



Save the dates

- Winter Meeting
Sunday 31 January
- 2016 Hosta Forum
Sunday 17 April
- OHS Bus Trip
Sunday 26 June
- OHS BBQ/Picnic
Sunday 17 July
- Annual General Meeting
Sunday 11 September



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President's Musings

As the 1st official day of 2016 starts to fade I find myself staring out of my window watching the snowflakes accumulate on an otherwise barren and exhausted lawn. For your average Southern Ontario resident this has been an unexpected and enjoyably warm fall and early winter. With above-average daily temperatures and the occasional +10°C day, there really hasn't been a lot of folks complaining about the weather... with the exception of some who were holding out hopes for a "White" Christmas.

Today's snow and forecasted cooler temperatures signal that winter may have finally arrived and, for gardeners, that's not a particularly bad thing. For hostas (and most perennials) the frozen ground and plentiful snow cover provides perfect conditions for what is called "vernalization". Described as a period of prolonged cold, vernalization provides the rest period that our beloved hostas need to support strong spring growth and next seasons' flowers. Although hosta lovers themselves don't require vernalization the prolonged cold gives us plenty of time to dream and plan for the growing season ahead.

For those of you who can't stop yourselves from digging in the dirt, now is a great time to try your hand at planting some hosta seeds indoors. Requiring minimal equipment,

growing hostas from seed is not only therapeutic but also very rewarding. If you didn't cut down your hosta scapes in the fall there will most likely be some seed pods still ripe for the picking in your garden.

Decide what your favorite hosta was in your garden last season and check to see if there are any seeds left to harvest. Remember, hosta seeds don't produce exact clones of the mother plant and the seeds you harvest will produce open pollinated seedlings with some characteristics of the "mother" plant and some characteristics of the unknown "pollen" parent. *[Editor's note: this issue of the OHS newsletter features an excellent article on starting hosta from seed by Randy Goodwin, reprinted from the Late Winter 2010 edition of the Indianapolis Hosta Society Newsletter.]* For more information on growing hostas from seed, visit the Hosta Library at: www.hostalibrary.org/seed/indoors/seed.html

Once you've started your hosta seeds, you'll need some inspiration and hosta camaraderie... and that's where the OHS comes in. We've got a great winter and spring schedule planned for you and hope that you take the opportunity to come out and spend some time with us.

Our **Winter Meeting** is scheduled for January 31st where we will have a wonderful slide show presentation

... continued on page 3

OHS 2016 Executive

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jutta.daverne@gmail.com

AHS Regional 7 Director - **Cindy Deutekom**

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Welcome!

Our newest members

Diane LeBlanc

Jim Chambers

Kelly Williams

Marilyn Elliott

Judith Rogers

Alexei Sherman

Maria Dekhtiarenko

ONTARIO HOSTA SOCIETY

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Renew your Membership!

The membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st. Members joining after October 1st are deemed to be paid-up until December 31st of the following year.

\$15.00 for 1 year

\$40.00 for 3 years

<http://ontariohostasociety.com/index.php/membership>

Note: Printed newsletters are no longer being offered. Members with printed newsletter memberships will continue to receive them until their membership expires.

OHS Newsletter

Newsletters are published 3-4 times a year. PDF copies of past issues of the OHS newsletter are available in the Members section of the OHS website.

Article Submissions

We are always looking for hosta-related articles, and photos. Do you have something to share? Send it to: hostanews@gmail.com

Advertising

Hosta retailers: Business card-sized ads are only \$100 per publication year.

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President's Musings

put together by the OHS's own Trish Symons. Trish's slide shows always captivate and for this presentation she has compiled photos from some of our 2015 events along with some of our member's photos. Following Trish's presentation we are pleased to have Joseph Tychonievich from Ypsilanti, Michigan present his talk: *Dealing with your addiction: a message from the Hosta Overdose Treatment Association (H.O.S.T.A.)*.

Author of *Plant Breeding for the Home Gardener* (Timber Press, 2013) and a forthcoming book on Rock Gardening, Joseph has been a repeated guest on public radio's food show *The Splendid Table*, was named by *Organic Gardening* magazine as "...one of six young horticulturists who are helping to shape how America Gardens", his writing has appeared in top gardening magazines such as *Fine Gardening*, and he writes regular columns for *Michigan Gardening Magazine*. He also draws ridiculous gardening cartoons. Joseph's talks combine horticultural science, a deep obsession with plants, and humor to create a presentation that is as informative as it is fun and also understandable to even the novice gardener. Don't miss this meeting... a pizza and Caesar salad lunch (and beverages) will be provided!!!

Following our January meeting is the event that helps get us excited and motivated for the gardening year ahead. This year's **Hosta Forum** is once again at the scenic Glencairn Golf Club in Halton Hills on Sunday, April 17th. Our wonderful and hardworking Hosta Forum co-chairs, Lynne Limpert and Donna Hussey, have put together an amazing slate of speakers to make this 6th Annual Hosta Forum (and Hosta Auction) a "must attend" event. Tickets are on sale now (early bird rates available until March 1st) and there's plenty of additional information on the Forum to be found in this newsletter. Plan on attending this year's Forum and enjoy a day of information, auctions, gifts and hospitality.

On behalf of the OHS Executive I wish you all a safe and enjoyable winter and we look forward to seeing you at the January 31st membership meeting.

Glenn Wilson
OHS President

OHS Winter Meeting

**Tickets for the Hosta Forum will be available!
We will also have 2016 OHS Calendars for sale.**

Date: **Sunday 31 January 2016**

Time: **12:30 pm - 4:00 pm** (lunch will be provided)

Location:

**Nassagaweya Community Centre,
Brookville Hall**

2005 Cameron Drive
Campbellville, Ontario
L0P 1B0

(Part of the Town of Milton)



Directions from the 401: Take Guelph Line north 6 km to the Nassagaweya Community Centre at Cameron Drive located on the left at the corner of Guelph Line and Cameron Drive. Guelph Line is one exit west of Highway 25 if you are coming from Toronto or one exit east of Highway 6 south if you are coming from Kitchener.

2016 Hosta Forum

Your 2016 Hosta Forum Coordinators, Lynne Limpert and Donna Hussey are excited to invite you to attend our next Hosta Forum.

We have arranged for diverse and dynamic speakers once again. Your day is all inclusive with a new deluxe lunch this year.

Please note that cost has not changed over the years, as long as you get your ticket before the March 1 early bird deadline.

We are looking forward to seeing you all.

Lynne and Donna

OHS Constitution & Bylaws

The OHS Executive committee has been working on updating the Constitution to better reflect the way we operate today.

Members have been sent the following four documents by email:

- Existing Constitution
- Proposed Changes to the Constitution
- New Constitution
- New Bylaws

All of these documents are also available in the Members-only section of the [OHS website](#).

The Constitution identifies our operating objectives.

The Bylaws provide more information about how we intend to operate.

Both documents work together to provide both the members and Executive with direction on how best to operate the Ontario Hosta Society.

Please read the documents and reply to Keith Skanes (keithskanes@hotmail.com) and Lynne Limpert (lynnelimpert@hotmail.com) by Friday January 22 with any issues, concerns or questions or to let us know that you are in agreement with the New Constitution and By Laws.

If we don't hear from you we will assume you are in agreement.

At our January 31st General meeting we intend to approve the changes to the Constitution and adopt both the new Constitution and new By Laws.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the Sunday January 31 meeting. Mark it in your calendar.

In the meantime Happy New Year to all of the members of the Ontario Hosta Society from your Executive Committee.

We look forward to an exciting 2016.



Correction: Volume 21, Issue 3 Words and photos for the OHS 20th Anniversary Picnic were provided by Lynne Limpert. Apologies for the incorrect attribution.

Spotlight on June



For her versatility
Blue green in the
shade



A nice yellow and
green in sun



And the colour is
half way between
these when sited
in part sun /part
shade

Trish Symons

Spotlight on... is a new feature being introduced in this issue. We will put the spotlight on several outstanding Hostas in every issue.

American Hosta Society

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\$39.00 US per year or \$107.00 US for 3 years.
Memberships can now also be paid by VISA or
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www.hosta.org

Contact

Sandie Markland

AHS Membership Sec.

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Starting Hostas from Seeds

by **Randy Goodwin** Article & photos courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange. Reprinted from the Late Winter 2010 edition of the Indianapolis Hosta Society Newsletter.

SEED SELECTIONS

Decide what you want to create:

- A. Variegation, need splashed pod parent, a 7 year process with edged, solid and medio form development needed



- B. For yellows, blues, or distinctive forms, solid pod parents needed; edged and center variegations produce lethal or green seedlings only

COLLECTING, CLEANING AND STORING SEED



- A. Collect seed only after mature, i.e. 40 days and 40 nights
- B. Timing differs from one to another, i.e. sieboldianas vs. summer vs. late bloomers
- C. Dry pods with name tags
- D. Crushing pod helps speed process
- E. Separate seeds from pods, then dewing for viability
- F. Stratification not necessary, but cool storage is recommended for viability
- G. Create a storage container, paper or plastic, with identification

CONTAINERS AND MEDIUMS

- A. Sterilized container; 'Clorox' and microwaving
- B. Use sterile non organic planting medium
- C. Use of Michigan peat or any soil based medium, prohibited
- D. Medium examples: Pro Mix, or peat moss, vermiculite, perlite, thru 3-2-1 mixtures
- E. Moisten medium prior to planting
- F. Use boiled water to kill fungus, fungus gnats, and algae



PLANTING PROCESS

- A. Plant in a prepared trench, then cover
- B. Plant in a scatter, then cover with more medium
- C. Use bone meal with seeds to increase germination
- D. Coverage should be 3 times depth of seed
- E. Uncovered seeds have roots unable to penetrate soil
- F. Water planted seeds after planting
- G. Cover with plastic dome
- H. Place in plastic baggie

LIGHTING

- A. Use fluorescent shop lights
- B. 24/7 light cycle or timed with timer from 18 on, to 12/12 also 8/4/8/4 cycle

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GERMINATION

- A. From 3 to 14 days, 7 average, with an average 33%
- A. Germination rate, germination is irregular
- B. Water from bottom, deters salts built up and pathogens,
- C. With ¼ strength soluble fertilizer roots can sit in water for extended time
- D. Room temperature should be maintained between 60-70 degrees
- E. Damp off is a constant problem; use of Benlate or Benomyl in a liquid spray deters after planting
- F. Use of plastic bags does lead to mildew with closed environment

CULLING AND DECISION MAKING



- A. For splashes, thin after 1st or 2nd leaf, eliminating the greens
- B. For solids and forms, keep most and cull only after 2nd year.
- C. Up potting helps selected seedling gain size, blooming in 1st year (scapes should be cut off to preserve seedling from energy drain and death.)
- D. Use deep containers for root growth
- E. Use a tool that creates a deep hole in porous medium
- F. Grow in containers until safe to plant outdoors
- G. Continue culling until the word **DISTINCTION** or **UNIQUE** applies.



GLENN WILSON

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Seasonal Hosta Tips

by **Bob Solberg**

Article courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange.

Spring

Foliage Emergence Begins

March - April - early May

Fertilization: Apply Osmocote 2 weeks after emergence, or apply granular 10-10-10 mid-March, or begin applications of liquid fertilizer mid-March.

Irrigation: As needed to maintain moist soil, but not wet. Remember this Bob Solberg rule:

If you aren't going to water -- **DON'T START**. If you are going to water -- **DON'T STOP**.

Protection: Protect from late frosts with lightweight cloth, pots, boxes or newspaper.

Division: Not the best time, since roots are not growing until after leaves form.

Pests: Begin slug control before foliage emerges.

Late Spring

Period of Rapid Foliage and Root Growth

Mid May - early June

Fertilization: Apply granular 10-10-10 May 1, or continue weekly applications of liquid fertilizer. For rapid growth, foliar feed high-nitrogen fertilizer. Add a pinch of magnesium per gallon of water (Epsom Salts).

Irrigation: Maintain moisture needed for growth (overhead watering may damage blue hostas).

Protection: Thin layer of coarse mulch to conserve soil moisture.

Division: OK to transplant entire hosta, being careful not to damage roots. Do not divide.

Pests: Continue to watch for slug and vole damage, apply bait as needed.

Mark Your Calendar!

What, you don't have one? We still have a few 2016 OHS calendars left! Only \$19 (includes postage). To order, contact ontgmw@gmail.com

Summer

Period of bloom, seed setting and dormancy

June-July-early August

Fertilization: Apply 10-10-10 July 1, or weekly applications of liquid fertilizer until bloom. Also, fertilize once after dividing and replanting.

Irrigation: Maintain soil moisture. Also, sprinkle leaves during heat of day to cool.

Protection: Thin layer of coarse mulch to conserve moisture and keep crown cool.

Division: August is the best time to divide and replant. Fertilize after replanting.

Pests: July and August, begin watching for foliar nematodes on leaf blades, and isolate or destroy affected plants. Fungal diseases begin during summer. (Use Daconil every 10 days as needed)

Fall

Final seed set and dormancy begins

September-October-November

Fertilization: None.

Irrigation: None.

Protection: Apply 1" course mulch.

Division: None, remove scapes and dead foliage if desired.

Pests: Begin watching for voles.

Spotlight on El Niño



A floral designer's dream! The green/grey with cream border works well with every single flower in a floral design.

Trish Symons

Robert John Murphy

We received the sad news of the passing of Bob Murphy on December 27. Bob will be remembered by members of the OHS for his tireless contributions as a member and director for almost 20 years.

While I had known Bob previously through his work as an educator and federation representative in Peel, it was during one of our early auctions at the Toronto Botanical Gardens that we reconnected and Bob became active in the OHS. As was his nature, he eagerly offered his assistance wherever needed and became the Chair of our Seed Committee, which oversaw the collection, organization and distribution of seed to members and others who were interested in growing. He also brought his experience and expertise to the work of revising our constitution to incorporate the newly formed SWOHS and EOHS so they could share otherwise prohibitive insurance costs.

It was during a seed cleaning session that he announced to a group of us that he had a terminal cancer and he entered a research program that saw many rounds of both chemotherapy and radiation

that prolonged his life by many years to enjoy his love of gardening, along with his wife, Diane, who passed away in 2012.

We spent many hours on behalf of the OHS on the road collecting plants for auction, collecting seed, scouting bus itineraries, scouting picnic sites, and generally enjoying the friendships of the many members we met.

In recent years Bob arranged for the use of the meeting rooms that bore his name for the OHS to hold its meetings at no cost. And as usual he was there to assist wherever he could. His contributions were recognized by the awarding of the American Hosta Society certificate in 2015. (*Editor's note: See AHS President's Wall on page 9.*)

Bob's life was defined by service: to his profession, to his community, and to his interests. We remember him in that light and are proud that he was a member of our Ontario Hosta Society.

Our sincere condolences to his family. We are all richer for having known him.

Bob Leash

Spotlight on Pineapple Upsidedown Cake



Gotta love this for the name alone. The yellowish slender leaves are a lovely contrast to many of our traditional hostas. I have had great luck in splitting mature plants.

Trish Symons



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Speaking of Viridescence

by Rob Mortko

Article courtesy of the AHS Newsletter Exchange

We have all come to appreciate that foliage color is a dynamic variable in growing hostas. And we can generally deal with that. But what about those variegated cultivars that start the year with a glorious combination of variegated color only to end up all green by mid-season?

For example both 'Fortunei Albo-Picta' and ventricosa 'Aureomaculata' start the season with an attractive cream colored center along with a dark green margin. But by late May they are essentially a solid green color. The very popular 'Whirlwind' does the same thing even if it does give us a little longer show of variegation into early July before turning all green.



Fortunei Albo-Picta (early June) photo Marta Cepek

So what's up with all this? The American Hosta Society defines the term viridescence as "having leaves which begin the season lighter colored and become more green as the season advances".



Same Fortunei Albo-Picta (late July) photo Marta Cepek

Viridescence is just another reason to know our hosta cultivars well before purchasing and planting. Just like knowing what the mature size will be, knowing that a specific variety is viridescence will help us manage our expectations down the road. It may even be a deciding factor in whether we opt to purchase a specific cultivar or not.

Is viridescence a "bad thing"? Does it make a specific hosta a poor choice? The current popularity of 'Whirlwind' (a perennial top 25 favorite in the AHS Popularity Polls) would seem to indicate "no". But that is a decision to be made at the time of purchase right along side with size and color considerations.

The more we know about each hosta cultivar the better we can manage our own expectations. Don't be surprised or disappointed later by not knowing your hosta cultivars before you buy.

AHS President's Wall

The American Hosta Society honours the members of local Societies who have worked tirelessly for many years to ensure the smooth running of their local clubs.

Congratulations to **Bob Murphy** and **Cindy Deutekom** of the OHS and to **Lynn Bisschop** of the SWOHS for being honoured in 2015 with this prestigious award. You can find their names on the 2015 President's Wall on the AHS website at: http://www.americanhostasociety.org/AwardsandHonors/Presidents_wall2015.htm

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Avoiding Spring Frost Damage

by Ray Rodgers

Article courtesy of the OHS Newsletter Exchange

The anticipation and excitement of early spring -

Spring is a joyous time for gardeners, a time of great anticipation as we start wandering around our gardens looking for signs of new beginnings. Such excitement must be tempered with the realization that freezing temperatures are always a possibility until approx. mid-May in Central Illinois. The average last frost date for Peoria is May 8. Every year, I hope spring will come in gracefully, without the major temperature swings we have come to expect. Unfortunately, this rarely has happened.

Last year was a prime example. After efforts to protect my rapidly unfurling hosta leaves on a couple of occasions, I thought those days were once again behind us when we reached the month of May, only to be surprised by an unexpected (to me) frost, that damaged gardens throughout the area on the night of May 2-3.



photo Marta Cepek

Every spring, I give credit to H. 'On Stage' as being the smartest hosta in my garden: as it is the last hosta to emerge from winter dormancy, making it much less susceptible to frost damage.

When hostas should be protected - It is important to realize that hostas, even completely leafed out, can withstand temperatures below freezing (32° F). I have repeatedly read that hostas can handle temperatures down to 28° F for short times with minimal or no damage.

During winter, if I find exposed hosta buds, I scrape a little mulch or soil mix from the surrounding area over them for protection. In very early spring, if shoots are starting to emerge, I often cover them in the same manner, in an attempt to slow their progress and provide additional protection.

If shoots are a few inches or more tall, yet leaves have not started to unfurl or are still in the early stages, and temperatures below 30° F are forecasted, I suggest providing additional protection via a choice of mulch or dried leaves piled around and over the emerging shoots. Alternatively, one of the protective methods described below can be utilized.

The more leafed-out hostas are, the more susceptible they are to frost damage. In these cases, covering via one of the methods described below is the best alternative.

One must consider the uniqueness of their gardens and plant placements when determining whether to protect or not.

Of course, part of the decision process is how much trust one has in the accuracy of the forecast. Isn't that a scary thought!

Plant protection - If one decides to protect, there are many options. Basically almost anything that can cover a hosta will help.

It is important not to let the leaves touch the covering material as they are more likely to sustain freeze damage at that contact, if the temperature gets low enough.

There are many methods for protecting your plants via covering. Materials include:

- Plastic pots (crumpled newspaper covering drainage holes improves protection)
- Newspapers
- Cardboard boxes
- Frost Cloth* (fabric material available through nursery supply companies. Search the Internet for options.)
- Bed sheets*
- Bath towels*
- Light blankets*

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- Burlap*
- Garbage cans
- Bushel baskets
- Wheelbarrows turned upside down

* Need to be propped up and anchored down. I try to keep a bundle of sticks or stakes around for props. I have also used covered sawhorses over larger hostas. Bricks and rocks are good anchors and also work well to hold down plastic pots during windy conditions.

Polyethylene film or similar materials, including plastic bags, should be avoided as condensation buildup on the inside can increase the likelihood of damage to hosta leaves. These materials are also a danger once the sun comes out.

Another method is to keep a continuous spray of water on plants when the temperature is below 28° F, as water is warmer than the air.

The morning after - After all the chosen plants are protected from the impending freezing temperature (usually during the night), one must address the uncovering task the following morning. Keeping the plants covered until the temperature climbs back above freezing is the best option. But, if one has to go to work, family or neighbors may have to be called upon for help. If the forecast calls for temperatures to remain in the danger zone, keep the plants covered.

How cold is too cold - This somewhat depends on the number of hostas one has to protect. If hostas are completely leafed out and the temperature dips into the low 20°s F, protective measures may reduce the severity, but it is unlikely that they will prevent freeze damage.

What should be done to frost damaged hostas - If hostas are hit by damaging frosts it is best to cut off and discard the most significantly damaged leaf tissue (sanitizing the cutting tool between plants), keeping as many of the undamaged leaves and petioles as possible to allow the continuation of the plant's food making process. At some point, if enough leaves are removed, hostas will force a second flush of leaves from smaller and previously dormant buds. This flush will likely produce smaller leaves.

Even worse than hosta leaves turning to mush, is the possibility of the crown being damaged, which if not attended to, typically allows rot to set in. The crown of the hosta is the base where the roots and shoots join. Crown rot can happen in early spring when water stands around the crown or by the plant freezing after it breaks dormancy. If hostas sustain significant leaf damage, be sure to check the crown for soft areas. If discovered, this tissue should be removed back to solid tissue to prevent further rot and possibly the death of the plant.

Which hostas are most frost sensitive - Late freezes can be a problem with any variety, especially the ones that break dormancy early. The species *H. plantaginea* and its sports have the reputation of being the most frost sensitive. It is widely believed all fragrant hostas have *H. plantaginea* in their lineage, making them candidates for protection. *H. plantaginea* is one of the only species that will continue to produce new leaves all summer long. This is an advantage when the original spring foliage becomes damaged. Contrarily, I have read that hostas in the Sieboldiana Group and Tokudama Group are slow to recover from frost damage, as they tend to push only one good flush of growth in a season, also making hostas with these lineages, good candidates for protection. A few other of the more sensitive hostas include *H. montana* 'Aureomarginata', 'Sagae', 'Lancifolia', and 'Chinese Sunrise'.

New purchases - If hostas are purchased prior to mid-May, I suggest leaving them in pots so they can easily be moved to a protected area when frost warnings occur.

Is it worth the effort - Protecting hostas from freezing temperatures is certainly a hassle. Each of us has to determine for ourselves whether it is worth the effort and when to take protective measures. In my opinion, we must always be aware of the possibility of freezing temperatures and react accordingly to preserve the beauty of our gardens.



6TH ANNUAL HOSTA FORUM



*Come out and enjoy a day with your fellow Hostaholics!
Don't come alone, bring a friend...everyone is welcome!*

Sunday, April 17, 2016

**Glencairn Golf Club
9807 Regional Road 25, Halton Hills, ON L9T 2X7**

9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. - (Registration Begins at 8:30 a.m.)

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<i>"Gardening Without Flowers: Fantastic Foliage, Garden Ornaments & Creative Containers"</i>	<i>"Designing Your Garden With Hostas & Other Treasures "</i>	<i>"Big Hostas, Little Hostas & Other Shady Characters"</i>

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