



# ONTARIO HOSTA SOCIETY

## SUMMER/FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER.

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 4

### CONTENTS

Presidential Musings	1
New Members	2
Membership Info	2
2009 Auction	3
Goldenbrook Picnic	4
Shades of Green Day	5
Overwintering Hostas	6
Upcoming Events	7
Seed Collection	8
2009 Hosta of the Year	8
Executive	8

### PLEASE LOOK AT YOUR ADDRESS LABEL

**If your label says 12/09 your  
subscription is due  
at the end of 2009**

**Please page 2 for details**

### PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

Talk about your wet summers! A lot of really “weird” thunderstorms going on this year and lots of scared puppies under beds. All is green and lush though and except for a little (okay a lot) of extra slug and snail activity, all is looking pretty healthy and robust.

Our picnic at Cindy & Carel Deutekom’s in Blackstock was amazing. More on that day is inside this issue.

We also were blessed to get out to Lynn & Art Bisschop’s for our second picnic where the rain held off for us. I got to car pool with Bob Leask and the trip to Aylmer and back just flew by. There is more about that event inside this issue as well.

I was told the Convention was a huge success. (I was booked for it but had to change my plans but alas, there is always next year). Seems there was lots of time to hook up with old and new friends. I also understand that our own Bob Leask (who is the planner of our very own bus tours) – well, it seems that Bob - **missed his bus!** Apparently not his fault? And I’m not questioning it Bob!

We will be holding our next Executive Meeting for the year at the end of this month and then, before we all know it, it will be time for our September auction. I hope to see you all there on the 20<sup>th</sup>. It’s always such a great time with tons of plant material and lots of bidding fun & revelry.

.....2/

I would like to once again thank all of the wonderful Executive Volunteers who do such a fabulous job for our Society. We always have the need for an extra pair of hands and some fresh new brainstorming minds, so if any of our members would like to help out in the planning and the success of our Society, please get in touch with any of us whose contact info is at the back of this Newsletter.

We currently are in need of a Secretary for our meetings. Dave Barham, who has been tirelessly performing this duty for us for the past few years, has had to commit to other endeavours and we will miss his accuracy and his wit (especially the wit part) very much. Thanks for all of your time Dave and hopefully we will still be seeing you at as many of our events as possible.

Well, that's it for now. If anyone would like to see an item placed on the agenda for the upcoming Meeting, please let one of the Executive know. See you in September.

*Sandra*

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Graham Ashdown	Fonthill	Karen Simon	Tillbury
Tamara Firchuk	Etobicoke	Howard Stapleton	Oshawa
David Grant	Port Perry	Steve Sterritt	Toronto
Bill & Elaine Hasting	Wallaceburg	Heln & Tom Voljak	Fort Erie
Cassie Lim	Waterloo	Natalie Weston-Rae	London
Clare Pattison	Kitchener	Wayne & Marilyn Williams	Listowel

### 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)**

# OHS 2009 AUCTION



**When: Sunday, September 20th** (new date)

**Where: R.J. Murphy Auditorium  
6435 Edward Blvd,  
Mississauga.**

**Time: 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

## Please join us for our 2009 Hosta Auction.

Although we never know what will turn up at our Auction,  
there will be lots of variety, bargains and treasures

**Candy Dish, Rhino Hide, Woop Woop, Pure Heart to name a few hostas  
Mark Zilis's Hostapedia, Hosta Finders, Hosta Lists  
Companion Plants, special cultivars, garden ornaments  
Offerings from our many supportive nurseries  
Dig up a piece of your favourite and bring it along to be Auctioned**

Join us for the fun, camaraderie and get that one hosta you have always  
wanted for that special corner of the garden.  
The auction will be part silent and part live.

Help to choose a name for the OHS 2010 plant!

While you are there pick up a OHS T. Shirt or perhaps buy one of the limited  
2009 OHS Club Plant  
**"OHS Butter Pat"**

**Refreshments and a light luncheon will be served**



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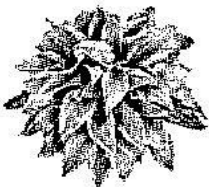
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*Lynn Bisschop*

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### Garden Picnic/Talk and Tour

#### **Blackstock**

Sunday, July 5th

What can one say? It was a beautiful day, especially ordered by our hosts. The gardens looked superb and inviting with plenty of shade under a very large maple for those who wanted it and even more sun for most of us.

Dave Barham gave a splendid talk on the essential parts of the hosta showing us where new buds are and where the meristem is, (brain of the plant) Did you know that in the old days people used to grind their heels in to the centre of a hosta encourage it to grow? Seems kind of counterproductive, but apparently the hosta thought it was under attack and produced more shoots. He had 14 or so "baggies" labeled with the various parts of hostas, and showed us sports, reversions and samples of Virus X (suitably taped tightly shut) that were passed around for inspection.

A somewhat large specimen of "Moonbeam" was produced with which he demonstrated division of hostas by first shaking off loose soil, followed by washing in the conveniently handy pond in the garden (I am not sure the fish knew what was happening) and from which he quickly made 12 or so new plants that were quickly prized by members. He showed us how to rossize and mini rossize a hosta taking care not to cut his fingers.

Interest was added in the afternoon when Dave Bob and Carel had a bet. One of the hostas in the garden showed evidence of reverting or possibly it was just two plants planted closely together. The plant was dug up, washed in the pond and the evidence presented. As far as I am aware the jury is still out on this one.

Bob gave a brief talk on collecting and storing pollen and what to look for when you want to try pollinating a flower. Seed collection and storage as well as seed starting were also briefly discussed. (see article on page 8)

The day was rounded out with tea, coffee and desserts provided by Cindy and Carel (I was assured that Carel got up at 5:00 a.m. to make them) and some members prowled the nursery looking for that prize hosta.

All in all a great day, we learned a lot.

**A big thank you to  
Cindy and Carel Deutekom,  
our generous hosts!**

Editor

(See picture page 7)

## "Shades of Green" Picnic Event

### Aylmer

Sunday, 9th August

Where to start? Lynn and Art Bisschop have only been at this property since 2002 and I simply cannot imagine how they have managed to create such an amazing landscape there in that amount of time.

They started at the front of the property which has a line of mature trees across it. From the front of their property are beautiful pathways to access their gardens, both lawn paths and bridge type paths. There are many seating areas on many paths winding every which way. The clover lawn is very comfortable under foot and I can only imagine it in bloom.

The couple they bought the property from actually allowed them to bring in their Hosta collection before they had legally taken possession of the place and that extra time helped them out a lot.

They have a beautiful plane tree on the property which caught everyone's eye with it's magnificent bark.

One of our guest speakers was Kevin Huber of Total Care Gardens and Lawns. His family had been growing tobacco since 1941 and decided to go from growing for human consumption to a natural herbal enhancer for gardens. It has a tobacco base and cayenne pepper and can be used against slugs and other pests like sand fleas and spider mites. Lynn said she had tested this product herself and said she was really very impressed with it.

Bob Leask also did a lively talk for us which also covered the idea of companion planting. Bob had brought a lovely collection of plants and as usual, captured everyone's undivided attention to his topics.

Lynn had a "name that hosta" contest with 10 plants being targeted throughout the gardens. I believe 6 was tops out of 10 and that honour went to Ken Lenz who won the prize of H. "Change of Tradition".

Lynn also had a draw set up and by the number of tickets being drawn on; we know that there were at least 41 people in attendance.

My ride, Bob, got a phone call from his wife Linda that there was an invitation to go out to dinner in the offing, so away we went well after 3:30. (Which worked out well as my car was at Bob's and I don't do well driving in the dark!). But just before leaving, Lynn showed us the most beautiful hosta of the day. It was one that she had named in honour of our dear friend Elizabeth Ingolfsrud. The perfect wrap up to the day. I am hoping to have a photo of it from Art for our next newsletter. Thank you both Lynn & Art.

*Sandra*

(see picture on page 7)



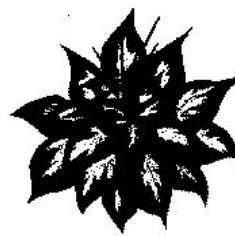
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## **OVER WINTERING HOSTAS IN NURSERY POTS**

It happens to all of us. At some point in our gardening life, we don't get all of our plants planted. Fall comes, big end of season sales, life happens, then winter shows up and we still have plants sitting in black nursery pots. Not only are you looking at money spent, but you really wanted those hostas. And now you need them off of the sidewalk so you don't hit them with the snow blower. Hostas can be over wintered in those pots in a few different ways. As temperatures drop, the plant will start to go dormant. The leaves will yellow and die back. Cut off the leaves and discard; don't compost. Be sure to sterilize your tools between plants in a 10% bleach solution to avoid spreading anything contagious. Allow the plants to continue getting the same moisture as the in-ground plants. Don't let them dry out prior to storage as they will need some moisture to get them through the winter. Check the pot bottoms for slugs and their little white pearl slug eggs so they don't over winter with the hosta. Plants in gallon pots will survive better than in smaller pots due to the increased insulation of the soil around the roots. Soils that are too heavy with clay or peat will hold too much moisture and can cause root rot.

### **TIP 'EM**

If you are over wintering the pots outside and you don't have a cold frame, one way is to dig a shallow trench before the ground freezes. After the hostas are dormant, place them in the trench at an angle to keep water from pooling on the surface. They can also be leaned against something like a landscape timber. You will want to keep the pots from thawing and freezing, so a cover of pine branches can be used. Or, a white insulating blanket designed just for this purpose can be placed over the pots and secured. Black plastic would cause too much heat and thawing could occur.

### **BURY 'EM**

Dig a hole to bury at least 3/4 of the pot in the ground. Again, a white insulating blanket over the pots and a piece of plywood weighted down over that to keep out extra moisture and critters.

### **STASH 'EM IN AN UNHEATED BUILDING**

An unheated garage, shed or barn works very well for winter hosta storage. In this environment they can be put on shelves or on the floor. Place the pots in the coldest part of the building, such as the north side, to reduce the chance of premature thawing. A little mouse bait would be a good idea if the area is not critter proof or patrolled by a cat. About mid winter, or if the pots appear very dry, you will need to add some moisture, but not too much. This can be done by placing a few ice cubes in each pot, or a snowball if available. The normal winter temperature fluctuations should cause the ice or snow to melt slowly enough to add some moisture without drowning the roots.

### **SPRING THAW**

Now things will get interesting. You will have to be aware of the spring temperatures. If it gets too warm where the plants are being stored, they will prematurely sprout. Then you will end up with pale, gangly leaves that will be too tender for outside fluctuating temperatures. Ideally, you should move the pots back outside, or uncover if already outside, prior to their spring thaw so that they wake up slowly and naturally. You should be able to cover up the pots if it rains and then freezing temperatures occur. You don't want ice pooling in the top of the pot. Be aware that not all hostas emerge at the same time. Just as in your garden, some will lag behind. Give the plants a chance, have a little faith, and make yourself the same solemn promise you did last year:

**"This year I will get everything in the ground by Labor Day"**. Good Luck!

**Mary Bardens**



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# Upcoming Events 2009/2010

**Auction**

**When:** Sunday, 20th September, 2009  
**Where:** R.J. Murphy Auditorium  
 6435 Edward Blvd, Mississauga  
**Time:** 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

**Winter Meeting**

**When:** Sunday, 24th January, 2010  
**Where:** R.J. Murphy Auditorium  
 6435 Edward Blvd., Mississauga.  
**Time:** 12:30—4:00 p.m.

(Please note: this is the **proposed date** -  
 to be confirmed in the next newsletter)

**PLEASE NOTE**

Change of Date for the Auction

The Auction will be held on  
**Sunday, 20th September**



*At Auction there will be a  
 limited offering of the  
 2009 OHS Club Plant*

*"OHS Butter Pat"*



## 2009 Hosta of the Year

### Earth Angel

This hosta was registered by Hans Hansen/Shady Oaks Nursery in 2002 and is a wonderful variegated form of the beloved classic "Blue Angel". This hosta features large heart-shaped blue-green leaves that have a wide creamy-white border topped by pale lavender flowers in early summer. H. Earth Angel is destined to be a show stopper when used as specimen in the shady landscape.

### Seed Collecting - We Need Your Seeds.

by **Bob Leask**

Watch those babies grow! With most hostas already in bloom, or about to bloom, it's time to think of all the young ones that are developing along the flower stalks. Some may be terminated with a pair of secateurs, some may ripen and fall to earth to become next year's hosta weeds, and some may be harvested to be grown on during the dreary winter months.

Evaluation will take place while still seedlings, as transplants, and as maturing plants. Some may go on to be special treasures. Considering that most will turn out to be plain old green, we still have to look for a different shape, shade, twist, size, or marking that will make them special to us.

But first let's get the gathering routine down. As the pods ripen, they will start to turn brown and eventually start to crack open. Pick off the flower residue at this point. Grab a paper lunch bag, cut the flower stalk(s) and deposit in the bag. The paper allows the pods to dry without rotting. Be sure to mark the name of the parent cultivar on the bag.

As the pods dry and open, the seeds will start to fall out, or you may have to dig a few out of stubborn pods. You may end up with literally thousands of seeds of any one cultivar. Discard the spent flower stalk, pods and other detritus. The ripe seeds should be black and have the shape of miniature maple keys with one fat end and the rest a tail.

Some people have planted seeds as soon as harvested, others wait until after the Christmas rush, and still others have tried multiple start dates to do their own quasi-scientific observations. Whatever seed you do not plant may be preserved by storing it in air-tight containers in a freezer for future plantings.

Our Seed Chairperson, Bryan Tunstall, (bryan.tunstall@gmail.com) is interested in acquiring any extra seed that may then be distributed to others interested in discovering the enjoyment of raising seed-kids and the trials and tribulations thereof. Contact him to arrange transfer of your surpluses.

Years ago Bill Nash wrote a lengthy piece on hybridizing, selection, care of, and cultivation of hosta seed. It is probably one of the most thorough treatments of seed propagation and much too lengthy to reproduce here. If you wish a copy, email me and I'll send a copy via return email. (rleask@hotmail.com)

To sprout seed you need little more than a covered container, some potting mixture, a bit of moisture and possibly some fertilizer. Around two weeks later you will see the little sprouts starting and you're on your way. But Bill explains it so much better. Also check out the [hostalibrary.org](http://hostalibrary.org).

**Try it and have that happy off season!**

### EXECUTIVE

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