



ONTARIO HOSTA SOCIETY

FALL 2008
NEWSLETTER.
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 5

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## PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

I can't believe another season is rapidly passing, WOW! Taking a minute to look back puts a huge smile on my face. We have fabulous members and contributors.

Mark Zilis was a "not to be missed" February meeting. Everyone enjoyed his presentation "Hostas of Distinction", and meeting both he and his son. Thank you Mark.

Our bus tour in June was another winner. You did it again Bob L. Thanks to all of our wonderful hosts, **AND**, Lynda Lou (who contributed the article on the bus tour,) has agreed to join Bob in planning next year's tour. **EXCELLENT!**

Our Southwest picnic at Jack Kent's "Potting Shed" in Dunnville was a lot of fun. Just what a picnic should be. All the family got involved and made us feel so very welcome. Thank you all. Cindy D. played a partial of Chris Wilson's DVD on Virus X and did a demo of the test strips available for testing our plants. It was great of Cindy to do and it got us thinking about how much more we need to learn. So what did we do about it? We got on the phone and got Chris Wilson to agree to come up and speak at our Winter Meeting in 2009. Education is what we all need so we can share and help other hostaphiles.

This is the year we also learned that our own Bob M. has a room named after him – the R.J. Murphy Auditorium. Bob was able to snag the auditorium for our first 2 day event, our Auction. Mike Shadrack was a fabulous and fun presenter and he and Bob L. had us in stitches for most of the 2 days. Once again Kevin & Olga did a fabulous job keeping our tummies happy Saturday and thanks to all of the volunteers (and the Colonel) who provided the magnificent lunch on Sunday. **Please, let us have your input on doing another two day event.** Possibly gardens in wine country? Some galleries in the area and some wonderful B & B's?

Our seed program is going to be up and running very shortly under the care of Bryan Tunstall and a warm "welcome" goes out to him. We are all looking forward to having him on board. We know he will do a great job for the Society and he can be reached at [Bryan.Tunstall@gmail.com](mailto:Bryan.Tunstall@gmail.com).

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A resounding thank you also goes out to all of our fabulous suppliers who have once again made this an outstanding year. We have listed you with pride in this newsletter.

Last, but certainly not least, I regretfully announce that Virginia will be leaving her post as Director at Large as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. We have much appreciated Virginia's **huge** contribution to the O.H.S. over the years. We wish you much fun and happiness in your newly found "freed up" time.

On behalf of the Society Executive, I would like to wish each and every one of you a colourful fall, a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year . See you in February.

*Sandra*



**PLEASE MARK YOUR 2009 CALENDARS NOW FOR  
FEBRUARY 22nd AND JOIN US FOR OUR  
FIRST MEETING OF 2009**

**COMPLETE DETAILS IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER  
or see our new web page  
[www.ontariohostasociety.com](http://www.ontariohostasociety.com)**

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Ross Aitcheson

Woodstock

Margaret Jelinski

Stayner

Joanne Atchison

Theford

Tom Woolhouse

Toronto

**Ontario Hosta Society**

Ontario Hosta Society Membership can be obtained by writing to (**new address**):

**Ontario Hosta Society  
2301 5th Street Louth,  
St. Catharine's, Ontario,  
Canada L2R 6P7**

**Annual Dues: \$15.00/YR    \$40.00/3 YR**

**American: \$16.00/YR    Foreign: \$17.00/YR**

The membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st. Members joining after October 1st in any year are deemed to be paid-up until December 31st of the following year. **First-time members receive a bonus copy of "The Hosta Adventure –A Grower's Guide"**

**American Hosta Society**

Memberships can be obtained by writing to:

**Sandie Markland  
AHS Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 7539  
Kill Devil Hills,  
NC 27948-7539 U.S.A.**

E-mail:

[ahsmembershipsecretary@earthlink.net](mailto:ahsmembershipsecretary@earthlink.net)

Membership for Canadians  
\$39.00 US per year or \$107.00 US for 3 years.  
Money order or cheque drawn on a US bank.  
Memberships can now also be paid by VISA  
or Master Card online at the AHS website  
**[www.hosta.org](http://www.hosta.org)**

## A Members thoughts on the Fall Auction/Seminar.

Dear Fellow Hostaphiles,

I hope you enjoyed the two day auction, sale and seminars at the R.J. Auditorium. The hall was named after our famous and illustrious member, Bob. It's a wonderful facility and has lots of free parking.

The auction was fun. Observing Bob Leask and Mike Shadrack exchanging quips/history of plants/hybridizers was very amusing. Bob Murphy and Dave Barham had their fingers and brain cells humming to catch all the bids and bidders.

I did notice there was a lack of companion plants for hostas. There were a few heucheras, a variegated day lily, some ajuga and astilbe, but nothing near what we normally have. In the past I have picked up a Hakenochloa grass, double bloodroot, ferns etc. but there were none this time around. The hosta tables were packed and it was quite a lot to auction in one afternoon, so a few choice hostas were held over for the 2nd day.

One piece of advice from me though, **always remember** your partner or friends bid number. I didn't and was bidding against my passenger—Debbie Clark of Plant World. A rumor was that a member of the Executive was bidding against her husband - *I wonder who that was??*

The food, as always, was great. I hear that in Kevin's family he enjoys putting on an apron - great desserts! Mind you, I loved the rum cake and shortbread—someone even made Deb's favorite brownies. Lunch on Sunday had loads of neat salads with the Colonel as "Chef du Jour"

Mike's talk on "Growing Hostas" was interesting. I learnt more on how to prevent deer from devouring and grazing on plants. Use cheap fishing line strung between trees is original, but I wouldn't want to decapitate or hurt them, using old deadfall tree branches to create fences was more to my liking. I don't have a deer problem, but snails!! Mike advised us to apply slug bait sparingly after the snow melts and thereafter every two weeks for the rest of the season.

Bob's talk on how to use the website, [www.hostalibrary.com](http://www.hostalibrary.com), was interesting as I have not logged on yet. I'm a technological dinosaur - I still can't cut and paste. He gave a comprehensive walkabout of the site and told us about the new Canadian Auction site. Bob and Cindy are enjoying bidding on the American Auction site..

Mike's talk on "Small and Little Hostas" tweaked my interest. I know that Debbie loved H. Blue Mouse Ears. He gave us an overview of the parentage of a few plants - Plantaginea, Aphrodite and Venus, with regard to breeding for flowers and scent. I still love H. Claus for the flowers which will always have a special place in my garden. (*Note the article about small hostas on Page 5*)

It was nice to see some new members and catch up with old friends too.

Many thanks to the wonderful donors - there were some nice specimen plants available.

Sincerely,

**Pat Loy**

**THE EXECUTIVE AND MEMBERS OF  
THE ONTARIO HOSTA SOCIETY  
WISH TO THANK ALL OUR DONORS  
FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR  
2008 ANNUAL HOSTA AUCTION.**

**WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT,  
WE WOULD NOT BE THE SOCIETY WE ARE**

BELGIAN NURSERY  
BLUESKY NURSERY  
CANADALE NURSERY  
CHRIS POTZE PERENNIALS  
EAGLE BAY NURSERY  
EVERGREEN ACRES NURSERY  
FRANK SCHENK PERENNIALS  
GLEN ECHO NURSERY  
GOLDENBROOK HOSTAS  
HANDLEBAR HOSTA FARM  
HARPERS' NURSERIES  
HOSTA LA VISTA  
KETLYN WOODS  
LOST HORIZONS NURSERY  
NIAGARA NURSERIES  
OLDE TOWNE GARDENS  
PLANT WORLD  
RIVERBEND GARDENS  
SHADES OF GREEN  
THE POTTING SHED  
VALLEYBROOK GARDENS  
WHITEHOUSE PERENNIALS

BRESLAU  
BEAMSVILLE  
ST. THOMAS  
WATERFORD  
DUNKIRK NY  
MILTON  
BELFOUNTAIN  
CALEDON EAST  
BLACKSTOCK  
UXBRIDGE  
BRAMPTON  
NORWOOD  
PARIS  
ACTON  
ST. CATHARINES  
NIAGARA ON THE LAKE  
ETOBICOKE  
WROXETER  
AYLMER  
DUNNEVILLE  
VIRGIL  
ALMONTE

**THANK YOU ALSO TO THE MANY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS WHO  
CONTRIBUTED THEIR TIME OR PLANTS**

**WE HOPE WE HAVE REMEMBERED EVERYONE AND APOLOGIZE IF WE HAVE MISSED ANYONE.**

**PLEASE LET US KNOW.**



**DON'T FORGET TO  
CHECK OUT OUR WEB PAGE**

[www.ontariohostasociety.com](http://www.ontariohostasociety.com)



*The Ontario Hosta Society Executive would like to wish  
all our members and contributors*

*Seasons Greetings*

*We're looking forward an exciting 2009*

## I LOVE THOSE MINIS!

Gardening on a small piece of property with a steep hillside in my backyard, I must confess that mini and small hostas have become my favorites. Obviously I'm not alone since the American Hosta Society decided to conduct a separate popularity poll for minis in addition to their poll of the most popular standard varieties. Also, I have noticed that articles on this subject and photos are appearing in The Hosta Journal more frequently in recent editions.

These little guys look great in containers and my favorite containers are troughs. Troughs can be filled with many different plants including dwarf conifers, small succulents and of course, mini hostas.

Making hypertufa troughs is not difficult and can be a good winter pastime as you wait for your hostas to start emerging in the spring. There are several recipes for hypertufa mixtures. The main ingredients are portland cement, peat moss and perlite – all readily available in local home improvement centers. They can be made using molds that are rectangular, round, etc., or even free shaped. Whatever shape you choose, the final product can really dress up a patio.

I grow mini and small hostas in a variety of containers and even have 'Lemon Lime' growing in a tree stump. It has been there for eight years. In most of my containers I mix hostas with companions like Ajuga 'Metallica Crispa', Tatting Fern (*Athyrium Frizellae*), and even small annuals. Some mini hosta favorites that I grow in our rock garden are; 'Pandora's Box', 'Surprised By Joy', 'Medusa', 'Teeny-weeny Bikini', 'Blue Mouse Ears', 'Green Eyes', 'Crepe Soul', 'Chickadee', 'Kinboten', and 'Thumbnail', to name a few. Like peanuts, you can't have just one.

Slugs are a bigger problem for small hostas than large ones. My way of combating the "damn slug" is by spreading a topping that forms a barrier. My formula for this very successful topping is a mixture of ground egg shells, ground sea shells, and chicken grit. An occasional sprinkling of Sluggo also helps.

In closing I will quote Bob Solberg: "Miniature hostas are cute, little babies that will grow in a thimble. They often run in herds through rock gardens, around ponds, or along the edge of a path. Minis are especially happy in containers, strawberry pots, troughs, or even whiskey barrels. Hundreds can live comfortably along a driveway. Just give them water."

Joe Haber,  
Centerport, NY

## From September to Fall Garden Cleanup

Planting hostas can be done anytime as long as the soil is not frozen, but the chances for survival are better if plantings are completed by early September, to allow four to six weeks for the plants to reestablish before first frost (approx. October 14 in central Illinois). Hostas are completely dormant during the winter, making late plantings more susceptible to rot.

Do not try to keep your hostas actively growing late in the year. It is better to let plants die down somewhat naturally rather than letting a hard frost do all the damage. All fertilization should have stopped well prior to September, but it is important for gardens to continue receiving the equivalent of 1 to 1 ½ inches of rainfall per week through September.

Although October is the time to start cutting back on watering, hostas do not want to be dry when they go into dormancy. Each gardener will have to decide for themselves whether their gardens need supplemental watering during October; considering soil type, temperatures, and amount of rainfall received.

We have very little control during the winter, but keep in mind that hostas prefer to remain on the dry side during dormancy. Excessive moisture and cold temperatures lead to rotting.

Continue to watch for foliar nematodes (brown streaks between the veins of hosta leaves). If you have infected plants, get rid of them, or have more infected plants next season.

Mole activity usually picks up in the fall. Moles won't directly cause damage to hostas, other than occasionally uprooting young plants, but eliminating moles will reduce the likelihood of voles which use the mole runs to reach and eat hosta roots and crowns.

It is a good idea to drop poison bait into vole holes throughout the winter. Look for nickel size holes, often right next to hosta crowns. Not being able to easily see the results, I suggest alternating the use of a variety of baits to increase the chances of success. Place a brick or other heavy object over the hole to prevent poisoning of birds and other animals. Several gardeners have also had success with mouse traps baited with a mixture of peanut butter and oatmeal placed next to vole holes. Again, cover the hole and trap in a manner to protect birds and pets. A clay pot turned upside down with a brick on top works well.

Depending on how early, cutting your hostas back before they go dormant may reduce the amount of energy that they are able to store, resulting in smaller plants the following season. If you prefer this method, it is advisable to sanitize your garden tools between each plant. One commonly used sanitizer is a bleach/water solution (10-50% bleach). Most people use a mix closer to 10%. If your confidence level goes up proportionately as the percent of bleach increases, it may be worth the extra expense. It is your decision, but do use some form of sanitizer. Remember that viruses spread when the sap from an infected plant comes in contact with the sap of another plant.

Mother Nature can make the removal of hosta foliage much easier than cutting petioles at ground level. After one or more hard freezes, it becomes vary easy to pull hosta foliage off without any tools. If you try pulling the foliage off too early, you may end up completely pulling some divisions and/or smaller hostas out of the ground.

Some of the reasons for cleaning your gardens in the fall include:

- ◆ Removal of all hosta leaves and other debris from the garden helps reduce slug populations the following year, as slugs often lay their eggs on these surfaces.
- ◆ Eliminates cover for rodents (mice, moles and voles).
- ◆ Reduces a variety of fungal diseases the following year.
- ◆ May reduce the spread of foliar nematodes. Some people believe that if infected leaves are not removed in the fall, they can be blown around infecting other areas. If unsure, why risk it.

For many of the above reasons, it is not advisable to put hosta leaves on the compost pile. Burning the garden clutter can be a bit of a challenge, as hosta leaves are typically very moisture retentive, but doing so eliminates any possible problems associated with discarding the waste elsewhere.

Cont'd.....

One of the arguments against cleaning gardens in the fall is that the old foliage helps to maintain soil temperatures and protects hostas from extreme cold. This is not without merit, but generally speaking, if your gardens are already mulched, and any exposed buds are covered with a little surrounding soil, there is no need for additional protection of established plants.

If additional protection is desired, a thin layer of low moisture retentive coarse mulch, such as various types of wood chips or pine bark nuggets, can be added. A thin layer of mulch will also help prevent heaving of young plants. An additional benefit of a coarse layer of mulch added anytime from fall through winter is by helping to maintain soil temperatures; emergence of new plant growth in the spring will be slightly delayed, making plant tissue less susceptible to freezing temperatures. On the negative side, adding an additional layer of compost before the ground is frozen increases the likelihood of rodent damage.

For trough gardens, putting them on the east or north side of a building and covering and surrounding them with a coarse mulch will provide winter protection. For additional protection, some gardeners prefer to first bury the bottom one-third of the trough in the ground.

For additional detail, I recommend the following articles:

How late is too late to plant hostas in the fall? <http://www.hostahosta.com/tips.html#late>

Preparing the Garden for Winter <http://www.hostahosta.com/tips.html#winter>

Both of the above articles were written by Bob Solberg who is very knowledgeable about all aspects of hostas.

By: Ray Rodgers

*rbrrsr@telstar-online.net*

### **Like to research into Hosta species?**

George Schmid has updated his book regarding species, but instead of publishing it is available on the library site  
[www.hostalibrary.com](http://www.hostalibrary.com)

**Take a peek!**



## **Upcoming Events - 2009**

### **2009 Winter Meeting**

**Speaker:** Chris Wilson on Hosta Virus X  
**When:** Sunday, February 22nd  
**Where:** R.J. Murphy Auditorium  
**Time:** 12:30 - 4:00 p.m.  
**Addr:** 6435 Edward Blvd., Mississauga.



## IMPORTANT

Many of our members had words of praise for the e-mail reminder of our 2 day auction and seminar.

If you have not as yet given us your e-mail address and would like to receive reminders of upcoming events, please let the OHS have your e-mail address by sending the Editor an e-mail - [hostaed@rogers.com](mailto:hostaed@rogers.com).

**Please be aware that your e-mail address will be kept confidential and will not be sold or divulged in any way.**

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