including the petioles, leaves (top and bottom), and seed pods. A cuticular wax barrier even covers and protects the flowers, although the leaves have a greater wax concentration than the flowers.

The difference in wax crystal coverage on leaves and flower petals is well suited for the pressures to which each are subjected. Whereas leaves are optimized for photosynthesis and longevity, the role of flower petals is not only to attract pollinators, but to ensure successful pollination. This includes facilitating pollinator attachment. Conical epidermal cells that are coated with cuticular wax on flower petals act like Velcro. The textured surface better enables bees to grip flowers, particularly when landing on vertical or angled surfaces. This improved foothold reduces the energy insects use to stay anchored while feeding, which increases their foraging efficiency. These waxy cuticle cells on flower petals are present in nearly all angiosperms.

As mentioned, the cuticle wax of the leaves is much greater than that found on the flowers. While the leaves last for an entire growing season, the flowers are open for a much shorter period, so a thick wax crystal coating on the petals would not be as beneficial when the expected duration of the structure is relatively brief.

Waxy Hostas: I See Blue

Cuticle waxes are located within (intracuticular) and on top (epicuticular) the leaf surface. Composed of fatty acids and their derivatives (alkanes, aldehydes, alcohols, esters), these waxes can vary significantly from one plant to another, making some hosta species and cultivars to appear glaucous while others are glossy. The wax crystals can vary in shape. Some are rod-shaped or tubular, while the crystals found on others are platelet-like.

The various shades of blue we see among hostas is due to both the amount of wax on the epidermis as well as the underlying color of the leaf tissue. The blue foliage is not actually caused by blue pigment, as you might think. The blue appearance is caused by a thick accumulation of wax on the outside of an otherwise dark green leaf. Depending on the amount of chlorophyll in the actual leaf tissue, some blues can be very light and others can be much darker.



Photo by Don Rawson.

As illustrated by this leaf of *Hosta* ‘Halcyon’, blue foliage is not actually caused by blue pigment, as you might think. The blue appearance (top half) is caused by a thick accumulation of wax on the surface of an otherwise dark green leaf (bottom half). Green hostas which produce a waxy coating appear as blue-green, and even more so in cases where the wax cuticle is substantial. The wax reflects blue light. Rubbing the wax off with your fingers will reveal the green pigment below.

Furthermore, the thickness of the wax coating determines the intensity of the blue color. Blue plants have more wax than green hostas, and those that are bluest have the highest amounts of wax. The light-scattering properties of complicated mixtures of waxes on the leaf can also affect the color perceived by the eye.

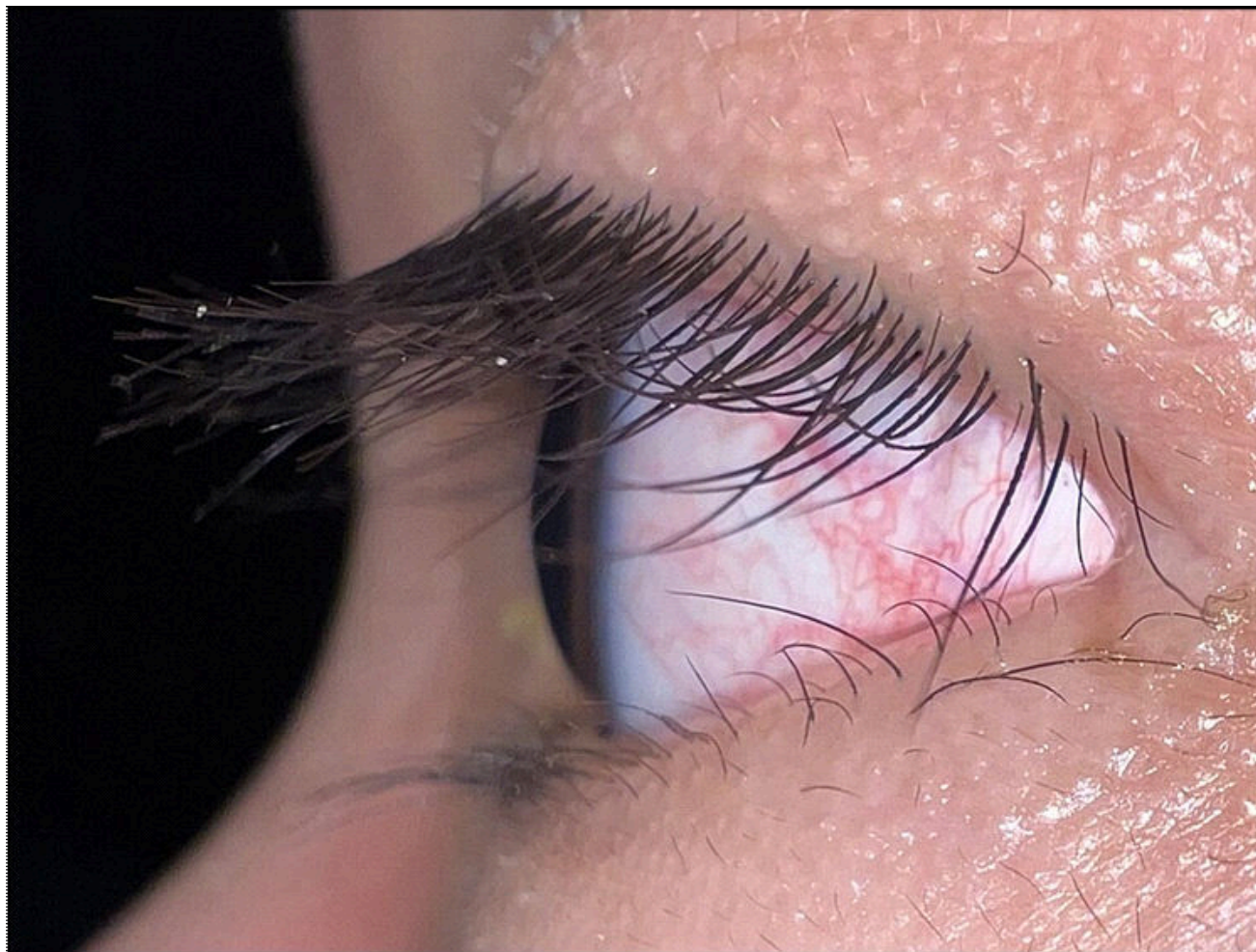


Photo by Rapidreflex. Used by permission.

The eye sees blue because specialized photoreceptors in the retina detect short-wavelength light. This color is perceived when objects reflect blue light. When light shines on hosta leaves that appear to be blue, the wax coating absorbs all the light wavelengths except blue, which is reflected, and that is why the hosta looks blue to the eye.

The typical effects of weathering during a normal growing season also affect the durability of cuticle wax. Wax coverage increases initially in the period during its expanding leaf stage in spring, then falls from spring to summer, and increases again from summer to autumn. The mid-season reduction is attributed to weathering by rain, wind and heat stress.

The extent of wax erosion during a growing season can vary greatly between species and cultivars. One study found that the wax crystals of 'Halcyon' melted and formed a thick crust only when exposed to full sunlight, while those of another variety did so under less intense conditions. The top and bottom leaf surfaces of 'Halcyon' are coated with dense tubular crystals, but the abundance of cuticle wax declines gradually with an increase in light intensity.



Photos by Bob Solberg. Used by permission.

As one of the more unusual new hostas to be introduced in the last few years, 'Calm before the Storm' emerges bright yellow and then slowly turns blue as the season progresses. The first color transition from yellow to green is because of a yellow gene that gradually produces enough chlorophyll to make the leaf green (viridescence). The second transition from green to blue is due to the increased production of a waxy cuticle later in the season.

Cuticle Wax on the Leaf Underside

Anyone with a large collection of hostas knows that some have an intense white, powdery bloom on the underside. *Hosta sieboldiana* has a glaucous leaf back, while other species including *H. hypoleuca* and *H. pycnophylla* really excel when it comes to wax production. This is a natural trait of these plants. The purpose of the wax on the underside could be to deflect light, or perhaps to deflect insects. It is interesting that with *H. hypoleuca* and *H. pycnophylla*, as well as with many hybrids, very little or no wax is produced on the top surface of the foliage.



Photo by Chris Wilhoite. Used by permission.

Hosta 'White Caps' offers rich red petioles, although they cannot be seen without pulling back the foliage. The main attraction, however, is the intense white bloom on the leaf underside. Cuticle wax has several functions depending upon the composition of the particular waxes involved. In hostas, it helps to catch as much light as possible. This may be the reason for the white waxy bloom on the backs of leaves as seen with some hostas.

With *H. hypoleuca* and *H. pycnophylla*, and with some cultivars including 'Marilyn Monroe' and 'White Caps', why is the underside powdery white while the top surface is green? First of all, the top of surface is darker green because that is primarily where chlorophyll is being produced through photosynthesis. Secondly, the waxy coating on the bottom does not deteriorate as quickly because it is more sheltered from sunlight, heat and rain. The main reason, however, is due to genetics — that is where the hosta is programmed to produce the wax. A goal of hybridizers is to move the wax from the bottom to the top of the leaf.

Photo by Monica Kurschner. Used by permission.



This seedling of *H.* 'Sara' × OP, grown by Monica Kurschner of Barron, Wisconsin, exhibits several shiny green longitudinal stripes. Most of the leaf surface is cover by a cuticle wax that diffuses light, creating a whitish blue bloom. But interrupting the waxy blue coating are the contrasting, glossy green stripes. These areas could have a shiny wax, or they may have no wax at all. In either case, it is an interesting seedling that should be grown on to see if the green stripes persist and for evaluation at maturity.

Mutations that Affect Wax Production

Hostas mutate frequently, and those mutations often produce different leaf colors, patterns, or shapes. Variegated hostas with multiple colors may lose their variegation altogether and turn solid green. A variety may mutate back (revert) to its ancestral form, or to an entirely new shape or color. Occasionally, mutations affect wax production. Although uncommon, a green hosta may send up a new shoot with a heavy wax coating. Though rare, these new bluish, waxy mutations can become attractive and garden-worthy varieties.



Photo by Gayle H Alley. Used by permission.



Photo by Gayle H Alley. Used by permission.



Photo by Roger Kinchen. Used by permission.



Photo by Ken Ziarek. Used by permission.

Although uncommon, a green hosta can produce a blue mutation.

Conversely, a blue hosta can produce a mutation that does not have as much wax as the parent plant. The result is a green hosta, and in many cases, the new sport is shiny because virtually no wax is manufactured at all. This occurrence among hostas seems to be more common than green hostas that mutate with wax-producing capabilities.



Photo by George Jen. Used by permission.



Photo by D Van Eechaute. Used by permission.



Photo by Steve Buckwalter. Used by permission.



Photo by Noah Schwartz. Used by permission.

More frequently, blue hostas produce a green sport.

The Ability of Cuticle Wax to Repel Water

We often overlook the benefits of wax, even when it comes to car care. By applying a layer of wax, a barrier is created that protects a vehicle's paint from the elements and keeps it looking great for longer.

Besides shielding it from harmful UV rays, oxidation, and acid rain, one of the perks of waxing is that it makes cleaning your car easier. Once your car has been waxed, dirt, dust, and pollen are less likely to stick to the surface and they wash off more easily. The hydrophobic nature of wax repels water and debris, meaning that a car that is waxed stays clean longer. Wax fills in microscopic pores in the paint so that dirt and grime cannot bond as easily, making the car easier to clean and wash. It makes water bead up and roll off the surface, which prevents water spots and mineral deposits.



Photo by Chris Scarlett. Used by permission.



Photo by Jennifer Tran. Used by permission.

Like the surface of a freshly-waxed car (*left*), water readily beads up on the waxy surface of blue hostas, such as ‘Blue Mouse Ears’ (*right*). Water rolls right off its leaves.

As a side note, carnauba wax is the primary plant-based car wax, derived from the Brazilian carnaúba palm. This wax is harvested as a natural coating from the surface of the leaves of the tree. Carnauba wax is prized for its high melting point, extreme hardness, and deep, glossy shine, making it the preferred natural choice for carnauba-based car care products.

In a simple way, the wax on a car illustrates the cuticular wax that coats and protects the epidermis of plant parts. Cuticle wax is found on the stems and leaves of all vascular plants, including hostas. These waxes are complex hydrophobic (water repelling), self-cleaning mixtures of lipophilic compounds. Key functions of cuticular waxes include reducing non-stomatal water loss (desiccation), helping plants handle UV radiation, and providing a barrier against pathogens and disease.

The water-repelling nature of cuticular waxes may seem at first to be a detriment to the hydration of the plant. However, most water absorbed by plants is through thousands of microscopic hairs located on the plant’s root system, not through its foliage. These root hairs act as “straws” to slurp up water and dissolved nutrients. While plants primarily absorb water through their roots, leaves can absorb a little water directly—particularly during fog or high humidity—via stomata to increase leaf moisture, but only by a small amount.¹ This means of absorption is not an efficient method for hydrating the plant, as foliar uptake alone is minor compared to root uptake. Hostas absorb the vast majority of their water through their root system rather than their leaves.

¹ “Plants absorb water better through soil than leaves? Do roots of dormant seedlings grow through the winter?”

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/plants-absorb-water-better-through-soil-than-leavesdo-roots-of-dormant-seedlings-grow-through-the-winter/>

“Can Plants Absorb Water Through Their Leaves?” <https://www.houzz.com/discussions/1749488/can-plants-absorb-water-through-their-leaves>

Protecting the Wax

The cuticle acts as a protective and self-cleaning barrier against environmental stress, UV radiation, and desiccation. Its most basic function is limiting water loss, but it also impedes the unregulated movement of carbon dioxide and oxygen into or out of the plant and the passage of air pollutants and volatile organic compounds into it. It prevents dirt, microbes, and other particles from sticking, so that when water rolls off the plant, the water takes the dirt away with it.

Plants with a thick wax layer are not generally attacked by small insects because the wax sticks to their feet and thus immobilizes them. However, in some incredible cases, coevolution has worked on the waxes and the insect's legs, such that only a plant's symbiotic partner is able to crawl along its surface (Müller, 2006).

While the reflective nature of cuticle wax reduces photosynthesis, at the same time it prevents overheating. This protective coating offers some heat resistance, an important factor for hostas grown in high ambient temperatures.



Photo by Don Rawson taken on July 14, 2025.

The effect of heat and direct sun has a significant impact upon how long the wax remains before it degrades. Both leaves above are from 'Skylight', one of the best blues with an extremely glaucous coating. One leaf (*top*) was removed from a specimen growing in full sun, while the other (*bottom*) came from a plant growing in filtered shade.

Sadly, most blue-leaved hostas become green at some point during the growing season. In hot or wet climates, the wax coating eventually degrades. This is why blue hostas eventually turn green in hot, humid summer climates. The wax melts off with exposure to hot sun, harsh watering, and with the application of certain pesticide sprays. Once the wax is gone, the plant will not regain its blue hue until the following year. While the wax is

diminished with wind, during heavy rainfall, and by overhead watering, heat (both daytime and nighttime) and midday to late afternoon sun are the most prominent cause of damage. So, site blue hostas out of direct sun.



Photo by Cynthia DeBoer. Used by permission.

By mid-summer, the cuticle wax on this 'Halcyon' is slowly melting away due to environmental stressors including heat and heavy rainfall. Once the wax is gone, the plant will not regain its blue hue until the following year.

Keeping Blue Hostas Blue

- (1) Locate blue hostas in filtered light or afternoon shade.
- (2) Select an area that is protected from harsh winds.
- (3) Apply water liberally at ground level, avoiding overhead irrigation.
- (4) Prevent any harsh contact, caring not to rub the wax off the leaves.
- (5) Do not use petroleum-based pesticides.
- (6) Select newer, improved varieties that have excellent waxy leaves.

Beside being a concern for the home gardener, the deterioration of cuticle wax on blue-leaved hostas is also an issue for nurseries and wholesale growers. Cultivars that were formerly blue in spring and early summer may likely be green by mid-summer and fall, affecting the marketability of blue hostas that are grown in full sun. Growing hostas and other shade-tolerant plants under shade cloth slows the growth rate, and furthermore, involves additional labor and expense. It would be quite advantageous for a large wholesale producer to be able to grow acres and acres of blue hostas in full sun without any concern for the protective wax coating to wear off.

Perhaps one potential remedy would be to develop a substance that could be applied to hostas that guards against UV radiation and prevents the breakdown of the cuticle waxes — like sunblock for humans that creates a physical barrier on the skin to reflect UV rays away.

One such product is a cuticle supplement known as Parka[®], which incorporates phospholipid and polysaccharide technology to strengthen the leaf and fruit cuticle for certain agricultural plants, including cherries, grapes, and blueberries. Parka is a food-grade, spray-able cuticle supplement powered by SureSeal[™]. This proprietary, edible, and elastic biofilm developed by Oregon State University acts as a protective coating to the plant cuticle. It works by filling in micro-cracks on fruit and leaves to reduce water loss, prevent cracking from environmental stress, and increase photosynthesis, all while expanding as the crop grows. Unlike rigid waxes, SureSeal forms a flexible, hydrophobic layer composed of carbohydrates and lipids. This layer stretches with the fruit or leaf, sealing cracks and protecting against moisture absorption (which reduces cracking, particularly in cherries). SureSeal is designed to be safe for plants and often has no restrictions on the number of applications per season.

While not labeled for use on hostas, research and development of a similar substance to preserve the cuticle wax of blue hostas would be of great importance to gardeners as well as to large wholesale suppliers of hostas. In a nutshell, protecting the waxy cuticle of blue hostas is essential because it helps these plants to stay strong and healthy — and the wax creates the signature blue color that we all appreciate.



Photo by Cultiva Società Agricola O.P. Consortile a r.l.

Influenced by both environmental factors and genetics, cracking is a common, detrimental disorder in sweet cherries where the fruit skin splits due to excessive water intake during ripening. It is a serious economic issue, making fruit susceptible to fungal decay. One such product to help fruit farmers is a cuticle supplement known as Parka[®], which strengthens the leaf and fruit cuticle. Could a similar product be developed to preserve the waxy cuticle of blue hostas?

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Photo by Don Rawson.

As one of my favorite gold hostas, 'Foxfire Irish Moon' with its dense wax coating exhibits a unique frosty color that cannot be adequately described. If the wax is rubbed off (*top half*), the bright gold color of the leaf tissue becomes apparent.



Hybridizer Corner . . .

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI

Review

In the last issue, we examined some methods for separating good hosta seed from poor seed. There is no benefit to sowing seed that will never germinate. Ensuring that each seed has a plump kernel inside is the first step toward success. In addition, the chaff and any white seeds should be discarded.

One innovative method for separating the heavier, plump seed from the chaff and poor seed involves the BugBuster BB100 insect vacuum, available on Amazon for \$19.95. When the seed is vacuumed up with this device, the chaff and lighter seed will stick to the inside of the tube. Then, with the vacuum tube slowly pointed downward, the plump seed will fall out into a bowl or tray. Give it a try.

An insect vacuum along with a wire mesh sieve are perfect companions — they complement each other. When equipped with both tools, the hybridizer can efficiently process large amounts of hosta seed in short order.

Storing Hosta Seed

The success of a hybridizing program depends in part on the quality of seed planted. That's why ensuring good quality seed by cleaning, drying, and storing it in the proper conditions is essential. If you plan to start your seed within two or three months, nothing special needs to be done. For short-term storage, the cleaned seed should be placed in coin envelopes with the cross recorded on the outside, then kept in a cool, dry place until planting time.

Placing the envelopes in an airtight container and then storing it in the refrigerator is better, but leaving the seed in a cool room is sufficient, too. Hosta seed left out at room temperature should retain viability for six to eight months, but when the seed is placed in an airtight container and refrigerated, viability can be sustained for more than three years.¹

Steps for Short-term Storage in Refrigerator

- **Avoid the Door:** The refrigerator door experiences a rollercoaster of temperatures, due to all the opening and closing. When storing seed in a refrigerator, it is best to keep it away from the door where temperatures frequently fluctuate.
- **Mid to Upper Shelves:** The best place for seed storage is the middle or top shelves, toward the back. The most stable temperature is at the back, furthest from the door.
- **Regularly Inspect for Mold:** Mold can form quickly when the conditions are right, typically within 25-48 hours when above 40°F (4°C) with high humidity. If you notice mold, discard any

effected seed and wash the container with a mixture of warm water and dish soap, white vinegar, or a diluted bleach solution (1 tsp./gal.).

- **Pre-germination Steps:** Encouraging the seed to germinate after cold storage requires a little prep work. Start by taking the seed out of the refrigerator and let it warm up to room temperature so it is not hit with a temperature shock. Then give the seed a good soak in water for a day.
- **Disinfect the Seed:** Your seed may not need to be sanitized, but it is a good preventative measure, especially if you suspect that some mold may have formed. The three most commonly recommended and effective treatments for disinfecting seed are hydrogen peroxide, vinegar, and calcium hypochlorite (bleaching powder).

Hydrogen peroxide: If hydrogen peroxide is used, it should be diluted to a 3% concentration. Since most concentrates are 33%, this is simple to do by using a ratio of 10-parts water to 1-part H₂O₂ concentrate.

Vinegar: Store-bought vinegar, which has an average acidity around 5%, can easily be used to disinfect seed. Soak seeds for 15 minutes while agitating, then rinse until all vinegar smell is gone.

Calcium hypochlorite: With calcium hypochlorite, dilute to a 2% solution. Soak the seed in the solution for 15 minutes while agitating, then rinse the seed until all chlorine smell is gone.

For further information, see “How to Disinfect Seeds Before Planting and Sprouting.”

- **Use a Soil-less Germination Mix:** Plant the seed in a sterile, moist, soil-less mix. Including a fungicide when watering, such as Captan, can help prevent fungal diseases.

Long-term Storage of Hosta Seed

For even longer storage, hosta seed can be frozen. When dried and frozen properly, seed can remain viable for ten years or longer. Remember these three rules when it comes to proper seed storage: keep the seed cool, dry, and dark. This trio is basically the opposite of what seeds need to sprout and grow: warm soil, plenty of moisture, and light.

Seed must be thoroughly dried before placed in a freezer. Freezing seed that is moist causes the water inside to expand, which can crack or destroy the embryo, killing the seed. The ideal moisture content for frozen seed storage is below 8%.²

Steps for Long-term Seed Storage in Freezer

- **Dry Thoroughly:** Ensure seeds are dry by leaving them in a cool, dry place for a week, or better yet, by using a dehydrator set at a low temperature.
- **Airtight Storage:** Place dried seed into an airtight container to prevent humidity, particularly if your freezer is not frost free. While a properly functioning freezer should not be wet or moist inside, any moisture that can potentially be absorbed is detrimental.
- **Sealed Cans or Jars:** Cans or jars are better than bags, as plastic bags are not completely airtight.
- **Use Desiccant:** Including silica gel packets in the container ensures that the seed remains dry. They are available on Amazon and Walmart.com.

- **Store at the Right Temperature:** The preferred temperature for long-term storage is -4°F (-20°C).
- **Avoid Condensation.** When seed is removed from cold storage, let the container reach room temperature before opening the container to avoid condensation from forming within the container.
- **Shelf Life:** If dried thoroughly and stored properly, seed will last for several years.

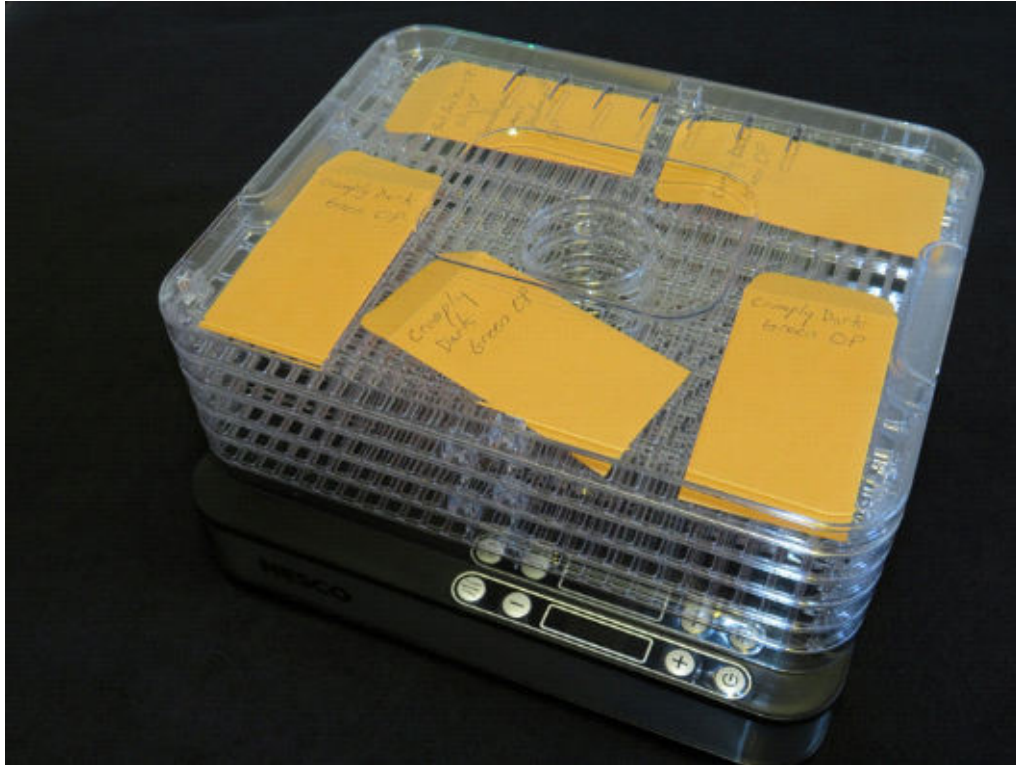


Photo by Don Rawson.

Relative humidity (RH) influences the moisture content of seed. Seed deterioration increases as moisture content is increased. Therefore, drying the seed thoroughly and storing it under dry conditions is of paramount importance.

Allowing seed to air-dry is sufficient for short-term storage. This can be done by spreading the seed out in the shade (rather than in direct sunlight) because sunlight is harsh and can easily exceed 100°F (38°C).

Placing the seed indoors in a cool, dry place is also a good option, although the moisture content will never be lowered more than the relative humidity (RH) of your home. Never use a microwave oven for drying seed. Above, hosta seed is being dried by a dehydrator set on low.

Be sure to label the coin envelopes or container with the seed type as well as the storage entry date. When retrieving seed from storage, allow the container to reach room temperature before opening it. This will help prevent condensation from forming on the inside of the container.

It is a good practice to do a germination test for seed that is stored for an extended period. To test for germination, place a given number of seeds (25 or 50) between moist paper towels and then in a bag or container to keep them from drying out. Remove and count the seeds as they germinate, making your final count after two or three weeks. Compute the percentage of germination. Seed lots with a low germination rate can still be used, if desired, but may be sown at higher rates than normal. Also remember that weakly sprouting seeds will grow slower after germinating and have a higher mortality rate. There is a certain amount of energy that is needed from germination to leaf development.

Preventing damping off diseases by treating the seed beforehand may be beneficial. Damping-off is a fatal, fungal disease that causes newly emerged seedlings to suddenly rot at the base, collapse, and die, often in cool, overly wet, and crowded conditions. Or the seeds may never germinate in the first place due to damping off. They just rot and fail to sprout, becoming soft and mushy. A white, moldy growth appears on the surface.

Selecting the Best Container for Long-term Storage

A moisture-proof container is one that stores seed safely while submerged in water. Standard plastic bags and Ziploc-style bags, made from polyethylene, are not completely airtight. They allow for slow gas exchange, oxidation, and moisture transmission over time. While they are suitable for short-term, daily storage, they are permeable to air, making them unsuitable for extended seed preservation. Even food storage containers including Tupperware and Rubbermaid are not entirely airtight.

A wide-mouth Mason jar or plastic paint storage container are good options. Both are completely airtight and easy to access when it comes to inserting or removing coin envelopes of seed. A Mason jar, however, may collect condensation on the inside if it is not allowed to warm up a bit before opening. Furthermore, an opaque container is recommended for seed storage, providing dim to no light. For these reasons, a better choice is a paint storage container. It is lightweight, easy to open and easy to hold. It will not break if it is dropped. It is opaque and it can hold hundreds of coin envelopes. And, with its very large mouth, it is super easy to get envelopes in and out.



A plastic paint storage container, such as this one by Dutch Boy, is ideal for long-term seed storage. It is completely airtight, easy to open and close, and with its very large mouth, coin envelopes can be inserted and removed easily. Available at Menards, in both quart and gallon size.

For Further Study

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¹One study, using *Hosta sieboldiana*, revealed that seed dried to a moisture content of 5-10% and then stored at 41°F (5°C) retained better viability than when stored at -4°F (-20°C). See Kanazawa, Yumiko, et. al. “Seed storage longevity of *Hosta sieboldiana* (Asparagaceae).”

²Some sources indicate that the preferred moisture level is less than 8%, while others report between 8 and 12%, and that 10 to 25% is preferred for some kinds of seed.



Photo by Don Rawson.

Air-drying hosta seed indoors is acceptable for short-term storage, but the moisture content will never be reduced more than the relative humidity within your home (typically 40-50%). And, when it comes to placing seed in a freezer, any moisture that can be absorbed is detrimental. That’s where silica gel packets become handy, such as this one from Dry & Dry. They are helpful not only for drying the seed, but also for long-term storage. A hygrometer is also helpful to measure relative humidity (RH).



Photo by Don Rawson.

These healthy young hostas are from seed that was stored in a freezer for over four years. When seed is placed in an airtight container and refrigerated, viability can be sustained for three years or more. However, storage life may be extended to 10 years or more if frozen, under optimal conditions. Seed moisture and storage temperature are the most important factors in determining how long seed can be stored. The drier the seed is, the longer it will store.



Welcome to My Garden

Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey



Gail Russo

Please meet

Chuck Doughty and Sue
DuBrava,
the owners of
Cochato Nursery
in Holbrook, MA.

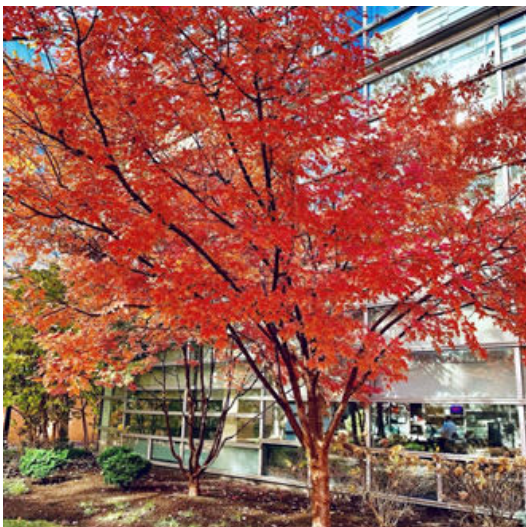


Boston is the capital and most populous city in Massachusetts, known as a major cultural, financial, and educational center in New England, with a rich history as a key site of the American Revolution, featuring landmarks like the Freedom Trail, historic neighborhoods, and world-class universities. It boasts America's first subway in 1897, first public park (Boston Commons, 1634), and first public school. Founded in 1630, it's one of the oldest cities in the U.S. and is famous for its blend of historical sites and modern innovation.

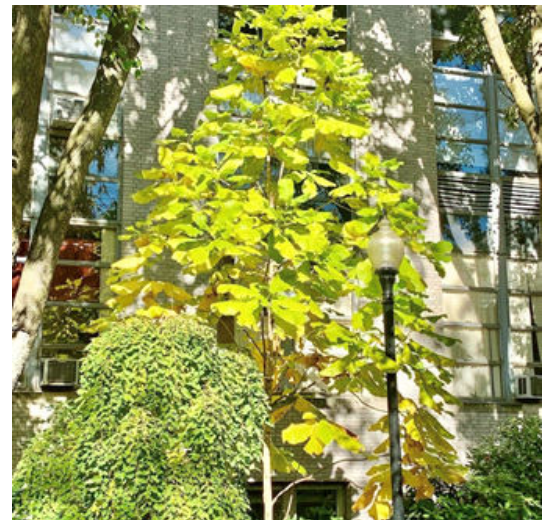
Less than 20 miles south of this bustling city is the town of Holbrook, a quiet, residential suburb with a strong sense of community, often described as having "old New England charm." Long before its incorporation in 1872, Holbrook was home to the Wampanoag tribe of Native Americans, and in their language, cochato means "running water." The Cochato River runs through Holbrook before emptying into the Boston Harbor.

In 1990, Chuck Doughty and his wife Sue DuBrava purchased a 3.2-acre property in Holbrook with a home that was built in 1830. The home had been modernized over the years, but their mission was to transform the landscape. Together, over the past 35 years, they have created an amazing gardener's destination and nursery specializing in hostas, shade plants, trees and other plant species. Fittingly, they chose the name Cochato Nursery to honor the river running through their property.

Chuck Doughty graduated from University of Massachusetts with a degree in horticulture. As a child growing up in Massachusetts, he was always interested in plants and trees, and there was no doubt that this would be his life-long journey. In 1983, he began working for Northeastern University, as the program director of landscaping grounds. Sue also worked at the University as the Administration and Finance manager. Under his leadership, he worked with staff and students to plant more than 1,400 trees representing 143 different species and then applied for the campus to be recognized as an official arboretum, another first in the area. To be accredited, an arboretum needs a strategic plan, a governing board, public programming, and an inventory of every tree and woody plant on the grounds. He developed an interactive online map of their plantings that visitors can access for information about the plantings while they are standing in the garden. Shortly after he retired in 2021, Northeastern University was accredited as a level two arboretum, which is a testament to Chuck's horticultural knowledge and abilities. They have added many more varieties of trees and plan to expand to another of their campuses. Chuck still visits the campus to observe and advise.



The campus of Northwestern University is planted with an amazing variety of trees, allowing it to be classified as an arboretum. Chuck is largely responsible for this award.



While they worked at the University, Chuck and Sue together were creating their own dream landscape in their spare time, utilizing their combined knowledge to transform their home property. When they purchased their property, it had some native plantings but was largely undeveloped. The property is located in planting hardiness zone 6a and the mostly rocky soil makes cultivation and planting challenging! Being Massachusetts natives, they wanted to preserve and focus on native plantings yet transform the native landscape into something beautiful. Chuck shared a quote by a Chinese landscape designer that inspired their vision: “The eyes see and the heart anticipates.” He was also inspired by the local landscape designer and colorist who has a hosta and a botanical garden named after him- Allen C Haskell, who sadly died in 2004. Over the past 35 years, they have created an Asian influenced retreat specializing in shade plants, daylilies, conifers, grasses, native plants, trees and unusual dwarf species. Cochato Nursery is home to more than eight hundred varieties of hostas alongside ferns, bog plants, and unique trees. The blend of beauty and function characterizes their offerings, catering to all types of gardens from rocky slopes to shady retreats. The display garden, known for its extensive paths and tranquil koi ponds, also features a fully functioning miniature train display. In addition to display gardens, there is a sales area where they offer many potted plants that customers enjoy seeing planted in the gardens. Chuck and Sue do most of the work themselves but often enjoy help from their children and seasonal employees, especially when groups tour the gardens.



Left, a fully functioning miniature train display greets visitors right outside the office to the nursery.



Sue plays an important role interacting with customers for the business, from her instructional videos and seminars to playing hostess. You can expect to check out your purchases with her too.

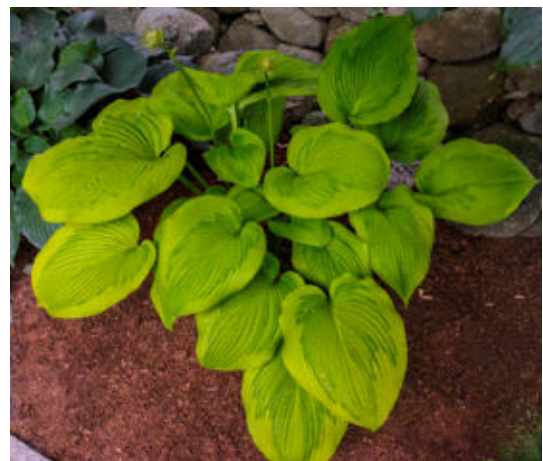




Chuck's interest and focus on hostas began with seeing a neighbor's shade garden as a child. He was already fascinated with plants, and this garden gave him the desire to create his own. Each of the hostas planted in their display garden is labeled with the name and a QR code that corresponds to printed and interactive maps. This allows visitors to identify the plantings without a tour guide. They fertilize their hostas in early spring with a 10-10-10 fertilizer and use Plant-tone and Neptune's Harvest fish fertilizer during the summer on any sluggish varieties needing a boost. They add shredded leaf mulch to all of the displays in the spring, for moisture retention and organics. Their water source is from a well, and they have automatic sprinklers installed through most of the gardens and sales area. Occasional hand watering is necessary during dry periods of summer. The property is surrounded by ten-foot-high deer fencing, so they don't have any issues with that pest, however, they apply rabbit repellent and slug repellent when damage is found.



Hosta 'Cochato Creek'

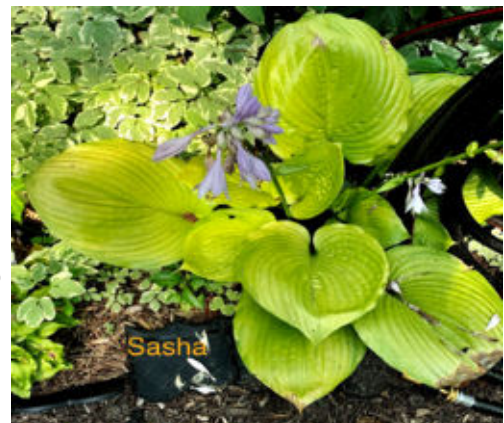


H. 'Krugerrand Watermark'



H. 'Frantic'

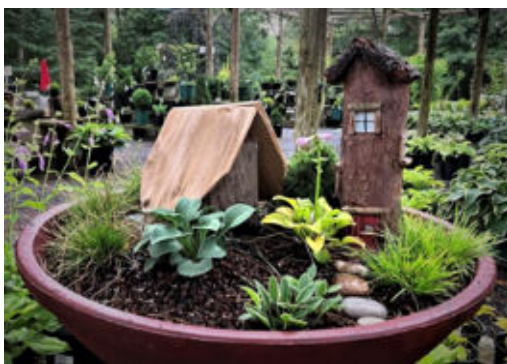
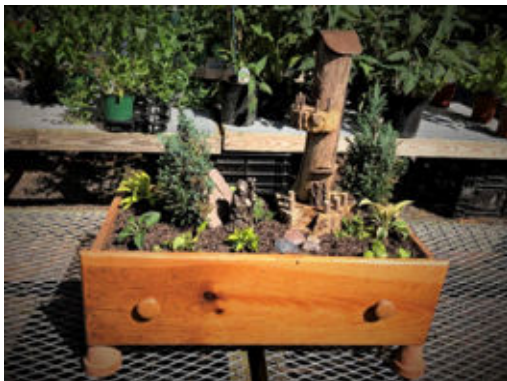
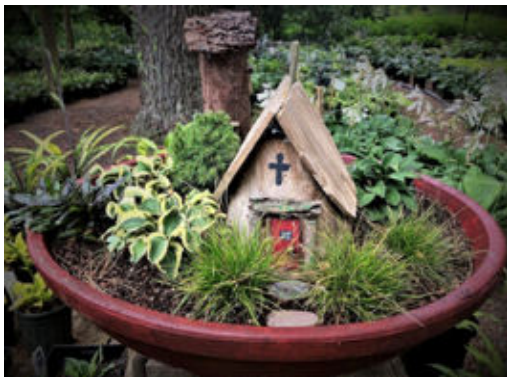
H. 'Sasha', named after Chuck's beloved dog.



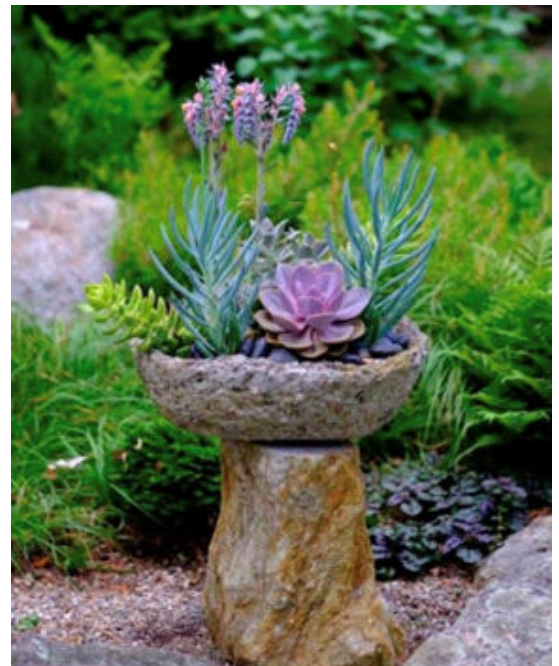
Chuck grows a few hostas from seed each year and looks for sports. Hostas developed at Cochato include 'Cochato Creek', Frantic', 'Sasha' and 'Krugerrand Watermark'. If he could only have one hosta variety in his garden, Chuck would choose *H. 'June'*.

Chuck notes that his biggest challenge each year is digging and dividing huge clumps of hostas. While age contributes to the challenge, a bigger obstacle is invading roots. Because the display gardens include many trees, shrubs and companion plants, there is a lot of root competition that requires dividing and moving hostas to keep them in peak condition. The naturally rocky soil doesn't help. Operating as a nursery often requires natural division of mature plants as propagation for sales. Despite his extensive knowledge and experience in horticulture, Chuck notes that he would like to see root competition strategies discussed in future publications. He would like to know from other gardeners which plants work with hostas in their gardens and which they discourage, along with their methods for dealing with problem plants that are difficult to remove. We learn from experience and sharing your experience with others helps everyone!

When asked for a hosta trick or tip to share, Chuck replied that hostas make excellent container subjects, especially miniature hostas. Miniature hostas require good drainage to survive and do well arranged in a decorative container strategically located on a step or at the beginning of a path.



Any container with good drainage, capable of holding soil can be used to create a hosta display, especially with miniature hostas. Even the unconventional types, such as an old drawer or carved out rock can be fashioned to create a beautiful display.



When asked for his best advice to pass on, Chuck stated, “Support your local nurseries, or reputable on-line nurseries. Join your local garden club or societies. Gardening is Fun!” Cochato Nursery is also a member of the New England Hosta Society and the Horticulture Club of Boston. These clubs and many others often visit for guided tours, and Chuck can often be found sharing his expertise at their meetings. In 2011 and 2024, Cochato Nursery was a tour garden during the national convention hosted locally during those years.

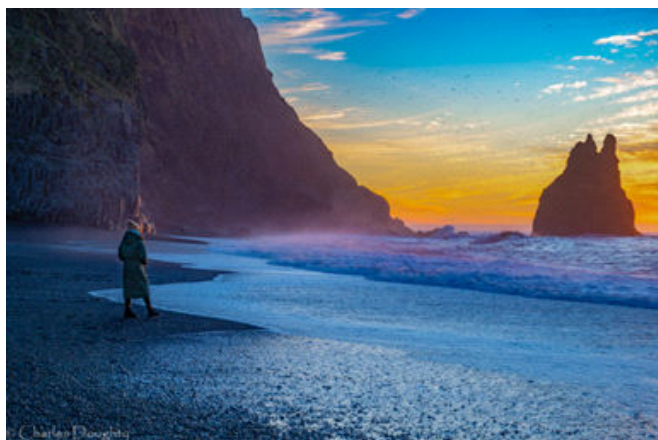


Chuck is currently serving as the President of the American Hosta Society, a well-earned honor, evidenced by the fabulous garden he has created. His main goal is to increase membership in the organization, and he believes that every Hosta enthusiast should be a member of the American Hosta Society and also support their local society. He would like to see younger members and children volunteering in public gardens, to carry interest into the future. He believes that protecting open space is important in our country and he wishes there were more hostas planted and maintained in public parks, campuses and other open landscapes.

Besides his own, Chuck’s favorite public garden is the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden, which must be spectacular if it’s his favorite!



During the winter months, when the gardens are dormant, Chuck updates his records, reads, and works on photography, which can be seen in the fabulous photos that follow. He keeps a 75-gallon aquarium of tropical fish indoors, while the koi sleep outdoors. Being a true native, he enjoys rooting for the Patriot's football team, the Red Sox baseball team, the Bruin's hockey team, the Celtics basketball team and especially the men's lacrosse team at the University of St. Joseph in West Haven, CT where their grandson is the first captain this year! Chuck also nurtures his photography skills during the many trips across the world he has enjoyed, including Rio Negro on the Amazon, Cuba, Iceland, Sicily and more recently Tanzania and Zanzibar.



Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach on the southern coast of Iceland.



The Aurora Borealis over Iceland.



A cart maker in Siracusa, Italy.



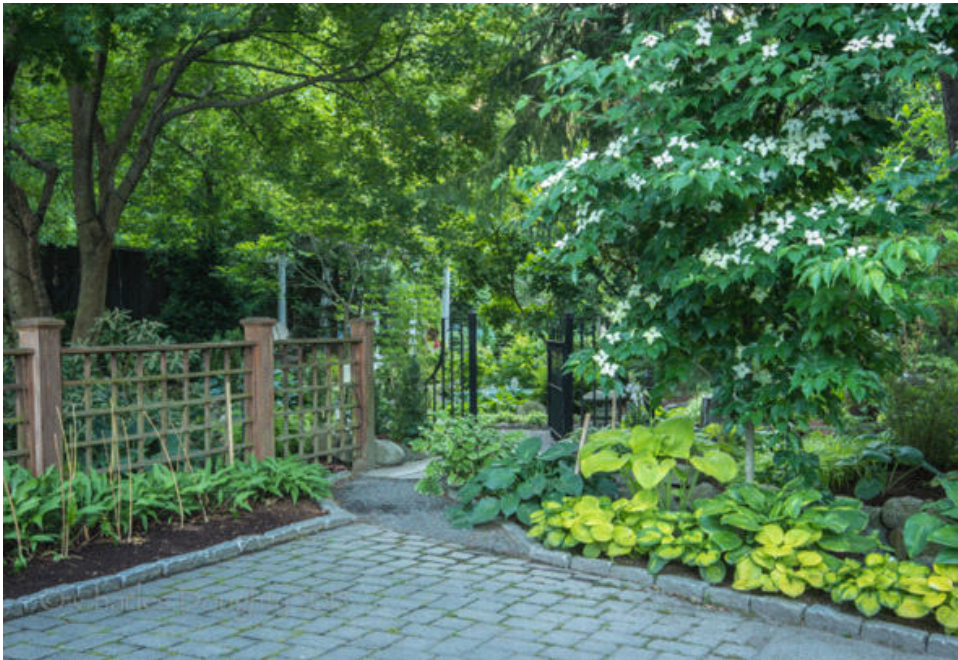
A dancer in Barcelos, Brazil.



In Remanso Village, Roraima, Brazil.

When asked if he had any interesting stories to share, Chuck replied with the following:

“There is a neighborhood on the south side of Boston called Dorchester. Dorchester (6 sq. mi.) is a thickly populated area where hostas are found in abundance. No telling when the first hosta was planted, but it was very successful, all resembling *Hosta lancifolia*! Many were shared! They are all planted in the strips along sidewalks, used as foundation plantings, on either side of walks, along chain link fences, stockade fences, in other words, everywhere! One day, friends from Dorchester visited our nursery where we grow a few thousand hostas. A non-gardener in the group walked up the hill and saw the many hostas, put her hands on her hips and proclaimed, “I have never seen so many Dorchester plants in my life!” We were very amused. It illustrates the power of The Friendship Plant.”



entrance to Cochato Nursery's display gardens.

When asked if he had any garden regrets, Chuck stated that he had none. I suppose with his level of expertise and the years of work, this is true, because I have seen his gardens and I am in awe. Gardens of this magnitude become difficult to maintain and even harder when it includes a business. After retiring from their primary jobs, and working full time at their nursery, Chuck and Sue wish to fully retire now, and plan to relocate to Maine. Both their home and business have been listed for sale for more than a year, but they have not received any real offers. For anyone who has ever wished to live on the East coast and has also dreamed of running their own nursery, here's your chance! A professionally designed display garden and successful nursery with a home on the same property is here for the taking! No work required to begin operation. The photos below show it all, so think what you could do with it while virtually strolling through the gardens. If anyone is seriously interested in purchasing, please contact Chuck or Sue for all the details at info@cochatonursery.com.



Until it is sold, and they move on to enjoy retirement, Cochato Nursery will be open and operational. Unless it is a very large order, shipping is no longer available for online orders, so please contact before placing an order. The nursery and gardens will open on April 9th, 2026, and will be open to customers Wednesday-Sunday or by appointment. Tours are available with prior notification.



Here is a link for an overhead video tour of Cochato Nursery:

<https://1drv.ms/v/c/43ba53c6fb1b377a/IQBjbCoizyuRRaQ-QPuhKUUBAZvXzEu2Nu6BYTHgW1nc2D4?e=zydSgC>

Cochato Nursery website: <https://share.google/wsSMCAxK8kXUIWEKl>

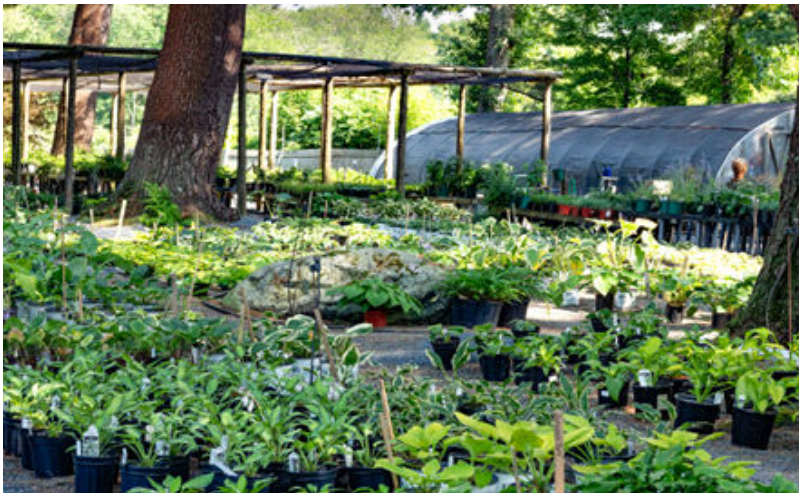
Please contact Chuck or Sue at: info@cochatonursery.com, or 781-767-9770

Their Facebook page is also very active and updated frequently with photos and information. Here is the link to their page:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1JPGbvMAMd/?mibextid=wwXifr>



The cozy inside of the sales office welcomes visitors.

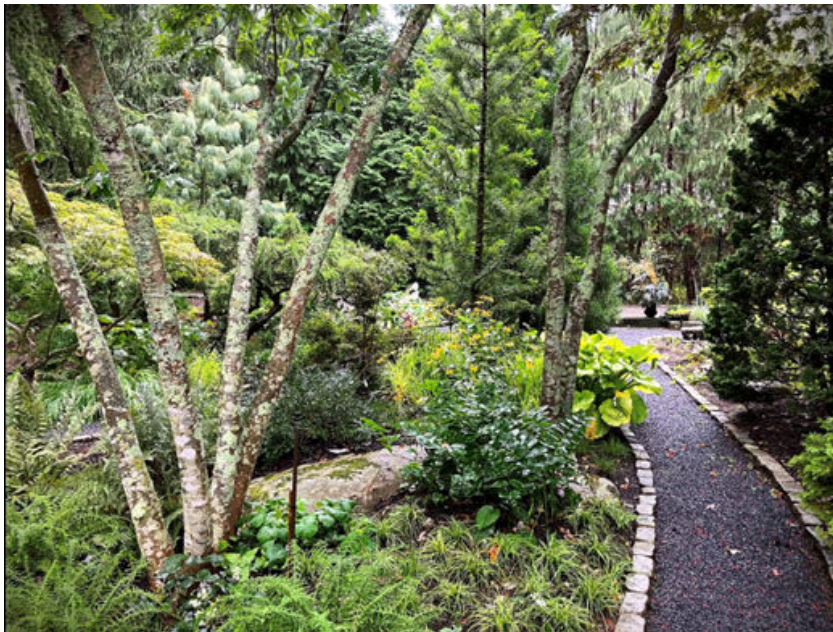


Botanical gardens require a documented, scientifically curated, and labeled collection of living plants, maintained with a high degree of permanence for research, conservation and public education. Key components include specialized, themed or native species, proper soil management, water features to support wildlife and pollinators and public amenities like pathways, seating and restrooms. You will find all the above requirements at Cochato Nursery, in addition to being able to purchase the plants you have seen. Guided tours are conducted upon request by the highly qualified horticulturist, Chuck Doughty.

So, enjoy your photographic scroll of Cochato Nursery (and Botanical Garden!)



Trees are the backbones of the gardens, and their trunks often serve as the height needed to balance the low growing hostas and other shade perennials, as well as adding the necessary shade for many of these perennials to thrive.

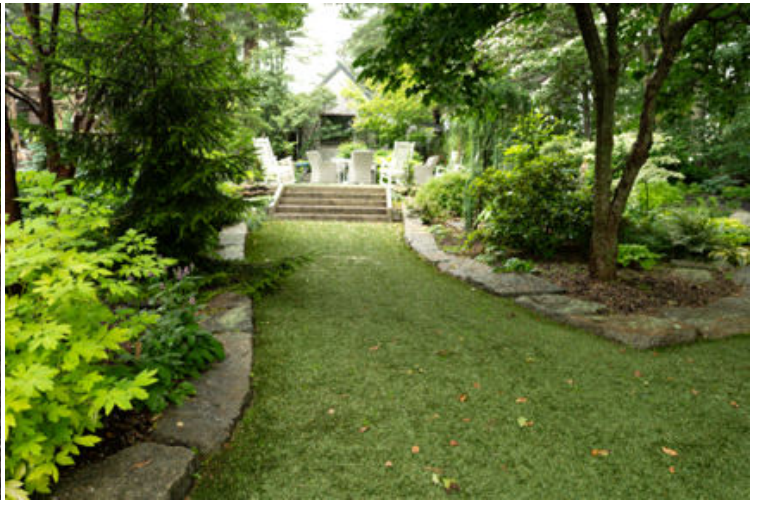


Below, a bed near the office testing hostas for sun tolerance includes hostas from Don Rawson's Sun Tolerant Hosta List, found on the Hosta Library.

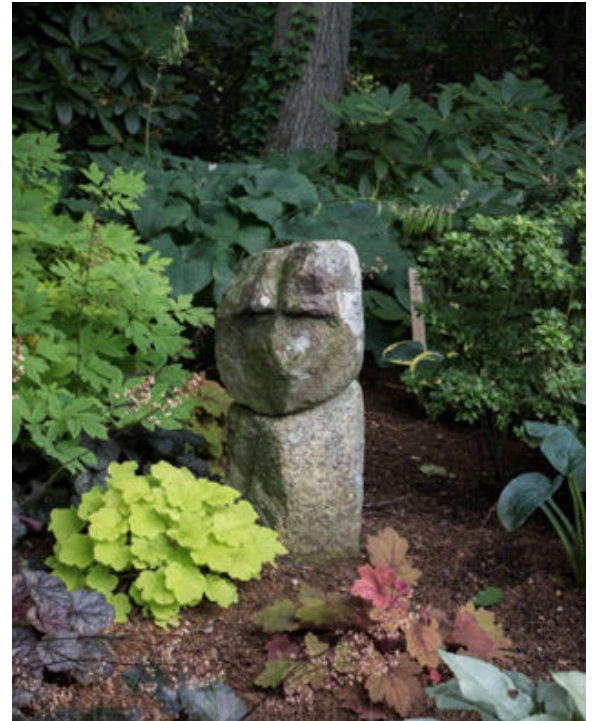
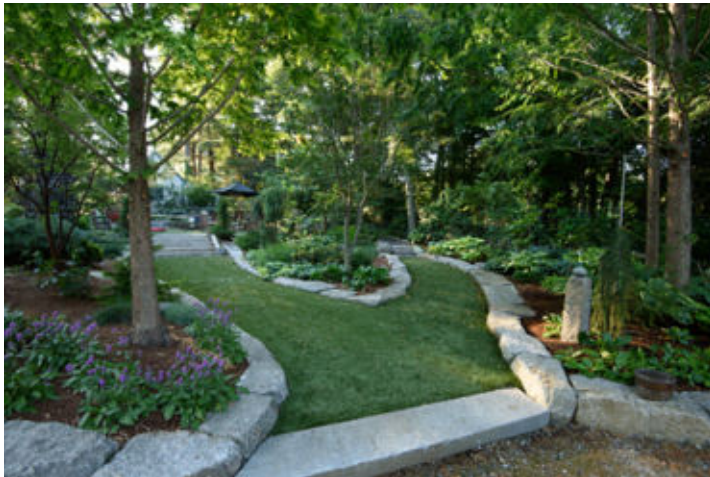
www.hostalibrary.org



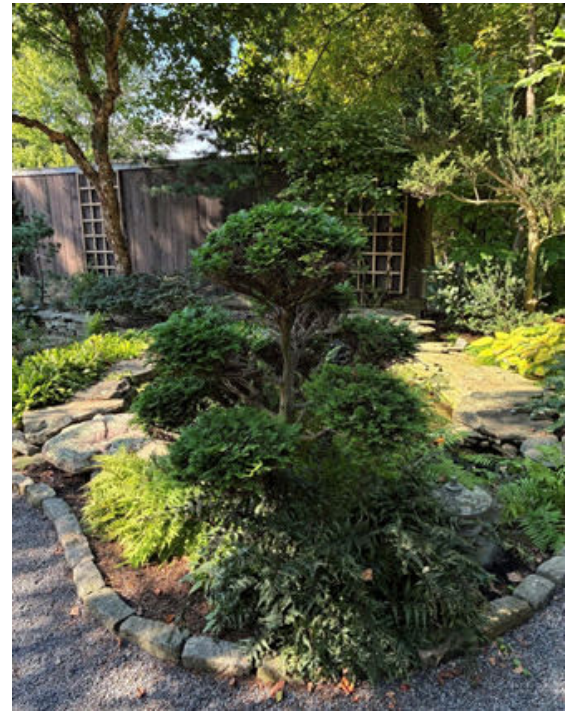
The walking paths of the gardens are lined with cobblestones, reclaimed from Boston's rich history, where they reportedly were used to pave the streets traveled by our patriots and earlier than that were used as ballast in the shipping and fishing industry. Crushed stone fills the paths, making them easy to maintain and traverse, as well as being rain friendly for the gardens. Where steps are needed, giant stone boulders serve the purpose, blending naturally.



Chuck and Sue together designed and constructed the gardens, and Chuck can often be found tending them, filling in areas that need attention or digging and dividing plants for propagation. The landscape changes annually, as features are added and perennials grow, requiring more space. Hostas often need to be moved due to root competition. Chuck fills those spaces with native plants, which thrive in their correct habitat.



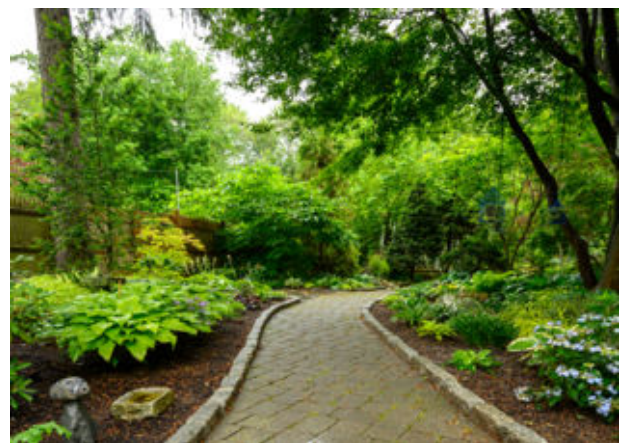
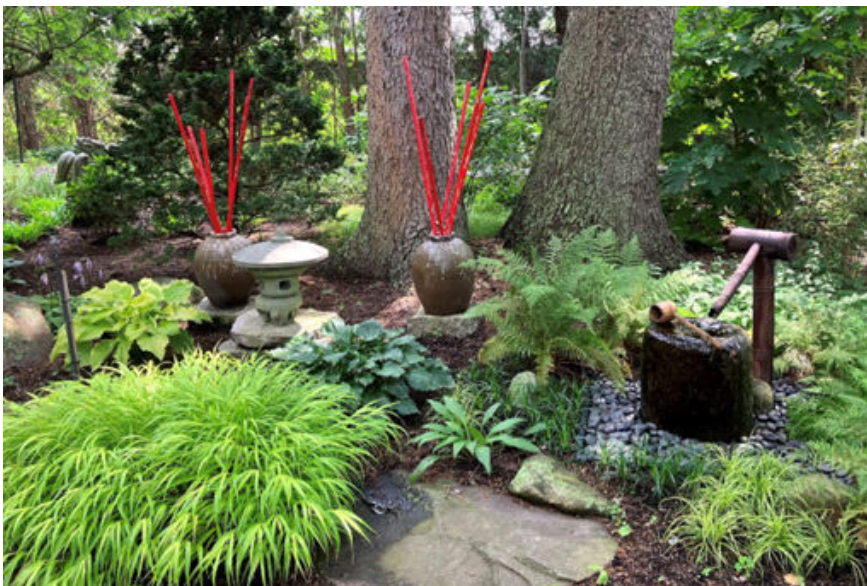
There are many stone statues and objects of art scattered throughout the gardens, which complement the paths.



A cloud pruned *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, or false cypress, creates the “Niwaki” style of Japanese design that Chuck carries as a theme throughout the gardens.



Left, *Hakonechloa macro* 'Aureola', or Japanese forest grass, brightens up the shady garden bed.



Left, *Hosta* 'Lakeside Cha Cha', *H.* 'Candy Dish' and a large clump of *Hakonechloa macro* 'All Gold' are included in this setting with a “shishi odoshi” or bamboo rocking fountain.



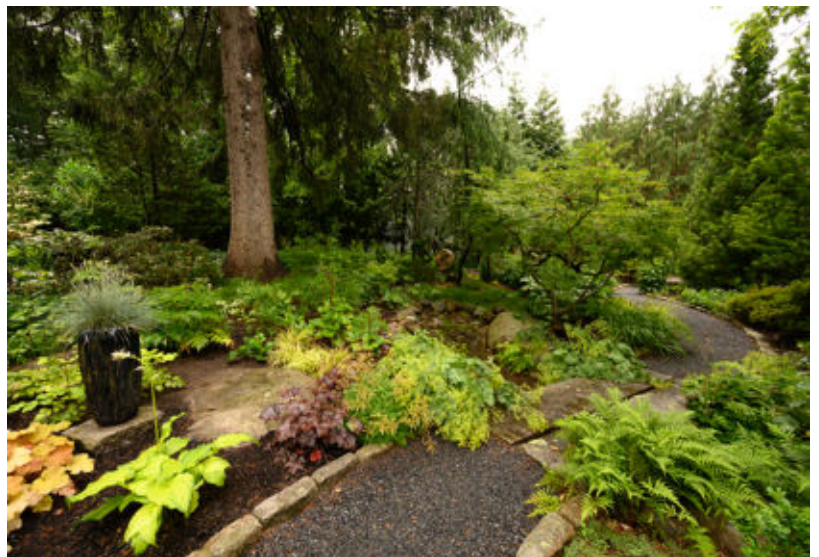
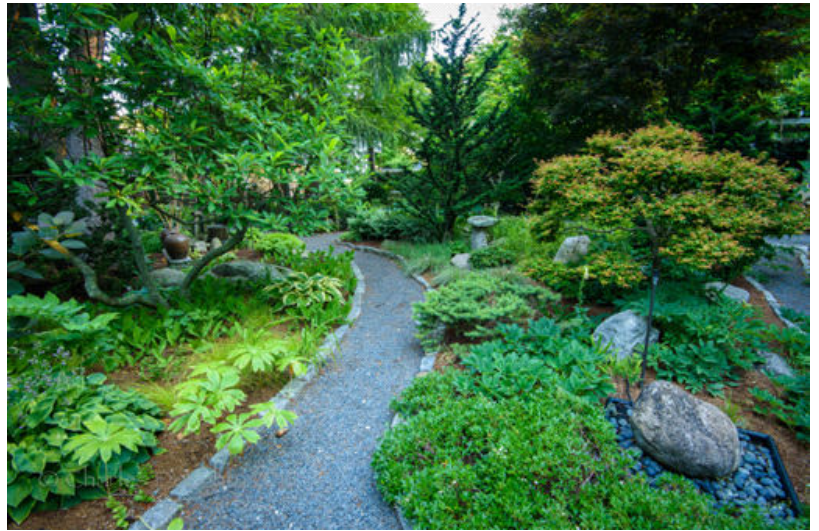
Left, bird cages hung from the trees hold hostas in colorful pots, providing vertical interest.



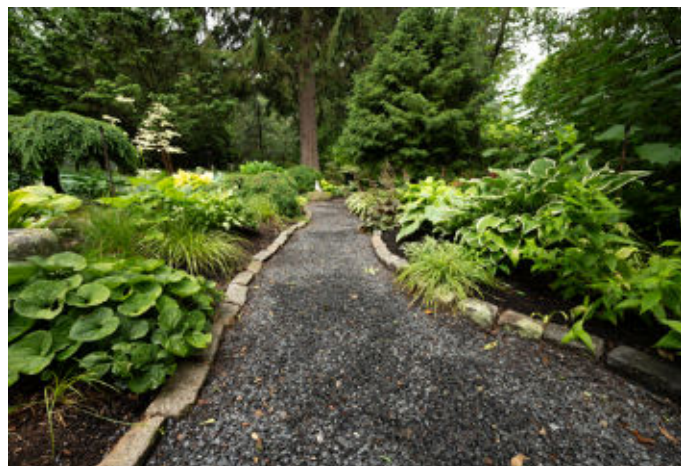
Heuchera villosa 'Caramel', *Hosta* 'Last Dance' and *Heuchera micrantha* var. *diversifolia* 'Palace Purple' accent the front of this mixed bed.

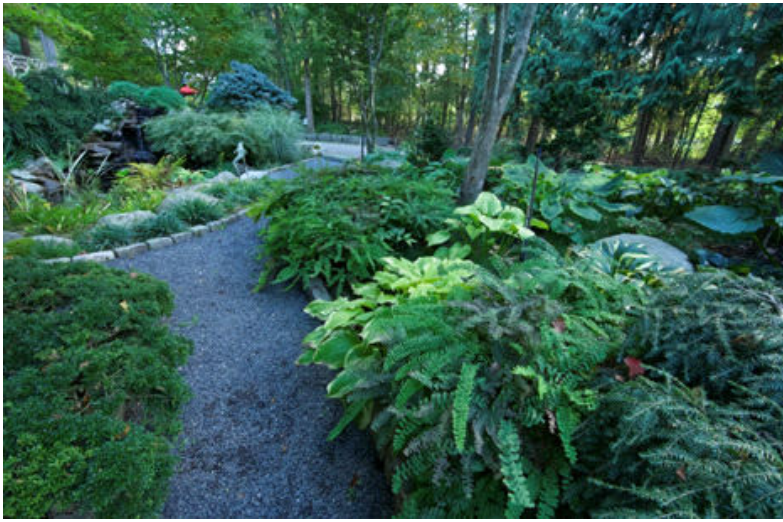


Hosta 'Mountain Snow', *Hosta* 'Kryptonite', *H.* 'Carnival' and *H.* 'Sun Shower' next to *Tsuga canadensis* 'Coles Prostrate' and *Cornus kousa* 'Summer Fun'.

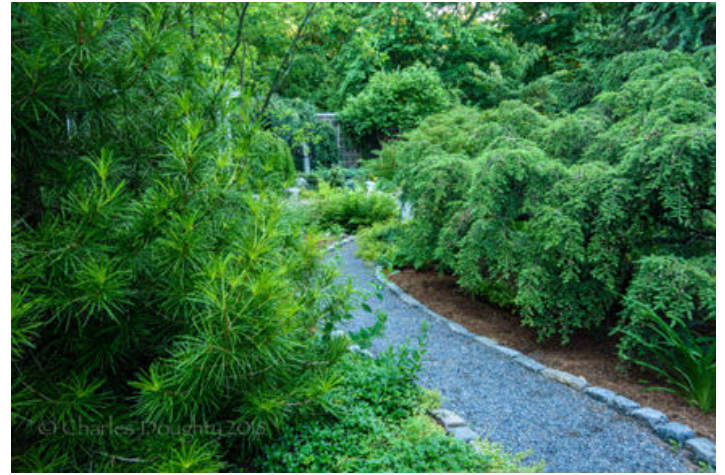


Above, a curvilinear path through the garden showing diversity of plant material in a shady setting.

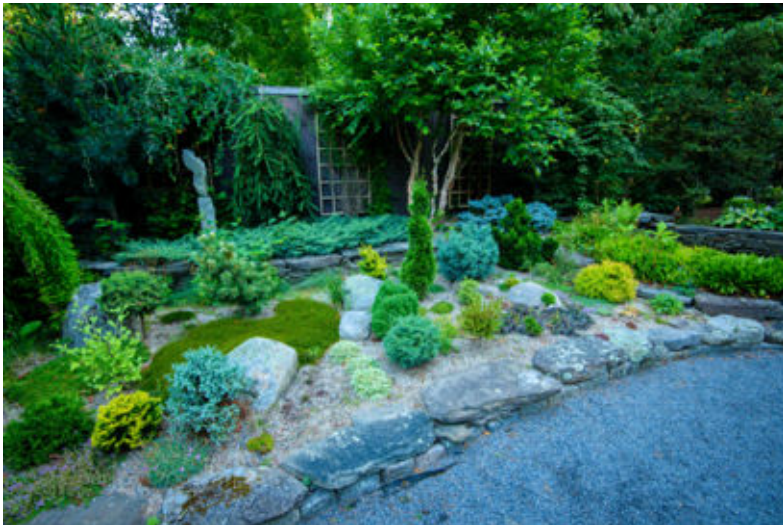




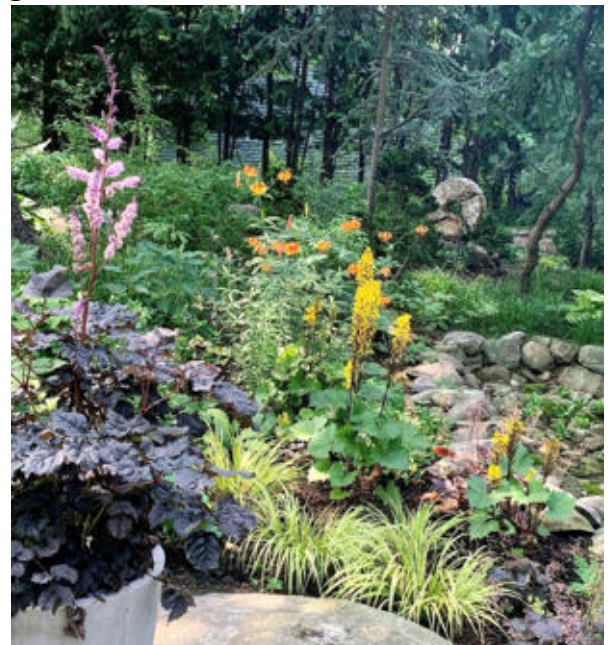
A mixed planting of natives and other perennials includes *Iris cristata*, *Hosta* 'June', *H.* 'Guacamole', *H.* 'Whirlwind', *Kirengeshoma palmata*, and *Rogersia pinata* blooming in the rear.



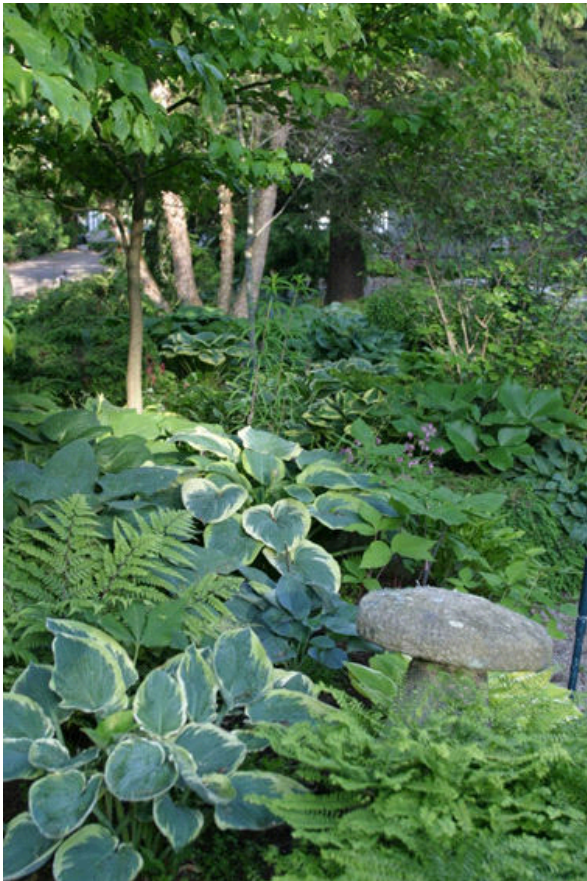
Many conifers and evergreen trees line the walkways, including the *Sciadopitys verticillata* (umbrella pine) and *Tsuga canadensis* 'Sargent Weeping'.



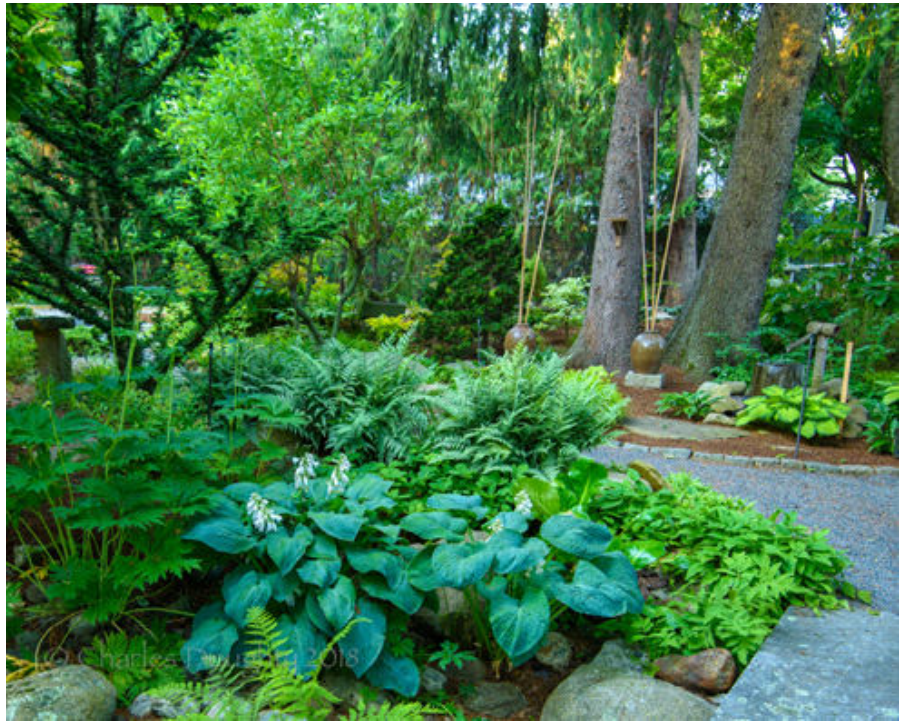
A planting of evergreen conifers provides winter interest in the garden when many natives and perennials are dormant.



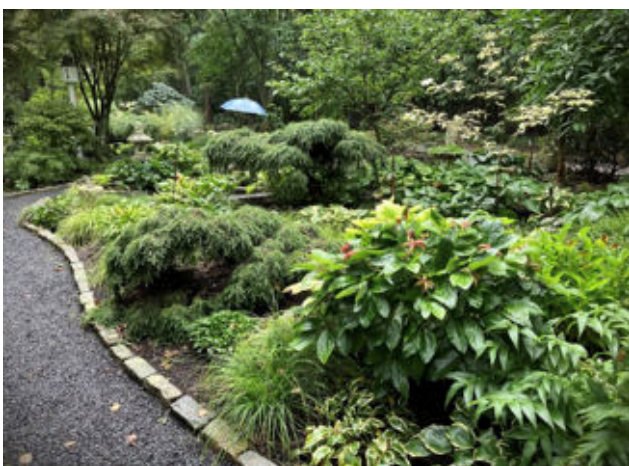
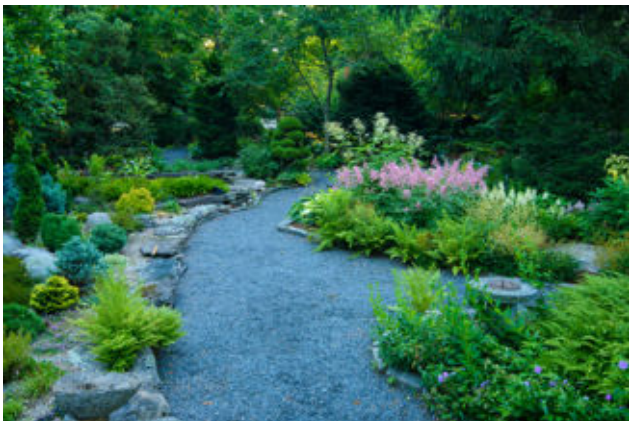
Left, an antique stone grist mill wheel stands in the backdrop of this perennial section including a potted *Astilbe* 'Dark Side of the Moon', *Ligularia stenocephala* 'Little Rocket' and *Acorus gramineus* 'Minimus Aureus'.



A planting of hostas and ferns including *Hosta* 'Northern Halo' and *H.* 'Northern Exposure' mixed with *Adiantum* or Maidenhair ferns.



Hosta volunteer seedlings stand out in this bed of *Ligularia japonica*, Ghost Ferns and *Omphalodes verna*, known as Blue-eyed Mary.

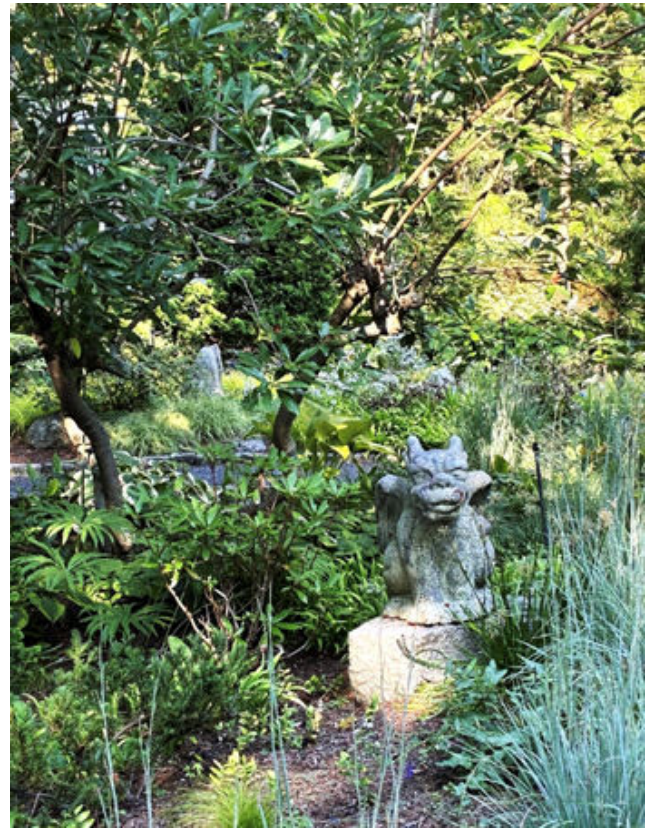


A mixed bed including *Hosta* 'Almost', *Cornus contraversa variegata*, *Hosta* 'Scituate Sunrise', *H.* 'Stag's Leap' and *H.* 'Jessica Alba'.

Left, *Peonia japonica*, *Tricyrtis hirta*, *Hosta* 'Scooter' fill out the front of this bed.



Chuck is guiding a group of visitors in the background of this mixed planting including *Caulophillum thalictroides*, or Blue Cohosh, *Carex oshimenis* “Everillo’, and *Hosta* ‘Pilgrim’.



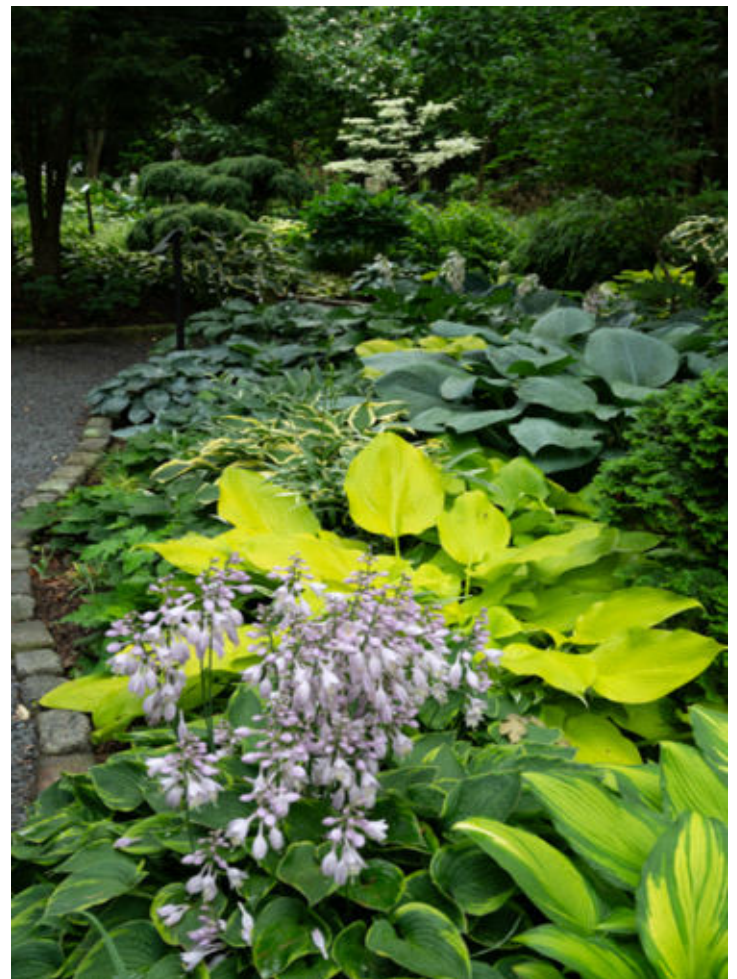
A stone gargoyle stands guard in the middle of this planting of drought tolerant mixed perennials.



Hosta ‘Foxfire Viper’

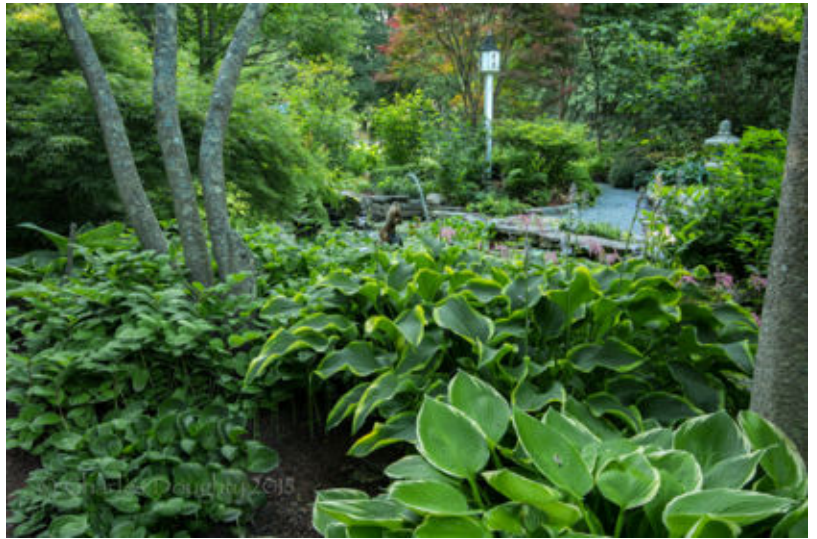


H. ‘Coast to Coast’





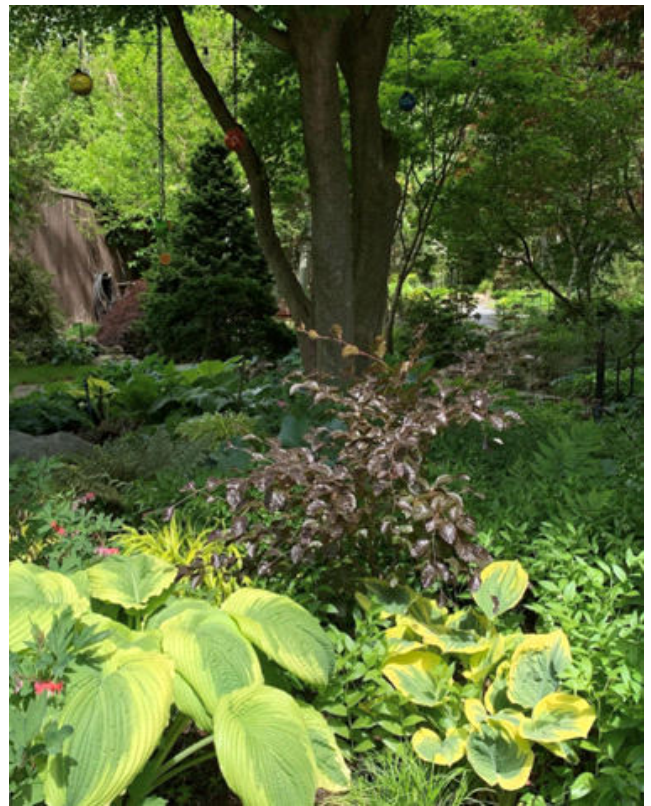
H. 'Miss Suzy', H. 'Smokey' and H. 'Mr. Blue' contrast and complement each other.



H. 'Richmond', H. 'Abba Dabba Do' and H. 'Nippers' stand out in this mixed shady planting.



H. 'Paradigm' and H. 'Alvatine Taylor' flank the beginning of this flagstone path, with many more beyond.



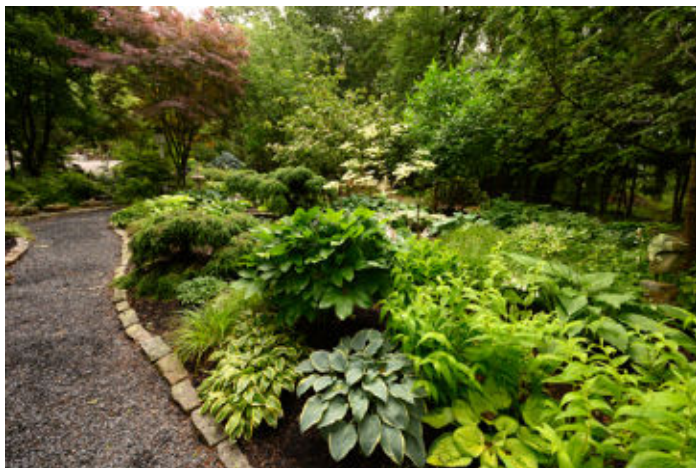
Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea Nana' sits behind *Hosta 'Bridal Falls'* and *H. 'Liberty'*, surrounded by *Disporum japonicum*.



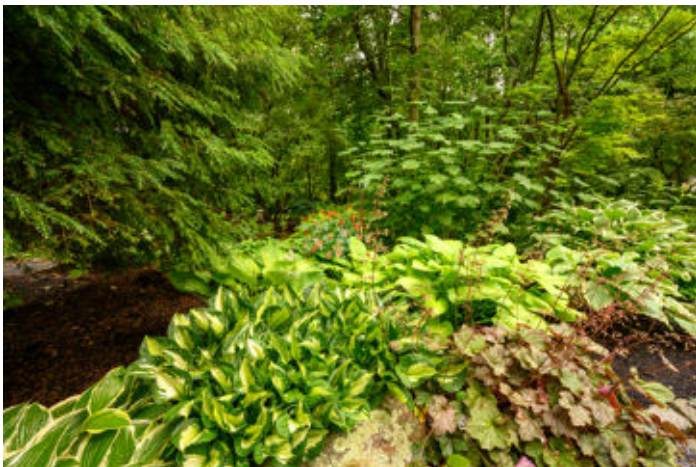
Left, *Dicentra spectabilis 'Valentine'* shines behind *Hosta 'Arctic Blast'*.



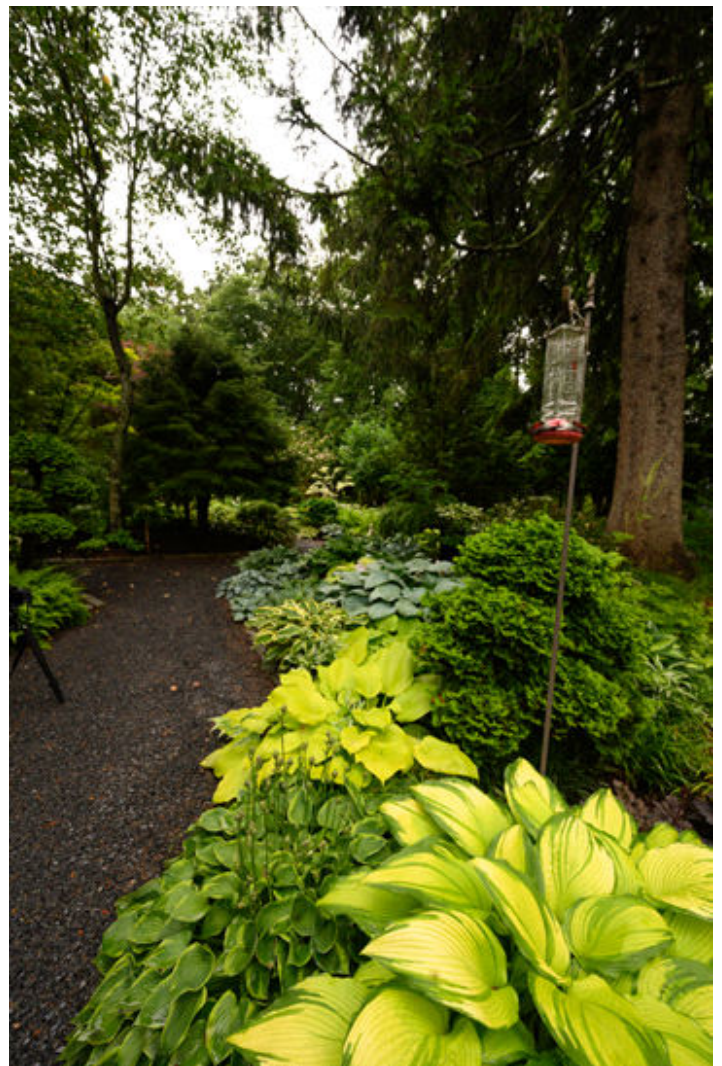
Cone shaped baskets fashioned of sphagnum moss add an aerial display of hostas.



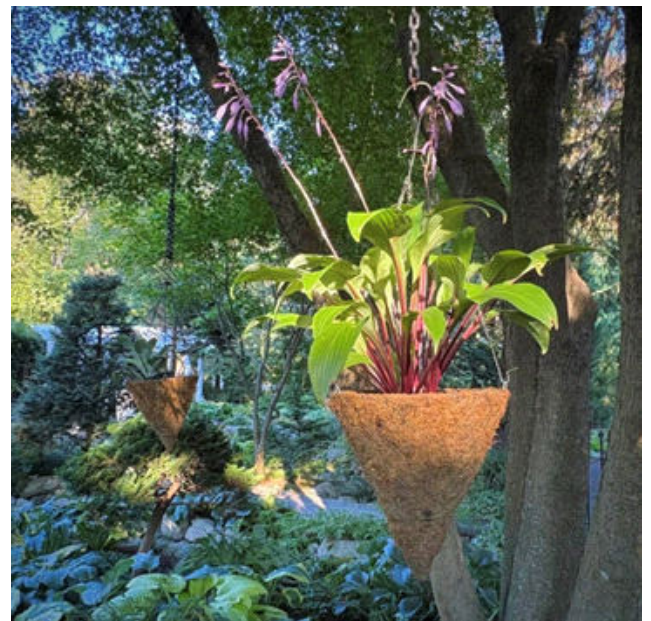
H. 'Frosted Dimples', *H.* 'Scooter' and *H.* 'Lucy Vitols' provide contrasting colors in this mixed bed.



Heuchera 'Purple Ruffles' pairs nicely with *Hosta* 'Whirlwind' and *H.* 'Guacamole' in this mixed perennial bed.



Hosta 'Choko Niskiki', *H.* 'Abby' and *H.* 'Daybreak' sit below a hummingbird feeder.



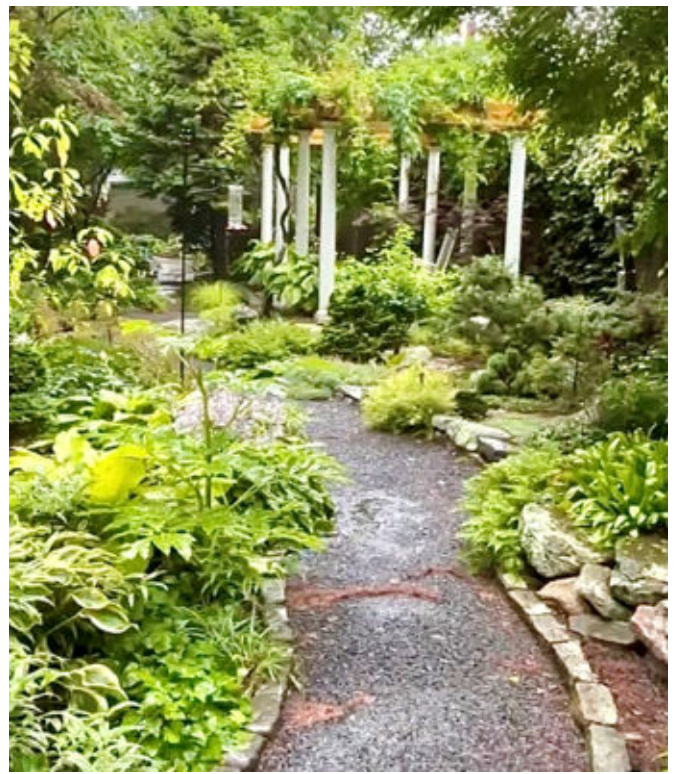
By placing *H.* 'Considering Concordville' in a hanging basket, you can see its bright red petioles which would be difficult to see looking down on it in the ground.



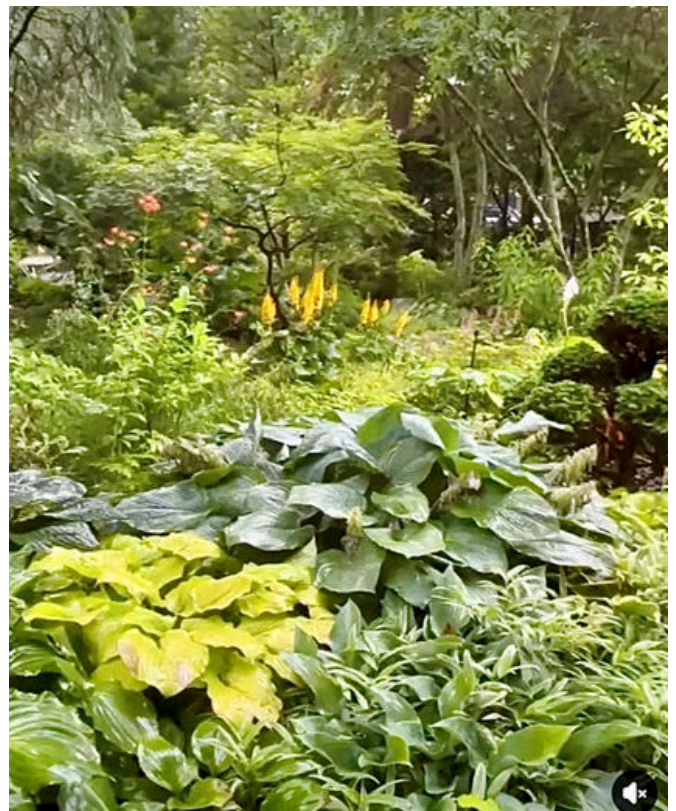
H. ‘Abiqua Recluse’ shines brightly amidst the darker shades of hostas including *H.* ‘Waving Winds’, *H.* ‘Blue Mammoth’, *H.* ‘Irish Luck’, *H.* ‘Blue Jay’, and *H.* ‘Camelot’.



Hosta ‘Abiqua Drinking Gourd’ visually explains why blue hostas make an excellent choice for a statement in a mixed bed.



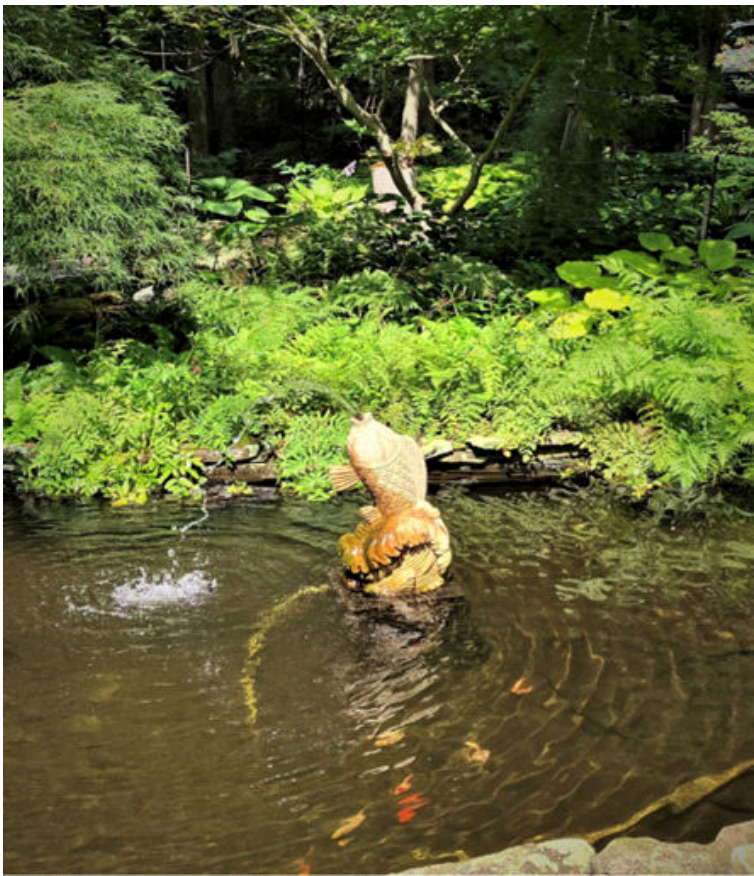
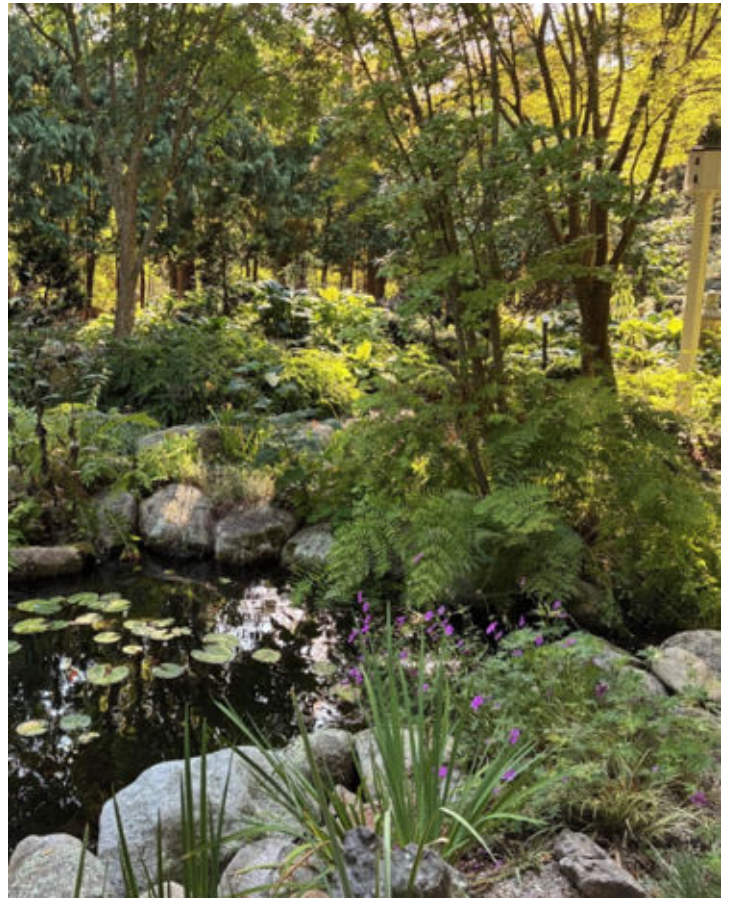
An arbor covered with *Wisteria frutescens* ‘Aunt Maude’ waits patiently at the end of this mixed path, for visitors to rest in its shade to enjoy the garden. Its less aggressive growth offers a fragrant native alternative for gardens.



H. ‘Abiqua Recluse’ and *H.* ‘Blue Mammoth’ with *Ligularia stenocephala* ‘Little Rocket’ in bloom behind.



Hosta ‘Nancy Gill’ and *H.* ‘Sum and Substance’ are two giant sized varieties that quickly fill a large space.



A stone fish spitter provides aeration to the pond, vital to the health of the fish within. Ferns planted along the bank multiply rapidly here.



Trollius x cultorum ‘Prichard’s Giant’ is suited to marshy pond life.





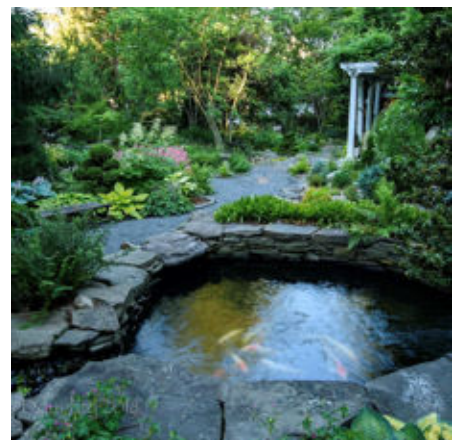
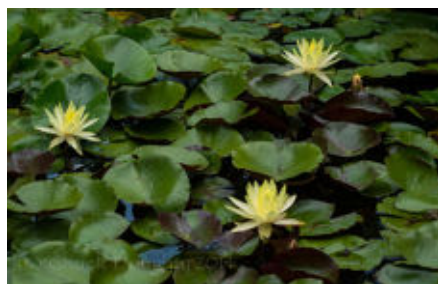
A babbling brook lined with ferns and hostas flows between water gardens.



Koi are winter hardy in most areas and will survive outdoors provided there is aeration and circulation in the pond, such as the waterfall above or spitters shown below.



Many flowers thrive in the pond including *Sarracenia flava*, *Iris ensata* 'Pinkerton' and water lilies.





Primula japonica or Candelabra Primrose brighten up the bank of the pond.



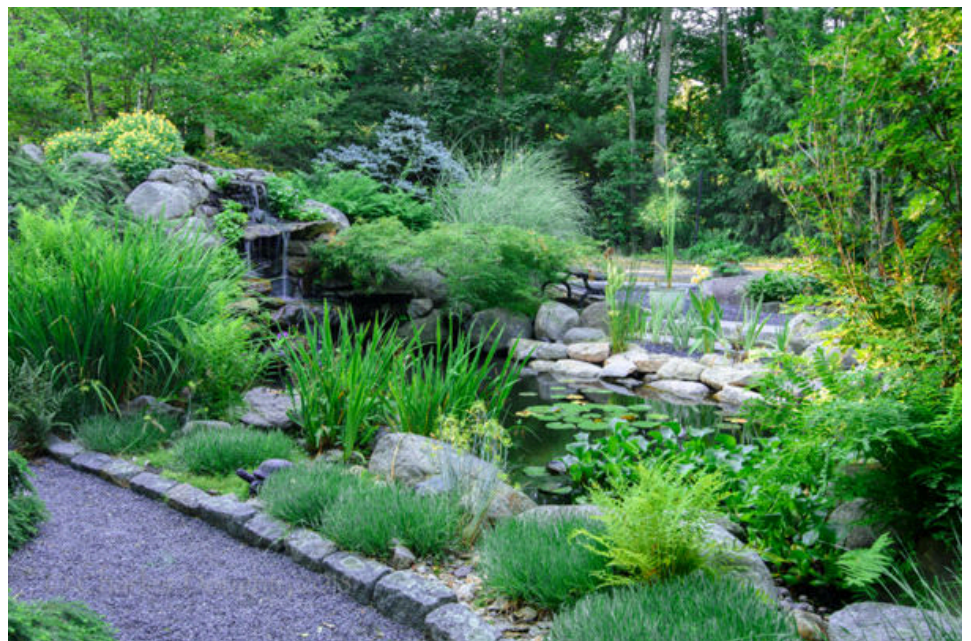
Helonius bullata, or swamp pink was grown from seed. It is considered endangered in many areas.



Dactylohiza 'Foliorella' or Marsh Orchid



Nelumbo 'Shirokunshi'



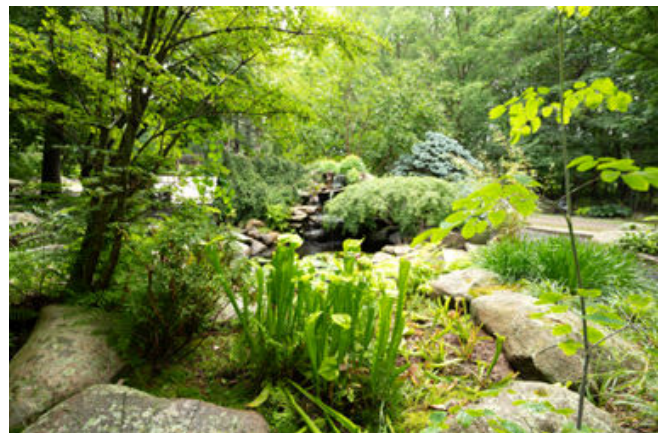
Right, many pond plants are hardy and thrive fully submerged in water including lotus, water lilies and iris.

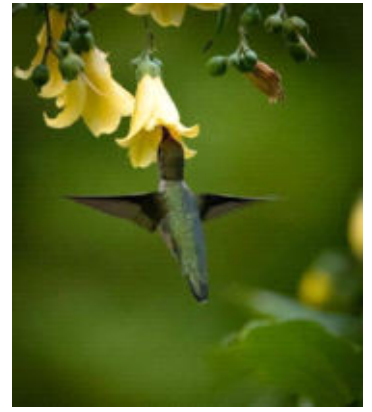


Every garden that is ecologically complete will thrive with wildlife. Here are a few examples of the critters that can be found thriving in the planted and water gardens of Cochato Nursery. They all, especially the pollinators, complete the food chain of life that we humans rely upon for our own survival.



The tall spikes of the *Sarracenia flava* thrive in this section of bog garden. The pitcher plant is carnivorous, and is also part of our food chain, consuming insects that may become pests.





Above, the native *Kirengeshoma koreana* or yellow wax bells is a large flowering shrub that attracts hummingbirds to its buttery yellow flowers.



Tricyrtis hirta, or Toad lily.



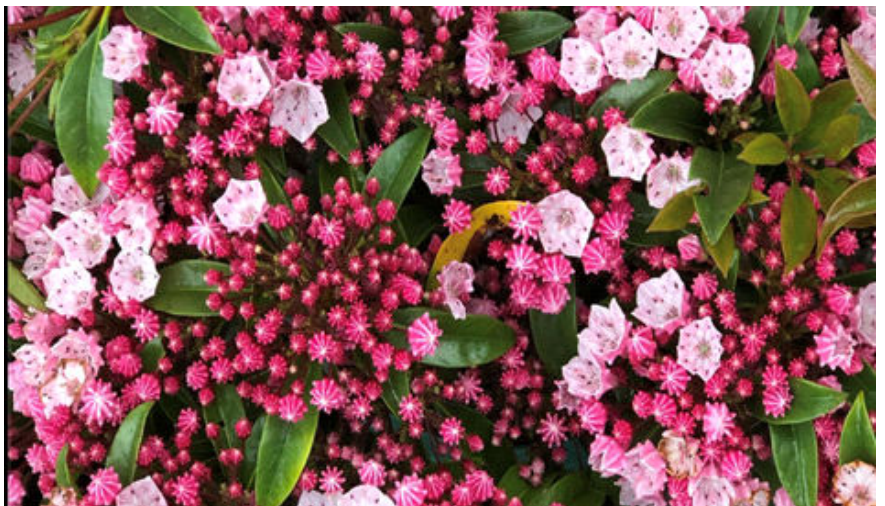
The yellow spikes of *Ligularia* command attention!



Pieris japonica 'Dorothy Wyckoff' in bud, which will form pink flowers!



Clarodendrom trichotomum



Kalmia latifolia, or evergreen mountain laurel



Allium tricoccum



Agastache foeniculum

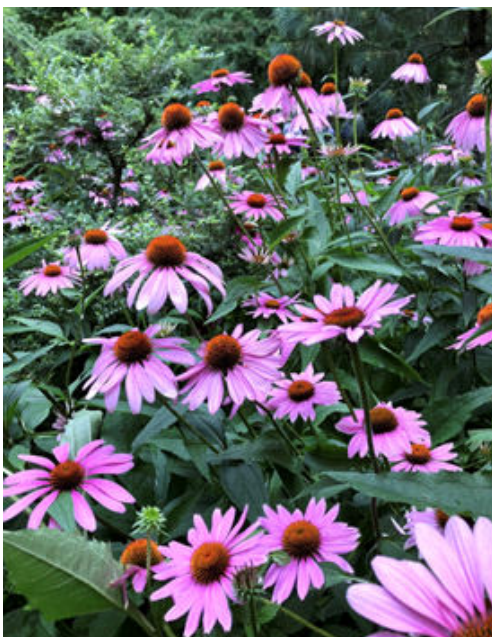


Trillium grandiflorum

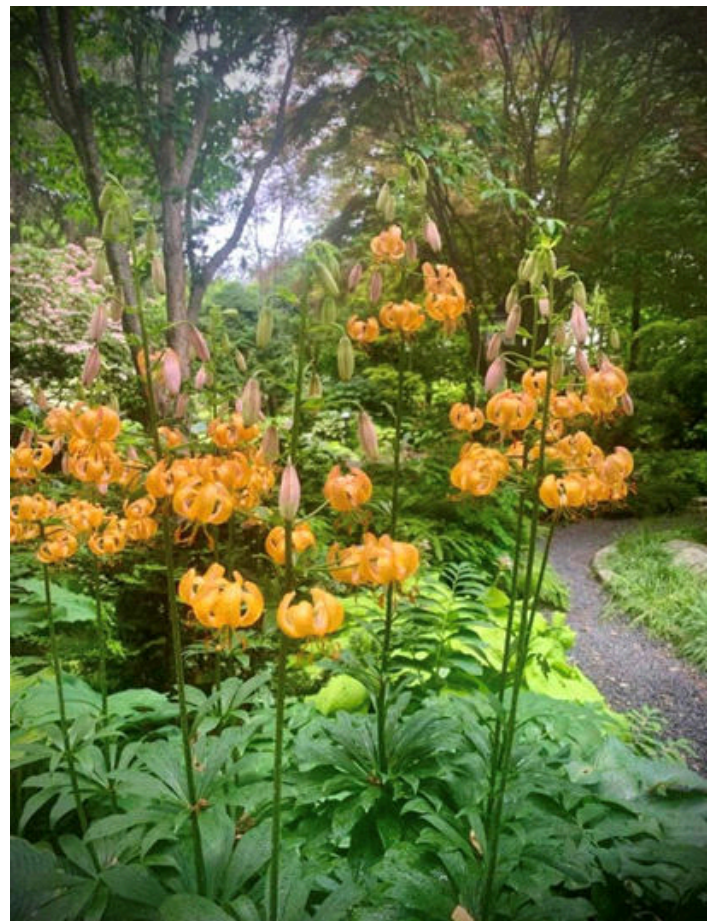


Above and below, *Echinacea* or perennial coneflowers are available in many colors and provide food for many pollinators and birds. They also provide a pop of color in a very green landscape.

Right, *Astilbe chinensis* 'Pumila'.



Right, *Lilium martagon* is a tall perennial flowering bulb that thrives in a shady garden and is often planted amidst hostas to provide height and color to the landscape.

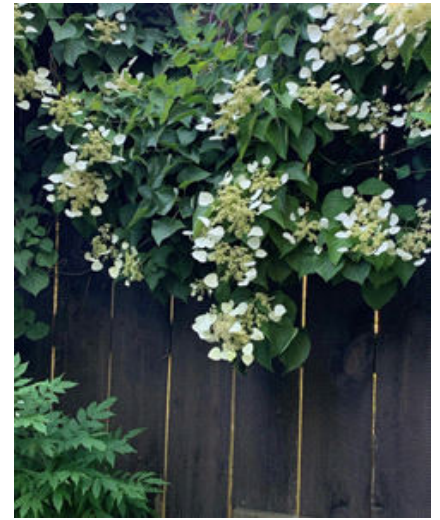




Clematis 'Betty Corning' intertwines the lacy maple leaves.



Lonicera sempervirens 'Magnifica'.



Schizophragma hydrangeoides 'Moonlight'



Clethra alnifolia 'Ruby Spice'



Above and right, *Heptacodium micoides*, or Seven Son shrub.



Oxydendrom arboretum



Clematis 'Violet Stardust'



Azalea viscosum 'Pink Mist'



Hydrangea paniculata 'Pink Diamond'

Right,
Kiringeshoma palmata.





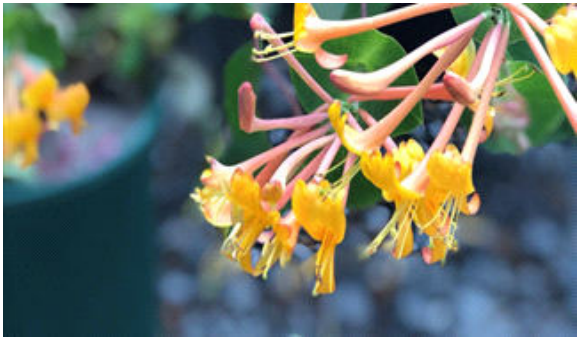
, *Paeonia obovata*



Spigelia marilandica 'Little Redhead'.



Anemone nemorosa 'Robinsoniana', or wood anemone



Lonicera x brownii 'Mandarin' is a hummingbird favorite!



Epimedium 'Amber Queen'



Erythronium 'Pagoda', or dog tooth violet



Epimedium 'Sunny and Share'



Rosa virginiana



Anemone canadensis is a native flowering groundcover.



Persicaria amplexicaulis 'Fat Domino'.



Angelica gigas



Thalictrum 'Nimbus Pink'



Lathyrus vernus or spring vetchling



Dicentra spectabilis 'Gold Heart'



Hibiscus paramutabilis x syriacus 'Lohengrin'



Chionanthus virginicus



Calycanthus floridus



Rhodotypos scandens or Jetbead



Lilium superbum or Turk's Cap Lily



Anemone pulsatilla vulgaris, or pasque flower



Phemeranthus calycinus



Thalictrum rochebrunianum, or Lavender Mist Meadow Rue



Cypripedium parviflorum



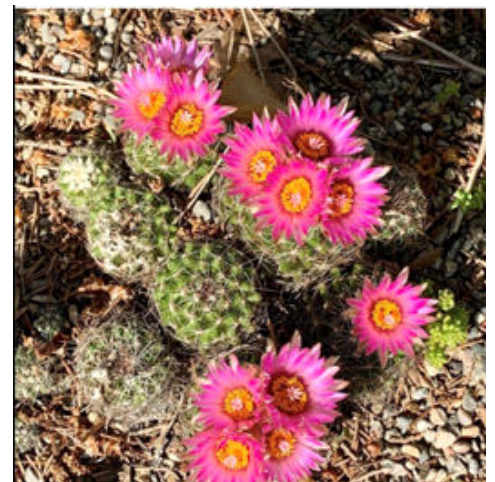
Optunia humifusa or Eastern prickly pear cactus



Cypripedium 'Sabine'



Geranium sanguineum 'Max Frei'



Coryphantha vivipara



Rhododendron yedoense var. *poukhanense*, or Korean azalea

These are all hardy shrubs on this page, many of which are also native. There are approximately 550 shrubs planted throughout the gardens!



The seed pod on *Paeonia obovata*, the Japanese woodland peony.



Hydrangea macrophylla 'Tellers Blue' with Azalea 'Someday Soon'.



Left, *Rhododendron yakushimanum* 'Percy Wiseman'.



Rhododendron 'Koromo Shikibu', a white flowering azalea.



Aesculus parviflora



Rhododendron yakushimanum



Viburnum carlesii, or Korean spice viburnum



Spirea x Vanhouttei

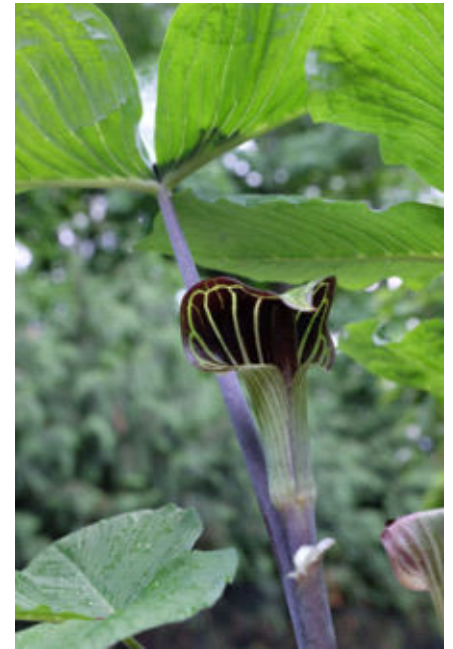


Hydrangea quercifolia



Brunnera macrophylla 'Langtrees'

Though often not as showy or bright, the shade garden is home to these perennials, each have a redeeming quality in our eyes. Below, *Polygonatum* or Solomon's seal bears delicate white flowers.



Arisaema triphyllum



Aruncus dioicus 'Guinea-Fowl'



In the right conditions, wild morel mushrooms sprout, ready to be consumed.



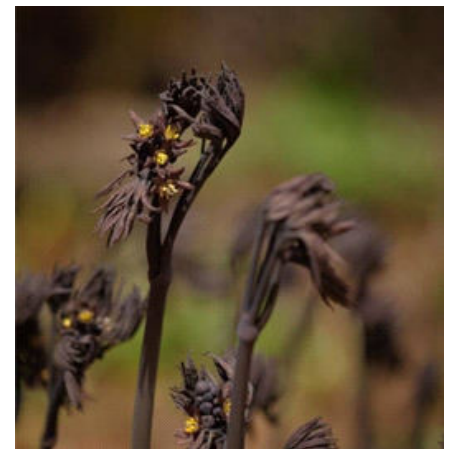
Astilboides tabularis



Lamiaeum galeobdolon 'Hermann's Pride'



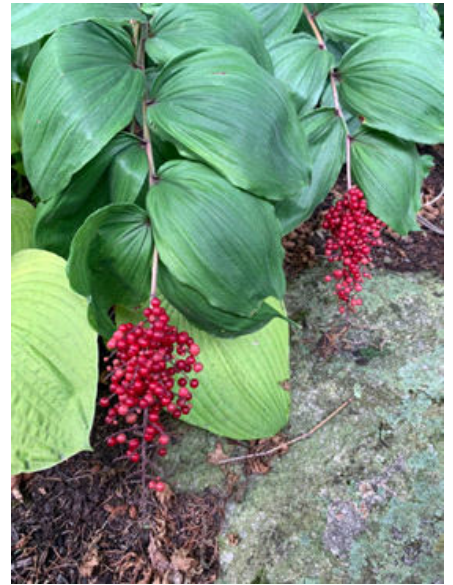
Euphorbia x martinii 'Ascot Rainbow'



Caulophyllum thalictroides, or Blue Cohosh



Plants that bear berries after they flower not only add colorful interest to our gardens, they feed the birds and critters too! Not to mention, they are wonderful to photograph, such as the *Paeonia obovata* or Japanese woodland peony seed on the left, fully opened below that.



Maianthemum racemosum, known as treacleberry or feathery false lily of the valley.



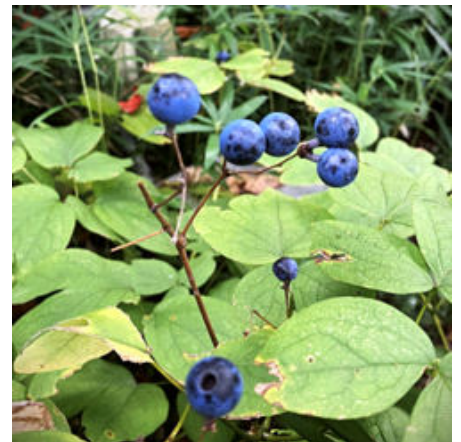
Ilex serrata 'Koshobai' bears orange-red berries on a small bush.



Chionanthus coreanus, or Fringe tree berries



Callicarpa dichotoma 'Early Amethyst', known as beautyberry.



Caulophyllum thalictroides or Blue Cohosh



Trees are the backbone and foundation plants in Cochato Nursery. There are approximately 250 trees planted throughout the garden. Many are flowering trees such as the *Franklinia alatamaha* blossom pictured on the left.



Late frost and freeze is common in zone 6a, and many blossoms are ruined by it but, it does not affect the health of the tree. Above, *Magnolia x Solagenea*, or Saucer Magnolia.

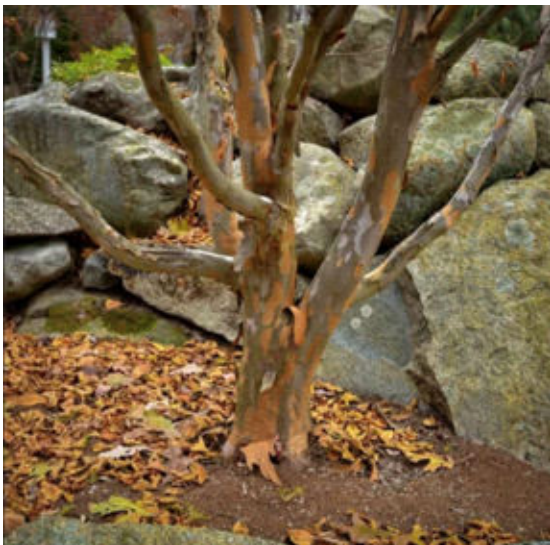


With proper winter protection, even a banana tree is hardy!

Left, *Musa banjoo*, a hardy Japanese banana tree.



Maple trees are perfectly suited to the shade garden and provide a brilliant show of color and texture. Above, *Acer japonicum* 'Green Cascade'. Below, *Acer japonicum* 'Oregon Fern' towers over a stand of *Luzula sylvatica*.



The exfoliating bark on some trees provides interest in the garden throughout the year. Left, *Stewartia pseudocamillia*, also flowers!





Cornus kousa 'Everbloom' is a long-blooming variety of dogwood.



Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold' looks beautiful near the house!



a native favorite, *Nyssa sylvatica* or Black Tupelo tree.



An Eastern Screech Owl snoozes high up in the tree canopy.



Abies koreana 'Horstmann's Silberlocke' bears curled white needles and these gorgeous cones.



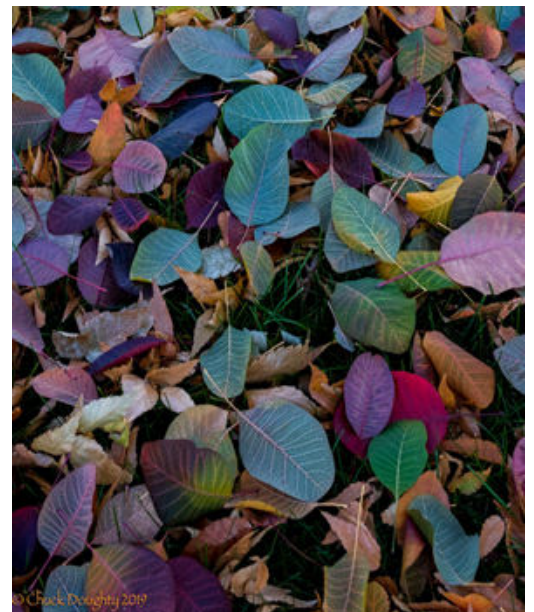
Acer japonicum 'Attaryi' displays beautiful fall color!



Some plants in our garden bear beautiful leaves, making them beautiful even when the flower is spent.

Left, *Leucothoe fontanesiana* 'Silver Run' is evergreen!

Right, *Cotinus x 'Grace'*, or smoke bush.

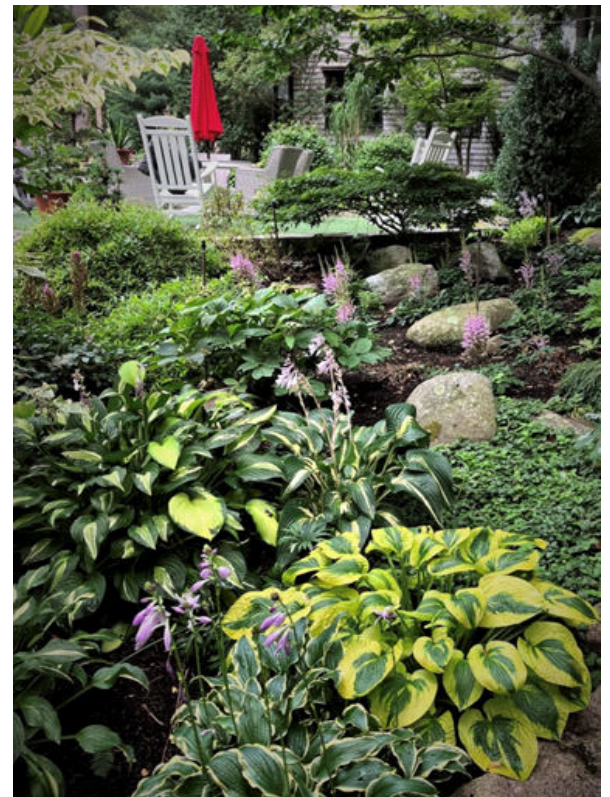




Below, *Hosta* 'Sharp Dressed Man' and *Hosta* 'Snake Eyes' compete for attention amidst *Astilbe chinensis* 'Pumila'.



Hosta 'Glad Rags', 'Satisfaction' and 'Foxfire Viper' brighten up this dark area of the garden.



Left, *H.* 'Almost' blooms underneath a lacy maple tree.

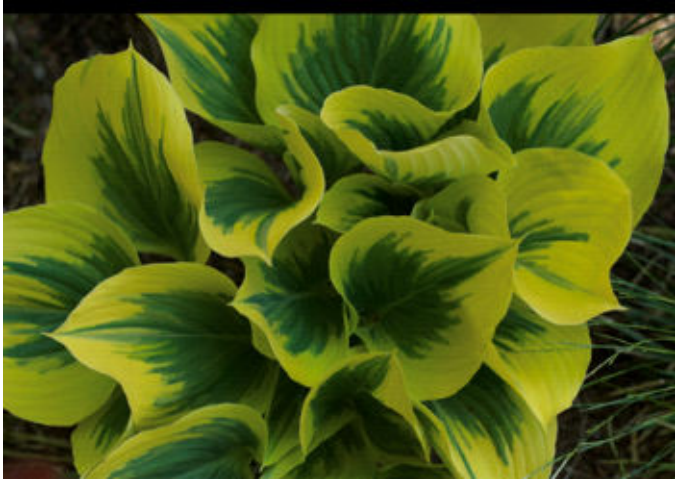




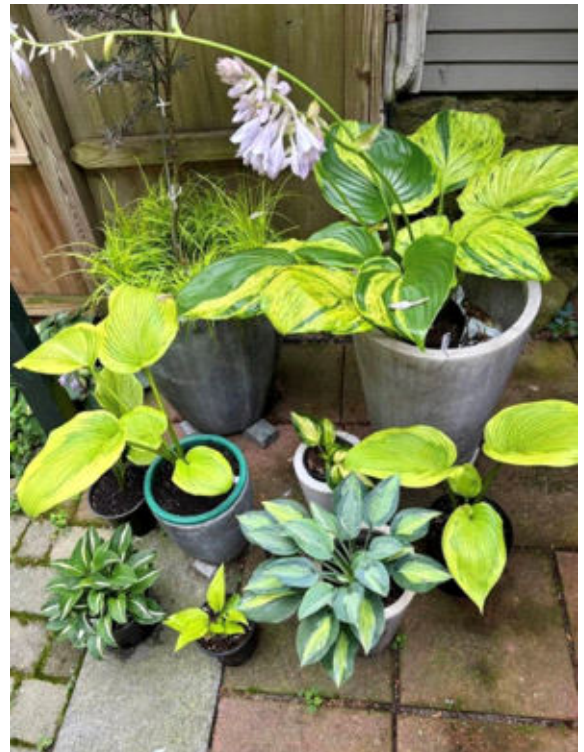
H. 'The Queen'



Right, *H.*
'The Queen'



H. 'Liberty'



A display of potted hostas near the back door including, *H.* 'Erotica', 'Ocean Isle Twist', 'Krugerrand Watermark' and 'Gunther's Prize'.



H. 'Cape Cod'

Below, bed full of cactus varieties which will be brought inside the greenhouse for the winter.

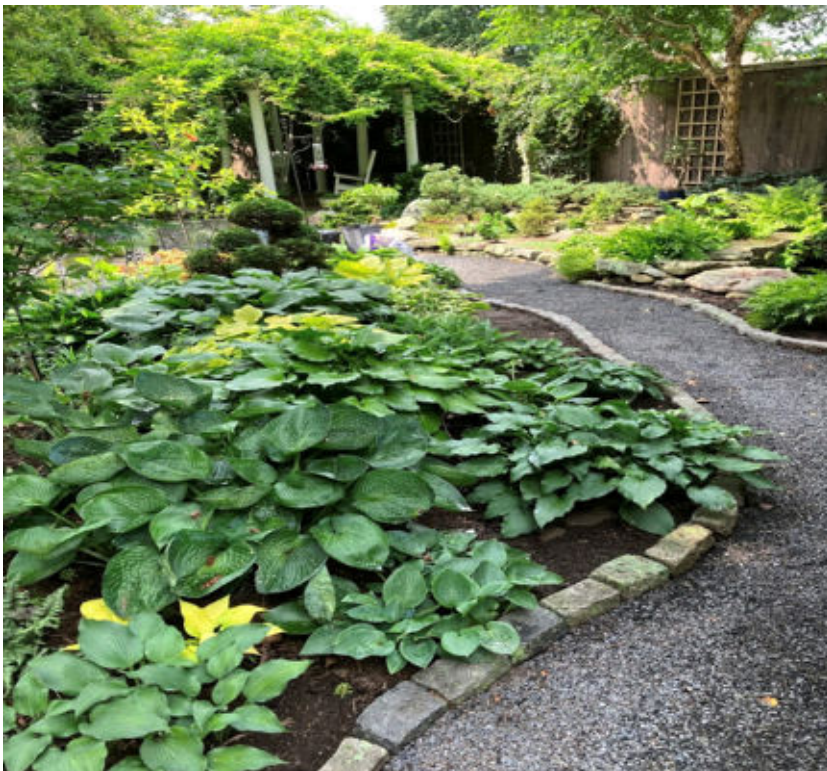
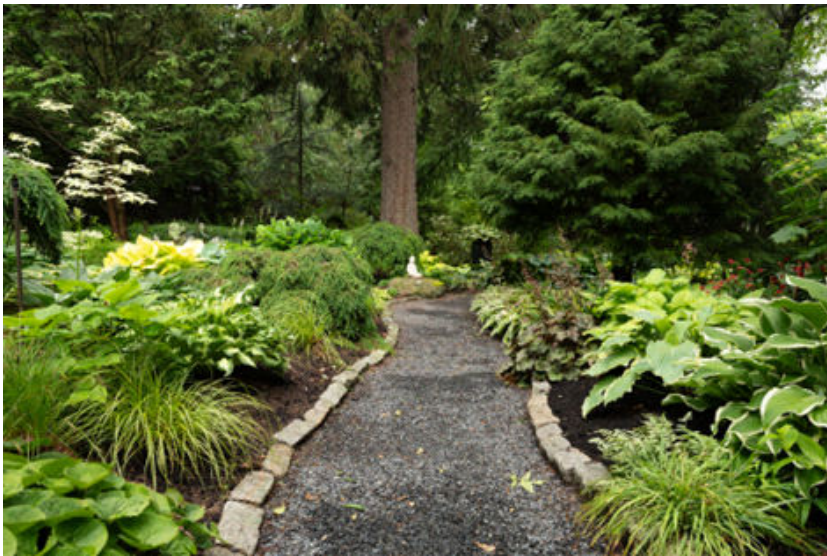
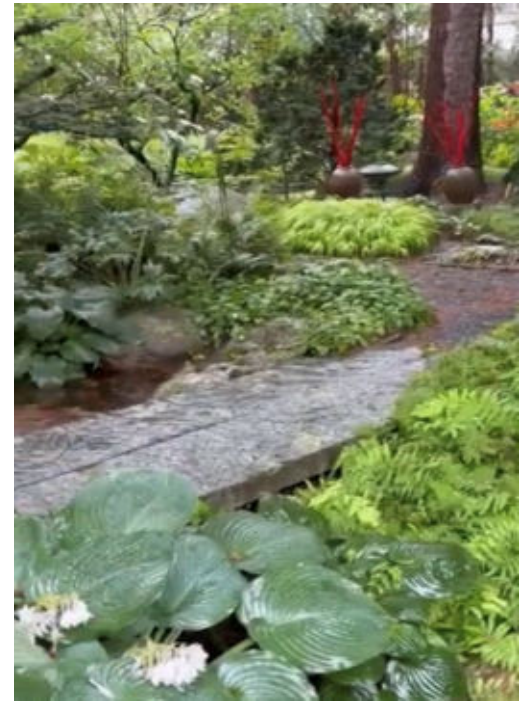


Left, a newly planted display including *H.* 'Double D Cup', and 'Stegeman's Dreadnaught', two giant varieties.

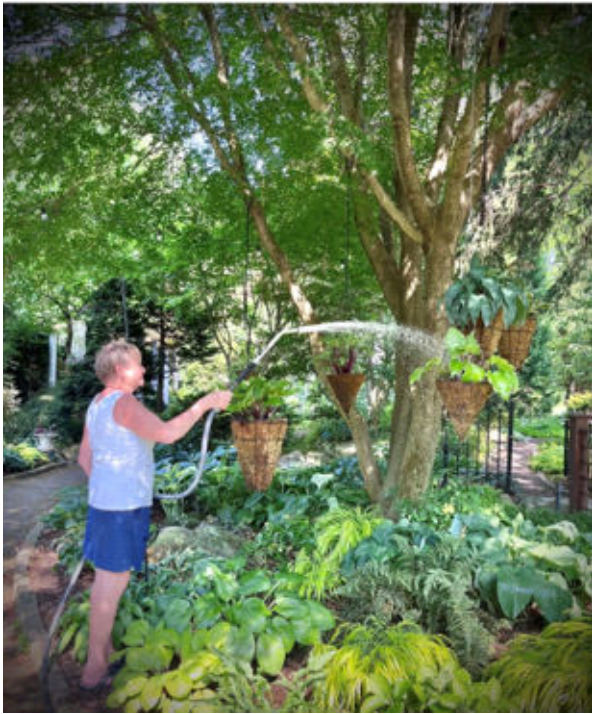




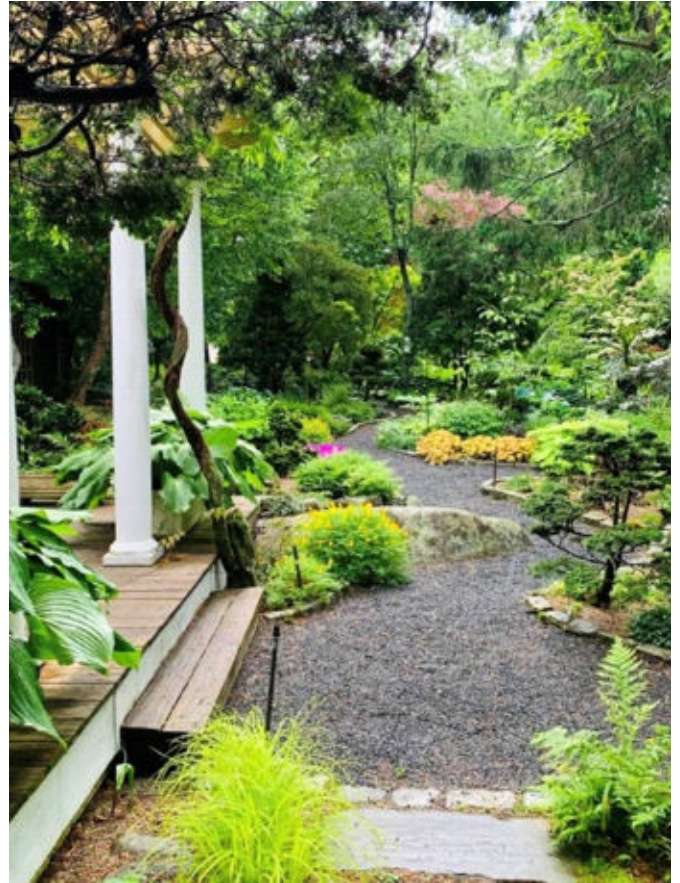
Left, a new project involving planting around rocks and old tree stumps, called a stumpery.



Left, a bed full of hostas including *H.* 'Irish Luck', 'Reptillian', 'Abiqua Recluse', 'Blue Jay', and 'Blue Mammoth', with a cloud pruned *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, or false cypress in the background.



Hand watering is necessary during dry spells and especially for the hanging potted hostas.



Left, Sue creates many planters and arrangements throughout the gardens and often records herself doing so to show customers how it is done. Videos can be found on their website and on Facebook.

Right, the tropical *Brugmansia suaveolens* or Angel's Trumpet looks lovely in a pot near the entrance, however, it must be brought into the house for the winter.





A garden as lush as you see on the right survives the cold winter and snow in zone 6a. But it can also look beautiful with fallen snow, when arranged artfully.

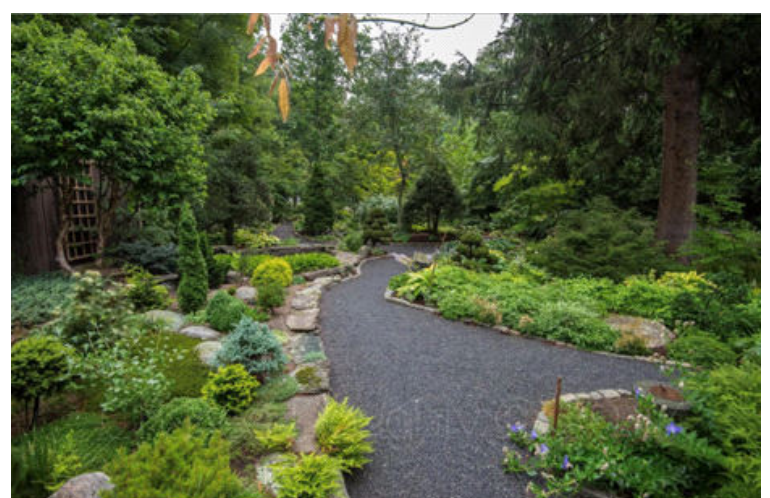
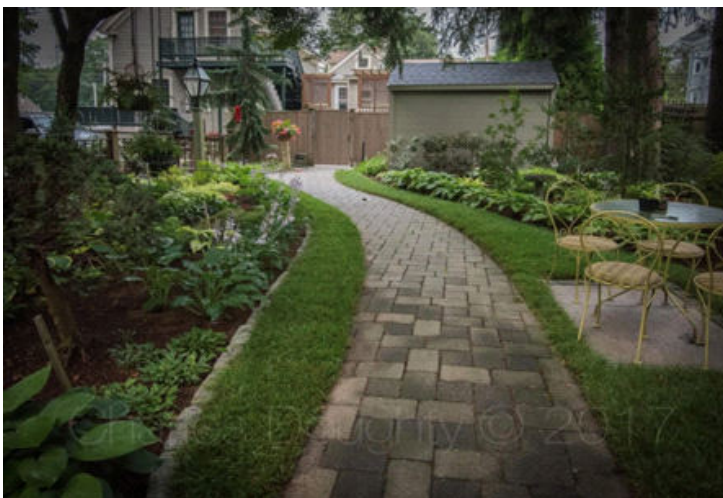
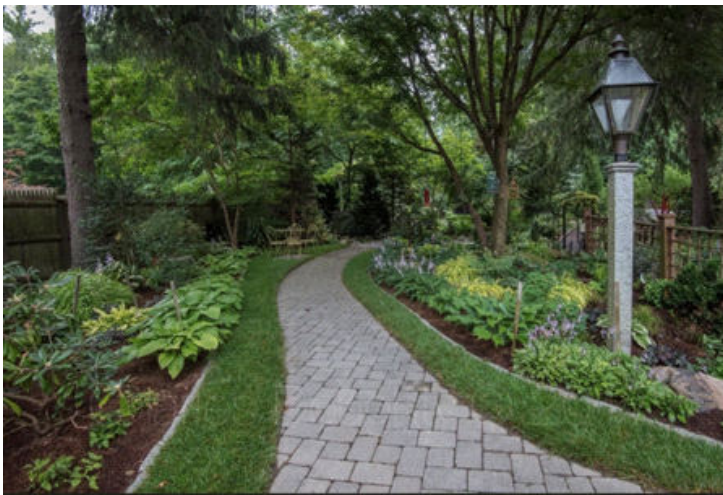


Right, *Prunus x 'Snofozam'* or Snow Fountains weeping cherry tree greets visitors to Cochato Nursery in early spring.





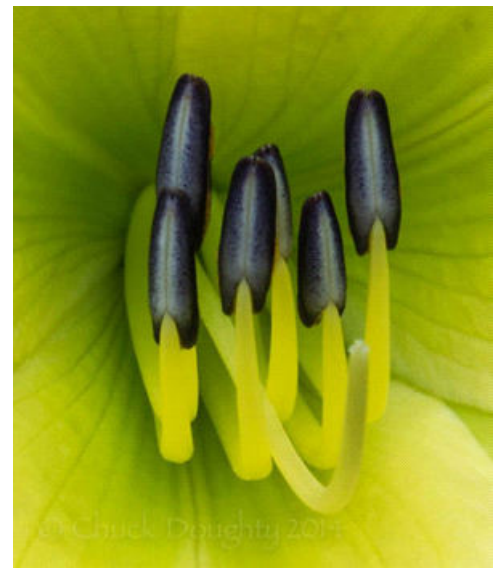
Whenever the American Hosta Society or its local chapters meet in the Northeast Region, you can be sure to find Cochato Nursery vending at the event. They bring along a wide variety of hostas and shade plants, and as many small potted trees as they can travel with!





Blossoms on *Hosta* 'Almost'.

Chuck manipulates photos he has taken in his own garden too, with artistic effects.



A close-up of the dark anthers, filaments and stigma of *Hemerocallis*, or daylily.



Corylopsis pauciflora or winter hazel terminal leaf holding on.

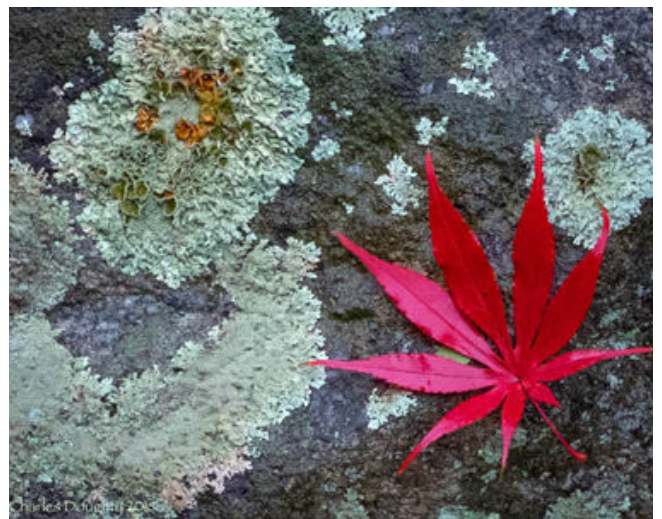


Fallen leaves in varying degrees of decomposition cover the stone steps.



Hosta 'Old Glory'

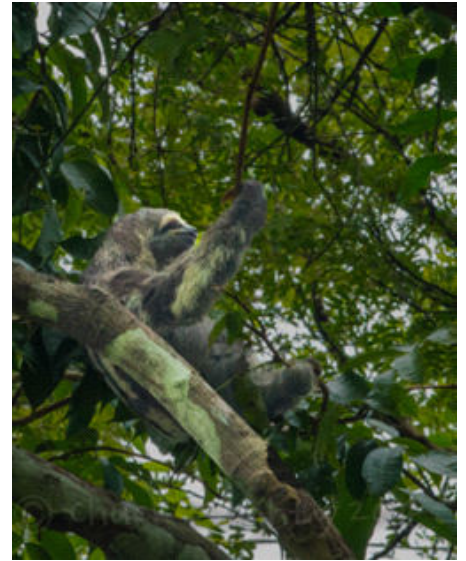
Right, a fall maple leaf landing on a lichen covered rock.





Above, a Sula bassana, or Northern Gannet on Machias Seal Island off the coast of Lebec, Maine.

While the gardens are dormant, Chuck travels the world and captures amazing photos worthy of being published. He has shared some of them with us. Below, a boat in a village boatyard in Cojimar, Cuba. (Where Ernest Hemmingway kept his boat).



A three-toed sloth in Amazonas, Brazil.



Along the Usa River in Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.



Right, an old car cruising down a street in Cojimar, Cuba.



Welcome to Earth, Texas!



Sunset on the Rio Negro in Amazonas, Brazil.



Pleasure boats on the Rio Negro in Amazonas, Brazil.



Vendors with peach palm fruit in Manaus, AM, Brazil.



Above and right, from Barcelos, Brazil. The FESPOB (Festival do Peixe Ornamental de Barcelos) dancers and fire breather. The FESPOB is an annual competition celebrating the sustainable aquarium fish trade.





A field at Lorenzo Reina's Andromeda Theater, Santo Stefano Quisquina, Sicily, Italy.



A herd of zebras on safari in Arusha, Tanzania.



A fisherman tosses a cast net into the Rio Negro in Amazonas, Brazil.



A Jabiru stork at the Central Amazon Conservation Complex in Amazonas, Brazil.



A western Texas high school rodeo rider.

Right, the vessel "Dorinha" cruises down the Rio Negro in Amazonas, Brazil.





A white throated toucan in Amazonas, Brazil.



A woman walks along a flooded street in Havana, Cuba.



Ancient structures in Sicily, Italy.



A lion pride on safari in Arusha, Tanzania.



A patriotic fireworks display.

Right, zebras in Arusha, Tanzania.





A baker with his treats in Camaguay, Cuba.



Teigarhorn, East Iceland



The Meeting of Waters, where the Rio Negro meets the Rio Solimoes near Manaus, Brazil. The rivers cannot mix due to differences in the chemistry of the waters.



Icelandic horses



A nosey pig in Cuba.



A monkey in Arusha, Tanzania.



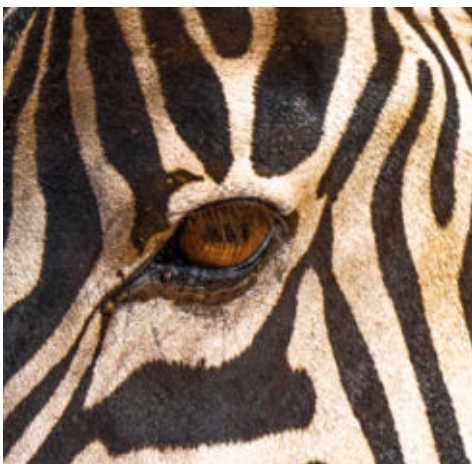
A Hampton Beach horse in Hampton, New Hampshire.



A family in Amazonas, Brazil.



Church on the hill in Vik I Myrdal, Iceland.



A close-up of a zebra's eye in Arusha, Tanzania.



Boats on the bay in Gibara, Cuba.



A leather shop worker in Siracusa, Sicily, Italy.



Children in Arusha, Tanzania.

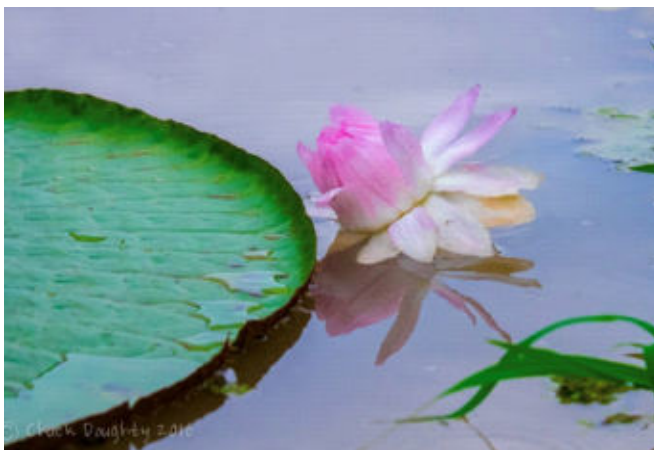


A rainbow over the Rio Negro in Amazonas, Brazil.



Hot air balloons soaring over Serengeti, Tanzania.

A *Victoria amazonica* flower showing pink post-pollination color on the Rio Solimoes in Manaus, Brazil.





A blue monkey in Arusha, Tanzania.



A Lilac-Breasted Roller in Arusha, Tanzania.



The Agua Boa River very low in water volume in Rio Negro, Amazonas.

If you would like to see your garden or the garden of a friend featured in this publication, please contact Gail Russo at Russo4@comcast.net for the application questionnaire.

All the photos printed in this column have been provided by the featured gardener with their permission, unless otherwise noted, and are the property of the featured gardener, so contact them if you'd like permission to use a photo.

We are trying to bring lovely, remote gardens to the readers who would not be able to see them otherwise and get to know the person behind them.

International hosta gardeners are encouraged to join us. We would love to meet you and enjoy your gardens, but you must communicate in English.



Vendor Spotlight

Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT



815-659-3282

22937 1140 N Ave | Princeton, IL 61356

mail@hornbakergardens.com



Princeton, Illinois, is known for its rich history, particularly its role in the Underground Railroad, iconic covered bridges (especially the Red Covered Bridge), and charming historic downtown with Victorian architecture and antique shops, serving as a gateway to scenic trails like the Ronald Reagan Trail and Illinois River Road. People travel many miles to see these historic sites and it's fabulous for us that there is also an equally amazing garden destination there too!

Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. is a family-owned and operated nursery located five miles southeast of Princeton. They have a large collection of many types and varieties of plants including hostas, daylilies, trees, shrubs, grasses, aquatic plants, annuals and perennials that can fill all your garden needs.

Hornbaker Gardens started as a dream in 1976 when Rich and Kathy Hornbaker purchased 14 acres of isolated land that had an abandoned homestead on it. They thought it would be a perfect place to build a new home and raise a family. As many new homeowners do, they planted a garden to help feed their family, which led to an abundance of berries. Their desire to share so they wouldn't go to waste led to the beginning of their business that they called Horn's Berry Farm, a small pick-your-own berry farm. They had some success with this and started to experiment with mums, another gardener's perennial favorite, offering them for sale in their garage. By 1984, they decided to plow under the berries to focus on planting and propagating perennials. In 1987, Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. was formed, operating as a wholesale perennial farm. They received a lot of interest from the locals and hosted an open house to allow the locals to see their operation. In 1990, they decided to expand their operation to include retail sales and operate seven days a week. Visitors often enjoy viewing a plant in a garden setting before choosing it for their own, so they began designing display gardens, starting with the Hosta Ravine, a fan favorite. They added a large selection of daylilies and then bought out an iris business. In 1996, they added a gazebo to the Hosta Ravine, enticing visitors to stroll the expanding gardens.

By 2001, they experimented with garden statuary, offering granite garden art, and they installed a large koi pond, with sunny gardens accompanying it. By this time, their selection of plant material had grown substantially, and they launched an online nursery site, offering shipping across the country for certain varieties.



The aerial photos illustrate the growth of Hornbaker Gardens over the course of 17 years. The property grew from a simple homestead into a bustling nursery.



In 2004, they decided to diversify by offering a venue for arts and crafts. Local artists were invited to create, display and offer artwork for sale and they opened Pottery Alley, where visitors could select pieces while strolling the gardens. They also began offering annuals and bedding plants. Since they are in hardiness zone 5, the annuals required the construction of a greenhouse to protect them until the threat of frost is pass.

In 2008, they opened The Shop, which is the storefront for the nursery. Inside The Shop, customers can find garden-related items and garden art for sale including fountains, furniture, stone benches and statuary, brass statuary, pottery, wind chimes, bird baths and handcrafted one-of-kind art pieces such as art poles and sun catchers. When you're finished browsing the store, wander into the plant aisles to find houseplants, succulents, vegetable plants or outdoor garden plants.



Not only have the structures multiplied, the expansion of the display gardens and water features is evident.



The Shop was opened in 2008, adding the next level of service to the business. Everything a gardener needs to accompany the plants selected outside can be found inside. Everything you could possibly want to make your gardens beautiful can be found in one stop now.



The display gardens were ever growing and expanding in all directions, to include a 2.5-acre native prairie garden, and a second greenhouse was needed. With business booming and gardens blooming, more people visited each day. Of course, there were many groups who requested to use the gardens for photo shoots and as a venue for events. Eventually, in 2013, they decided to eliminate the iris field to construct The Barn, a beautiful four-season venue for events such as weddings to be held on site. It is designed to look rustic on the outside yet elegant on the inside and be versatile enough to accommodate outdoor events, indoor events or a combination of the two. It is ADA-accessible, air conditioned/heated and can accommodate up to 350 guests.

By 2015, The Barn was fully constructed, and the first event was hosted, though it's never really finished, as the gardens expand around and beyond. Sadly, before it was completed, the family had to mourn the loss of their matriarch founder, Kathy Hornbaker, whose influence is evidenced throughout the gardens as a lasting testament.



The Barn is upscale on the inside while retaining a rustic look on the outside to blend into the gardens. Events often combine the use of The Barn and the gardens for a remarkable experience.



As each of the Hornbaker children, Dave, Molly and their older sister Sarah married their spouses in separate ceremonies at Hornbaker Gardens, they drew a lot of enjoyment and purpose in knowing they had created a beautiful space that brings joy to others. They look forward to each wedding held in the same space as their own, knowing the couple will begin their future in a peaceful and natural environment, with a sense of relaxation and connection with the outdoors. They love seeing the wedding parties come down to the beautiful grounds and display gardens for photos.

In 2017, sidewalks and a patio were added. In honor of Kathy, they created a Children's Garden. The Children's Garden is a child's plays-cape, designed for open-ended, screen-free play time. It features a natural sand play area along the stream with tools and toys for building and an exploring tunnel tucked into the hillside. Children can duck into Kathy's Kitchen, a cozy playhouse that sparks imagination, all while their parents are touring the gardens and selecting plants for their own projects. The founders of Hornbaker Gardens believe that nature-based play helps build confidence, creativity and a deeper connection to the world around us.



The Children's Garden is a section added in memory of Kathy Hornbaker, the founding matriarch of the gardens. The playhouse bears her name.



Below, plants and customers alike often benefit with a break from the hot summer sun. Structures are built above the tables to support shade cloths with the correct percentage of sun protection for the variety underneath.



Below, as Dave is the Creative Director for Hornbaker Gardens, he often crafts structures utilizing Osage Orange (*Maclura pomifera*) branches, which he believes is one of the best materials for outdoor structures. The railings along the walkways are also made from it due to its durability and rot-resistant qualities, as well as its beauty. The structures carry a piece of the local landscape into the gardens.



Major garden renovations were again the focus in 2017, updating and expanding to eventually include a new shade structure with more annual's space, Purple Martin houses to attract wildlife to the prairie and an Osage orange pergola! Handrails and pavement have also been added throughout many of the areas to increase accessibility.

Many events are held at Hornbaker Gardens and of course, with the beautiful Hosta Ravine, the American Hosta Society could not be kept out! As early as 1998, the AHS convention has toured the gardens. Many local societies tour frequently, including those of which Hornbaker Gardens is a member - the CIHS, MRHS and NIHS. In 2025, the AHS convention visited again, with Hornbaker Gardens hosting a full dinner event in the gardens!

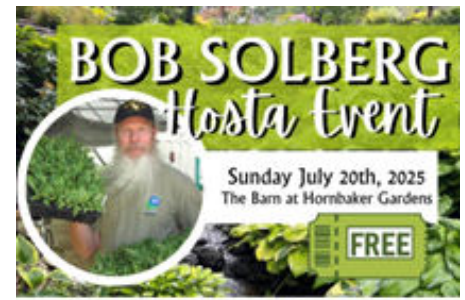
Every September, Hornbaker Gardens hosts Artisan Market, a fun-filled day with more than 30 regional artists, food trucks, baked goods, music, beer and wine, and a community mural. The artists set up booths on the paved "parkway" amongst the gardens to offer their art and wares to strolling guests. Whenever the opportunity is presented, Hornbaker Gardens hosts gardening events and speakers such as the hosta legend Bob Solberg as he educates visitors and offers brand-new varieties for sale. The second weekend in June is always their spring annual Open House and is one of the best times to visit not only for the fresh spring gardens, but for the open house deals offered too!



Left, visitors enjoy walking the gardens, especially the Hosta Ravine.



The annual Artisan Market is a crowd magnet that many eagerly anticipate.



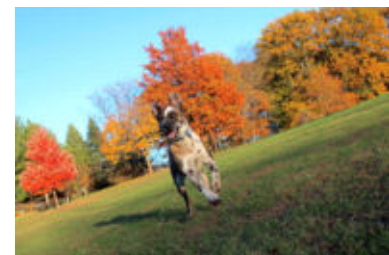
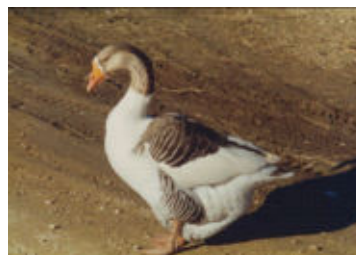
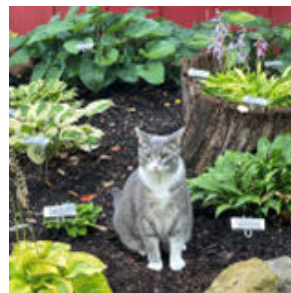
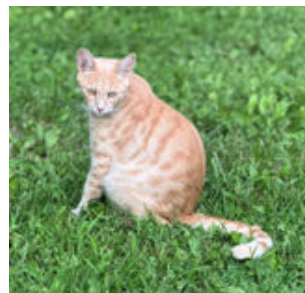
Learn More or Register Now at hornbakergardens.com/events or scan the QR Code with your smartphone camera

Schedule:

- Garden Center Open 9am-2pm
- Meet and Greet with Bob in the Garden Center 9:30-10:30am
- Bob's Presentation in The Barn at Hornbaker Gardens 11am
- \$2 off all Hostas this day only



Molly fondly recalls how customers have enjoyed their farm animals over the years. Early on, they had a few geese that were usually fenced in, but that didn't stop them from causing the occasional passerby to jump when their outstretched necks reached for something to nip at! There have always been a few farm cats roaming the grounds, climbing trees, antagonizing birds, and seeking attention from anyone willing to pet them. Lastly, there have been the beloved farm dogs, from Rif to Ozzie to KC, who each had their "besties" amongst the staff and gave many children and adults alike something other than plants to look forward to on their visit.



Rich and Kathy started the dream that became Hornbaker Gardens, Inc., and the second generation of their family has continued its operations with Rich Hornbaker and his children Dave Hornbaker and Molly Blogg currently keeping the dream alive. What once was a small family garden has become a large full-time operation with many employees necessary to keep things operating. They employ approximately 25 employees and are currently hiring this year's seasonal help. Rich, Dave and Molly are the driving force behind all decisions, renovations and additions, with Molly being the CEO and general manager. Dave holds a degree in horticulture from the University of Illinois, and he is now responsible for the renovations, maintenance and care of the display gardens. Rich still lives in the home on the property, so the gardens he started nearly 40 years ago

blend into the display gardens. Dave and Molly have gardens of their own to tend at their homes, but they spend the majority of their days tending and growing the business. Molly has three sons and Dave has a son and a daughter, providing plenty of candidates to keep their heritage alive in the future. Hornbaker Gardens holds an Illinois Nursery Certificate, and they are inspected regularly by the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Though they grow nearly 600 varieties of hostas in their gardens, only 400 varieties are offered for sale. All the plants sold through the nursery are potted for sale. The majority of them are received as tissue culture liners directly from certified labs and have never been planted in the ground. This method lessens the possibility for the spread of pests and disease such as Hosta Virus X. Before a hosta from the display gardens is propagated for sale, it is tested for HVX. Should any hosta display HVX symptoms, it is tested and any variety testing positive is destroyed along with all others with that name. Plants are sourced only from suppliers that have protocols in place to prevent the spread of disease. Every spring, they spray to prevent slug infestation.

Maintaining the display gardens is a full-time job itself, but there is also a business to run that includes The Shop and The Barn! This keeps everyone busy throughout the year, leaving little time for hobbies. Gardening is their life. During the winter months while the gardens are dormant, The Barn is still open for business. They spend time indoors propagating plants and ordering plants and supplies for the next season. Inventories require updating and events with advertising are planned. As long as the weather cooperates, some chores can be tackled outdoors. Rich is enjoying semi-retirement, happily allowing his children to take the reins. Right now, they are busy preparing for an exciting new gardening season. Hornbaker Gardens is scheduled to re-open this year on Friday, April 10, 2026, and they will be offering an incredible lineup of more than 150 new varieties of trees and shrubs! This is in addition to the hundreds of varieties already offered in each plant category.

Hornbaker Gardens has a website with photos of everything they grow in the display gardens, and everything they offer for sale in the nursery, with prices listed. They offer separate listings for native plants, should that be your focus, making it easier for new gardeners wishing to include more native plants in their landscapes, which is what Hornbaker Gardens encourages. Furthermore, plants are divided into categories by type, making the site easy to navigate. There is a separate section featuring everything for sale in The Shop, and yet another page for The Barn. They also maintain active Facebook pages, which are updated regularly with upcoming events and photos. Bare root shipping is available for hostas and daylilies, via USPS in the continental USA. Everything else must be purchased on site.

Hornbaker Gardens offers curbside pick-up and local delivery!

Click the links below for more information.

To view a short introductory video:

[https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=3e9ef65a8577b35b&biw=430&bih=729&kgmid=%2Fg%2F1tjl6h3b&q=Hornbaker%20Gardens%2C%20Inc.&shndl=30&source=sh%2Fx%2Floc%2fact%2Fm4%2F3](https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=3e9ef65a8577b35b&biw=430&bih=729&kgmid=%2Fg%2F1tjl6h3b&q=Hornbaker%20Gardens%2C%20Inc.&shndl=30&source=sh%2Fx%2Floc%2Fact%2Fm4%2F3)

Hornbaker Gardens (and The Shop) website:

[Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. - Products](#)

To order hostas and daylilies shipped to your door:

[Online Shop | Hornbaker Gardens, Inc.](#)

The Barn website:

[The Barn at Hornbaker Gardens | Four-Season Event Center](#)

Hornbaker Gardens Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1Dtf2NVQ5t/?mibextid=wwXIfr>



Rich Hornbaker



Above, the entrance planting was designed by Jane Morris, a garden designer employed by Hornbaker Gardens for years. To honor her contributions, they have named the entrance garden The Jan Morris Pollinator Paradise. Read more about it here:

[The Jane Morris Pollinator Paradise at Hornbaker Gardens](#)



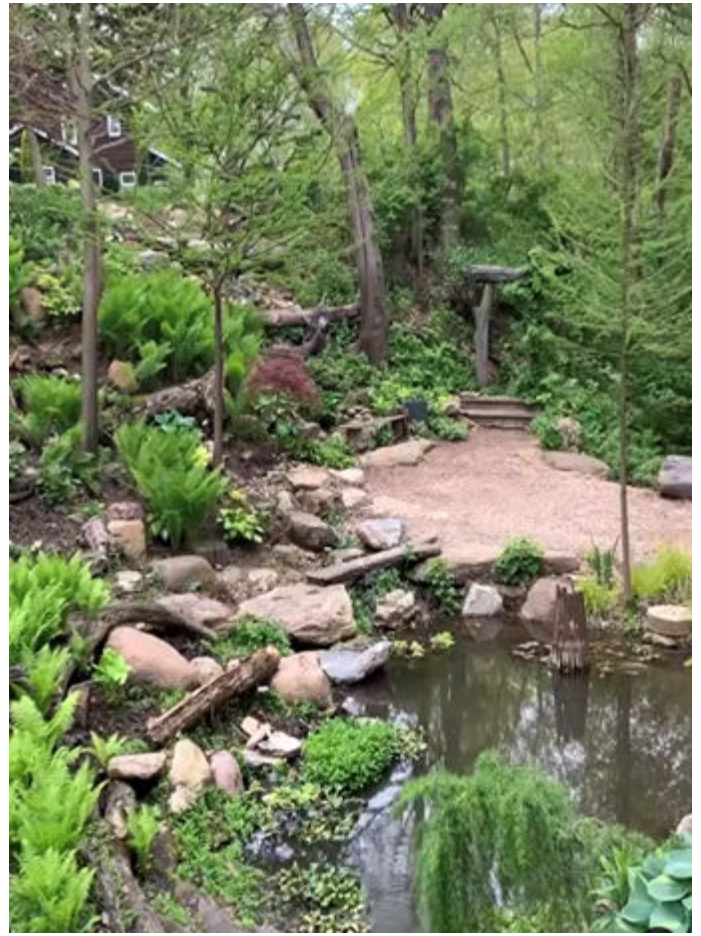
As a new gardening year begins, Hornbaker Gardens receives numerous deliveries of fresh plants, ready to be selected and planted in your garden. New varieties are added every year, to be offered alongside the stock propagated and maintained at the nursery.



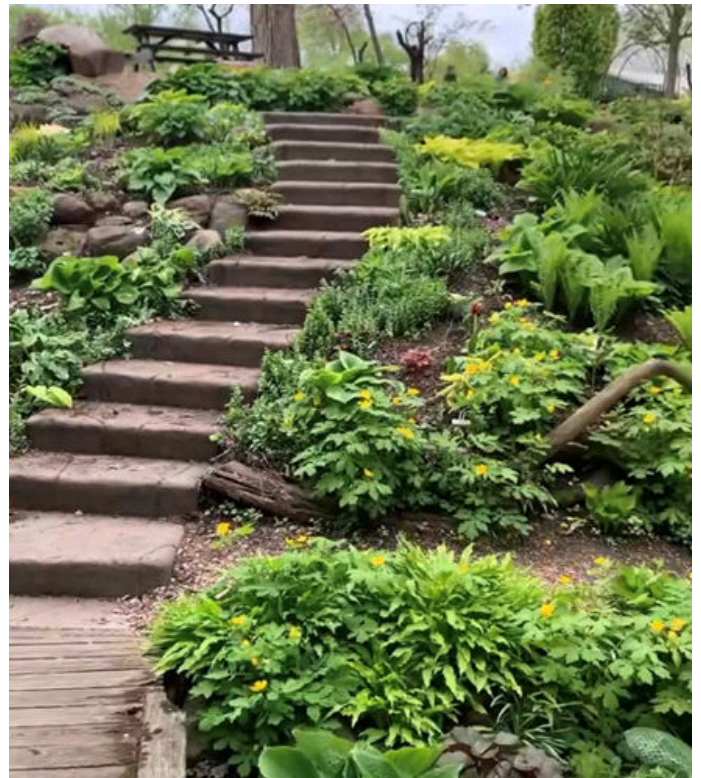
Above, Dave Hornbaker with KC. Above right, founder Rich Hornbaker with his daughter Molly Blogg, who is now the CEO and general manager of the business.

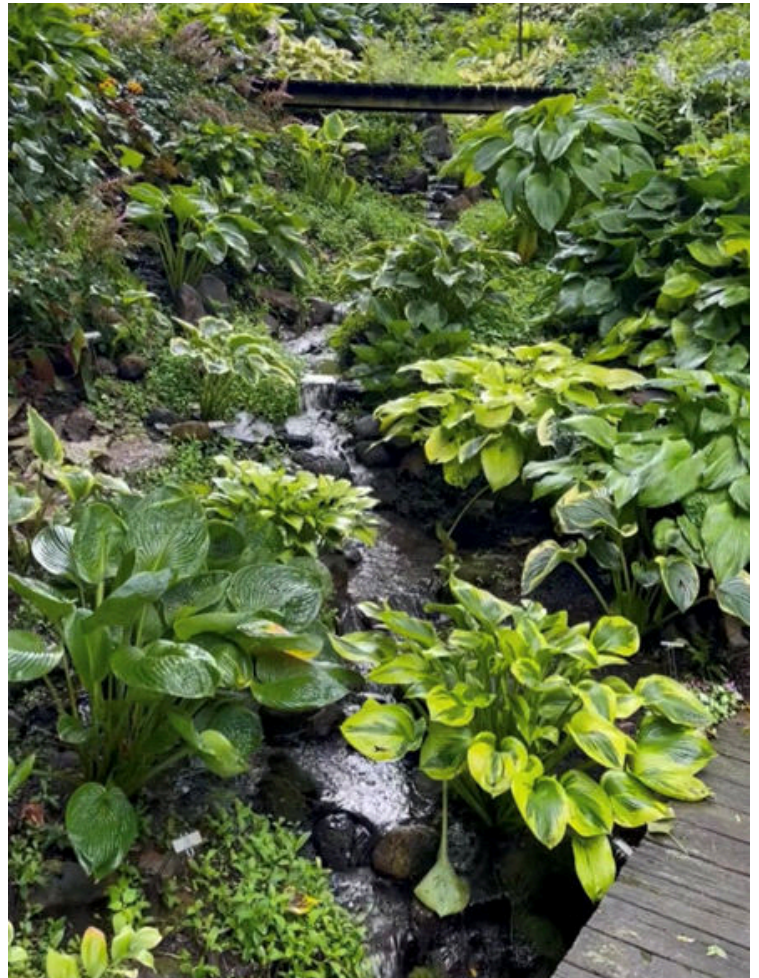
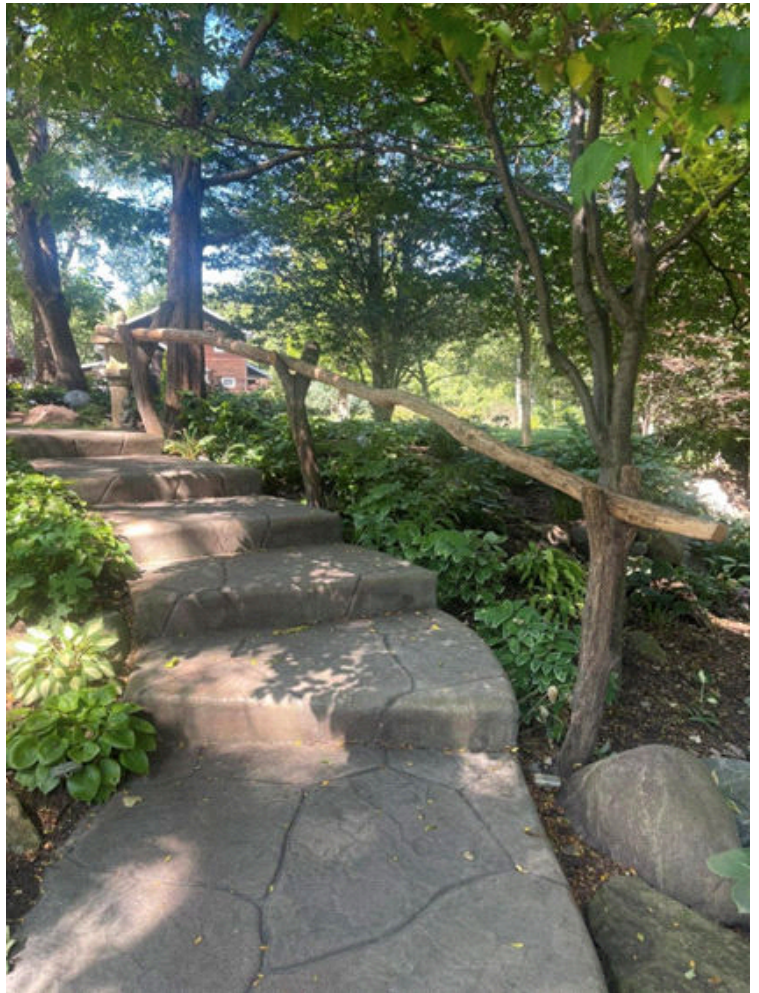
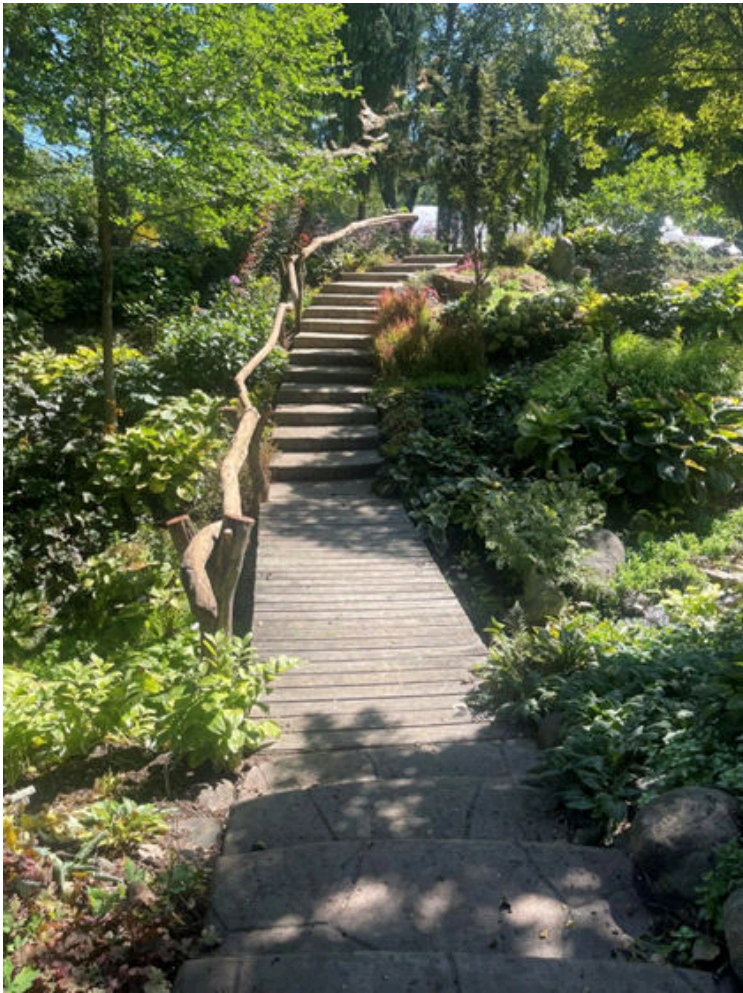


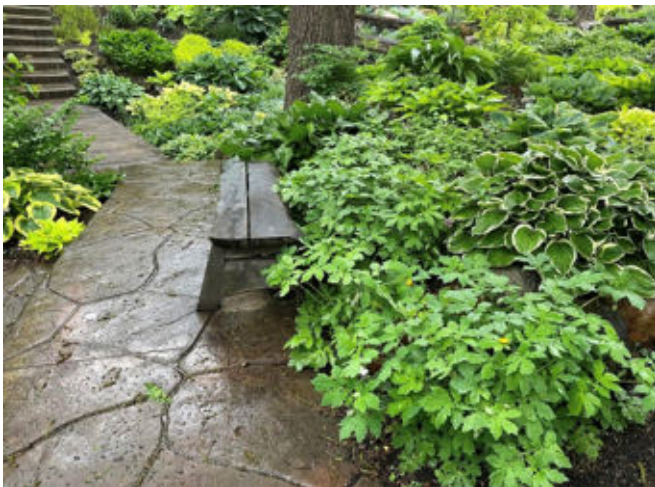
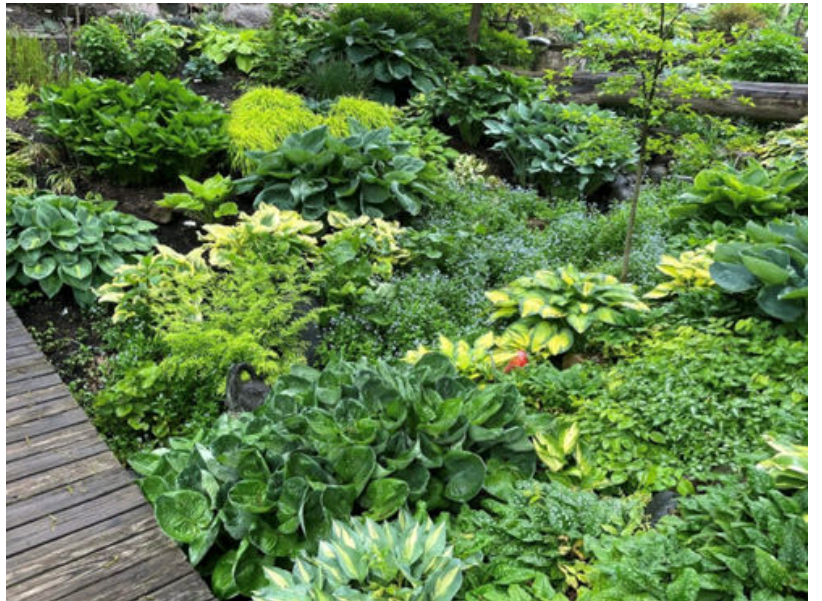
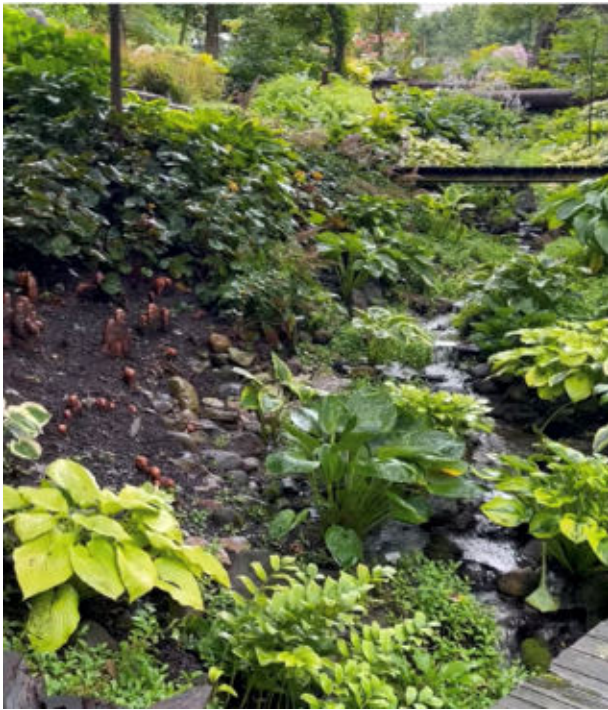
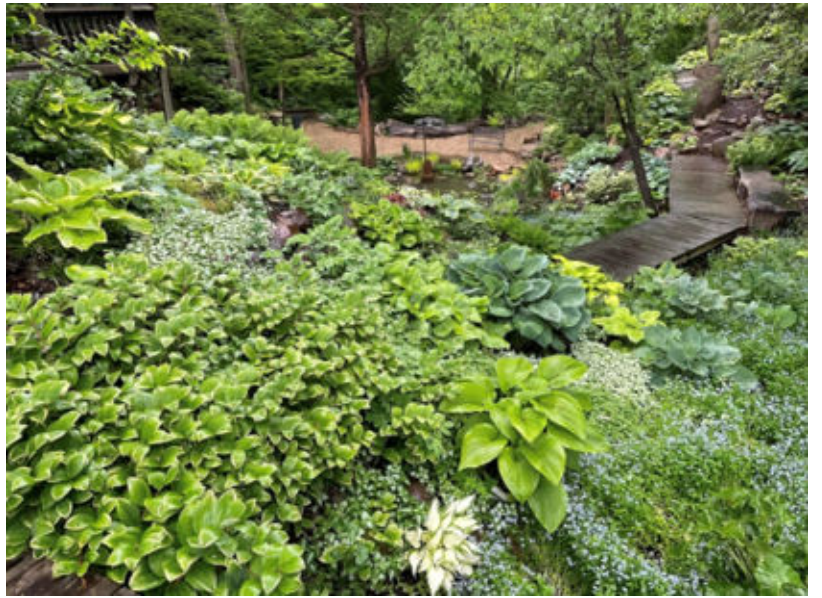
The late Kathy Hornbaker.

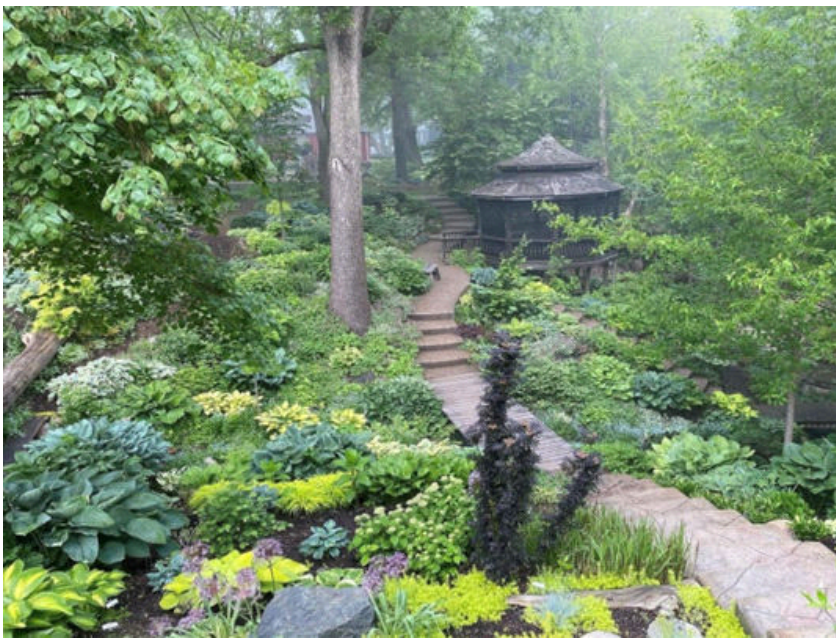


The Hosta Ravine was one of the first display gardens Rich designed and created, and it has received many upgrades over the years to make it more easily accessible and enjoyable.



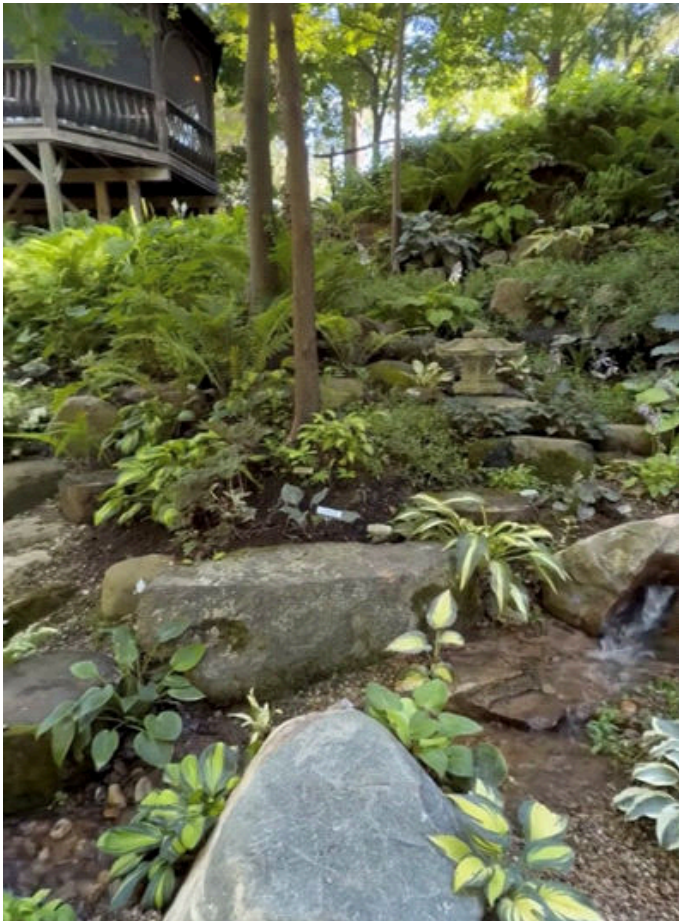


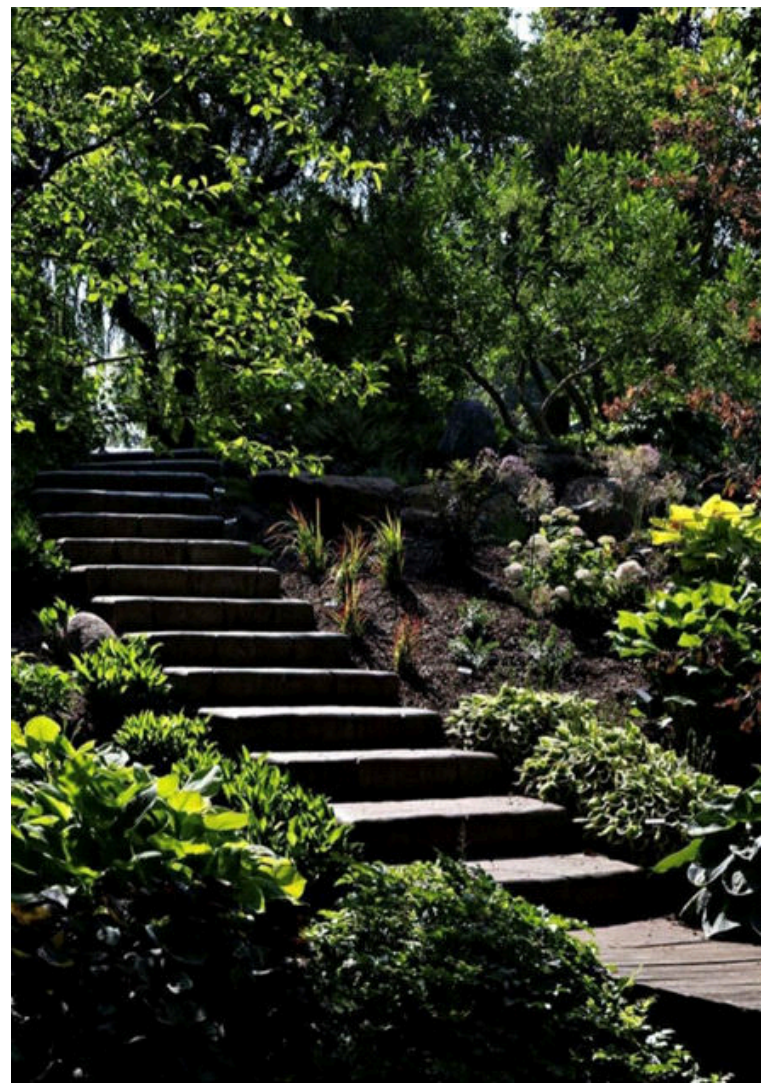


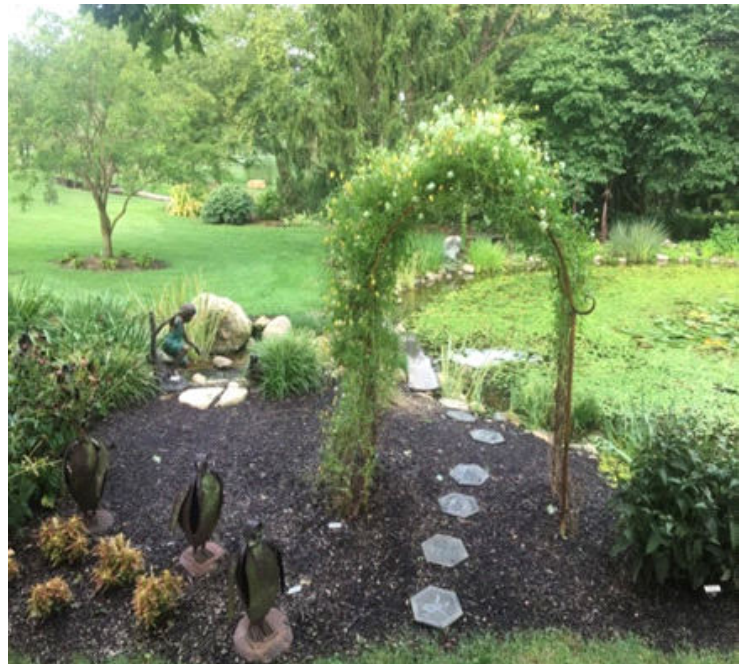


Most of the hostas planted throughout the Hosta Ravine are sold in the nursery. For photos of the hostas available for sale, please visit the website to find photographs of individual varieties with their names. Most of the hostas planted throughout the Hosta Ravine are sold in the nursery. For photos of the hostas available for sale, please visit the website to find photographs of individual varieties with their names.

[Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. - Products](#)



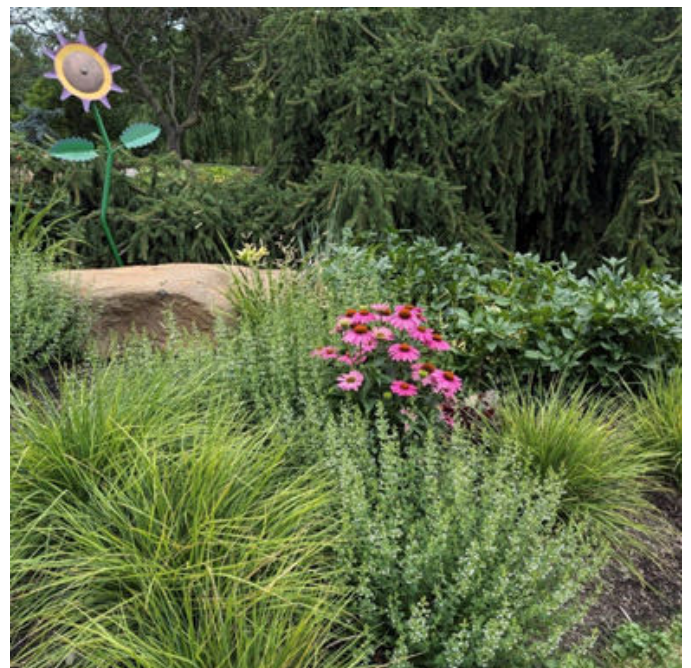






The native prairie was sown over a 2.5-acre field and is allowed to flourish naturally.

Native plants promote biodiversity, nourish local wildlife and conserve water by thriving in our natural environment.

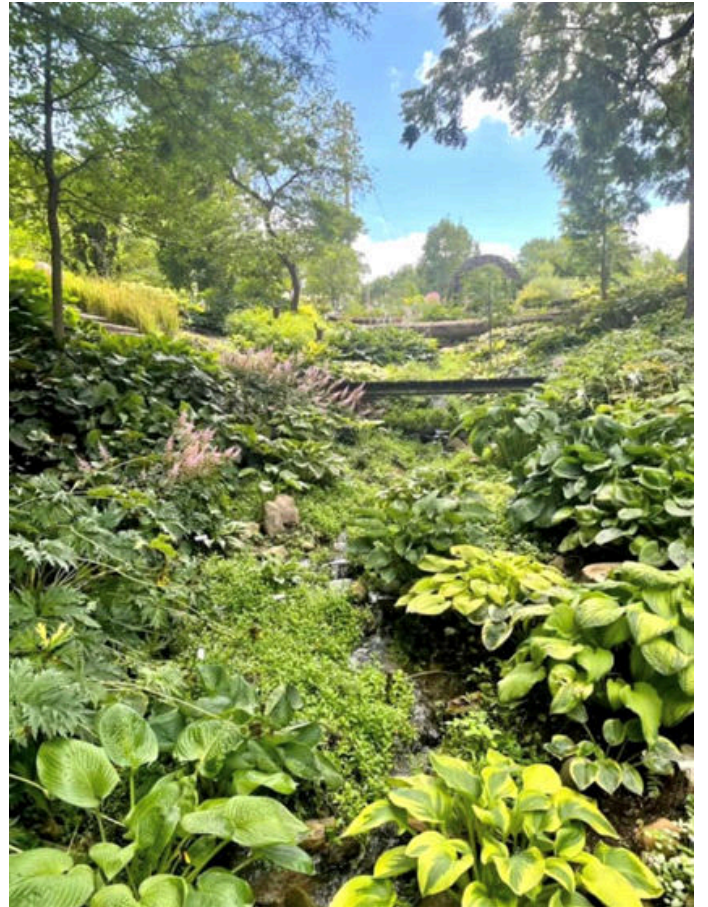
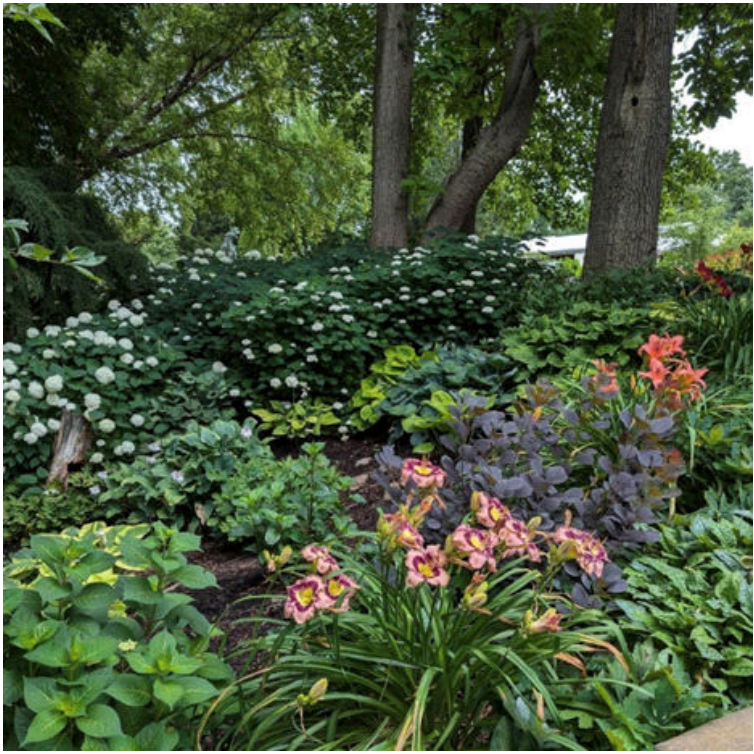


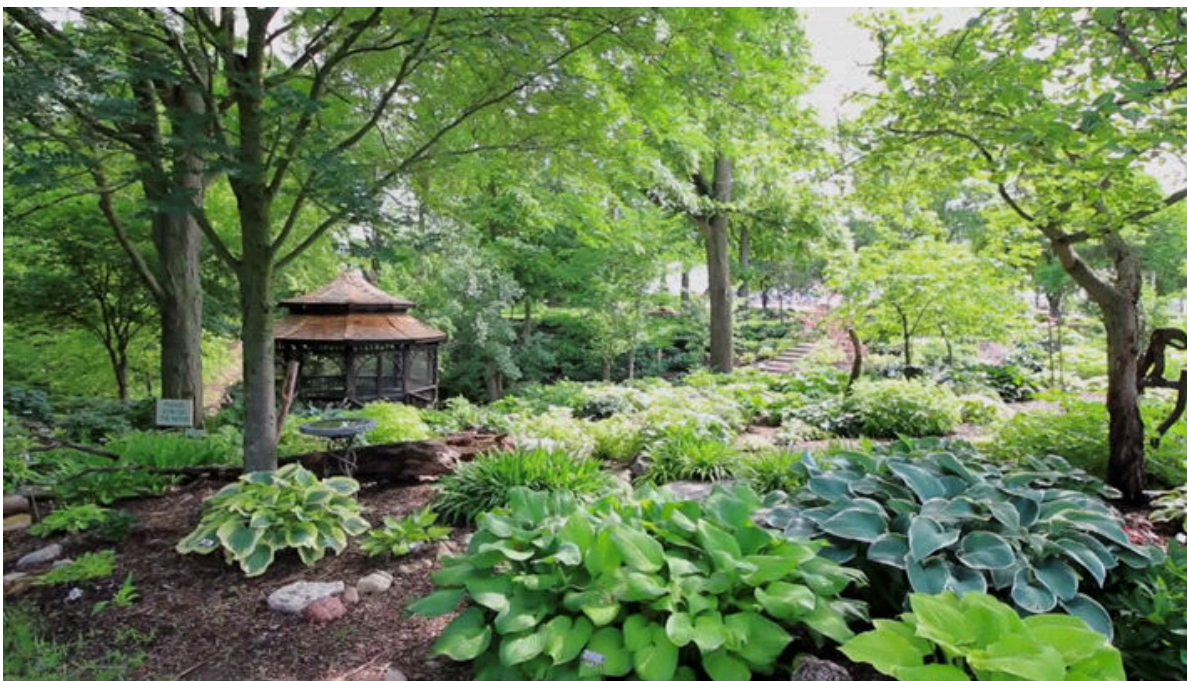
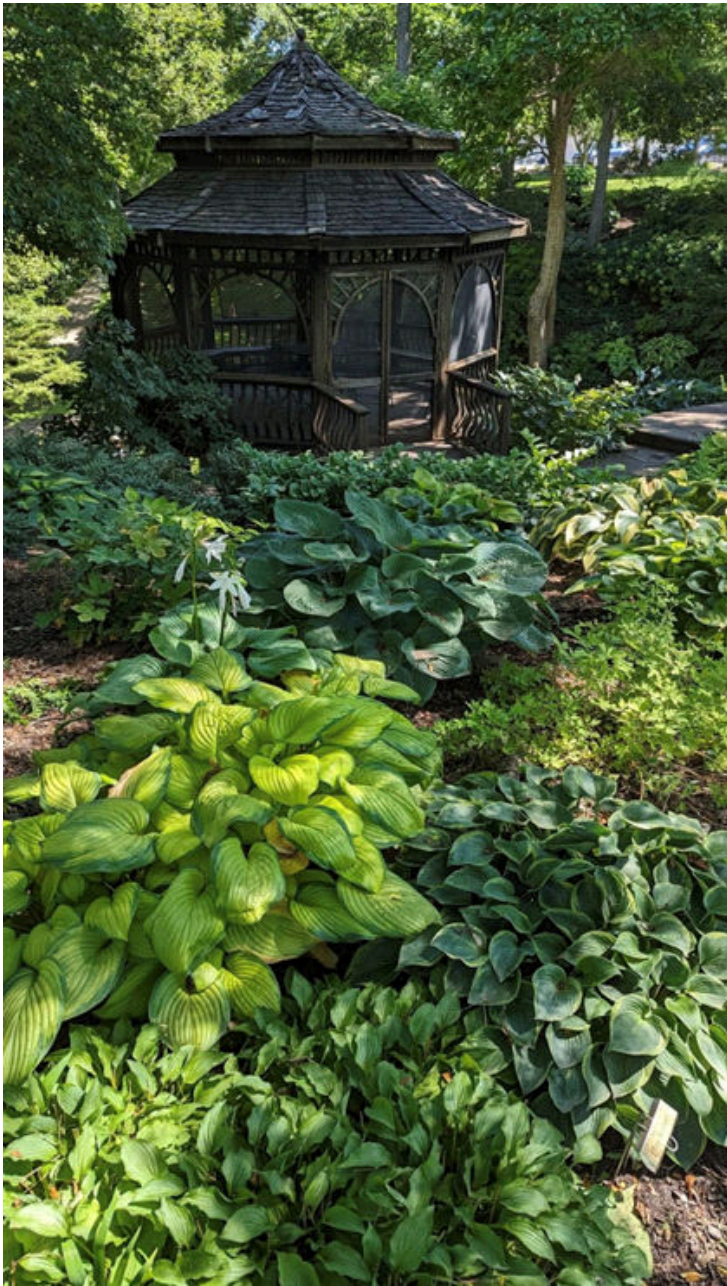


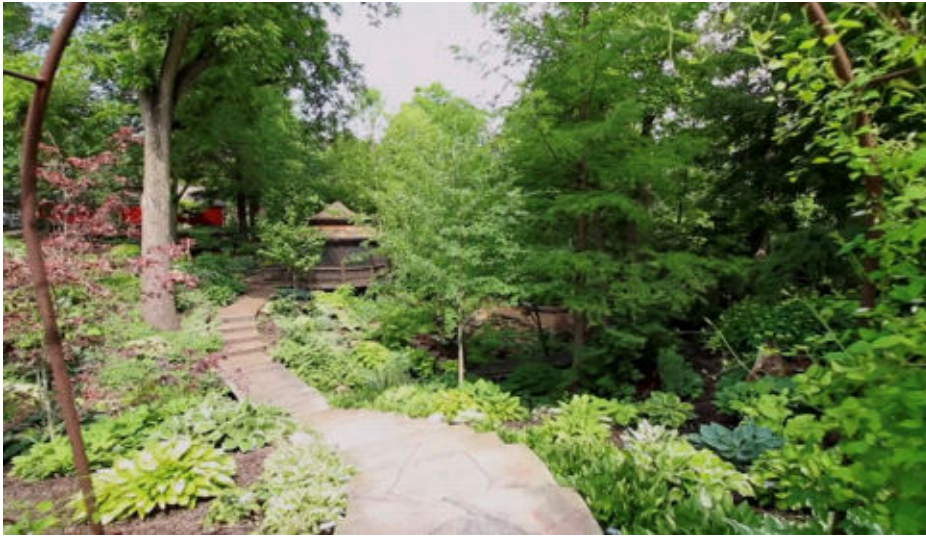
What a fabulous setting to catch the sun's last rays of the day!

A late day visit is worth it to catch these scenes in photographs.

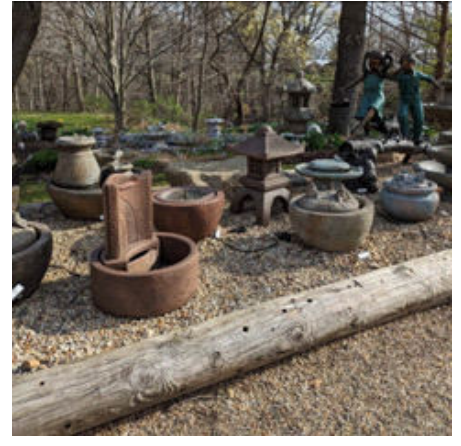


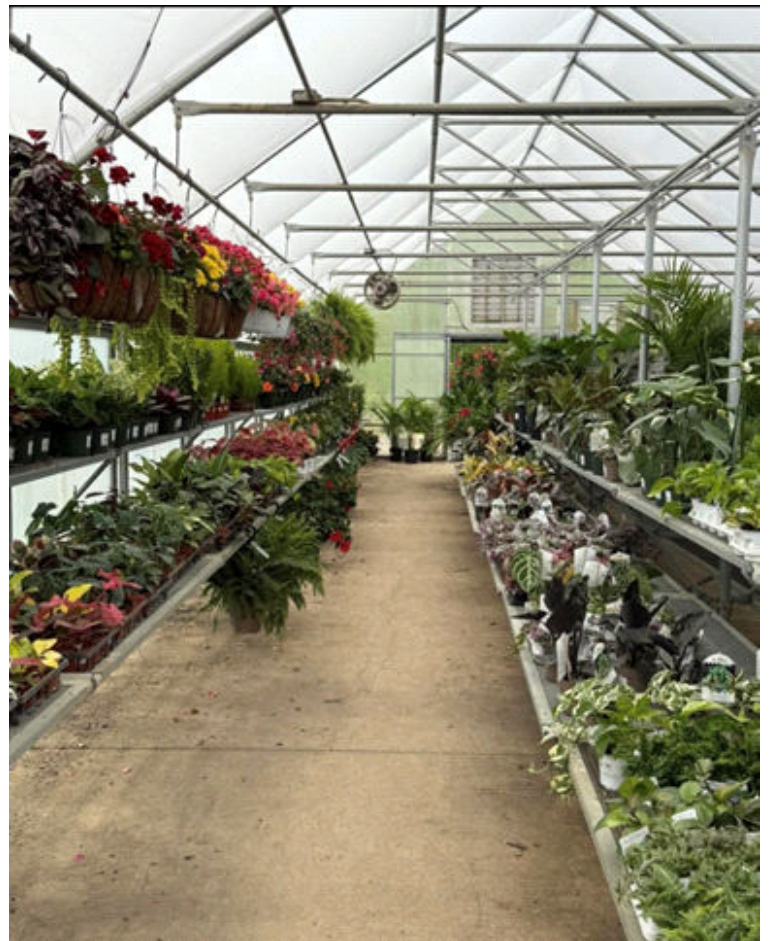






Pottery and other garden adornments that are scattered throughout the walkways are for sale, and their placement offers an idea of what it might look like in your own garden.











Sections of the sales area are clearly labeled with contents so you can easily locate the type of plant you are seeking.





At the close of each season, the potted hostas are stacked closely in a covered greenhouse and then covered with a blanket for the winter. Any tender potted plants that are going to be overwintered are placed in the heated greenhouses.

Below and right, potted hostas remain in the greenhouse each spring to unfurl naturally until danger of frost has passed and they can be placed on the sales tables.






HORNBAKER GARDENS, Inc.
Princeton, Illinois

Open House & Hosta Walk
June 8 — 8 am to 5 pm
June 9 — 8 am to 5 pm
June 10 — Noon to 5 pm

**Daily Door Prizes
Lots of Special Pricing
Refreshments
Plain air artists painting in the gardens**

[hornbakergardens.com](https://www.hornbakergardens.com)



Prom Photos

**We are Open
Saturday 8am-5pm
Prom Photos in the Gardens
are Welcomed**

2025 Open House Specials June 13, 14, & 15th
Friday & Saturday 8am-5pm, Sunday 12pm-5pm
Special pricing available at Garden Center only

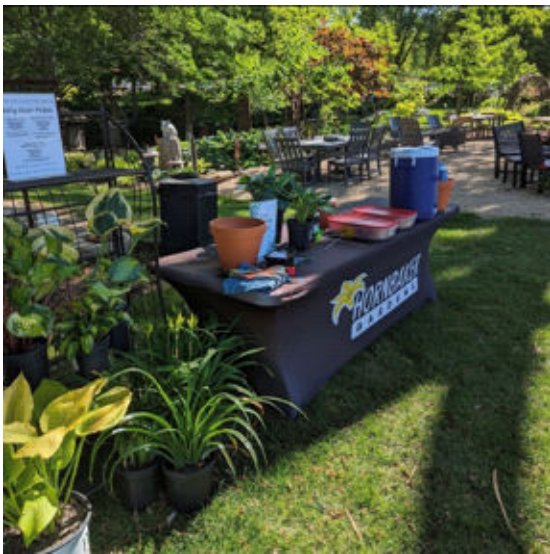
50% OFF
• All Annuals
• Hanging Baskets
• Topiary
• Conifer Containers
• Fresh including fresh items & shrubs
• Veggies & Herbs
• Houseplants
• Succulents
• Pile Plants
• Select Pottery
• Beached Pots

30% OFF
• Aquatic Plants
• Pottery

10% OFF
Garden & Stone
• Benches
• Lattices
• Arbors
• Statues
• Fountains
• Fences
• Birdbaths

Art Installation: June 13th-September 2025
• Outdoor Art & a modern sculpture garden created by Tom Sagers for Horizon Hotel in the heart of the Hyde Park.

For more details follow us on Facebook or visit www.hornbakergardens.com



Throughout the gardening year, there are many events that attract customers and artists to the gardens. Guided tours, demonstrated artistic activities, special sales and guest speakers are advertised to attract visitors.

OPEN HOUSE

Sale Hostas

| Mini | Small | Medium | Large | Giant |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Blue Bird (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arroyo (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Albatross (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) |
| Blue Bird (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arroyo (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Albatross (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) |
| Blue Bird (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arroyo (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Albatross (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) | Arctic (Reg. \$12.00 Sale \$10.00) |

Daily Hosta Walks Check out our favorite hostas in our Shade Gardens and Hosta Ravine. Those with mobility limitations can view the ravine from above. Meet in the Garden Center- Friday and Saturday at 10am.

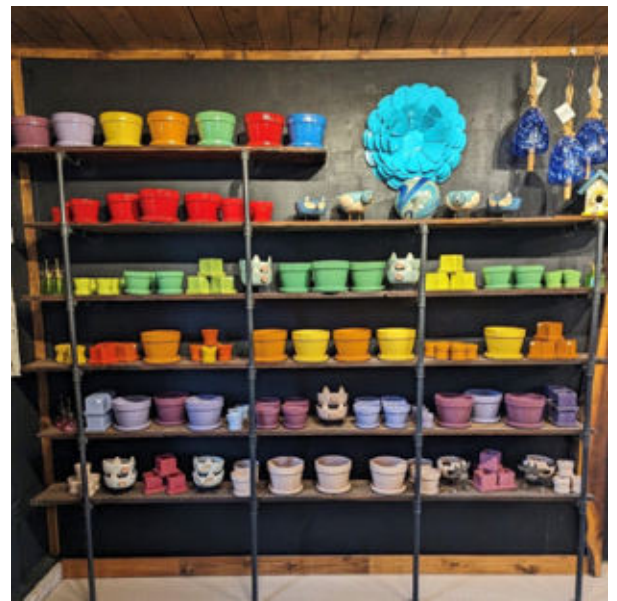
REGISTER NOW

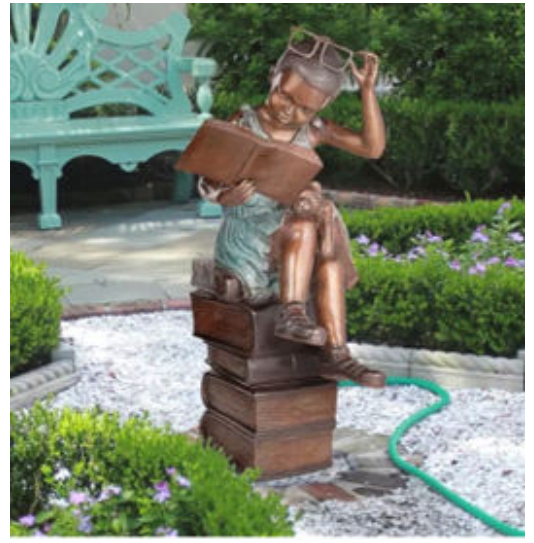
Sessions begin this week!
Three Sessions from 9-11am
• June 15th - Sensory Hike
• July 16th - Art in the Wild
• July 23rd - Art in the Wild

Outdoor Expeditions with Dave & Laura Hornbaker

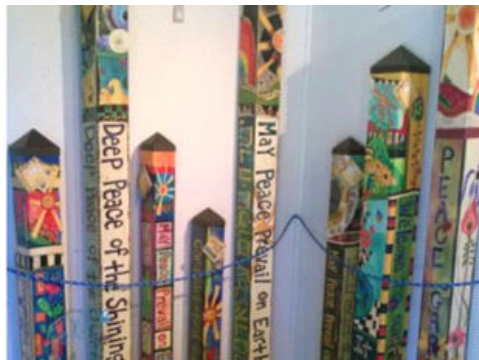
HORNBAKER GARDENS





The Shop is the hub of the business, where supplies are stored and sold, and where you visit to select the finishing touches for your garden. Staff is on hand to assist and guide you in the right direction, or to arrange for delivery of your purchases, if you'd like.



This is a sampling of some of the items found for sale inside The Shop.

Hornbaker Gardens is much more than just hostas! There's something for every member of the family!



Check out these events that are planned for 2026, beginning with opening day on Friday, April 10, 2026. Events continue until closing day, October 10, 2026.

Business hours are Monday through Saturday 8am – 5pm and Sundays 12 noon – 5 pm.

22937 County Rd 1140 N, Princeton, Illinois 61356

815-659-3282 mail@hornbakergardens.com



Sat, Apr 18 at 10AM EDT
Houseplant Help Desk Interested



Sat, Apr 25 at 11AM EDT
Wild about Willow - Create Your Own Living Sculpture Interested



Sat, May 2 at 11AM EDT
Repot & Refresh: A Houseplant Styling Bar Interested

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Artisan Market at Hornbaker Gardens Princeton, IL
Saturday, September 19, 2026
10am to 4pm

Seeking local and regional fine artists, 18 and older, of varied disciplines for the 12th annual Artisan Market at Hornbaker Gardens.

Get the details and submit at hornbakergardens.com

Submission deadline: Monday, March 2nd

hornbakergardens.com
Artisan Market | Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. Learn more



Sat, May 9 at 11AM EDT
Thumbprint Treasures: Mother's Day Terracotta Pots Interested



Sat, May 16 at 11AM EDT
Spring Container Porch Pots Interested



Sat, May 9 at 2PM EDT
Sound Healing in the Gardens Interested



Sat, May 16 at 11AM EDT
Five Points Apiculture - Inside the Hive; an introduction to beekeeping Interested



Sat, May 23 at 11AM EDT
Prairie in a Pot Butterfly Garden with Ellen Starr Interested



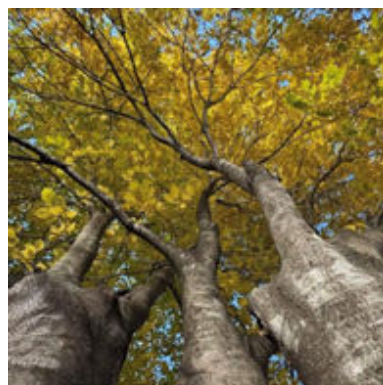
Sat, May 23 at 11AM EDT
Year Round Porch pots with Carol Interested



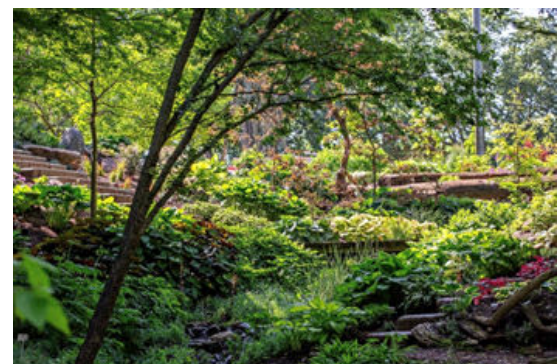
Sat, May 30 at 11AM EDT
Leaf Casting "Make & Take" with Ella Maxwell Interested



Sat, Jun 13 at 11AM EDT
Easy Worm Composting Interested



Sat, Jun 6 at 8AM EDT
Awaken Your Curious Spirit - Birds, Plants, and a Living Landscape Interested



Fri, Jun 12 - Jun 14
Open House and Hosta Walk Interested



In just one short year from now, Hornbaker Gardens, Inc. will be celebrating its 40th year in business!

If you enjoyed the photographic journey that you just experienced and would like to visit, the garden gates are open!

If you can't make it this year, plan to attend the 40th Anniversary events that are sure to be epic!



If you would like to see your hosta business featured in this column, free of charge, please contact Gail Russo at Russo4@comcast.net for the application questionnaire. International vendors are welcome to be featured, but only if you ship to the USA. If you do not ship but have lovely display gardens, consider applying to be featured in the "Welcome to my Garden" column of this newsletter instead. You must communicate in English.

All photos are courteous of Hornbaker Gardens



And In Other Hosta News . . .

Dr. Robert Olson Memorial Plant



Bob Olson served in many roles for both the American Hosta Society and the Midwest Regional Hosta Society. After his passing several years ago, it was determined that a memorial plant be produced with the proceeds of the sale of the plant going to pay for memberships in the American Hosta Society (AHS) or the Midwest Regional Hosta Society (MRHS).

Memberships for younger members was always a priority of Bob's, as he knew that the future of the hosta societies would rest in the hands of younger members. Your purchase of this plant will provide a complimentary membership in one or both organizations for younger members. Please indicate your preference below.

Hosta 'Bob Olson' was registered by Herb and Dorothy Benedict in 1995. This small hosta from Dr. Benedict was named after Bob Olson, a past president of the AHS. It has long dark green leaves with a creamy-white margin that ripples slightly. The plant has good substance and seems to do well in a location with morning sun. It has a medium-lavender bell-shaped flower. The mature plant is about 6 inches tall and spreads to a width of about 12 inches.

To purchase this plant, fill in the form below or call 309-678-4119 with a credit card. **Plants will ship Spring, 2026.** The cost of \$25.00 includes shipping. Plants can only be shipped to locations in the United States.

Jack Barta Memorial Plant



Jack Barta was a well-known hosta vendor who was always found at both the American Hosta Society (AHS) and Midwest Regional Hosta Society (MRHS) Conventions. He owned and operated Jack's Hostas in Wisconsin for many years. Jack was also a frequent speaker at local and regional hosta clubs.

Jack was a retired high school band director, who took many of his bands to college bowl parades and bowl games over the years. After Jack passed away several years ago, it was decided to produce a tribute plant as a memorial to Jack.

Memberships for younger members was always a priority of Jack's, as he knew that the future of the hosta societies would rest in the hands of younger members. Your purchase of this plant will provide a complimentary membership in one or both organizations for younger members. Please indicate your preference below.

Don Dean, an award-winning hybridizer from Minnesota, offered to donate this plant, and it was subsequently named by Becky Micheletti, giving it a fitting name to honor a band director. **Hosta 'Strike Up the Band'** was registered in 2022. At maturity, it is 11 inches tall by 33 inches wide. It has intense blue green foliage with feathered .25 to .5 inch wide, yellow, slightly rippled margins; glaucous bloom on top; glaucous bloom underneath; leaves are moderately twisted and folded overall.

To purchase this plant, fill in the form below or call 309-678-4119 with a credit card. **Plants will ship Spring, 2026.** The cost of \$25.00 includes shipping. Plants can only be shipped to locations in the United States.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

PURCHASE ONE FOR \$25.00 OR PURCHASE BOTH FOR \$45.00. Plants will ship in early May, 2026.
H. 'Bob Olson' \$25 _____ H. 'Strike Up the Band' \$25 _____ Both Plants \$45 _____

Please donate my purchase toward memberships in:
AHS _____ MRHS _____ Both Organizations _____

Mail this form with your payment to:
Memorial Hosta Plants P O Box 7407 Villa Park, IL 60181-7407

2026 AHS Convention

Hosted by the Central Ohio Hosta Society

Buckeye Hosta Fever



**Join us in the Heart of Ohio for Buckeye Hosta Fever
in Dublin OH (a suburb of Columbus).**

Registration for the convention is limited to 350 participants. Register early to reserve your place! Download registration form at AmericanHostaSociety.org

All the events will be there: Hosta Show, educational presentations, live auction, garden tours, convention plant, vendors, and evening hosta-tality.

Registration information available soon on the AHS Convention Website (HostaConvention.org).

Buckeye Hosta Fever

2026 AHS NATIONAL CONVENTION



June 10-13, 2026 – Dublin, Ohio
Embassy Suites by Hilton, 5100 Upper Metro Place, Dublin, OH 43017

HOSTED BY THE CENTRAL OHIO HOSTA SOCIETY (COHS)

Make hotel reservations by using the link at the AHS convention website:
www.Hostaconvention.org beginning June 30, 2025

REGISTRATION DETAILS (Please print clearly – ONE attendee per form)

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Name: | Preferred Name on Badge: |
| Address: | City, State, Zip Code: |
| Phone: | Email: |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| STANDARD REGISTRATION if received by 5/15/26 (Thurs. BBQ dinner included) | \$235 | |
| LATE REGISTRATION if received after 5/15/26 (Thurs. BBQ dinner included) | \$260 | |
| Friday & Saturday Banquet COMPANION MEAL ONLY or Vendors Meals (Registration includes your Banquet meals. This is only if you are bringing a guest with you) | \$105 | \$ |
| GARDEN TOUR BUS Includes bus fee and box lunches for Friday & Saturday **Bus seats limited to 160 attendees** Box lunches for Tour Bus Riders ONLY – Lunch on your own for self-drive Friday – Choose One <input type="checkbox"/> Deli Ham <input type="checkbox"/> Deli Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan Wrap Saturday – Choose One <input type="checkbox"/> Deli Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Deli Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan Wrap | \$110 | \$ |
| 2026 Convention T-Shirt - Unisex Sizes <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> 2XL | \$20 | \$ |
| CANCELLATION POLICY: <i>Registrar must receive written request by: April 2, 2026 (100% refund); received by May 1, 2026 (50% refund); NO refund after May 1, 2026.</i> | Total Due → | \$ |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Bone-in Pork Chop <input type="checkbox"/> Beef Tips with Gorgonzola <input type="checkbox"/> Ratatouille (vegan) | Saturday Banquet Meal Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Salmon <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Marsala <input type="checkbox"/> Eggplant Parmesan (vegetarian) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Check Payable to:
Buckeye Hosta Fever
MAIL PAYMENT AND FORM TO:
Debi Gerrick, Registrar
1638 Doone Road,
Upper Arlington, OH 43221

List any special dietary restrictions/allergies:

Hosta Show: Please check if you wish to
 Judge Clerk
 Plan # _____ entries in Hosta Leaf Show (Limit 20)
Ed Elslager Seedling Competition:
 Plan # _____ entries in Seedling Competition (Limit 10)
 \$5 per seedling entry fee paid at convention
 Rules & Regulations available at
Hostaconvention.org

Friday night auction
 I plan to donate _____ items for the auction

I am willing to volunteer during the convention
 ___ YES ___ NO

Hosta Judges Clinics: I will attend ___ Clinic I ___ Clinic II ___ Clinic III | Need Judges Handbook ___
 (\$15 payable at Clinic)

Registration is limited to 350 participants. Questions? – contact Debi Gerrick at:
debigerrick@gmail.com or (614) 205-8187



Your Indiana Hosta friends are excited
to invite you to the
AHS National Convention

June 9–12, 2027

Hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society

Join us in Plainfield, Indiana
just minutes from the Indianapolis International Airport
as we celebrate:

Hostas • Music • Friends

Use the QR code to register online
or visit HostaConvention.org to
download the registration form.



*If you sign-up during the
2026 Buckeye Hosta Fever
Convention, you will receive
a one-time 2027 Indy
Convention Gift!*

You asked for more gardens – and we're
delivering! Plus, get ready for:

- Spectacular Hosta Show
- Dynamic Speakers to inspire and educate
- Live & Silent Auctions full of treasures
- Fabulous Vendors with must-have finds
- Evening Hospitality with friends old & new
- Uplifting Music to set the mood



And the 2027 Convention Gift:

Hosta 'Indiana Stardust'

*Pictured with Indiana University life-size bronze of
composer Hoagy Carmichael at his grand piano.*



And In Regional News . . .

Dixie Regional Hosta Convention



Cool Leaves and Warm Welcome!

SAVE THE DATE

Hosted by the Hosta Society of North Alabama

May 29 - May 30, 2026
Huntsville, Alabama

Register at <https://alabamahostas.weebly.com>

Email: alabamahostas@gmail.com

Join us for a Golden Celebration in Madison, WI.
We are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the
Midwest Regional Hosta Society.



July 9-10-11 2026
Sheraton Madison Hotel



The 2026 convention plant, grown by Don Dean, has been named Golden Celebration. It's a small/medium bright yellow hosta. The perfect name for a perfect celebration.

2026 MRHS 50th Anniversary Celebration Convention REGISTRATION FORM



July 9-11, 2026 – Madison, Wisconsin

Madison Marriott South Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53713

Make your hotel reservations by calling (608) 251-2300 or use the link at the

MRHS convention website: midwesthostasociety.org

Remember to request the special 2026 MRHS Room Rate.

(Room Rate is \$129 per night – plus \$18 per person for breakfast)

REGISTRATION DETAILS *(Please print clearly - one attendee per form)*

| | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| Name: | Preferred Name on Badge: |
| Address: | City, State, Zip Code: |
| Phone: | Email: |

**Please see cancellation policy at midwesthostasociety.org*

EARLY REGISTRATION if received by 3/15/26

\$ 189

STANDARD REGISTRATION if received by 6/15/26

\$ 199

LATE REGISTRATION received after 6/15/26

\$ 219

MEALS ONLY (companion or vendors)

\$ 141

➔

\$

➔

\$

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Optional Thursday night welcome event – Olbrich Botanical Gardens with private use of Bolz Conservatory | \$ 30 | ➔ \$ | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Friday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean Mahi Mahi <input type="checkbox"/> Steak au Poivre <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Saturday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Pork Tenderloin <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian </td> </tr> </table> | | Friday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean Mahi Mahi <input type="checkbox"/> Steak au Poivre <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian | Saturday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Pork Tenderloin <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian | TOTAL DUE \$ |
| Friday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean Mahi Mahi <input type="checkbox"/> Steak au Poivre <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian | Saturday Banquet Meal Choice: <input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled Pork Tenderloin <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian | | | |

Please list any dietary restrictions or food allergies. _____

Make Check Payable to: **Wisconsin Hosta Society**

MAIL THIS FORM AND PAYMENT TO: **Dave Collura, 13600 W. Graham St., New Berlin, WI 53151-2572**

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hosta Show: Please check if you wish to <input type="checkbox"/> Judge <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk Plan # _____ entries in the Hosta Leaf Show Seedling Competition: Plan # _____ entries in Seedling Competition Rules & Regulations available at MIDWESTHOSTASOCIETY.ORG | Friday night auction I plan to donate _____ items for the auction. Saturday Gardens tour ride sharing transportation: I can provide transport for _____ persons. I will need transport for _____ persons. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Videos now available on the AHS Website

Brendan Shick, AHS Video Producer

This quarter we have launched a video section on the AHS website. At present, three presentations and two garden tours are available to view in total. Garden tours were featured at American Hosta Society conventions and include interviews with the gardeners themselves. We look forward to producing similar content during the next AHS National Convention (Peoria, IL) in June 2025 and including this on the AHS website in the months to follow.

Non-members may **preview** some of the content available to members at <https://americanhostasociety.org/videos> and enjoy a full-length sample presentation on Hosta Virus X. Meanwhile, members of the American Hosta Society have exclusive access (password protected) to the extended garden tour videos and presentations at <https://americanhostasociety.org/members/resources/videos>.

Grab a beverage, sit back and relax, and watch these videos as you glean design ideas, jot down your favorite hostas, ooh and ahh over impressive landscapes, and maybe learn a thing or two. We hope these pieces will also serve as a resource for local Hosta Clubs to use at their gatherings.

Editor's Note: You can also go to <https://americanhostasociety.org/> to explore all that is available on the website including the Videos and Members Only area.

Become a member. Become a friend. - Join Today!

Contact Donate Hosta Information

EVENTS & AWARDS COMMUNITY RESOURCES MEMBERSHIP ABOUT MEMBERS ONLY

Publications
Blog
Videos
Popularity Poll
Hosta Dictionary

Hosta: The Friendship Plant™

BECOME A MEMBER

BECOME A MEMBER!



- Receive *The Hosta Journal*, mailed to you
- Gain access to members-only online materials
- Participate in exciting events and auctions
- Further your love of hostas and gardening

HOSTA.org

**AMERICAN
HOSTA SOCIETY**

Enjoy the carefree beauty of this shade-tolerant perennial

Sign Up!
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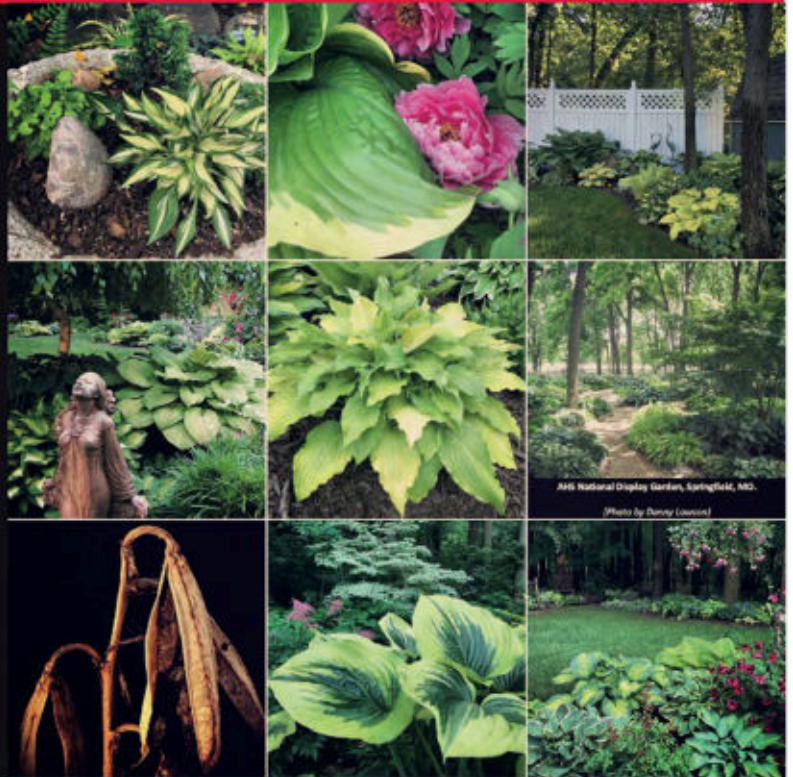
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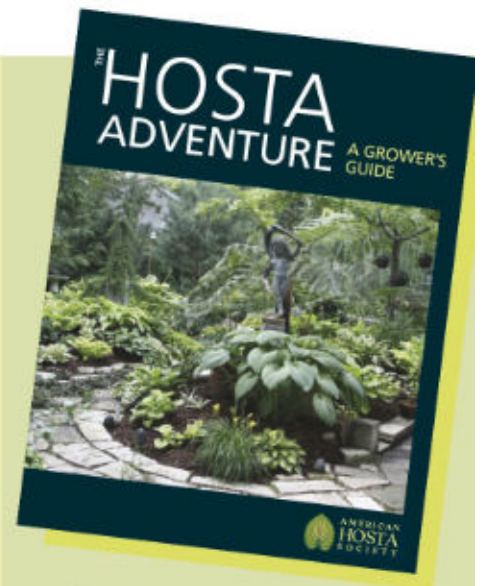
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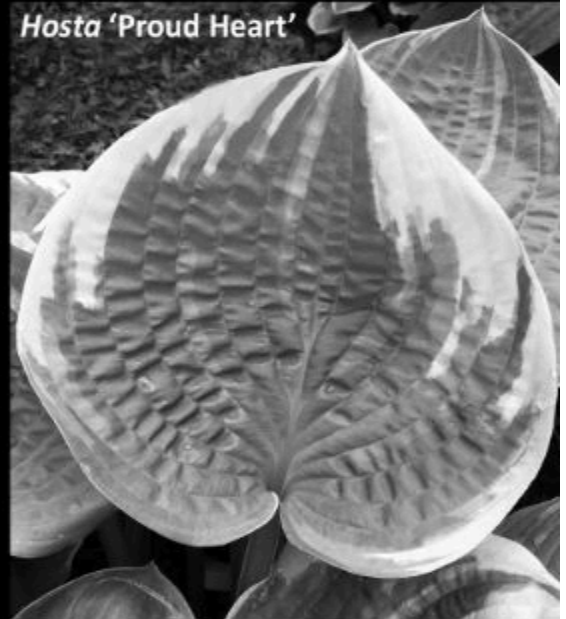
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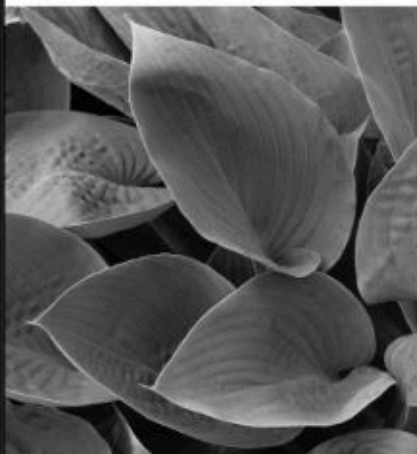
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Hosta Frances Williams, F. Williams & C. Williams 1986,

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