



The American Hosta Society

Oct. 2026

eNewsletter



H. 'Quesadilla'

M. Zilis 2010

(Photo by Mary Vertz)

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President's Message

Chuck Doughty , Holbrook, MA

Fellow Hostaphiles,

Growing up and living in Eastern Massachusetts has shaped the way I see the world. I'm accustomed to the region's seafood, changing seasons, nearby shopping, familiar landscapes, local gardening traditions—and, of course, the pleasure of growing Hostas.

In 2024, and again in 2025, I traveled through the West Texas Plains with two friends on photography trips. Each journey lasted five days, beginning before sunrise and ending after sunset as we chased the changing light. We drove through arid country—some flat, some hilly, and some mountainous—where abandoned buildings, small towns, and sparse vegetation gave the landscape a stark beauty. Our black-and-white images reflected that simplicity and drama. The only abundant green came from young soybean and cotton plants stretching across vast irrigated fields toward the horizon.

Along the way, we also enjoyed the region's Western culture, with stops at a Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Alpine, the Buddy Holly Cultural Center in Lubbock, Wink—Roy Orbison's birthplace—and towns such as Turkey and Earth, whose names and character could only belong to Texas. For the first time in my life, I saw **mirages** shimmering in the distance in the desert heat.

So, what connects those dry, dramatic landscapes—where rain is scarce and Hostas simply cannot grow—to my travels? For me, visiting places beyond Hosta country is a delight, but nothing compares with the joy of tending to a Hosta garden or attending an AHS Hosta Convention.

I hope to see you at the 2027 AHS Convention, “Where Hosta, Music, and Friends Meet,” in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Charles “Chuck” Doughty

“The traveler walks through many mirages before he finds water.”

Yasmin Mogahed

Hosta ‘Mirage’
Ron Livingston NR
Photo Chuck Doughty





Hostas and Associates

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

Mutations and Reversions in Plants

Photos by Glenn Herold

As I walk through the garden looking at my plants, I'm always looking for something that looks out of the ordinary. It could be a pest infestation or a cultural problem, but my hope is that it is a mutation. Should it be a desirable mutation, perhaps I could isolate it from the original plant and have something unique. As a plant collector, having something that no one else has, would be a real coup. Even if it's not a marketable plant, it's still one of a kind and gives me some bragging rights when others view it in my garden.

That is exactly what happened a few years ago when I saw an irregular yellow edge on my *Hosta* 'Tower of Power.' 'Tower of Power' is the all-green reversion of 'Continental Divide,' which has a yellow center with a green margin. My mutation is in essence the reverse variegation of 'Continental Divide.' After dividing it out and watching it for a couple of years, I deemed it worthy of registration. Watch for 'Freshly Scrubbed' in the 2026 registration list. The name does have a story to it, but that's for another time.

Characteristics that an organism exhibits are the result of DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) coding within the nucleus of a cell. With the exception of reproductive cells (the sperm and the egg), every cell has a pair of each chromosome. Humans have 46 chromosomes or 23 pairs. The pairs divide during normal cell division and are then replicated, resulting in two identical cells. A mutation is a mistake that occurs during the replication process. A sequence of DNA that "codes" for enzymes and proteins is called a gene. DNA codes must be in a specific order to make sense and code for the enzymes and proteins, which run the processes of life. However, most DNA is "non-coding." If a mutation occurs within non-coding DNA, there are no apparent consequences. A mistake



Hosta 'Freshly Scrubbed,' a mutation of 'Tower of Power'

mutation occurs within non-coding DNA, there are no apparent consequences. A mistake

within coding DNA, however, can have a beneficial, detrimental, or neutral affect on the organism. It may affect the color or shape of the flowers, fruit, leaf, or branch of the plant. If the mutation is desirable and affects only a portion of the plant, it can potentially be isolated and propagated by grafting or rooting cuttings from the affected portion. In the case of hostas, divide out the eye of the plant that contains the mutation.

Mutations may result in benefits for the plant population. Throughout eons of evolution, it is mutations that allowed a population to gradually adapt to changes in the environment. If, during this process, a barrier develops to split the population, each will develop its own characteristics. Hostas of Korean origin likely originated from one mother plant but have differentiated due to geographic barriers and formed distinct species. Though similar, each has its own individualities.

Many North American plants have an Asian counterpart, indicating that the two populations were once connected. Mutations are critical for genetic diversity and adaptation and the process of evolution. If the environment changes too quickly, though, such as is happening right now due to global warming, the population may not be able to adapt fast enough and could possibly result in species extinction.

There are many factors that affect mutation rates, including the environment, tissue type, chemical exposure, or viruses. Higher temperatures, exposure to UV radiation, drought, or salinity are environmental factors that may increase the rate of mutations. Roots have a higher rate of mutations than that which occurs in the shoots or leaves. Plant breeders sometimes expose plant tissue to certain chemicals in an attempt to instigate mutations, hoping that positive changes occur. If a plant suffers from bud-killing temperatures, adventitious buds must reprogram to produce new shoots. Mistakes can occur in this reprogramming process.

Mutations can be unstable, resulting in reversions and the plant going back to its “wild-type” form. If this occurs in a plant with variegated leaves, it usually results in a plant that is all-green, which can quickly overtake the variegated portion because of a greater abundance of chlorophyll and food production. If a reversion occurs in a dwarf plant, the “wild-type” will dominate. This frequently occurs in Dwarf Alberta Spruce (*Picea glauca* ‘Conica’). If it looks like a tree is growing out of the dwarf spruce, it means that a reversion has occurred and the reversion is showing the normal type of spruce foliage. If this occurs in your plant, prune the reversion out as soon as possible.



A reversion on *Picea glauca* ‘Conica,’ Dwarf Alberta Spruce

Cultivars of *Euonymus fortunei*, Wintercreeper Euonymus, also frequently mutate or revert.

The hosta industry is highly dependent on mutations, for the popular cultivars all show the effects of mutations. Every species hosta, from which the cultivars originated, is green, but the top selling plants are variegated. Currently 'June' is the number one selling hosta. It is a medium-sized plant with blue and yellow variegated leaves which originated as a mutation of 'Halcyon,' a plant whose leaves are entirely blue. In the garden, it is not unusual to see a portion of 'June' with leaves that are totally blue. In other words, it has reverted to 'Halcyon.' If you want to save your 'June,' you must split off the portion that is non-variegated. 'Halcyon' is a great plant too, so plant it in another area of your garden!



Hosta 'June' showing reversion to 'Halcyon' in some of the leaves.

You don't need to be a geneticist to have fun with genes in the garden, whether it be with breeding new plants or just looking for mutations. Who knows, you may be the next person to introduce a plant that is even more popular than *Hosta* 'June'!

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



Hostas Happenin's

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI

Shimmering and Sparkling: One Hybridizer's Focus on Flowers

Well-known hybridizer Doug Beilstein describes his work with red flowers, which eventually leads to the introduction of his Shimmering and Sparkling Series of hostas.

When you enter someone's garden, color plays a large part of your experience. Gardeners often love to have plants throughout their landscape in bloom at all times to enhance your enchantment. While hostas are primarily grown for their foliage, shape and size, it is time for their flowers to step forward!

A mentor to all who love hostas, Bob Solberg has always proclaimed a love of the hosta flower. Then years ago, Jim Spence of Ontario, Canada came along. Jim was a creative and accomplished hybridizer, creating *Hosta* 'Amethyst Star' and 'Cosmic Rain' with their spectacular flower colors of "red" and dark crimson. In addition, hybridizer Jeff Moore of Janesville, WI, always one step ahead of the rest of us, introduced his Dostoyevsky series of hostas: 'Crime and Punishment', 'The Librarian', 'The Pit and the Pendulum', plus others. They were beautiful shades of "red" and crimson flowers. C H Falstad of Walters Gardens in Zeeland, MI obtained a hosta that he labeled "Experiment 136," another "red-flowered" cultivar from Japan.

Seed from Red-flowered Hybrids is Obtained and Planted

The stage was set. My interest was hyped! I obtained OP seed from Jeff Moore, who also graciously shared them with many others. Jeff's admonishment was that you need to breed red flowers to red flowers to get progeny with red flowers, as he provided Clarence Hanna and me with red-flowering seedlings. Other OP seeds were obtained from Don Rawson (via Jeff Moore) and those seeds yielded flowering hybrids. In addition, with the help of June Colley, who is a beautiful friend and fellow hostaphile from England, I was able to obtain two other hostas from Japan, 'Akane' and 'Kokuryu'. It was off to the races for me. My Japanese hosta friend Koki Kurata also assisted in these acquisitions.

In the summer of 2019, I committed to obtaining the best flowers I could get from all of these plants now on hand. I should mention that all of them were hybrids of *H. sieboldii* and were a rather nondescript group of small to medium hostas with green, ovate-shaped leaves, usually with rounded leaf tips.

I made 531 crosses and planted all the seeds in our basement during the winter of 2019. Green grows well, as hybridizers will tell you. Fortunately, after a few transplantings and rapidly outgrowing my basement environment, our daughter Megan Armstrong and her employer George Pealer, owner of Mill Creek Gardens of Ostrander, OH, came to my rescue. They offered space in the "shopping center" greenhouse at Mill Creek! By mid-June, the plants were ready for the ground. This time, another gifted hybridizer and true friend, Clarence Hanna of Marion, OH, came to my rescue. We built a structure that

measured 20' × 60' and covered it with shade cloth. Planting required two full days and the “red flower” madness was well on its way. All 4,800 of these seedlings!!! Approximately 20 of the young seedlings flowered that summer, and the rest were thriving as well. Green grows.

The Selection Process Begins

The summer of 2020 brought a daunting task. Criteria for selecting the crème de la crème of flowers was established. It was eye candy! Clarence and I set about with flags of yellow, blue and green to identify the chosen ones. We were ably assisted by my mentor, Bob Solberg, during his visit in August, whose sharp eye found additional hybrids. In the end, approximately 120 seedlings of the 4,800 were chosen. Each one was then photographed and the cross was recorded. That fall we transplanted those that were selected to 1-gallon pots after removing the soil and replacing it with a traditional greenhouse potting mix.



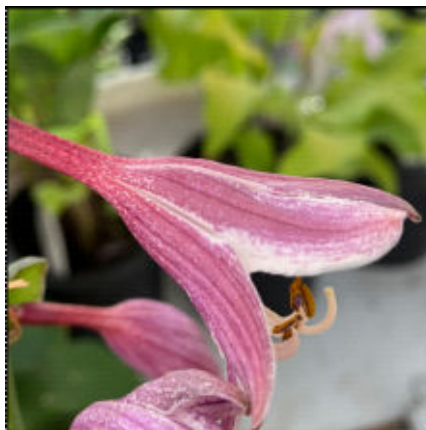
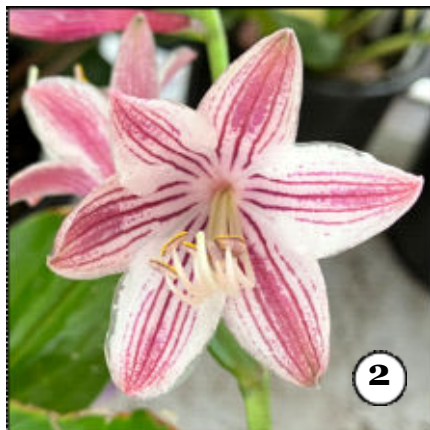
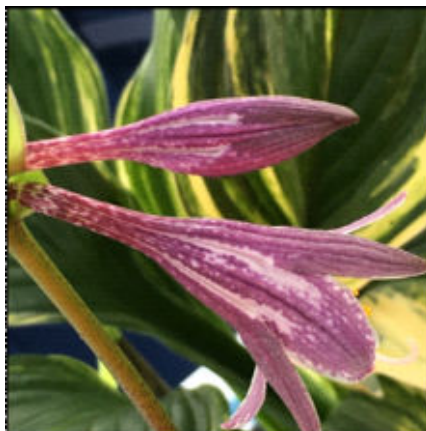
All photos by Doug Beistein.

**A staggering total of 4,800 seedlings, nearly all in full bloom.
Now the overwhelming task of culling begins. Only 120
seedlings were tagged and set aside for further evaluation.**

All of the potted seedlings survived the winter of 2021 at the Ostrander, OH location in a hoop house that was covered with 4 mil white co-poly. In spring, many emerged with several eyes. In August 2022, now in 1-gallon containers, the plants were blooming again. Five were selected on criteria including flower color (red to maroon), color saturation and pattern (inside and outside of flower, which is different), flower size (some mini, while other flowers were normal size), the number of flowers on the scape (spaced or tightly packed), and flowers with recurved petals (which are beautiful). The combination of the above traits was truly amazing.

While many of the chosen 120 had highly desirable traits, just five were set aside for registration in the fall of 2022, all strongly based on their flowers as these plants were still that “plain Jane” green. As to the names, it was groupthink. My wife Mardy, who helped to fertilize the seedlings in the basement, transplant the seedlings at Mill Creek, and sort and label the seedlings when they were planted in the Hanna Garden, wanted to have a common moniker for the series that we introduced.

My old hobby of lapidary cabochon work came to mind, and thus the “Sparkling Series” was conceived. The tough part was trying to put a gem color to the flower pattern or color. Certainly, we think we named ‘Sparkling Opal’ appropriately — a beautiful white flower with specks or flashes of red!



**1 – H. ‘Sparkling Amethyst’ 2 – H. ‘Sparkling Garnet’
3 – H. ‘Sparkling Opal’**

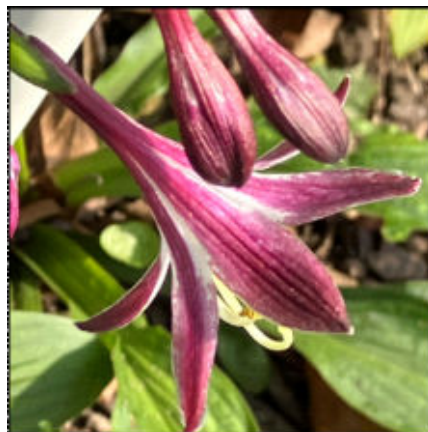
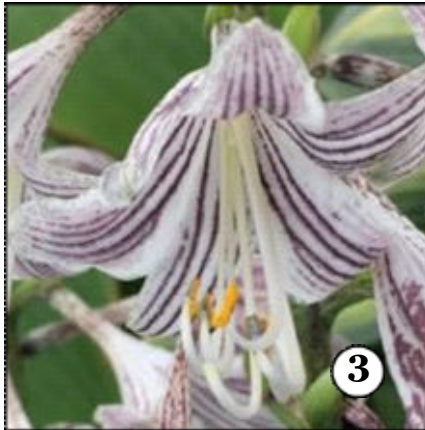
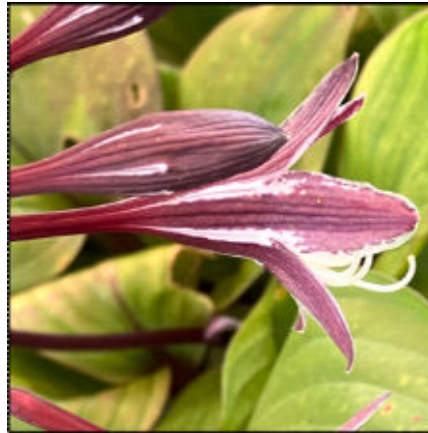


4 – *H. 'Sparkling Ruby'* 5 – *H. Sparkling Sapphire'*

In naming the four hostas that are in the “Shimmering Series,” Mardy and I decided it was a different year to register this group and we wanted to call attention to a new but different set of flowers. The various red and burgundy-colored precious gems were exhausted. So, we chose to go with different types of wines. The word “shimmering” came to mind, and that became the moniker for the second group of deep red-flowered plants that we registered.



1 – *'Shimmering Burgundy'*



2 – *H.* ‘Shimmering Merlot’ 3 – *H.* ‘Shimmering Rose’

4 – *H.* ‘Shimmering Shiraz’

Outcrossing Produces No Red Flowers

A hybridizer always discovers new avenues in his travels. If Jeff Moore’s admonition that “to get red you have to use red” is true (and it is), then how many backcrosses would be needed after an outcross to get the red color back? Crosses involving a red-flowered hosta with pollen from ‘Miss Suzy’ (with red petioles) as well as with other cultivars produced no red flowers. Furthermore, those f1 seedlings crossed back to red flowers yielded no red flowers. The f2 offspring crossed back to red flowers still generated no red flowers. There is only so much time in the day, so I stopped there. But, and there always is a but, red-

flowered hybrids × ‘First Blush’ did produce an early spring/summer blush, but still with no red flowers. The blushing trait wasn’t a total surprise, as fellow hybridizer and friend Jeff White had previously noted that the blush is in the secret sauce, i.e., in the pollen of ‘First Blush’. Another avenue for someone to pursue.

Percentages of Red-flowered Offspring		
	Red-flowered Pollen Parent	Lavender-flowered Pollen Parent
Red-flowered Pod Parent	~60% Red-flowered Offspring	100% Lavendar-flowered Offspring
Lavender-flowered Pod Parent	100% Lavendar-flowered Offspring	100% Lavendar-flowered Offspring

Further Observations

In evaluating the results of working with a large sample of red flowers, I have made some observations, which are in no particular order. First, there are very few plants that presented to my eye a reddish or lighter pink tone, maybe 10 out of 4,800. By far, the crimson color is dominant, ranging from a light to very dark saturation. In the petals and sepals, the saturation went from mere dots to about three-quarters of the petals, working from the middle outward to the edge. Sometimes, three or five lines were seen instead of the fuller saturation.

Secondly, the flower sizes ranged from 1 1/4 to 1 3/4 inches in length. But, to my delight, there seems to be a strain of smaller flower sizes. I refer to these smaller flowers as pygmy size — in the 3/4 to 1-inch range.

Also noted were several groups that had blunderbuss-type flower presentations. This is often referred to as recurved petals and sepals. When you have that feature with multiple small pigmy flowers in “red” and crimson, it is a sight to behold. Nobody would cut those scapes off of their hosta!

Most of the flower scapes were green and were proportional to the plant or a little taller, allowing me to see the flowers more easily. These plants are very fertile, for the most part.

A word of caution: when you breed a red-flowered plant to another red-flowered plant, all of your seedlings will not come out red or maroon. Between 50–60% of the seedlings have lavender flowers. Hybridizer beware!

Blushing Foliage and Other Traits to Pursue

My great buddy Doug Ruff of Minnesota, with his super blusher ‘Bloodline’ as well as three other blushing hybrids coming out, has taken the lead position in blushing. We are

both working in the yellow-leaved, red-petioled blush venue. This adds an entirely distinctive feature to the hosta genre!

Another feature, not necessarily the “red” feature in hosta flowers, is the never-opening hosta flower. Currently, I have one plant in which the fully developed flower bud never opens, and the buds stays on the scape until all of them are present. IMHO, I think it’s a beautiful hosta with its multiple scapes of buds that have a pink base and white bulbus end. Already on the market are several other close-flowered cultivars, including ‘Purple Lady Fingers’ and *H. clausa* var. *clausa* with their lavender buds, and maybe this one will join them!

When looking into the future, I see the field as wide open. There already are yellow and “blue” flowers out there. Breeding, cross-breeding, and backcrossing may yield some interesting results. So far for me, I can report no breakthroughs. My orange flower remains elusive. When I actually crossed my really red-flowered hosta with a yellow-flowered one (‘Miracle Lemony’), the seedlings went back to lavender flowers. There are *H. sieboldii* hybrids with all-white flowers out there, so what they might yield is an unknown. I’m just trying to breed within the species that has those red genes.

Anybody heard of a rose? We have red-petioled hostas, red-flowered hostas, and fragrant hostas. What about adding the fragrance to those areas? Nothing like a smelly garden!!! { : ^)... Currently, I am actively working on developing a black or super dark maroon flower. And, did I mention branching scapes? I know we have ‘Branching Out’ and ‘Menora’, but those are just the beginning. So you see why I think the future is bright for flowers.

Conclusion

New hybrids with red and dark crimson flowers are stunning! My request to other hostaphiles is to consider the flowers of our hostas as a way to extend the beauty of our gardens in yet another way. These hybrids with red flowers bloom in August, which is a time when many gardens are lacking in color. The hybridizing world is wide open, as hosta flowers are gaining significant widespread interest. And certainly, hybridizing is one of the prime ways to produce new, exciting hosta cultivars for our gardens and landscapes!

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my fellow hybridizers — Jeff Moore, Don Rawson, Clarence Hanna, and Bob Solberg — for their encouragement, support, and collaboration in my flower work. Without them, my work with red-flowered hostas would not have been possible.

Editor’s Note:

Several of Doug’s red-flowered hybrids are now available on Bob Solberg’s Hosta Guru website at <https://www.hostaguru.com/product/red-flower-collection-1/>. Offered as “Red-flowered Collection 1,” the following hostas (two of each variety) can now be mail ordered:

H. ‘Shimmering Shiraz’
H. ‘Shimmering Merlot’
H. ‘Sparkling Opal’
H. ‘Sparkling Amethyst’

The Hosta Guru offers shipping to Canada, Europe, and Russia.



Longtime hosta friend Bob Solberg admires the vast number of red-flowered hybrids from crosses made in the summer of 2019.



Hybridizer Corner . . .

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI

If you are reading this column, be assured that YOU can have a successful hosta hybridizing program. It is not rocket science! And growing hosta seedlings is so much fun. In the event that you create an amazing new variety that is mass produced and marketed, you will have great satisfaction when you discover your own origination in someone else's garden. Hybridizing hostas is a very rewarding pursuit. We hope that the *Hybridizer Corner* will be helpful as you navigate this wonderful activity.

Review

In the last issue, we looked at hybridizing for hostas with cupped leaves. Many gardeners find this feature quite attractive, whether the leaves are concave or convexly cupped. While some hostas have leaves that are just slightly cupped, others are deeply cupped to the point of holding water.

Commonly expressed in *H. sieboldiana* and its progeny, cupping is a genetic trait in which the center of the leaf grows faster than the margin, causing the leaf to be cupped upward or downward. Most cupped hostas are medium to large, corrugated plants with ovate to round leaves. Folding, on the other hand, occurs usually with narrowly ovate or lance-shaped leaves, but the cupping occurs the same way: the center of the leaf grows faster than the margin.

Whether aiming for cupped leaves or for those that are folded, set a goal, make sure your goal is realistic, and choose parent plants which will most likely produce the intended results.

Success With Late Season Crosses

Recently, I had a conversation with a friend looking for advice. She was facing an issue that nearly all hybridizers deal with: what to do about those hostas that are late bloomers.

She wrote, "In fall I scale back on my outdoor hybridizing and focus only on the ones in the basement under lights. The problem I run into is that the fall season gets pretty darn late here and I'm putting some of those plants back outdoors in the dead of winter. For the most part the plants survive, but I don't think they really thrive the next year. What is your recommendation for this dilemma?"

She went on to inquire, "Do you cut the scapes and hope they ripen in sugar water or a cloner so the plant can go outside again? Or, do you dig some holes in the fall so you can plunk them back out in the garden with some insulation around their roots? Or, keep them indoors for the winter?"

Whereas frost may affect or stop leaf growth, hosta seed that is still outdoors should be fine and will continue to mature until lower temperatures are experienced.

However, there could be a decrease of the total number of viable seeds — a good reason to cut the scapes off and bring them indoors beforehand.

As a fellow hybridizer, I certainly understand the dilemma. Some cultivars bloom so late that it makes me envious of those plant breeders who live in the South where the growing season is considerably longer. But as a note of encouragement, there are ways to remedy the situation.

Extending a hosta's growing period indoors throughout autumn and then suddenly placing it outdoors where it is very cold would have a negative effect on its overall health. It could even kill it, which would be very unfortunate if it is one of your prized breeders. It is better to not push the limit. Extending a hosta's growing period only slightly and then placing it in a garage, an unheated shed, or a cold frame, is better than putting it outdoors mid-winter in hopes that it can somehow survive. An even better option is forcing your late blooming hostas to flower earlier in the season. See more ideas that are presented in the April 2025 eNewsletter, pages 21-28, posted at <https://americanhostasociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/April2025.pdf>.

Growing and Storing Hostas in Pots

If hostas that are grown in pots throughout the summer are to be stored over the winter, then the transition should be gradual. Those in active growth should ideally transition to dormancy slowly. An incremental, natural transition allows the plant to properly pull vital nutrients and sugars from its green leaves and store them in the crown and root system for the winter. An abrupt transition, such as sudden extreme frost or forcing them into darkness/cold while they are growing can shock the plant or rob the roots of necessary winter energy reserves.

Here are some additional tips to ensure success in growing and storing hostas in pots:

- Use pots with drainage holes. Fill the pots with a free-draining potting mix. Avoid mixes with coir such as Miracle-Gro Moisture Control Potting Mix that retain excessive moisture.
- Reduce watering gradually. As autumn approaches and temperatures start to cool, slowly ease back on irrigation. This acts as an environmental signal to the hosta that it is time to slow down foliage production and shift focus to the roots.
- Stop fertilizing. Do not apply fertilizer in late summer or fall. Fertilizer forces new, tender growth that will easily freeze and drain the plant's resources right before winter.
- Leave green leaves alone. Do not cut back a hosta while the leaves are still actively standing upright and green. Wait until they naturally turn yellow, wilt, or collapse after a hard frost.
- Keep hostas on the dry side during the winter storage period to prevent fungal problems. Plants do not need much water when dormant and not in active growth.

Ripening Hosta Scapes Indoors

One technique for ripening hosta seed is to place the scapes in sugar water. This method was used by the late Bob Kuk, owner of the former Kuk's Forest Nursery in Brecksville, OH. Bob had an extensive hybridizing program, registering a total of 59 originations including *Hosta* 'Bigga Luigi', 'Gray Cole', 'Joseph', 'Little Bo Peep', 'Punky', 'Queen Josephine', 'Rock and Roll', among others. His method of using sugar water while making crosses and then bringing the seed to maturity is included at the end of this article for your convenience.

If making your own sugar water concoction sounds like too much fuss, fresh-cut flower food could be used. Small, reasonably-priced packets are readily available on Amazon.com. In addition, most florists give out or sell fresh-cut flower food packets.

Personally, I have not had good results using sugar water to ripen the seed pods on hosta scapes, in spite of multiple attempts at doing so. I must be doing it wrong, because I know it worked well for Bob Kuk. In my experience, the water needs to be changed out for a fresh solution every two to three days to keep the scapes from rotting and stinking, and I am a bit neglectful in doing so. Each time, the container should be washed out well with soap and water to keep things as sanitary as possible. Perhaps adding a bit of fungicide to the water, and keeping the scapes in a cool place indoors under LED lights, would be beneficial.

In contrast, I have had good results using an aeroponic propagator (cloner) to ripen the seed on hosta scapes. A cloner is a wonderful addition, not only to the dedicated gardener, but to a hybridizing program. Plant cuttings in an aeroponic cloner do not rot because the system provides a constant, high-oxygen environment that suffocates harmful bacteria while delivering just enough moisture for roots to form. Unlike stagnant water in a glass jar or cup, a cloner uses a pump and misters to blast the stems with tiny water droplets and air. Rot-causing fungi and anaerobic bacteria need low-oxygen conditions to thrive. With a cloner, abundant oxygen keeps the water fresh and the stems healthy.

Cutting the scape on a 45° angle with a sharp razor blade rather than with scissors is recommended. The angle gives the stem a larger surface area to drink from. Using a razor blade or a very sharp, single-bevel knife to cut hosta scapes—or plant cuttings in general—is preferred over using household scissors because of how the two tools interact with the plant's cellular structure. Because a razor blade is incredibly thin and sharp, it slices cleanly through cell walls with minimal resistance, creating a smooth, micro-precise cut. Scissors, on the other hand, work by forcing two bypassed blades past one another, causing a crushing injury to the plant tissue just before the blades actually shear through.

Trimming a bit more off the bottom each week keeps the end of the scape fresh so that water can be absorbed. Making a fresh, clean cut removes blockages and reopens water pathways so the scape can stay hydrated and live longer. It clears bacteria and slime that build up on the bottom of the scape over time, clogging the paths that pull up water.

As a side note, I do not recommend adding sugar to a cloning solution. Just plain tap water will do. If your tap water has very high mineral content, hard water buildup, or heavy chlorine, distilled or reverse osmosis (RO) water is best. I have had good result with just filtered spring water purchased at my local grocery store.

As a word of caution, whether using a container of sugar water or a cloner, do not neglect to check your setup regularly. Too often, I have carelessly forgotten to do so, only

to find that the scapes have ripened, the pods have split open, and the seed has been scattered and lost — or at the very least, the seed from the various scapes has fallen out and is now all mixed together. What a disappointment!

In the Next Issue...

We have more to come — tips on growing hosta seedlings, what to do about damping-off, re-potting hosta seedlings (upcupping), and so on. Stay tuned!

Sugar Water – A New Approach to Hybridizing

I began using sugar water crosses in late October of 2000. I had a mutant ‘Dorothy Benedict’ seedling which was a fall bloomer. I began crossing ‘Tardiflora’ and *H. rupifraga* to the mutant ‘Dorothy Benedict’. Cold weather moved in and I was having trouble covering the scapes. A hybridizer friend, Jesse Willetts, suggested cutting the scapes and placing them in sugar water and continuing the crosses indoors. I use his formula: 1 teaspoon of granulated sugar per 4 ounces of water.

I was amazed that the crosses took and the flowers formed seed pods. I left the scapes in the sugar water for two months. I harvested the pods and placed them in envelopes; the same way as I do when I harvest mature seed pods from outside. These are placed on a shelf above my water heater in a darkened closet. I very seldom place upright flower scapes in bags, as many seed pods fail to open on their own. I let the seed pods dry for two to four months until I have time to clean them. All my seed is sown outdoors in early April. Weak seedlings do not survive, so it’s survival of the fittest (natural culling).

I had 34 seedlings from the 2000 cross of the mutant ‘Dorothy Benedict’ (‘Dorothy Benedict’ × ‘Rippling Waves’) × *H. rupifraga* and ‘Tardiflora’. Most are greens with heavy substance, some with margins, and a few gold splashes.

In the fall of 2001, I used the sugar water again to make the same crosses as listed above. I also crossed the ‘Dorothy Benedict’ mutant with *H. pachyscapa* both directions. The *H. pachyscapa* cross yielded many greens and two golds. One of the golds is extremely shiny with heavy substance and surpasses the gold color of ‘Prairie Fire’.

I only made two sugar water crosses in 2002 due to the failing health of my mother. A cross of ‘William Lachman’ × ‘Azure Snow’ yielded a margined seedling, and ‘Azure Snow’ × ‘Flower Power’ yielded four seedlings.

In 2003 I formulated a plan to make all my crosses in sugar water for the whole year. The following crosses were made solely in sugar water: (NOTE: FP=frozen pollen) ‘Splashed Leather’ × ‘Angel Eyes’ FP; ‘Grand Slam’ × ‘Blue Angel’ FP; *H. pachyscapa* × ‘Bold Ruffles’ FP; ‘Golden Gate’ × ‘Blue Angel’ FP; *H. montana* ‘Praeflorens’ × ‘Millennium’; ‘Dorothy Benedict’ mutant × ‘Millennium’; ‘Babbling Brook’ × ‘Angel Eyes’ FP; ‘Mikawa-no-yuki’ × ‘Bold Ruffles’ FP; ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ × ‘Angel Eyes’ FP; ‘Splashed Leather’ (fasciated) × ‘Angel Eyes’ FP (yielded 6 pods); ‘Millennium’ × ‘Rock and Roll’; ‘Dorothy Benedict’ sdlg × ‘Millennium’. NOTE: the mutant ‘Dorothy Benedict’ began flowering in late June.

Through observation I discovered that crosses failed to take when inside temperatures were above 80°F (27°C). After moving the jars to cooler rooms, the crosses began taking again. The flower scapes should not be in direct sun. Crosses can be accomplished at your leisure because of the absence of wind, insects, deer, and sunlight.

My crosses are always done using the whole scape for one cross. Through repetition I find the characteristics that I'm striving for.

Do not harvest all the scapes from a selected hosta outside. I found out through conversations with Mark Zillis and Jesse Willetts that hosta seeds are mature six to seven weeks after fertilization. I suggest dating your crossing tag with the date you began your cross. If using whole scapes, then date the last flower crossed on the scape.

Also, take note of the photos on my website and the slide program; the flowers retain their color and stay on the pods even though the crosses were completed many weeks prior to the photos.

If you notice that the sugar water becomes cloudy or a gel has formed at the base of the scapes, then I recommend changing containers and adding a new solution of sugar water. Also, remove one inch of the bottom portion of the scape.

Frozen pollen can be used to make out-of-season crosses. Simply remove the ripe pollen anthers from the filament using tweezers and place them in 35mm film containers. Label and place in your freezer. Prior to crossing, label a scrap of paper with the variety and take out as many anthers as you will need. Let the anthers warm up to room temperature for at least 15 minutes and proceed to make your cross.

THIS IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE.

Bob Kuk



Hosta 'On Stage' Photo by Mary Vertz



Welcome to My Garden

Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey



Gail Russo

Please meet

Please meet Susan Ragsdale of Critterhaven Gardens in Petersburg, Tennessee.



Nashville, Tennessee or “Music City” is a tourist destination known as home of the Grand Ole Opry. The metropolitan population exceeds 2 million people! Just an hour south of this bustling scene is Petersburg. Petersburg, Tennessee is a very small historic town that was founded in 1814 with a population of approximately 500 people, with the community covering less than a square mile centered around a town square! One of its residents is Susan Ragsdale, who has lived here for thirteen years on a property of just less than an acre.



Now retired, Susan worked as a veterinary technician and was the general manager of an animal shelter. Fittingly, she chose Critterhaven Gardens as the name for her home garden, which she shares with her husband, Richard, and many critters including dogs, cats, chickens and ducks.



Eight short years ago, Susan found *Hosta* 'Empress Wu' in a nursery, and she became enamored with hostas. Until then, her garden had specialized in trees. Now, her hosta collection includes nearly 900 varieties, focusing on the rare and unusual varieties. Susan tends to the garden herself, which is quite a task considering its requirements. Petersburg is located in Planting Hardiness Zone 7, where the summers are very hot and humid. The soil is riddled with limestone and clay, neither of which is hosta friendly. Before planting any hostas in the ground, the soil must be amended with organics and humus to ensure their survival. She has county water that is often restricted and does not have automatic sprinklers, so the garden must be watered by hand each day. She fertilizes her hostas with Milorganite, hand-spread. Her pets don't bother the garden much, but armadillos tear it up! Richard takes care of them when Susan sees them.

Susan doesn't have a theme to her garden, saying, "If it fits, it goes in." She maintains a hand-drawn map of the garden to keep track of her inventory, and an alphabetized listing. She labels her hostas with a Brother P-touch label attached on anything she has to stick in the ground. Her biggest challenge is weed maintenance, and she wishes she could hire help to pull them. In fact, her best advice to future gardeners is to start as early as possible in the season to stay on top of weed control! She plans to add water features to the garden and create more planting beds for her hostas, the majority of which are planted in the ground. She wishes that she had not waited so long to start collecting hostas, but she has amassed quite a collection in a short time. She thinks every gardener should have garden helpers and that every hosta enthusiast should find a hosta buddy.

Susan is a member of The American Hosta Society (AHS), The Middle Tennessee Hosta Society, The Dixie Regional Hosta Society and the Hosta Society of North Alabama. She found her own hosta buddy when she met Julie Lewter at one of these local hosta gatherings. Julie lives in Ardmore, Alabama and has been collecting hostas for many years. They meet up frequently during local hosta social events and both attend the annual conventions sponsored by the AHS. They began carpooling to events that were farther away and they decided to share their adventures under the name "The Hosta Road Trippers – "Two southern girls who love their hostas and have fun taking tours of the country visiting hosta gardens, nurseries, and fellow hostaholics." You can find their adventures shared on Facebook and TikTok with this link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1Bbp3ccp38/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

You can also contact them via email: hostaroadtrippers@gmail.com



The Hosta Road Trippers – Susan Ragsdale and Julie Lewter. Together, they travel the country visiting gardens and nurseries, meeting lots of people along the way.



Susan does not grow hostas from seeds because her space is very limited. She is not an originator of any named hosta varieties. When her hostas become too big, she divides them to save garden space. Crittterhaven Gardens was inspected and received a Tennessee nursery license to sell. She frequently offers her hosta divisions for sale at her home and at the annual hosta sale sponsored by the Hosta Society of North Alabama in Huntsville. She has hosted tours of her garden for the local societies and will host private tours by appointment. She is also a member of the Lewisburg, TN Garden Club. Her favorite public gardens are the University of Tennessee Gardens in Knoxville, TN and the Huntsville Botanical Garden in Huntsville, AL.

During the winter months while the hostas are dormant, Susan focuses on her hobby of collecting and selling vintage antiques, noting her favorite is Breyer model horses. She started an online business with her friend Ella Claire named 2 Junk Gals - "constantly on the hunt for antique and vintage, unique and eclectic items to keep or resell". They offer goods for sale live on Whatnot! every morning, Monday through Friday. Follow this link to their Facebook page to see previews of their Whatnot! shows and to access the links to their live shows:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1CT51kt3a9/?mibextid=wwXlfr>





With shopping for goods to offer on her daily online sale taking so much of her time, it's easy to understand why she wishes she had hired help to pull weeds in her garden! If you're ever in the Land of Dixie and would like to tour her garden, contact Susan via email-

Critterhavengardens@gmail.com

Or on her personal Facebook Messenger here:

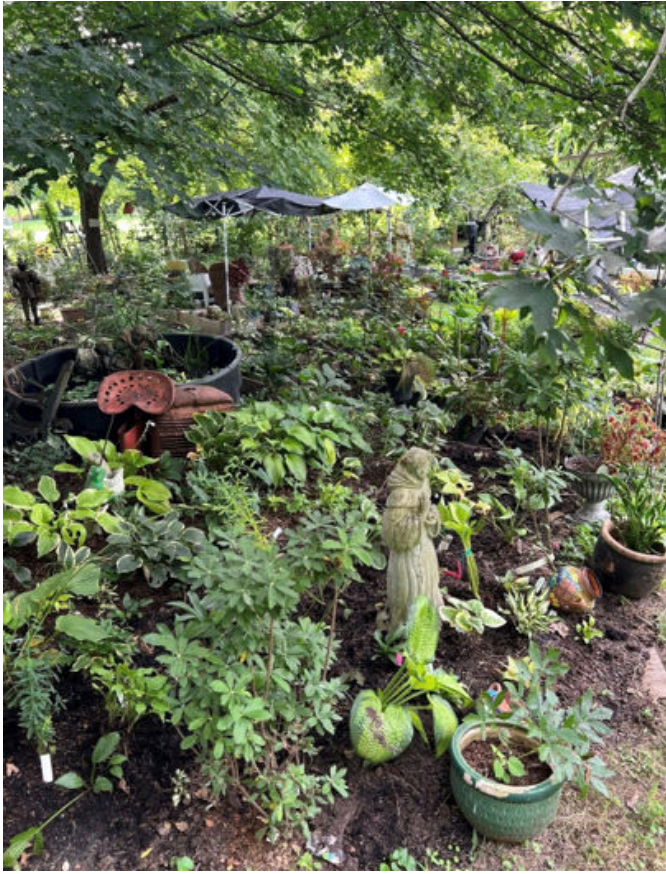
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Or on Critterhaven Gardens Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1EnZ8QAELZ/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

Critterhaven Gardens also has a webpage where you can find her entire hosta inventory list:

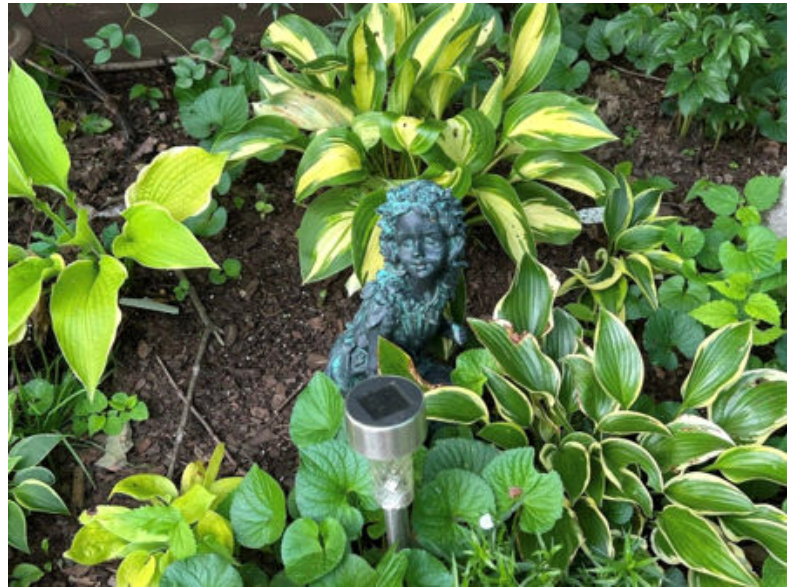
http://www.critterhavengardens.com/?fbclid=IwRlRTSATp9vZwZG9mBWZkaWQWUMUKqKvsGW5PcNS5_e1BKlDtBlGy2V4dG4DYWVtAjEwAHNydgMGYXBwX2lkCjY2Mjg1NjgzNzkAAR53dPJi2XfraWGLXqoK5oi2_hkdzxahbwSkZ7w8zmlykx3dYZLgeyX7y_4EOw_aem_9Yw_PpPegj24gD29zcYqhw



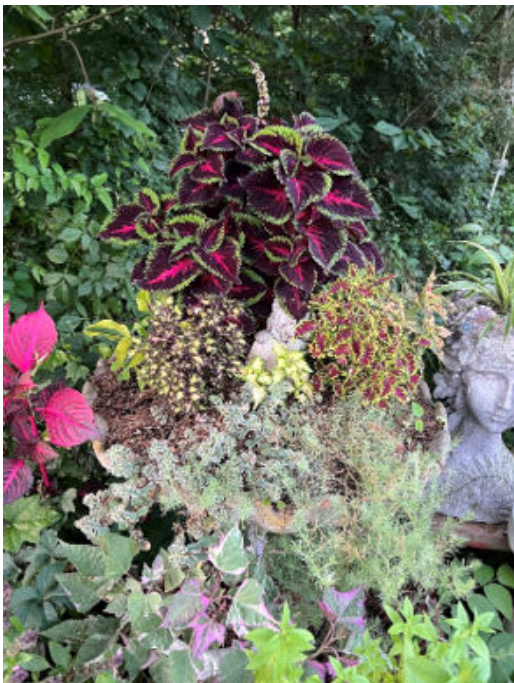
Susan packs many plants into a small space, accenting the garden with items she has found in her travels



Hosta 'Honeybells'

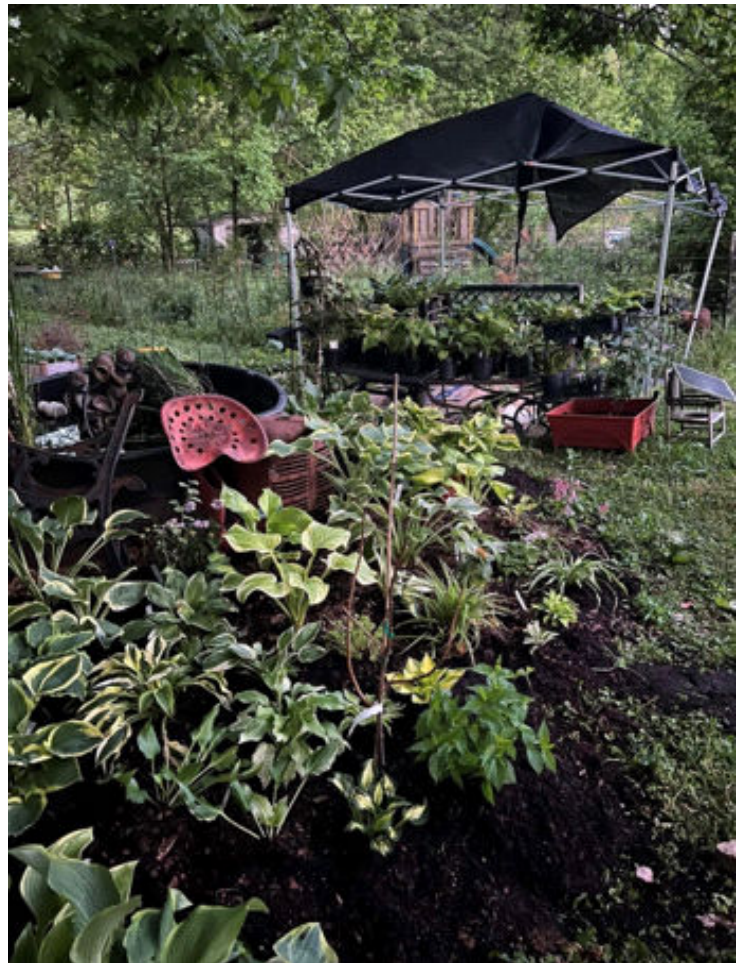


A garden fairy sits amidst several hostas in the garden.





Right, a hosta bed. Lower left, a smaller trough bed where Susan grows out unnamed hosta seedlings she has purchased.

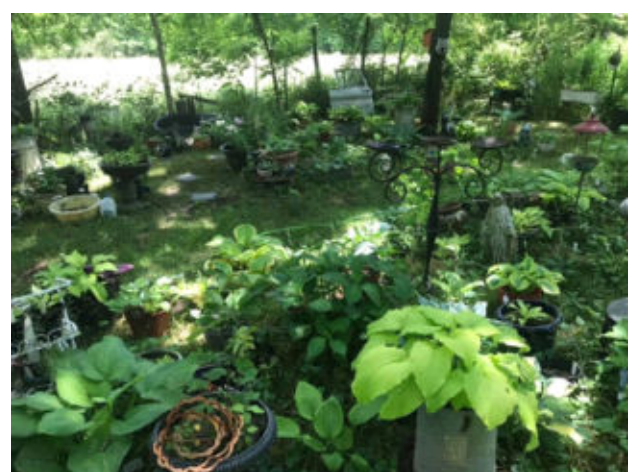




Fairies add whimsical charm as they frolic throughout the garden. add whimsical charm as they frolic throughout the garden.

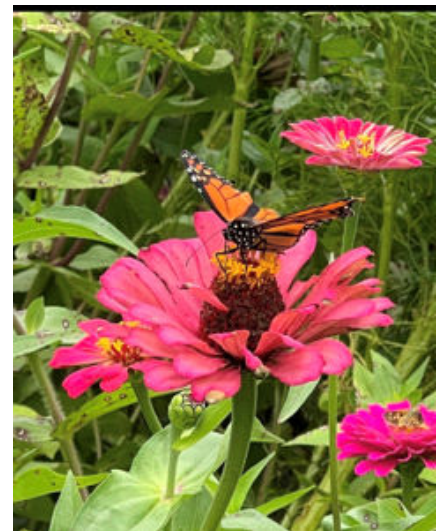
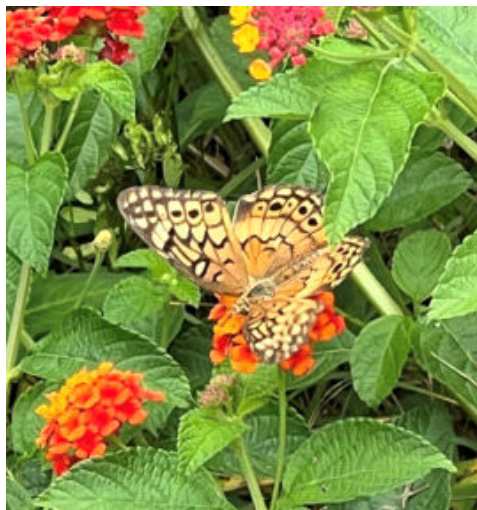


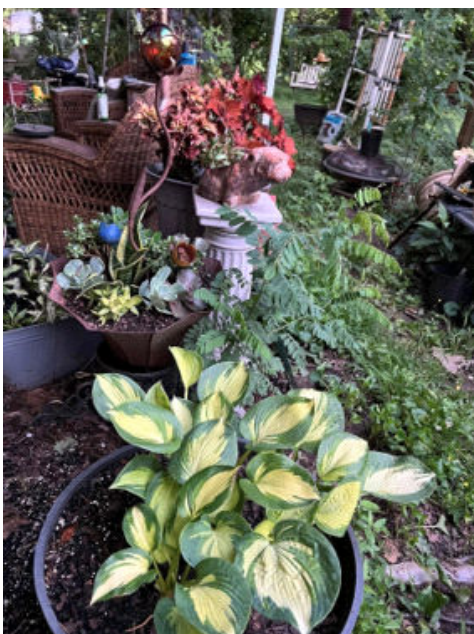
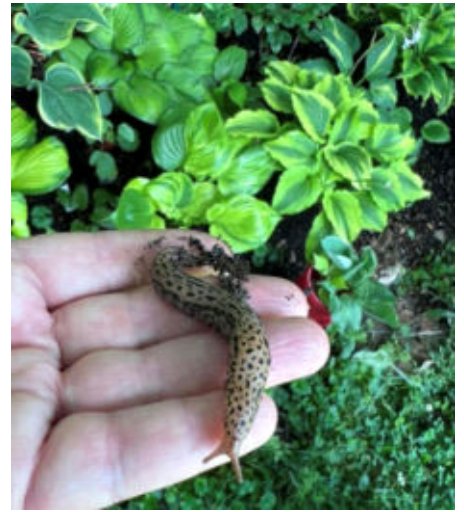
Susan fulfilled the requirements for Critterhaven Gardens to be awarded the designation as a Certified Wildlife Habitat, a Native Pollinator Habitat and a Monarch Waystation. Gardens must be diverse to meet the criteria for these awards.





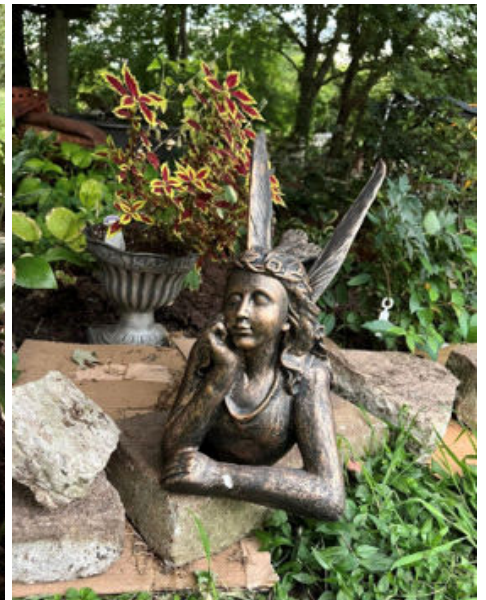
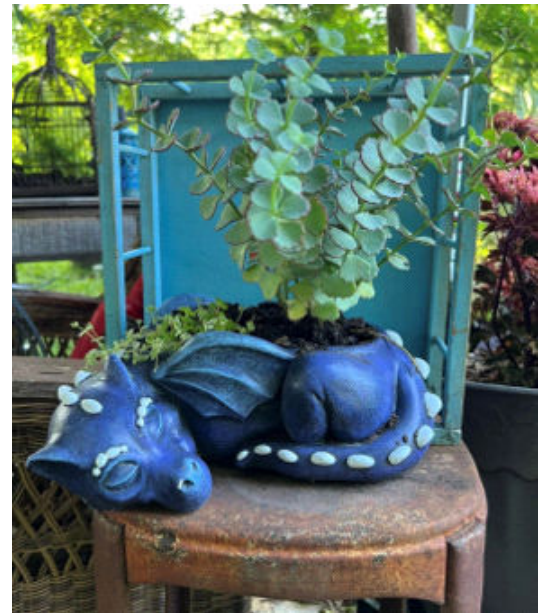
A sampling of a few of the many critters that call Critterhaven Gardens home.



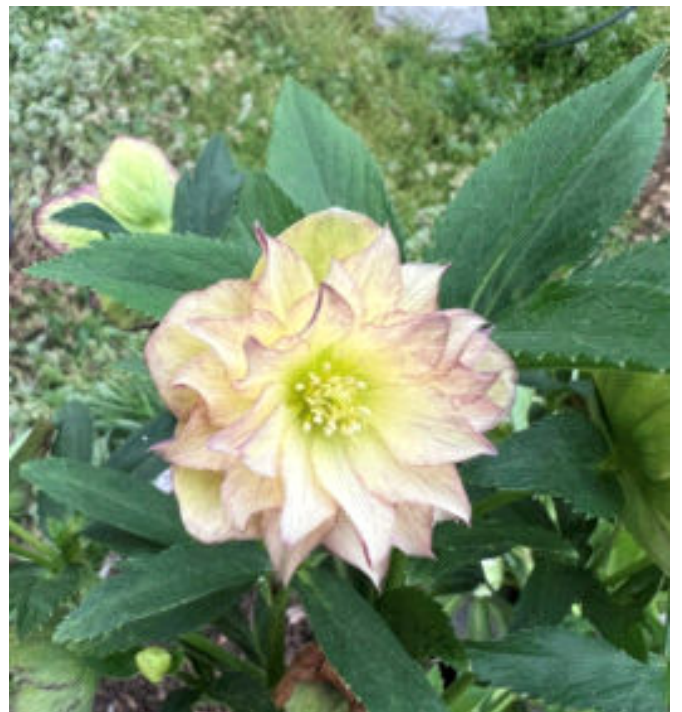
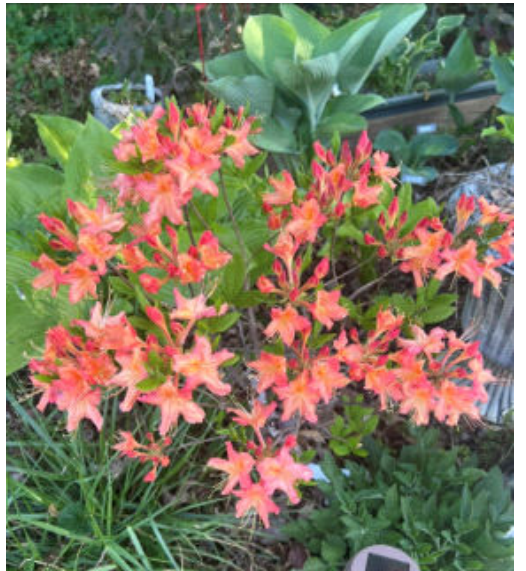




Owning an antique and collectibles business has its advantages in the garden, too. Susan decorates her garden with unique statuary and planters that she has found in her travels collecting goods for her shop.







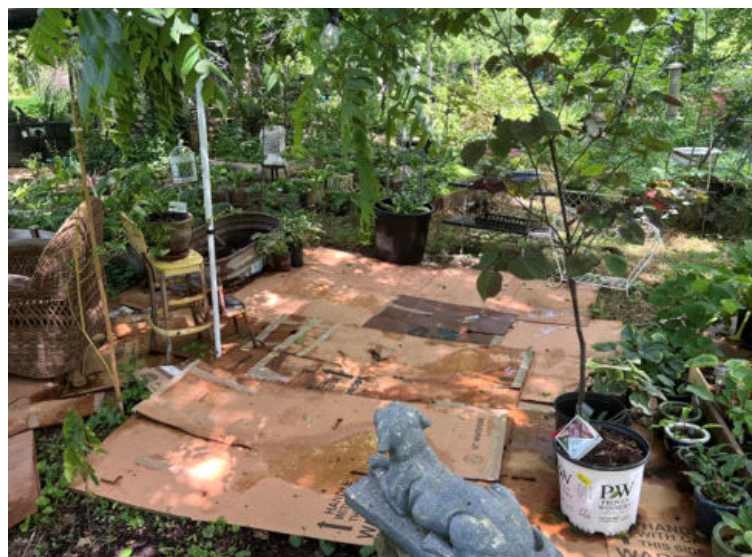
Critterhaven Gardens has a large collection of colorful Hellebores that bloom in early February in her climate.

Susan notes that her largest chore is weeding, and she wishes she had help to tackle the task. low, she illustrates her achievement.

Before and After



Weeding the bottom hosta garden by hand today



Because the natural soil contains large amounts of clay, every new planting bed must be amended with organics. Susan is preparing a new bed here.



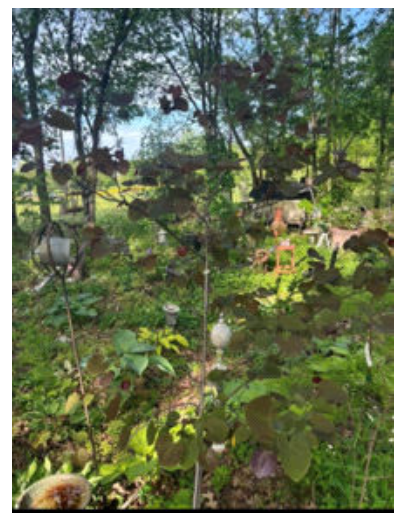
Hosta 'Valley's Salty Crocodile'



H. 'Titanic'



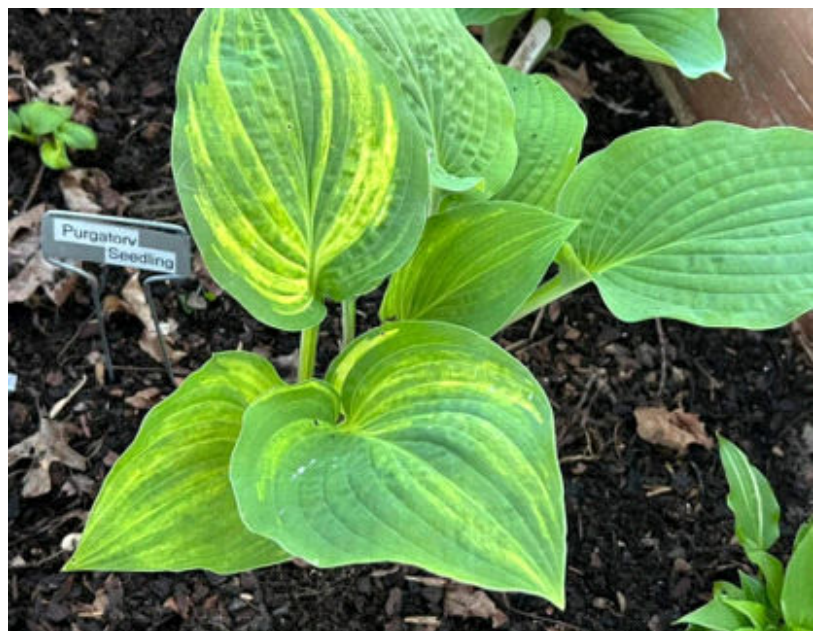
H. 'Summer Rainbow'



Critterhaven Gardens is home to many trees that provide the shade for her hosta collection. Left, *Cersis canadensis* 'Flame Thrower' and right, *Cercis canadensis* 'Black Pearl' and 'Forest Pansy'.



Hosta 'Lakeside Shore Master'



Open pollinated seedling from *H.* 'Purgatory'.



Onoclea sensibilis



Hosta 'Siberian Tiger'



Hosta 'The Perfect Storm'



H. 'Amalia'



H. 'Sew in Love'



H. 'Cat in the Hat'



H. 'Superfecta'



H. 'Mito-no-hana'



H. 'Stitch in Time'



H. 'Rosedale Blend Master'



H. 'None Lovelier'



H. 'The King'



H. 'Garden Gate'



H. 'Clifford's Stingray'



H. 'Wet Felted'



H. 'Kiwi Highlights'



H. 'Whoopee'



H. 'Sand Pebbles'



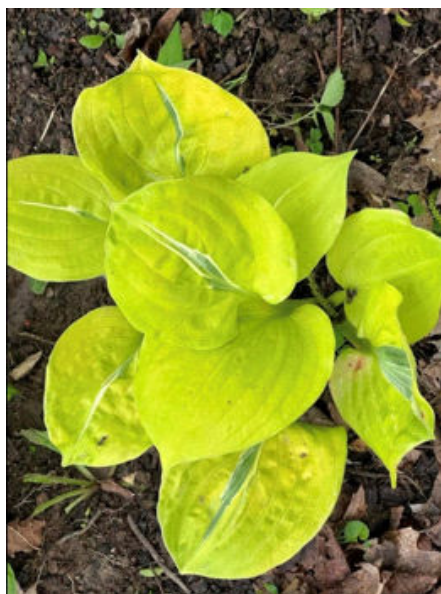
H. 'Grecian Lace'



H. 'Bullfrog'



H. 'Christmas Tree Gala'



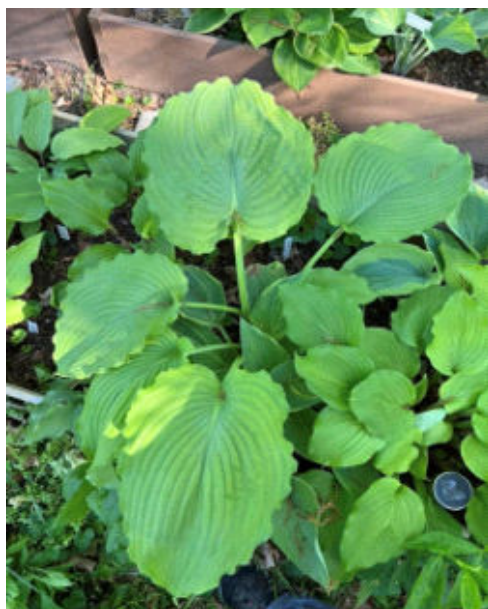
H. 'Time Traveler'



H. 'How About That'



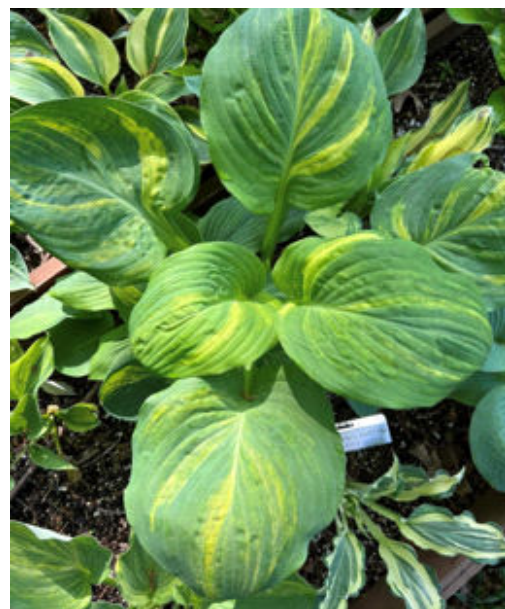
H. 'We Back the Badge'



H. 'Giantland Friends Forever'



H. 'Middle Ridge'



H. 'Galaxy'



H. 'Giantland Pegasus'



H. 'Embroidery'



H. 'Dragon Fire'



H. 'Stargate'



H. 'Spring Love'



H. 'Hollywood Silly Wabbit'



H. 'Andrew'



H. 'Light the Match'



H. 'White Ray'



H. 'Chinese Dragon Supreme'



H. ventricosa 'Aureomaculata'



H. 'Seventh Heaven'



H. 'Zeus'



H. 'Speakeasy'



H. 'Green Lava'



H. 'Pandora's Box'



H. 'Lionheart'



H. 'Gilt by Association'



H. 'Frühlingssonne'



H. 'Ice Age Trail'



H. 'Country Heartthrob'



H. 'Empress Wu', is Susan's first hosta and was the one that fueled the drive to collect hostas.



H. 'OOME'



Susan and Julie with Gail Heidbreder, owner of Hillcrest Hostas & More in Donnellson, Iowa.



The adventures of The Hosta Road Trippers begin with an empty vehicle which is gradually filled with hostas as they visit various gardens and vendors across the country. They memorialize each stop in a photo with the owners for their blog.



Susan and Julie with Renee Thies and Mike Dammen, owners of The Hostas Store in Hollandale, Minnesota.

Right, Susan and Julie with Joshua Spece, owner of In the Country Garden and Gifts in Independence, Iowa.





Susan and Julie with Gail Russo, when they met up during the AHS Convention in the garden of Clarence Hanna in Marion, Ohio.



Susan and Julie with Brian White, owner of Brian White's Nursery in Maynardville, Tennessee.



Susan and Julie with Rob James, owner of Holy Hosta Farm in Rockford, Illinois.



Left, Susan and Julie with Cozart Smith during the Dixie Regionals.



Right, Susan and Julie with Dr. David Bowe in his garden in Chagrin Falls, Ohio before he retired and moved to Florida.





Susan and Julie with Ed Thaubald, owner of Bentley Gardens in Locust Grove, Georgia.



Susan and Julie with Al Ritchey, owner of Al's Auto Body and Arboretum in Walworth, Wisconsin.



Susan and Julie with Michael Carr, owner of Hugo's Hosta Haven in Cherry Valley, Illinois.

Right, each garden visit fills the vehicle up with more hosta treasures, that they eventually resort to strapping luggage to the rooftop.



Left, Susan and Julie with Nick Ternes, owner of Botanophilia LLC Garden Center in Antigo, Wisconsin.



Above, Susan and Julie with Natalie Silvers, owner of Silvers Elbert Nursery in Cisco, Georgia.



Susan and Julie with Kelly and Michael Giese Sr., owners of The Hosta Stop in Plover, Wisconsin.



Susan and Julie with Ashley and Chino Moscoso, owners of Land of the Giants Hosta Farm, LLC in Milton, Wisconsin.



The next time you attend a hosta event, keep your eyes peeled for the auto packed full of hostas and then look for Susan and Julie because they are probably not far behind!

Right, Susan is peeking through a huge stack of hostas, contemplating her next move. When you find her, be sure to greet her, because she will be on the way to the next adventure before long!



This interview was conducted and compiled by Gail J Russo, Cedarville, NJ.

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



New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants, LLC
73 Exeter Rd
South Hampton, NH 03827
1-603-879-0085



Have you ever visited Boston, Massachusetts, considered to be the “Cradle of Freedom”? It is one of America’s oldest cities, boasting a Public Garden which is America’s first botanical garden. A few miles across the state line you will find South Hampton, New Hampshire, a small town of fewer than 1,000 residents. South Hampton is known for its focus on open space with a quiet, country vibe, which are perfect conditions for starting a fabulous garden. Residents often frequent Heron Pond Farm to shop for produce, Nor’East Architectural Antiques for building supplies and New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants, LLC to satisfy their serious hosta addiction needs!

Richard Merritt grew up in Amesbury, MA, which is a few miles away from Boston and South Hampton. He studied Agriculture at Delaware Valley University and then Business at Boston University. With fresh degrees in hand, he opened Merritt Nursery on leased property in Amesbury in the late 1980s. He always had a deep love for plants and the natural world, and this career seemed the perfect path for his future. Merritt Nursery offered annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs and hard goods for sale. They also offered landscaping services. After a few years of success in this trade, he purchased property in South Hampton, NH and moved the business there to serve the residents of this Boston suburb. He lives in the home on the property and spends his days tending to the nursery.

Young P.J. Beaulier lived with his parents less than a mile away from the nursery. One afternoon while rollerblading, he noticed a help wanted sign posted in front of the nursery and he was hired. In 1993, he started working at Merritt Nursery. He gained a love for all things plant related and after graduating from high school, attended Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute. Richard taught P.J. all he had learned and together they tended to the nursery. By 2007, they noticed a change in the nursery industry as the “big box stores” such as Home Depot and Lowe’s expanded their presence in the area. They were able to offer the same plants cheaper with the added convenience of shopping for other household things at the same time. Richard and P.J. recognized the need to distinguish the nursery by focusing on a specialized niche. They chose hostas because they were the best-selling perennial in their area at the time. They knew there were many varieties grown and commercially available that were difficult for home gardeners to find locally. Additionally, the growth of the internet made it possible to offer the less widely available varieties to a broader audience across the country with the convenience of shipping. Richard changed the name of the business to reflect its new mission to New Hampshire Hostas.



Initially, they chose about 20-25 varieties of hostas to test the concept. They were especially excited to offer popular new varieties such as *Hosta* ‘Golden Tiara’, ‘June’ and ‘Pizzazz’. Their search for newer varieties led them to the tissue culture laboratories Shady Oaks Nursery and Q & Z Nursery where they were able to purchase large quantities of hosta liners to expand their selection with hard-to-find varieties that were not offered by the “big box” stores.

As their nursery operation changed and expanded, the number of employees grew from two to ten and sometimes fifteen during the spring. P.J. became the nursery manager, with Richard focusing on the business end. As their customer base expanded, Richard began writing and publishing informational articles or blogs on their website to help customers care for their hostas and solve other problems such as voles in the garden. For P.J., expanding their hosta catalog became an irresistible pursuit - much like it is for many hosta collectors. They were thrilled when their collection surpassed 100 varieties, then 200 and eventually 300. Today, their hosta inventory lists more than 1,800 hostas!

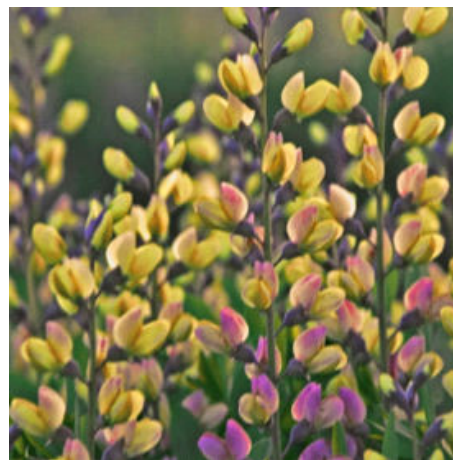
In addition, they tested the concept that true hosta collectors also like to complete their shade gardens with companion plants that thrive near hostas without harming them. They began sourcing hosta companion plants such as *Heuchera*, *Tiarella*, *Helleborus*, *Epimedium*, *Pulmonaria*, *Brunnera*, *Aquilegia*, *Carex*, *Dicentra* and many fern varieties. The business name again changed to reflect their inventory and scope, becoming New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants, LLC. (NHH).



Epimedium × *versicolor* ‘Sulphureum’



Heucherella ‘Copper King’



Baptisia ‘Pink Lemonade’



Athyrium niponicum ‘Crested Surf’



Anemone FALL IN LOVE™ ‘Sweetly’



Dicentra ‘Pink Diamonds’

NHH has a customer base that stretches across America, with much of their business being mail order. They have a small display garden on site, and P.J. has a garden of his own at his home to tend. Because the majority of their stock is received as liners, they are all potted upon arrival and remain in the grow houses in pots until they are rooted enough to sell. Local customers visiting the nursery can select hostas and companions from the greenhouses and grow areas.

NHH is a member of the American Hosta Society, was a member of the American Hosta Growers Association until it ceased and is a member of the New England Hosta Society. They have hosted tours of the nursery for the NEHS and local garden clubs, by appointment.

Being located in planting hardiness zone 6A would normally be detrimental to a nursery that begins shipping plant orders in March/April, but because they are all potted and remain inside greenhouses, they get a head start on the season and are able to ship to warmer climates in time for spring planting because they don't have to dig them up outside. A few of the larger varieties of hostas and companions are shipped bare root, but the majority of hostas are shipped potted! Each pot is packed with newspaper that has been taped or banded on to retain the soil, and each plant is supported with a wooden stake inside the shipping box. If your order arrives before you can safely plant it outside in your climate, it can remain in the pots until you are ready to plant, which is very convenient!



Left, hostas prepared for shipping. Most are shipped potted but plugs and companion plants are shipped bare root. Some are shipped wrapped due to agricultural laws. The smaller wrapped ones pictured here are plugs, with their roots wrapped in wet paper. Each hosta is labeled with the corresponding tag.

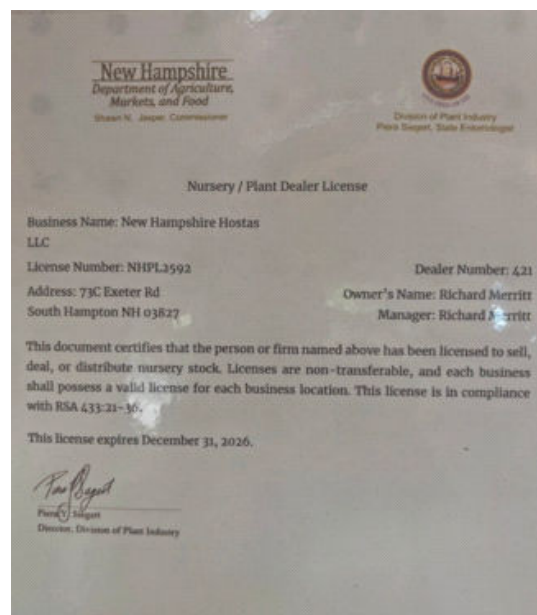


Potted hostas are topped off with paper and sometimes taped and/or banded to retain soil. A supportive stick is inserted to keep the plants from bending and breaking leaves.

Packing boxes for shipping is a daily weekday event with stacks of boxes waiting for pick-up in the packing area.



As each delivery of liners is received, it is inspected before potting for signs of Hosta Virus X (HVX) and random plant varieties are tested. If anything tests positive, the entire quantity of that variety is discarded. Because they remain potted, there is little chance of contamination. They purchase liners directly from reputable tissue culture laboratories before they are placed in any fields or soil to be grown on. If they notice any sign of nematodes, they treat with Nemastop and they release beneficial wasps in the grow areas to control aphids. If any tools are used, they are sanitized after each use. NHH is inspected yearly by the New Hampshire state agriculture department to retain their nursery license. If your concern is finding a reliable, reputable source for your hosta needs, New Hampshire Hostas is a wise choice with these procedures in place.



During the winter months while the hostas are dormant, P.J. is hard at work on updating the website and sourcing new companion plants to offer for sale. They always work at improving the appearance of the site and he reviews and compiles spring orders daily for accuracy.

P.J. and Richard share a love of houseplants such as orchids, monstera, begonias and alocasia which can be enjoyed and tended year-round. Richard enjoys attending musical theater performances and enjoys going to the movie theaters. P.J. enjoys golfing when able to (with a handicap of eight) and he enjoys playing with his dogs Lucy and Cinnamon.

His favorite public garden is the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. During the winter months while the hostas are dormant, P.J. is hard at work on updating the website and sourcing new companion plants to offer for sale. They always work at improving the appearance of the site and he reviews and compiles spring orders daily for accuracy.

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NHH does not grow hostas from seeds, though P.J. has started growing some seeds at his home, with most being too immature to view right now. He once found a seed pod on *Hosta* 'King of Spades', which rarely sets seed and he germinated them. He had one seedling survive to maturity and he named it *H.* 'Hold My Beer'. It has an upright habit with cupped and corrugated leaves that bear a thick white bloom on the backs and edges, creating the appearance of a halo around the leaf.



H. 'Hold My Beer' was named for its upright cup shape with the white halo around the edge of the leaf resembling the foam on a mug of beer.



NHH has found two hosta sports in the nursery that they have registered and placed into tissue culture production. *H. 'Whirlwind Flame'* is a sport of 'Whirlwind Tour', and *H. 'Silverback'* is a sport of 'Humpback Whale'. They have a few other unregistered sports that they have named and offer in limited numbers as they are able to divide them from the parent plants growing in the display gardens. These include *H. 'Pennybags'* and 'Painted Dog'.



H. 'Painted Dog' is a sport of 'Golden Needles'.



H. 'Whirlwind Flame' is a sport of 'Whirlwind Tour'.



Left, *H. 'Silverback'* is a sport of 'Humpback Whale', growing just as large!



Right, *H. 'Pennybags'* is a sport of 'Rich Uncle'.

NHH releases its newly updated catalog online November 1 of each year, with all the new hosta varieties being offered this season until sold out, so placing orders early is advised. As a bonus, all orders placed from November through mid-January receive a 10% discount. Additionally, once you total \$300, the discount increases to 15% with free shipping and multiple orders placed are combined for this total! If you fall outside these requirements, customers who return to their website to place a second order automatically receive 5% off their order. Year-round discounts any way you choose!

NHH is open to the public Thursday and Friday 9 am – 3 pm and Saturday 9 am – 1 pm. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment to visit, contact P.J. Beaulier, nursery manager: info@nhhostas.com or 603-879-0085.

To view their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1EhuD9P32V/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

To browse the catalog or place an order online: <https://nhhostas.com/>

New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants, LLC offers between 800-1000 hosta varieties for sale online as well as hundreds of companion plants. They update the website as varieties are ready to be sold, so periodically checking back for new additions is encouraged.

A quick search of the site by price yields a single hosta priced at \$40 with every other one less than that, making their selection quite affordable. If you subscribe, NHH sends out frequent emails to notify customers about new additions so they can visit and browse the site.

Below is a preview of some special hostas you will find offered this coming season!



The office entrance is planted with *H.* 'Leading Lady', 'Komodo Dragon', 'King of Spades', 'Razzmatazz', 'Glory Hallelujah', 'Age of Gold' and 'Silver Serenity'.

These varieties are hostas that were offered as liners a long time ago but are no longer in their inventory for sale. If you see something in stock you like, purchase it now! Every year they select a few of the older varieties to propagate and offer but once sold, it's a while until they can be offered again.



Hostas and their companions are tucked away snug for the winter inside the unheated greenhouses.



Visitors are often greeted by P.J.'s Yorkies – Cinnamon, age 3 on the left and Lucy, age 11 on the right, next to *H.* 'Cathedral Windows'.



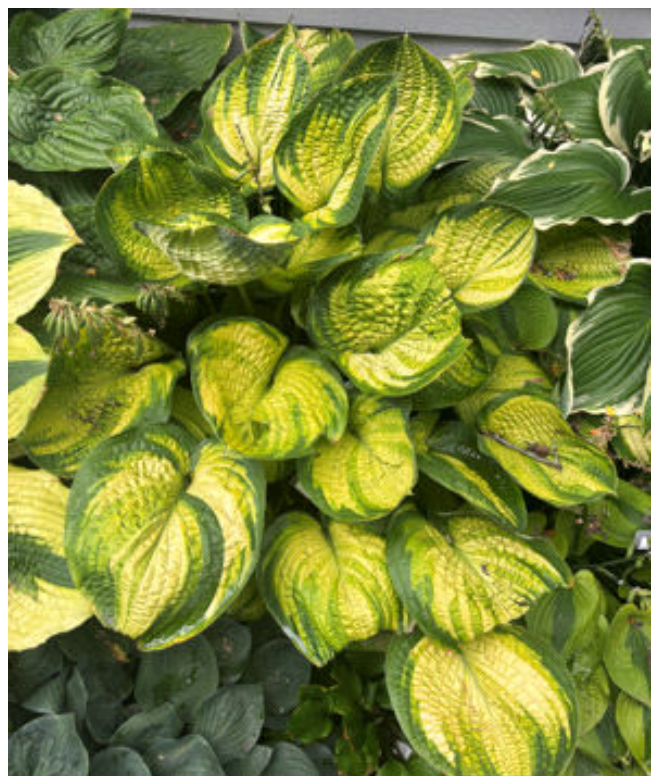
Left, there is a small display garden at the nursery, but the majority of stock for sale remains potted. Planted hostas include *H.* 'Prairie Sky', 'Luna Moth', 'Bridegroom', 'High Society', 'Manhattan', 'Toy Soldier', 'Carnival', 'Guardian Angel', 'Cutting Edge' and 'Journey's End'.



Left,
H. 'Waukon
Water'.



Left,
H. 'Satisfaction'.



H. 'Dick Ward'



P.J.'s most prized breeding hosta, growing in his personal garden. It is an unnamed seedling that he grew from seeds that he purchased from famed hybridizer Doug Beilstein labeled A104. It is a *H. 'Justice'* seedling with 'Brutus', 'Boondocks' and 'Empress Wu' in its lineage. It is very fertile, as shown by the huge scape of seed pods above and has yielded many streaked seedlings.



Right, a tray of seedlings from the hosta above. P.J. sows his seeds in February so he can move them into the greenhouse in late March or early April. He does not have a grand growing station set-up in his home so he utilizes the nursery space to grow them out. These seedlings may be future introductions to the trade.



Allium 'Medusa'



Osmunda spectabilis or
American Royal Fern



Bergenia 'Red Beauty'



Baptisia 'Honey Roasted'

There are many varieties of companion plants that thrive in the same conditions suited to hostas. New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants offers many fabulous selections so you can purchase your entire shade garden in one spot! The same great discount applies.



Miscanthus sinensis 'Little Zebra'



Asarum splendens or Chinese Wild Ginger



Heuchera 'Lava Lamp'



Allium 'Millennium'



Heuchera 'Silver Gumdrop'



Filipendula 'Red Umbrellas'



Helleborus 'Blushing Bridesmaid'



Pulmonaria 'Spot On'



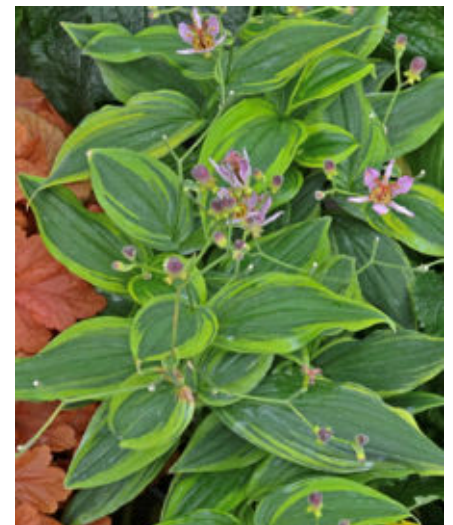
Rodgersia 'Bronze Peacock'



Ligularia dentata 'Britt-Marie Crawford'



Thalictrum 'Black Stockings'



Tricyrtis formosana 'Autumn Glow'



Hosta 'Dragon Fire'



H. 'Christmas Toast'



H. 'Kent Falls'



H. 'Buffalo Golden Warrior'



H. 'Bowe Derek'



H. 'Golden Celebration'



H. 'Sip of Wine'



H. 'Cherry Cheesecake'



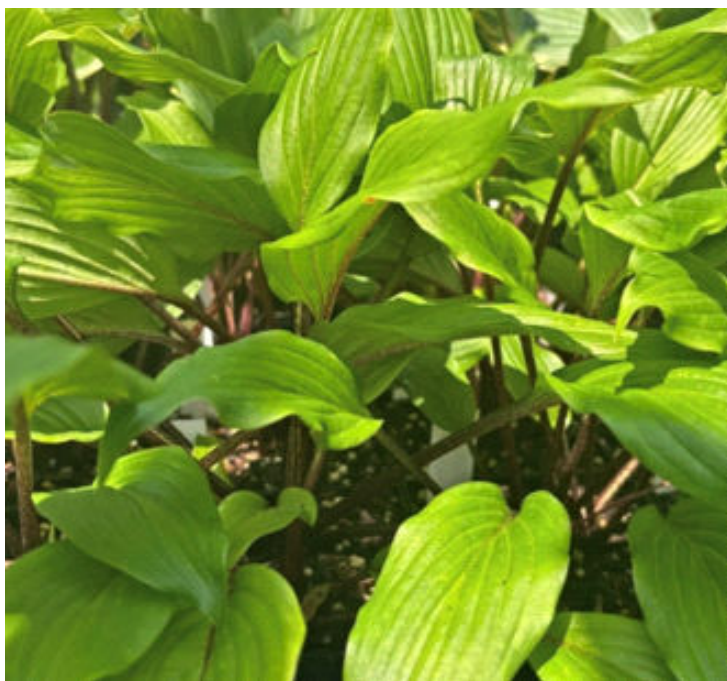
H. 'Captain Cam'



H. 'Holar Fiery Sky'



H. 'Big Red'



H. 'Sing My Life'



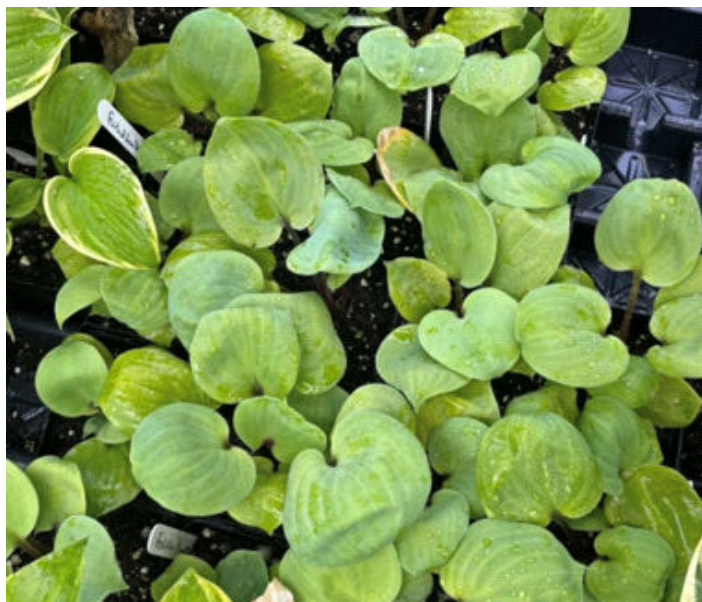
H. 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida'



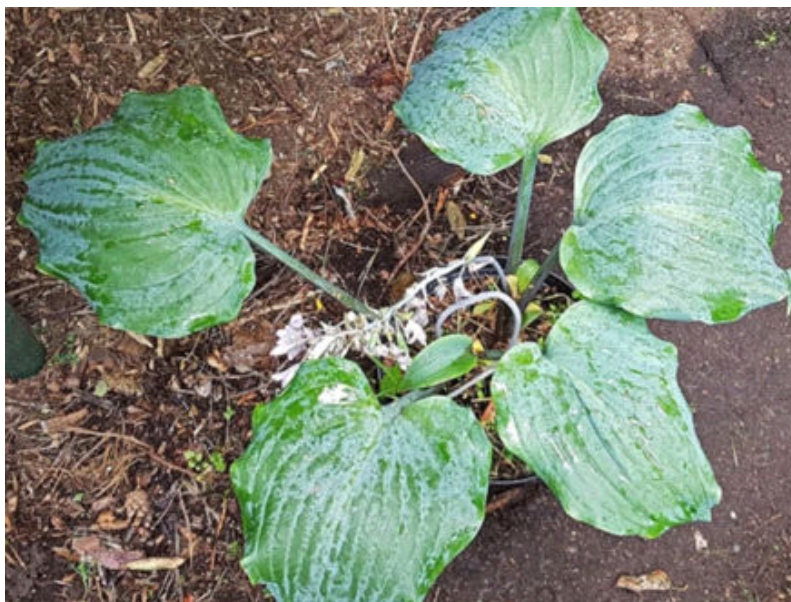
H. 'Sidekick'



H. 'Lemon Feather'



H. 'Forbidden Planet'



H. 'Kempen Metallica'



H. 'Top Shelf'



H. 'Sparkling Sunshine'



Red Petioles

[View collection](#) ➔



Rippled Foliage

[View collection](#) ➔



Safe Pest Control

[View collection](#) ➔



Shop Hostas by Type

[View collection](#) ➔

The website is extremely user friendly for both novices and hostaholics. There are sub-categories for every hosta type - by size, color, newest and of course, alphabetically. Companion plants and accessories are also grouped. Don't miss the discount section for the bargains!



Collections



Blue Hosta

[View collection](#) ➔



Blue/Green Margins

[View collection](#) ➔



Companion Plants

[View collection](#) ➔



Discounts

[View collection](#) ➔



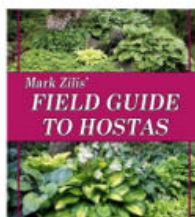
Epimediums

[View collection](#) ➔



Extra-Large 2 Gallon

[View collection](#) ➔



Hosta Books

[View collection](#) ➔



Hosta Of The Year!

[View collection](#) ➔



Giant Hostas

[View collection](#) ➔



Gold Hosta

[View collection](#) ➔



Fragrant Hostas

[View collection](#) ➔



Garden Labels

[View collection](#) ➔



Hosta Starter/Elle Plant Plugs

[View collection](#) ➔



Hosta Varieties A-Z

[View collection](#) ➔



Green Hosta

[View collection](#) ➔



Ground Cover Hosta

[View collection](#) ➔

New Hampshire Hostas & Companion Plants is preparing to launch their updated online catalog with the newest varieties that will ship in the spring.

They continue shipping from the current inventory until the end of September. They are conducting inventory of the greenhouses right now and they update the website with found varieties daily.

Don't miss the launch of the 2027 catalog on November 1, 2026. It is first-come, first-served on the newest varieties that will ship in the spring, when they are ready to be planted in your garden!

New varieties include *H.* 'Cherries Jubilee Flambe', 'Green Eggs and Ham', 'Jade Dragon', 'Maize Maze', 'Mito-no-hana', 'Poetry in Motion', 'Ripples in Time', 'Sparkling Sunshine' and 'Wisconsin's Finest'. This is not a complete list, so be sure to check back in November! <https://nhhostas.com/>



a growing bench in one of the greenhouses full of newly planted hosta liners that will be offered soon!

Please come visit us In South Hampton, NH!

NH HOSTAS & COMPANION PLANTS

Yes, We Are Still Shipping! Yes, We Have Plenty of Inventory!
Order Now and Receive Your Plants Quickly!

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HOSTAS

& Companion Plants - Thoughtfully grown. Expertly chosen. Ready for your garden.

GIFTS FOR GARDENERS
Mark Zilis' **GUIDE TO HOSTAS**
Gift Certificates
Great Gardening Books & More!
SHOP NOW

Summer Gardening!
Hostas Love the Warm
Soil Temps! Remember to
Water!

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 provided by New Hampshire Hostas.



The Dirty Corner

Erica Lawrenz, Apple Valley, MN

Don't Guess. Soil Test!

It starts here.

If you want to understand your soil, the first step is a soil test. Because without one, the reality is—we're guessing. Sure, you can watch how quickly water drains. You can squeeze a handful of soil and see whether it crumbles apart or forms a ball that could potentially be fired in a kiln and turned into pottery. Those observations can tell us *something*. But they're still only small pieces of a much bigger picture. The truth is pretty simple: **you can't really begin improving your soil until you know what you're starting with.**

Some gardeners, for lack of a better term, just get lucky. Their soil naturally has decent structure, favorable nutrient levels, enough organic matter, cooperative rainfall, and an environment forgiving enough to overlook a few questionable gardening decisions. And then there are those that stand in the garden staring bewilderedly at struggling plants, wondering what on earth they are doing wrong.

So we add things. Fertilizer. Compost. Maybe the latest “miracle” amendment someone mentioned online that you can whip up from ingredients already sitting in your kitchen—because apparently if it's safe for the pantry, it must be good for the soil, too.

A splash of this. A scoop of that.

It baffles me sometimes, the lengths we'll go to concoct some elaborate potion based largely on anecdote and conjecture, then happily dump it into the garden without a second thought. Yet somehow, running a relatively simple soil test—one that can actually give us measurable, scientific information about what is happening beneath our feet—feels like too much work, too complicated, or simply unnecessary. We're often very willing to experiment blindly with what we *think* the soil might need, when we could just...actually find out.

Most gardeners have at least heard of soil testing. Some have done it. But relatively few make it part of their regular garden routine. Why? Maybe the process feels daunting and unfamiliar, and you simply don't know where to begin. Maybe you've tested before, received a page full of numbers, abbreviations, colorful bars, fancy terms and thought, *Well...that's nice. Now what?*

Sending in the soil is only half of the process. Understanding what comes back—and knowing what to do with that information—is where soil testing actually becomes useful.

Not All Soil Tests Are Created Equal

Your soil test results will only be as good as two things: the sample you send in, and the test the laboratory performs on it.

I learned this one firsthand. When I sent in my very first soil sample to a local lab, I waited for the results with probably an unreasonable amount of excitement. Then they arrived, and I was...underwhelmed. The basic test reported only a handful of things: estimated soil texture, pH, phosphorus, and potassium, accompanied by brightly colored bar graphs that mostly said HIGH.

My estimated soil texture was listed as coarse, which by the lab's definition was sandy soil.



Well that certainly wasn't right.

I have quite literally made sculptures and repaired pots with the clay from my garden. I'm lucky if I can persuade the tip of the shovel more than an inch into the ground without first considering power tools. Then my eyes moved to the recommendations.

Essentially: Don't add anything. That was it? No explanation of nutrients. No discussion of ratios. No real insight into what might be contributing to my plant problems or what could improve the soil.

Just...do nothing??

I had hoped the results might shed some light on why my garden seemed to be struggling. Instead, I was left with a page of numbers I didn't understand and a recommendation that seemed to suggest everything was perfectly fine.

Spoiler alert: there was plenty that needed attention.

There were two main problems. First, I had absolutely no foundational knowledge of how to interpret a soil test. Second, the test itself wasn't giving me enough information.

We'll tackle soil test interpretation in future *Dirty Corners*. But first, let's start at the beginning—because before we can interpret anything, we need a good sample and a good test.



Keys to Successful Soil Sampling

When Should You Test?

Technically, you can soil test anytime the ground isn't frozen.

Some gardeners prefer to test in the fall. This allows time for certain fall-applied amendments to begin breaking down and gives you the entire winter to study your results, create a fertility plan, order products for spring, etc. Fall results may also reflect a soil that is somewhat depleted after supporting plants throughout the growing season.

Others prefer to test in the spring, just before the growing season begins. Spring testing can provide a picture of what is available as plants prepare to actively grow. Nutrients released through organic matter decomposition and mineralization may also look somewhat different than they did the previous fall.

Where Should You Sample?

The more soil testing you do, the more you realize just how much variation can exist—even across surprisingly small areas. This is why I don't recommend taking one giant composite sample from your entire yard. For example, the soil on the left side of my house tested at a pH of **7.5**. The soil on the right side? **5.9**. If I had collected soil from both gardens, mixed everything together, and sent it in as one sample, I might have received a pleasant-looking average somewhere around 6.7.

Wonderful! Except neither garden actually had a pH of 6.7. One was quite alkaline. The other was acidic. And the management needed for those two areas was completely different. By averaging them together, I would have successfully identified the needs of...neither one.

A few sampling rules to follow:

- Keep individual sample areas relatively small. I prefer the sample size area to be no larger than **10 × 10 feet**.
- Mark or document exactly where you sampled. Future tests are much more useful when you return to the **same area**.
- Sample areas that grow noticeably differently **separately**.
- If one section consistently produces beautiful plants and another looks like it has personally given up on life, don't mix those soils together. Test them independently.

Taking the Sample

For the most accurate results, you want good, consistent soil cores. If one sample contains mostly soil from the top inch and another contains mostly soil from five or six inches down, nutrient concentrations can be very different—and your final result may not accurately represent the area you're trying to evaluate.

A simple **stainless-steel** soil probe makes this process much easier. They're relatively inexpensive, and a six-inch probe can help you take samples at a consistent depth each time.

For each sample area:

- Take multiple cores throughout the area.
- Insert the probe **straight up and down**.
- Sample to the **same depth every time**.
- Place all of the cores from that sample area into a clean bucket.
- Mix them together thoroughly.
- Take the required amount of that mixed soil and place it into your soil sample bag.



Where Should You Send It?

There are several good soil-testing laboratories available, and gardeners may choose differently depending on their location, or the recommendations commonly used in their region.

The bigger issue is making sure you know **what your test actually includes**.

A complete soil test should include:

- **Primary nutrients:** Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K)
- **Secondary nutrients:** Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), Sulfur (S)
- **Micronutrients:** Zinc (Zn), Manganese (Mn), Copper (Cu), Iron (Fe), Boron (B)
- **Organic Matter**
- **pH**
- **Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)**

- **Base Saturations**
- **Sodium**
- **Excess Lime**
- **Soluble Salts**

Phew. It looks like a lot, yes. But important? Yes! If I'm trying to understand overall soil fertility and nutrient balance, I want a complete picture. Partial tests give you exactly that: a partial picture.

Watch for Reporting Limits

There's another detail worth paying attention to when choosing a laboratory: reporting limits. Some labs stop reporting certain nutrients once the result exceeds a predetermined level. Take phosphorus for example.

A report might list phosphorus as 100 ppm, when what it really means is **100+ ppm**. The laboratory has decided that, from its perspective, anything above that number is already sufficiently high and there is little value in reporting the actual concentration.

For some fertility recommendations, that may be fine. But if you're trying to evaluate nutrient balance, ratios, or long-term soil management, the actual number becomes very important.

We encountered one soil test where phosphorus had been reported at the laboratory's upper reporting limit of 100 ppm. When the actual value was obtained, it was over **900 ppm**. That is absolutely important to know. So when choosing a test, understand whether you're receiving the actual measured value or whether the laboratory caps its reported results above a certain threshold.

Finding the Right Lab

Look for a laboratory that offers the information you need without requiring you to add (and pay for) every nutrient one at a time. That à la carte approach can become expensive very quickly.

One laboratory may start with an inexpensive basic test but then charge separately each additional nutrient and everything else you actually wanted to know. Suddenly your bargain soil test has the pricing structure of an airline ticket.

Would you like magnesium with that? That'll be extra.

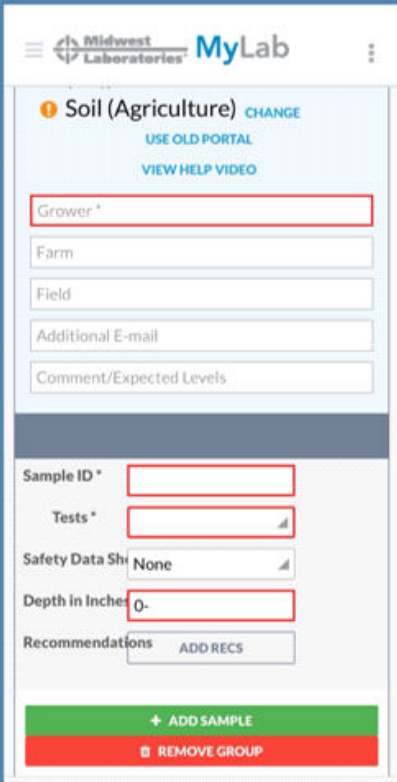
In fact, a comprehensive soil test that costs around \$12 at one laboratory could easily cost more than \$200 at another. Same test, very different price tag.

GROWER
YOUR NAME

UNDER
SAMPLE ID
CREATE YOUR
OWN UNIQUE
IDENTIFIER
FOR YOUR SOIL
SAMPLE

UNDER TEST
SELECT
S3CM

DEPTH
TYPICALLY
0-6 INCHES



The screenshot shows the Midwest Laboratories MyLab portal. At the top, it says 'Soil (Agriculture)' with a 'CHANGE' link, and 'USE OLD PORTAL' and 'VIEW HELP VIDEO' links. Below this are input fields for 'Grower *', 'Farm', 'Field', 'Additional E-mail', and 'Comment/Expected Levels'. A section for 'Sample ID *' and 'Tests *' has dropdown menus. There's a 'Safety Data Sheet' dropdown set to 'None' and a 'Depth in Inches' dropdown set to '0-'. At the bottom, there's a 'Recommendations' section with an 'ADD RECS' button. A green button says '+ ADD SAMPLE' and a red button says 'REMOVE GROUP'.

In fact, a comprehensive soil test that costs around \$12 at one laboratory could easily cost more than \$200 at another. Same test, very different price tag. For my purposes, I have found Midwest Laboratories to be a good fit. A large, well respected lab with fast turnarounds, reasonable prices, and good customer service. The test I commonly use is their **S3CM** soil test, which provides the broad range of information I'm looking for while using the Mehlich III extraction method. It also remains cost-effective when testing multiple garden areas throughout the season.

If you're looking for a step-by-step walk through showing exactly how to order the S3CM test through Midwest Laboratories, you can find that information here:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=792297096773072&id=100079783653608&mibextid=wwXIfr&rdid=yEjWXewZgOeh2fcd#

So...What Do I Do With All Those Numbers?

Getting the test is step one. Understanding it is where things really start to get interesting. Those numbers aren't just isolated measurements. Nutrients interact. Ratios matter. Soil chemistry matters. CEC matters. pH influences nutrient availability. And sometimes the nutrient your plant appears to be lacking isn't actually missing from the soil at all. That's where soil testing becomes less about asking:

“What should I add?”

...and more about asking:

“What is my soil telling me?”

And resist the urge to blindly throw another bag, bottle, powder or potion at your garden until you know what's actually going on down there.

So, send in that soil. Get your baseline. And follow along with future *Dirty Corner* articles as we dig into those results sitting in front of you—what they mean, how they relate to one another, and how to turn a page full of soil chemistry into information you can actually use. Because once you understand what your soil is telling you, you can finally stop guessing.



And In Other Hosta News . . .

Dr. Bob 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, 2027. 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 Becki 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, 2027. 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, 2027.
***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

The 2027 AHS Member Plant, *Hosta 'Rising Smoke'* is on sale through April 15, 2027.



ROD KUENSTER

2027 AHS Member Plant
Hosta 'Rising Smoke' (R. Kuenster - 2026)
Medium (21" tall x 30" wide at maturity)

The 2027 AHS Member Plant comes from Rod Kuenster, a previous winner of the AHS Eunice Fisher Hybridizer Award.

Rising Smoke is a cross of *Hosta* 'Purple Verticulated Elf' and *H.* 'Beer Belly Blues'. Powdery blue leaves are held upright on light blue petioles.

The cost is \$26.00, which includes the shipping cost.

Members of the American Hosta Society are eligible to purchase the 2027 AHS Member Plant, *Hosta* 'Rising Smoke'. The plants are on sale now and will be available through April 15, 2027. We plan to ship in late April 2027. Sales will continue through April 15, 2027 or when the plant is sold out.

To order, complete this form and send with a check for \$26 payable to American Hosta Society or **call 309-678-4119** with your credit card.
Mail this form with your check to **AHS Member Plant, PO Box 7407, Villa Park, IL 60181-7407.**

AHS Member Name

Address

Email

Address



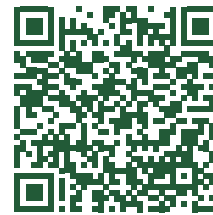
Your Indiana Hosta friends are excited
to invite you to the
AHS National Convention
Hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society

June 9–12, 2027

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

Where Hosta, Music & Friends Meet!

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



Dr. David Bowe sporting H. 'Deep Blue Sea'
from the 2006 Nashville TN Convention

Photo credit: Dr. Doug Beilstein

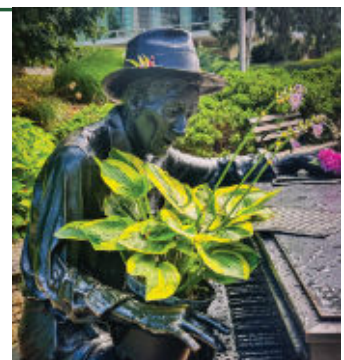
You asked for more gardens —
and we're delivering! Plus, get ready for:

- 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
- The AHS whimsical Hosta Hat contest
- 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.



American Hosta Society 2027 National Convention

Registration Form: Register and pay online at hostaconvention.org

June 9–13, 2027	Embassy Suites Plainfield Indianapolis Airport
6089 Clarks Creek Road, Plainfield, IN, 46168	Hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society

Registrant Information Complete one attendee **form** for each registrant.

First name	Last name
Email address	Phone Number
Billing address	City, State, ZIP

Registration Selection

Registration type	Price	Amount
Full Registration - sale ends April 30, 2027	\$278	\$ _____
Late Full Registration - on sale beginning May 1, 2027 - sale ends May 31, 2027	\$300	\$ _____
GARDEN TOUR BUS Includes bus fee and box lunches for Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday **Bus seats limited to 150 attendees** Box lunches for Tour Bus Riders ONLY	\$155	\$ _____

Cancellations received before May 1, 2027, will be charged a \$50 processing fee. Cancellations received on or after May 1, 2027, will not be refunded.

Convention T Shirt Preorder

T-shirts are \$20 each and are available by pre-order only. Order by April 30, 2027. Size(s): _____ Quantity: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Order Summary

Total due \$ _____

Dietary Needs

☐ Vegetarian ☐ Gluten free ☐ Other: _____

Judges Clinics

 Please indicate which clinics you plan to attend.

☐ Clinic I ☐ Clinic II ☐ Clinic III ☐ Official handbook and binder requested - \$15 fee payable at the clinic

Hosta Show Participation

 the Show Schedule will be available online at hostaconvention.org

☐ Judge ☐ Clerk ☐ Participate in the Leaf Show Planned number of Hosta Leaf Show entries (limit 20) _____

Number of items I plan to donate to the Friday afternoon AHS auction: _____

Volunteer Interest

I am willing to volunteer during the convention: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Payment and Submission

If submitting this paper form, Make Check Payable to: Indianapolis Hosta Society

Mail Check to: Tony Benner –Registrar, 4201 Melbourne Rd East Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46228

Visit hostaconvention.org for hotel registration and other convention related information.

Photography and filming activities may be conducted during American Hosta Society events, and attendees or personal property may appear in resulting photographic pictures or video and may be used in printed or digital publications, social media, advertising, or other AHS activities. Participation in the AHS convention constitutes permission and consent for the American Hosta Society to use the resulting photographs and video for any purpose without payment or acknowledgement. Additionally, people who participate in an AHS convention assume all risks of personal injury and loss or damage to property.



And In Regional News . . .

2027 MRHS Winter Symposium

February 27, 2027 - Embassy Suites Hotel - Brookfield-Milwaukee, WI
Event Check-in Fri. Feb 26th, 4-6 PM and Sat. Feb 27th 7-8 AM

Stay tuned for details.



July 8-10, 2027

We want YOU to join us in Rockford, IL for the MRHS Convention July 8th-10th, 2027 at the historic and luxurious Rockford Riverfront Embassy Suites by Hilton. Come and see how Hostas Rock in Rockford!

Come for everything you expect from an incredible MRHS Convention: hosta friends, speakers, vending, silent auction, live auction, raffle, the Rod Kuenster Seedling Contest, Leaf Show, the Convention Plant "I Want You To Want Me," garden tours on Friday AND Saturday (yes, we are taking on two days of garden tours with 10 amazing gardens), and so much more!

You don't want to miss the Thursday Night kick-off Event at Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden (www.klehm.org) where we will have a ribbon cutting of the Stumpery created by Phil Timm, an amazing display filled with over 200 hosta varieties and what we hope will become the next AHS National Display Garden.

If you really love garden tours - we can make your week even more incredible. The Council of Rockford Gardeners (www.crgrockford.com) FREE Annual Garden Walk is on Wednesday, July 7th from 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

These six fabulous gardens are not part of the MRHS garden tours, so you will be seeing even more of what "The City of Gardens" has to offer with the #1 Garden Tour in Illinois.

Want our suggestion for how to have an incredible 4 days of fun, friends and gardens...

Wednesday: arrive in time to do the CRG FREE Garden Walk before checking-in and enjoying the Rooftop Bar at Embassy Suites.

Thursday: after your "made to order" breakfast at Embassy Suites, go see some of our favorite nurseries and garden centers (a list will be provided),

then head to the World-Renowned Anderson Japanese Gardens (www.andersongardens.org) to explore the gardens before grabbing an amazing lunch in their fabulous restaurant, Fresco.

Head back to Embassy Suites to get registered and start hitting all the wonderful vendors before your afternoon nap. Then, get ready for the kick-off of a great hosta convention.

If that didn't get you excited enough - [click here](#) for a little more of a sneak peek as the band Cheap Trick (Rockford natives) welcome you to the MRHS Convention.

2027 MRHS Convention – Registration Form

July 8-10, 2027 – Rockford, Illinois

Embassy Suites by Hilton, Rockford Riverfront Hotel and Conference Center.

Make your hotel reservations by calling **(815) 668-7878** or use the link at the

MRHS convention website: midwesthostasociety.org

Remember to request the special **Hosta Society Convention** Room Rate or **Code 932**.

(Room Rate is \$179 per night - including breakfast - taxes and parking fees are additional)

The hotel rate is good until 6/8/27 or until the room block is full, so book early.



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

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

Friday Banquet Meal Choice:

- ☐ Pasta Primavera
- ☐ Herb Seared Chicken Breast
- ☐ Roasted Salmon

Saturday Banquet Meal Choice:

- ☐ Truffle Mushroom Gnocchi
- ☐ Rosemary Roasted Chicken
- ☐ Pot Roast - potatoes, carrots

**Cancellations received before 6/1/27 will be charged a \$50 processing fee. Cancellations after 6/1/27 will not be refunded.*

EARLY REGISTRATION if received by 3/15/27

\$ 189

STANDARD REGISTRATION if received by 6/18/27

\$ 199

LATE REGISTRATION received after 6/18/27 (DOES NOT INCLUDE DINNERS)

\$ 219

MEALS ONLY (companion or vendors)

\$ 90



\$

Optional Thursday night welcome event – Klehm Arboretum – with private use of the gardens and ribbon cutting for the Hosta Display garden and Stumpery

Meal \$30



\$

\$ Total =

Please list any food allergies or restrictions _____

Make Check Payable to: **MRHS 2027 CONVENTION**

MAIL THIS FORM AND PAYMENT TO: **Barry Ankney, 1104 Oxford Court, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-5249**

Hosta Leaf Show

I plan to ___ Judge ___ Clerk

I plan ___ entries in the Hosta Leaf Show

Friday Night Auction

I plan to donate _____ items for the auction

Seedling Competition

I plan # ___ entries in Seedling Competition

Ride sharing for garden tours.

Need ride for ___ people. Can provide a ride for ___ people.

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!



- 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

Enjoy the carefree beauty of this shade-tolerant perennial

Sign Up!
New members join for \$40/yr and receive a free hosta, *The Hosta Journal* and a \$15 voucher towards hosta purchases from participating vendors

or call to join 309-678-4119

HOSTA.ORG

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

- Receive two print issues per year of our popular publication, *The Hosta Journal*. This 84-page publication is filled with color photos and current information regarding Hostas.
- Receive a copy of *The Hosta Adventure – A Growers Guide* and the *Hosta of the Year* booklet, both filled with color photographs and a wealth of information.
- Receive access to the members-only section of the website to read our *Online Hosta Journal* and access other publications and our member directory.
- Attend national and regional meetings where specialty vendors offer the most recently introduced *Hostas* and companion plants and where a live auction offers rare and distinctive *Hostas* and other garden items.
- Enjoy garden tours open only to AHS members.
- Exhibit your favorite *Hostas* and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional cut-leaf shows.
- Vote on the most popular *Hostas* with our popularity poll.
- Enjoy the camaraderie of fellow *Hosta* enthusiasts.

For more information or to join go to hosta.org or call 309-678-4119.



A reminder that the cost of eMembership in the American Hosta Society has been reduced!

Previously \$20

**Join as an eMember now for one year for only \$12.
A three-year eMembership is only \$32.**

Join Online at HOSTA.ORG or

Call the Membership Secretary for details. 309-678-4119

eMembership in the American Hosta Society will unlock the following benefits:

- Full-color issue of *The Hosta Journal* available to read online twice each year
- Unique digital edition of *The Hosta Journal* emailed once each year
- Access to “Members Only” section of the website
- Eligibility to purchase a member-only hosta every year
- Exclusive invitation to exhibit hostas and compete for recognition in AHS-sanctioned Hosta Shows
- Updates on speaker programs, events, awards, plant auctions, news, and more!

FIRST-TIME MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVE

- \$15 voucher for use at participating nurseries
- *Hosta Adventure—A Grower’s Guide*, a primer on hostas outlining what every gardener should know
- *Hosta of the Year Booklet*, a full-color publication featuring the American Hosta Growers Association Hostas of the year

An eMembership also makes a great gift for your hosta gardening friends!

for the love of Hostas



American Hosta Society

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AHS members,

Have you seen our official Facebook page? It's been growing, and we'd love for you to join! It's a place for all things AHS news. Just a heads-up, we won't be able to answer questions like "What hosta is this?" or "Does my hosta have HVX?" There are other fantastic Facebook groups out there that are perfect for those kinds of questions. So, why not check it out and follow us for all the exciting news about the American Hosta Society, our events, advertisers, members and more?

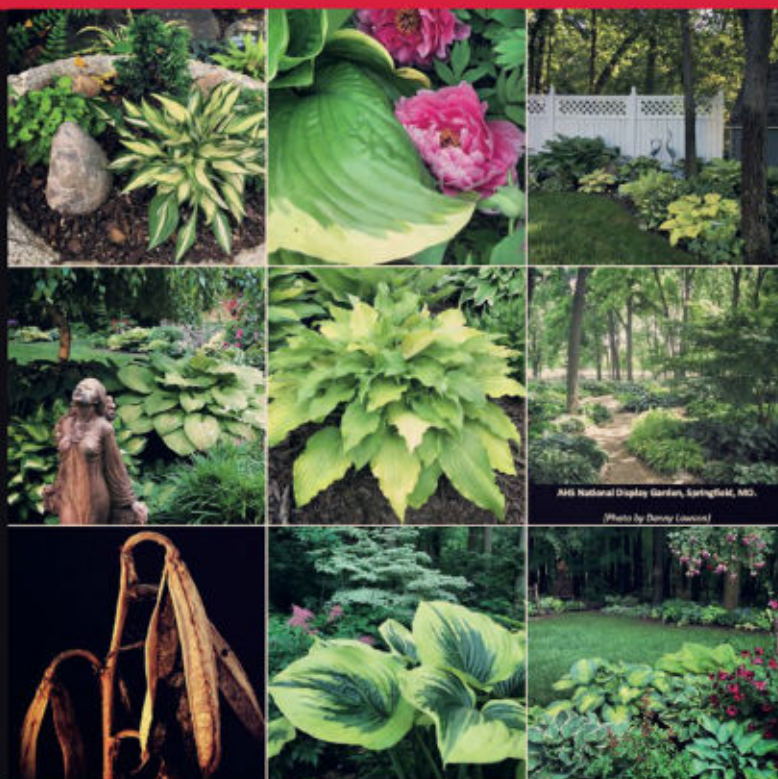
hosta.org

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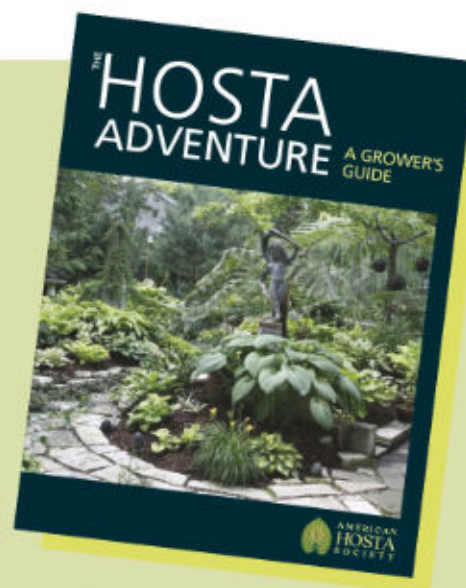
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The American Hosta Society's

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Hosted by the Indianapolis Hosta Society

June 9–12, 2027

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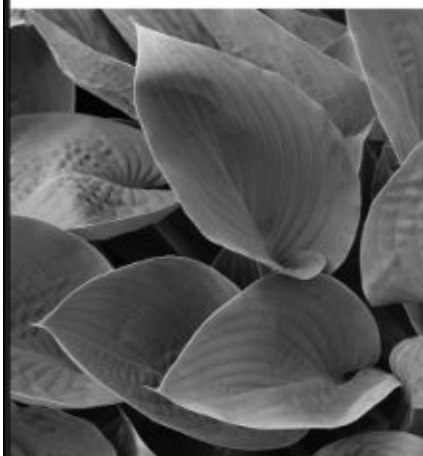
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