



Save the dates

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 9 September 2018
➔ See flyer on page 18

2019 OHS event dates will be
posted as soon as confirmed



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Late Summer 2018 Edition

Hi, hosta friends, with the OHS Annual General Meeting (AGM) only a week away, I look back on the summer and wonder how is it even possible that it's already been 4 months since the Hosta Forum? Not so long ago I couldn't wait for the interminable winter to be over. It seems like we skipped spring and went straight from freezer to furnace. Late frosts and early and prolonged heat and drought took their toll on previously healthy happy hostas. Many came up with damage, shrunk, or even vanished. Even now many are still struggling—meanwhile, some former "duds" have transformed into beauties. Maybe those ones came from southern US hybridizers. In this late summer edition we have not one but two articles from our own Jayne Christiani (pages 7 and 17).

Just when we thought we were getting a handle on the pests that afflict our beloved gardens, a new invasive species is on the horizon. Other horticultural and hosta societies are publishing cautionary newsletter articles, giving presentations at member meetings, and some plant sales are requiring bare-rooting or are even being cancelled over concerns about spreading Asian jumping worms. Although Canadian authorities have not (yet) started raising awareness, we must be vigilant to prevent their spread. We have an excellent Wisconsin-focused article in this issue (page 10) that could very well apply to Canada.

So all of the 2018 OHS events except the September AGM are but a memory. We have gorgeous photos of the OHS Hosta Forum (page 4), of the OHS BBQ at Kelly Williams (page 9), and four pages of photos from the OHS Bus Tour (page 13).

We hope that a large number of members will turn out for the AGM—not just for the complimentary lunch, or for the hosta auction, which will feature a rare collector's cultivar (page 5), or even for Lizzie Matheson's "Conversation Pieces" presentation, or Trish's bus trip highlights. What we really hope is that members will realize how much we all get out of being a part of the Ontario Hosta Society, and during the business portion of the AGM to step in, speak up, and to take an active leadership role so that we can keep OHS activities going.

We have been lucky to have such a dedicated and resourceful team for the last few years, but as inevitably happens, people come and go.

Donna Hussey, co-organizer of the Hosta Forum (with Lynne Limpert), and Sandra Shrieve-Mahoney, organizer of our annual bus tour are both leaving the OHS Executive. We sincerely thank them both for the time and effort they have given to OHS over the years.

We still need a Vice President and now we need volunteers to help coordinate these activities. OHS may not be able to offer a bus tour or a Hosta Forum in 2019 unless someone steps up! If that someone might be you, please contact Russ Talbot (President) and/or Lynne Limpert (Hosta Forum Coordinator) at the email addresses on page 2 to find out what's involved. Or arrive a bit early at the AGM and speak to anyone on the Executive. We would love to have you... We need you!

If you don't step up, who will?

Marta Cepek

OHS Newsletter Editor

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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.

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 tips, 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.

Welcome!

Our newest members

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Hosta Forum Donations

For the 8th Annual 2018 Hosta Forum
Many thanks for the donations received from
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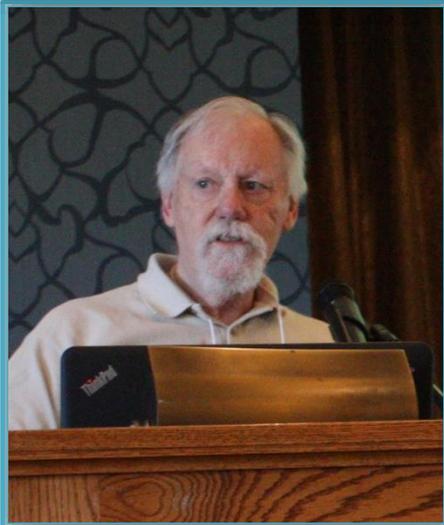
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Several well loved gardening books

Thank You!

2018 OHS Hosta Forum Photos

Photos Trish Symons & Kelly Williams



2018 OHS Events

OHS Annual General Meeting & Auction

When: Sunday 9 September

Where: Nassagaweya Community Centre, Brookville Hall

➔ **For details, see flyer on page 18**



EOHS News & Events

Website: www.EasternOHS.ca

Eastern OHS Annual General Meeting

When: Saturday 22 September, 12:30–4:00 pm

Where: Swiss Chalet (private room)
85 Dalton Ave., Kingston

RSVP: Annic at President@EasternOHS.ca
Non-members/guests are welcome.

Guest Speakers: Our guest speakers, **David Cybulski** and his wife, **Colleen O'Connell**, are founders of the **1000 Island and Rideau Canal Garden Trail**. They opened their **Maitland Garden of Hope** in 2011. Located in Leeds Grenville township, they have a private 1.5 acre garden with a variety of themes.

Topic: Garden Features

Garden features are an important element in the creation of a successful garden. Colleen and David will take us through a colourful slide show of various elements they use at their Maitland Garden of Hope, including pathways, resting places, water features, container plantings, obelisks, and trellises as well as garden art (adapted from Maitland Garden of Hope presentations)

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Hosta collector alert!

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on Sunday 9 September (see flyer on page 18), you will have an opportunity to bid on the usual great lineup of tried and true old favorites and the hottest new hosta cultivars in the auction part of this event.

For this auction, however, we are especially grateful to Anna and Bill Barger for a donation of originator's stock (OS) of their 2016 registration, H. Barger Blue.



H. Barger Blue

This extra-large, slug-resistant seedling of Sum and Substance has thick, intensely-blue-green, nearly round leaves that are shiny, folded, corrugated, and cupped, and pale lavender flowers on 32-inch scapes in July–August.

Don't miss this chance to bid on a rare Canadian OS hosta that even the nurseries don't have yet!



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Video Killed the Radio Star

By Robert Leask, Ontario Hosta Society

Do you remember this oldie by **The Buggles** back in '79? While the theme of the song was the promotion of technology and worrying about the results, have we not encountered the same concerns in the hosta world about what's new and available to serious collectors and the general public? Does the same concern exist in the propagating houses and nurseries pumping out our favourite foliage plant?

In researching for my presentation to the 2018 Ontario Hosta Society Forum, *Hot New Hostas: Where Do They Come From*, I questioned retailers, hybridizers and growers as to their perceptions and came to the following conclusions.

There are many hybridizers out there who are successful at producing beautiful new cultivars. After all didn't Dave Barham write in an article for OHS a few years ago that mathematically there were "millions" of genetic combinations. Aside from sports, the universe awaited. And I appreciate the time and effort that these people spend to bring new offerings to life, whether it be a few or hundreds.

But from these efforts how many reach the mass growing stage and ultimate dispersal to retailers globally? At my very first "hosta meeting" in 1995, I was introduced to a glass jar full of babies that had been cloned by the tissue-cultured process.

From the song—*Rewritten by machine on new technology* *And now I understand the problems you can see*—can we draw a parallel? What has happened since? Where we used to wait for sports to show stability and be shared by division, labs were multiplying by the thousands and the demand increased as new mutations appeared from the process.

While it became a fascinating chase to obtain the "latest and greatest," how many of these were so similar that we wondered what the chase was all about? Was it just for bragging rights? *Pictures came and broke your heart*—and didn't we buy in? How many of these lasted past the introductory stage? Really, do we need 56 hosta mice?

And how many of these new introductions reverted back to something less distinctive, or totally lost the endearing characteristic you paid big bucks for? Not all sports are easily reproducible, and thus uneconomical for mass distribution. Gone are the days when a friend would find a sport, divide it off, grow it on and then divide it for a fellow hostaphile. It was an appreciated and cherished addition to a collection. Can we go back?

Mass retailers have somewhat spoiled the landscape by offering new varieties each year, but the benches are also filled with many of the older lesser quality/less attractive and in some cases unhealthy varieties. It takes knowledge and vigilance to be a true

Video Killed the Radio Star

I heard you on the wireless back in fifty two
Lying awake intent at tuning in on you
If I was young it didn't stop you coming through
Oh a oh
They took the credit for your second symphony
Rewritten by machine on new technology
And now I understand the problems you can see
Oh a oh
I met your children
Oh a oh
What did you tell them?
Video killed the radio star
Video killed the radio star
Pictures came and broke your heart
Oh, a, a, a, oh
And now we meet in an abandoned studio
We hear the playback and it seems so long ago
And you remember the jingles used to go
Oh-a oh
You were the first one
Oh-a oh
You were the last one
Video killed the radio star
Video killed the radio star
In my mind and in my car, we can't rewind
we've gone too far
Oh-a-aho oh, Oh-a-aho oh
Video killed the radio star
Video killed the radio star
In my mind and in my car, we can't rewind
we've gone too far
Pictures came and broke your heart
Put down the blame on VCR
—The Buggles, 1979

hosta lover.

So if you are a chaser, appreciate the smaller hosta specialists who often carry hundreds of varieties in the hope that they are the popular ones that will reward them enough to stay in that business.

And when you join the societies where like minds meet, you may have the opportunity to receive a special oddity every once in a while. It may encourage you to try dabbing a bit of pollen around.

The hybridizers in Australia, the USA, Belgium, Holland, England, Canada, and Japan are producing some wonderful new varieties. Get to know them and maybe they will share or offer at a small price some of their creations. Or wait for someone to make a decision which one will go to commercial production. Breeding is a long process but can be rewarding and fun.

Look at the number of old standbys that are being brought back for sale. Have we run out of choices? Or are there just not too many different ones? —
We can't rewind we've gone too far.

Where Did the Passion Come From?

As a child in the '60s, I was raised in East York, a borough of Toronto. The "concrete jungle" is not conducive to gardening and truly, at the time, it was the furthest thing from peoples' minds. They were simply trying to put two cents together to eke out a living, and their idea of gardening was to use the manual lawn mover to take care of their postcard-sized lawns on the weekend. The 'knife sharpener' man would walk up and down the streets pulling his cart with the round sharpening stone wheel; ringing his bell all the while. It was to him that you went for maintenance on your lawnmower and it would cost you 10 to 25 cents to get the blades sharp again.

If one was frugal, and you really had to be in those days, you would have a smaller postcard-sized plot within your postcard-sized backyard. It was here that one would grow vegetables and herbs for the dinner table. I know I have mentioned this before, but my Sicilian grandmother lived two doors down from us, and she had such a garden. If I had run out of things to get into (and there were many because I was such a tomboy), she would send me out there, or come with me herself, and I would pick the oregano while she would check on the tomatoes. To this day, I cannot make a pot of tomato sauce without thinking of her.

When we were out and about getting into trouble, we would steal rhubarb from the neighbour's garden. We would run the streets sucking on these long stocks, and somebody's mother always took pity on us when she saw our sour faces and offer us a bowl of sugar so that we could dip our treasure and soften our countenance.

But as a child, I also recall lying on the sidewalk on a hot summer's day, being fascinated with the weeds growing in the cracks of the cement. Even tasted one or two! Little

yellow buds and little purple flowers. They were beautiful to my young eyes. They must taste terrific. They tasted like crap!

Obviously my fascination with plants started at a very early age. I don't know why. Other than my grandmother, no one in my immediate family was interested in wasting their time digging dirt. If I didn't know any better, I would swear that my mother spent her pregnancy in a fully-stocked greenhouse and I absorbed the green stuff *in vitro*. How ever it came to be, I have spent an inordinate

number of decades gardening. Of course I started out with the vegetable patch and bottled more jars of pickled beets than I care to count. I hate beets! But it was the thrill of growing them that tickled my fancy.

After all my plant passions over the years, I am stuck on hostas, and I like to think that all of the experience I have garnered over time has led me to this spot. That's not to say that I don't have my fair share of perennials as well, because I do, but nothing beats the sight of the little hosta buds returning in the Spring. But I'll even go one step further. To see *H. Zebra Stripes* arrive creamy white and slowly, over the course of a few weeks, add green stripes to the leaves, is a fascination in itself. While it can be finicky, it grows so much better than

H. White Feather, which has the same characteristics of coming up white in the Spring. Give it a few hours of direct sun and it will thrive.

I was very thankful to be given a mature eye of *H. War Paint* last year. I can't tell you how excited I am to see it in its full glory this Spring before it fades to green over the Summer. Some hostas can change so much over any season, and also change from year to year, as they mature.

A young *H. Touch of Class* has incredible markings and always grabs centre stage. The same plant at 5+ years starts to lose the flaming markings and the chartreuse leaf



Young *H. Touch of Class*



Same *H. Touch of Class*, mature

centre does become narrower.

I have an incredible *H. Epiphany* in the garden and while it always looks lovely, around mid-August the centre markings seem to glow. It is always an eye catcher at that time. Very well named, in my opinion.

And yes, the weather plays a huge role in how they look. Have you not noticed that one year your "Titanic" had so many flaming margins that you thought you had sprouted a new sport to add to the hosta world? And then the following year it didn't look half as nice.



A few years back (same year as the Titanic) I had a "Fragrant Dream" sprout leaves that were half chartreuse, half dark green, right down the middle. And on some of the leaves, the thin margin was the opposite colour. It looked like two different plant leaves had been stuck together to form one. I carefully separated the plant and lo and behold, next year it was "Fragrant Dream". Research into the parentage did reveal plants with this periodic deviation, but as of yet, the incredible markings have not been stabilized.



This year I bought several Amalia. I love this hosta. Of the Dancing Queen family, the yellow glows so much that you can spot it from forty feet away. As they sprouted into full leaf, I was blessed with an all green Amalia. I have called her Dancing Amalia, and she will be registered in the near

future. This family, Dancing Queen, One Last Dance and Amalia, love the shade here in Central Ontario. If you have any of these, and it's not doing well, get it out of the sun.



left: *H. Amalia*, right: *H. Dancing Queen*, centre: *H. Dancing Amalia*

So, where does the passion come from? Couldn't tell ya! Maybe it's in our DNA. Maybe we were artists in a prior life, setting up our easel in the lovely French countryside, painting unique flora masterpieces. (Monet, are you out there?)

I do know that you have the same passion, because if you didn't, you wouldn't be a member of the Ontario Hosta Society and reading this newsletter right now. You have the chance to converse with people that have the same passion as yourself, whether it be through phone calls and emails with other members, attending meetings, or talking to people at your local nursery. We are an elite group of nature-loving people and the more people we can haul into our passion, the better we like it. We are a generous lot.

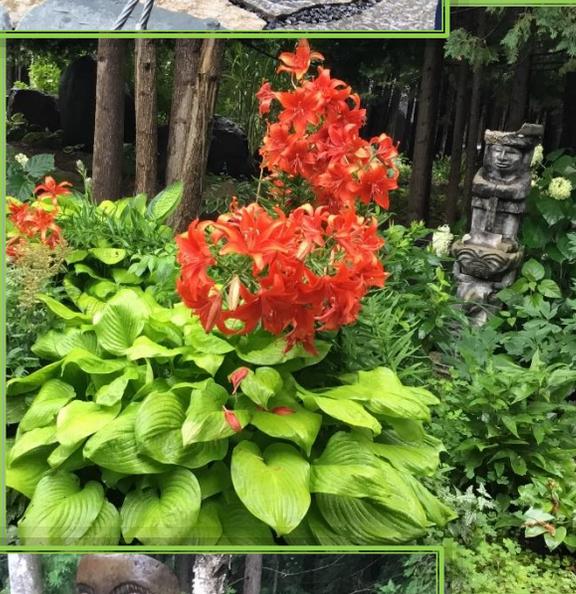
Jayne Christiani
Hosta Vista, Baby!

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2018 OHS BBQ at Kelly Williams

Photos Trish Symons



A new invasive

by **Jerry Belanger,**

Reprinted courtesy of the AHS newsletter exchange from Volume 21, Issue 1 January 2017 of Northern Star, newsletter of the Northern Wisconsin Hosta Society

One of the major topics at our past few meetings has been jumping worms. The discussions were not so much about our own gardens, but rather the potential impact on our traditional annual plant sale. Garden clubs in Madison and Milwaukee have been advised to take precautionary steps (selling only thoroughly-washed bare-root plants) and Olbrich Park has discontinued its popular leaf mulch sale altogether. Last year our plant sale at Phoenix Park added more than \$3,000 to the club's

coffers. If the sale is cancelled due to the worms, what might replace it?

As of the last meeting the possibilities were left hanging. ...

This issue of the Northern Star takes a closer look.

We could start at the beginning: What in the world is a jumping worm?

But that's not really the beginning: it's a continuation, because all earthworms in our area are "invasive." That's right: Wisconsin has no native earthworms. If there were any before the Ice Age, the glaciers wiped them out. Europeans introduced them with plants and soil brought from their homelands—probably unintentionally, because worms were viewed as pests before 1881. That's when Charles Darwin changed the public's perception of earthworms with one of his most popular works, "The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms, with Observations on their Habits."

Scientists have identified more than 20 European species of earthworms in our region and have studied their negative impacts on forest regeneration, ground nesting bird populations, and facilitation of the spread of still other invasives such as garlic mustard and buckthorn.

Thanks in part to Darwin, earthworms have been held in high regard by gardeners, especially those of an organic bent. Only in recent years have scientists sounded the alarm about the damage they cause in places where they

don't belong, such as northern Wisconsin's forests, where they were spread by fishermen dumping unused bait.

The Wisconsin DNR, which is spearheading the war against invasive species of all kinds, likens forest floor leaf litter to the skin on an animal. It retains moisture, protects roots, breathes, prevents erosion, deters pathogens and non-native plants and promotes seed germination. When leaf litter is consumed by earthworms it's like removing the skin of the forest floor. Disturbance from earthworms exposes the soil and causes erosion, compaction and increased rainwater runoff. This disturbance favors invasive plants, beginning a cycle of non-native invasions competing for critical resources. The result is less diversity of native plants and animals in our forests.

More about earthworms

Earthworms fit into three general ecological groups—meaning they have three ways of feeding and burrowing:

Epigeic types: small, reddish brown species living in the leaf litter.

Endogeic types: small to large, with no actual skin pigmentation but appearing gray-blue, yellowish, pink or whitish or even with a greenish cast, and living and feeding in the mineral layer of the soil.

Anecic species: very large-sized deep soil burrowers who may feed up in the litter; reddish-brown. Nightcrawlers are our only anecic species so far.

For more keys to worm ID, see Great Lake Worm Watch's website: www.greatlakeswormwatch.org

A new variety is discovered

That's the story with "regular" garden-variety worms. Then in October, 2013, a new variety was discovered in Longnecker Horticultural Gardens, part of the UW Arboretum in Madison. It was an Asian species, *Amyntas*. They are earthworms on steroids. They consume the litter layer faster than any other worms in the state, and to such an extent that the soil becomes dry and granular—it looks like coffee grounds. They reproduce much faster than other worms, and they are asexual: one individual can colonize an area all by itself. The cocoons hatch, and reach sexual maturity within 60 days. Adults do not live through Wisconsin winters, but that seems of little consequence, because the cocoons survive. This means you won't find adult worms until late June or July. This also

means there won't be worms in potted plants or mulch in early spring unless they originated out of the area, but the nearly invisible cocoons are ready to hatch. A second hatch can lead to infestation levels by early fall.

When they are disturbed, jumping worms thrash violently, slither like snakes and even jump into the air.

Jumping worms are darker and smoother than other earthworms in Wisconsin. They are relatively easy to identify if you take a look at their clitellum (the band around the body of a worm). The clitellum on a jumping worm is milky white to gray-colored, smooth, and it

completely encircles the body of the worm. In contrast, the clitellum of European earthworms does not wrap entirely around the worm. Also, on a European species it is raised above the body of the worm, not smooth.

Mind your BMPs

As with all invasive species the goal is to minimize their spread. That can be as simple as following these suggested BMPs (Best Management Practices):

- Arrive clean, leave clean. Clean soil and debris from vehicles, equipment, gardening tools and personal gear before moving to and from a work or recreational area.
- Educate yourself and others to recognize jumping worms.
- Watch for jumping worms and signs of their presence. If you find them, report them to the DNR by email at invasive.species@wi.gov. *OHS Editor's note: In Ontario please report sightings to info@invasivespeciescentre.ca.*
- Only use, sell, plant, purchase or trade landscape and gardening materials and plants that appear to be free of jumping worms.
- Only sell, purchase or trade compost that was heated to appropriate temperatures and duration following protocols for reduction in pathogens (see Wis. Admin. Code Ch. NR 502.12).

The keys to dealing with any invasive species are prevention, control, monitoring, disposal and education.

Good eaters, lousy burrowers

The problem with the Asian jumping worm seems to be, a study conducted by University of Wisconsin-Madison zoologist Monica Turner and her colleagues confirms, that the animal is too good at half of its job—eating—and not nearly as helpful on the burrowing front.

The UW-Madison researchers added worms to a plot of forest in a 4-month controlled outdoor experiment, and also studied field sites in Wisconsin where the worms had been discovered in 2013. In both cases, the animals decreased the nutrient-rich leaf litter 84 to 95 percent by mass, according to the paper published recently in the journal Biological Invasions. The soil that remained was "bare and clumpy," Turner said.

At the same time, inorganic nutrients left behind by the worms—nitrogen and phosphorus, on which plants feed—spiked in the top two inches of dirt. In other words, as the nonnative worms stripped the leaf litter, nutrients clumped up at the surface of the soil. There, the inorganic elements are inaccessible to hungry plant roots.

Turner compared the difference between the Asian jumping worms and other worms to the difference

between a quick- and slow-release fertilizer. Some plants are simply not equipped to ingest a sudden food flood. The researchers worry, too, that as the nutrients concentrate at the soil's very top, strong rains could wash nitrates and other dissolvable minerals away.

The "Alabama Jumper"

You may have heard of this worm already, although when the Asian jumping worm (*Amyntas agrestis*) is sold for bait or composting as the "Alabama Jumper" or "Georgia Jumper," there is seldom any mention of the destruction it can bring to forests.

Composting ads boast that the worm can eat and process more than its body weight in organic matter (vegetable scraps, leaves, lawn trimmings, etc.) each day. That same tenacious appetite means that when people release their bait (or their bait escapes) and the worms make their way to the forest, they consume massive amounts of leaf litter. If you were a leaf-litter-feeder such as a millipede, fly larvae, or springtail, this would be a big problem because your food source would be gone. It would also be bad if you were a creature that ate these invertebrates. In some areas on the western side of the Smokies, the jumping worm population is so high there is almost no leaf litter left. Without this food, native animals are disappearing, and the nutrients from decaying plants aren't there to build new soil.

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What's in a word?

In 2009, all 51 species of *Amyntas* were "prohibited" in Wisconsin. As if to demonstrate that the laws of nature are more powerful than the laws of Man, the worms invaded anyway: as of 2014 (the latest data we can find), they have been identified in five counties. The worms were reclassified from "Prohibited" to "Restricted"—which still prohibits the sale, introduction, transport and propagation of jumping worms in Wisconsin.

They're in Minnesota, too. Although Wisconsin banned "all 51 species" in 2009, more recently, Dr. Lee Frelich, Research Associate and Director, The University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology, who has studied invasive worms, said there could be as many as 145 species in the genus. He also notes their presence in Minnesota: "I found some several years ago in the main garden in Loring Park, Minneapolis, where they killed a number of plants, and they apparently came in on leaf mulch distributed by the Minneapolis park board.

"During summer 2015, someone also sent me some earthworm specimens that they said came in garden mulch that they bought at one of the large stores like Menards or Wal-mart. They did turn out to be *Amyntas* as well, and could have been *A. agrestis*, but were too decayed by the time I saw them to determine the species for sure."

The Great Lakes Worm Watch is a citizen-science outreach organization working to study earthworms and their habitats. The director is Ryan Hueffmeier, an environmental scientist at the University of Minn.-Duluth.

Roughly speaking, there are two different classes of ecosystems, Ryan explained in a radio interview: In manmade environments, such as farms and gardens, worms have proven to be helpful as soil-aerators and as detritivores, super-efficient recyclers that break down organic material and return it to the loosened-up soil.

Home-brew Deer Repellent

*** FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY ***

In a blender or with a hand whisk, blend:

2 raw eggs (no shell)

3 to 6 Tablespoons hot sauce

1 Tablespoon Asian chili oil

½ to 1 teaspoon liquid dish detergent

Pour into a 2 gallon sprayer and fill with water. Mix well.

Spray every-thing. Apply before deer browsing. Reapply

after heavy rain or multiple light rains. Two gallons

protects Don Dean's 1.25 acre from deer. The ratio of 3 to 1 (oil to detergent) is the key.

Don Dean, Past President of the AHS, as told to the New England Hosta Society, October 2017

Some natural habitats such as the hardwood forests of the Northeast and upper Midwest were historically earthworm-free by design—meaning they supported no native earthworm species and were not meant to have earthworms, instead relying on tiny fungi and bacteria to do the recycling tasks.

"The fungi and bacteria do that job really, really slowly," Ryan explained. "But when earthworms come into such an environment, as they did with the European settlers hundreds of years ago, they do it much, much faster."

They accelerate the order of things—and not in a good way. The forest floor is meant to be a thick, spongy organic "duff" layer, slow to break down. Not only do earthworms make things decompose too fast, but their castings make forest soil more compacted and dense—and more mineral-rich. The altered medium is inhospitable to tree seedlings and herbaceous plants that used to thrive. Natural forest succession is interrupted, and the diversity of the plant community threatened.

The forest floor can even drop, so what used to be a tree root may suddenly find itself above soil grade—a root no longer, but a branch.

"Researchers have coined the term 'tree root gingivitis'," said Ryan, who can tell right away when he enters a woodland whether it has been invaded. Big trees still tower up above, perhaps, but on the ground, maybe sedges (*Carex* species) or not much at all. When the big trees die, what will happen, since there are no saplings in the community?



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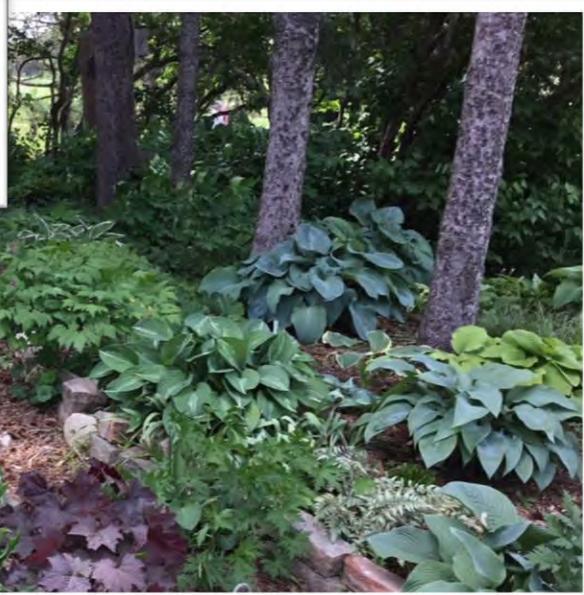
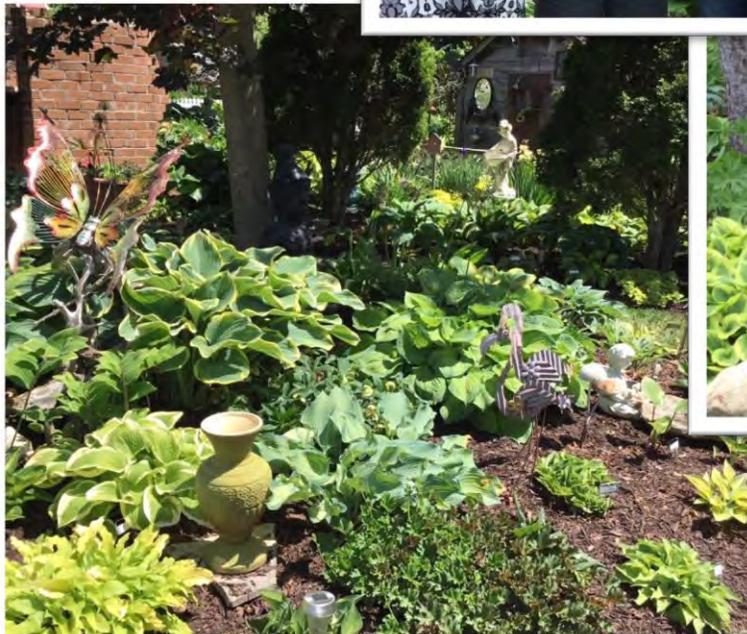
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2018 OHS Bus Tour

Photos Trish Symons









I Thought I Had Heard of Everything

I try to keep my articles lighthearted and informative. Try as I might, I can't find anything funny about this. It all started about a week ago, with a phone call from a hosta friend. As usual, we were expounding the merits of hostas, and specific varieties in particular. We both own several perennials and were talking about peonies. She told me that once, a few years ago, she knew a woman and she thought, quite well. Until this woman told her that there was a specific house in small town Ontario that had outstanding peonies at the end of her driveway near the road. This woman would drive by the house several times a week, lusting after the peonies. In the middle of the night, this middle-aged woman went to the house and dug up each and every one of them and took them home. She was so gleeful in relating the story to my friend. How does she not understand that this was stealing?

My friend was horrified and no longer associates with this woman. Me, I would have called the police, or at the very least, told the victim.

But for some reason, this started an influx of stories from my customers this past weekend. I didn't say anything about the story I had heard, but it was as if the stars had aligned and the universe decided I needed to get this story out to the general gardening public. I could go on and on with the stories but will tell just this one.

An elderly man told me a story, telling me where he had lived in a small village setting. I knew the village because it was very close to where I had once lived many moons ago. His backyard was on a ravine, so instead of fighting with a lawnmower, he planted over

200 hostas on his hilly backyard. He loved his hostas and is now trying to get a collection going at his new residence; God love him! Anyway, he was away for the weekend visiting family and when he came home, someone or several someones, had stolen all of his hostas. He went on to tell me that there was also a family in his village that went away on vacation, and when they came home, every plant, every bush, every tree had been taken. The property looked like a construction zone.

After hearing this, and several others over the course of the weekend, I am horrified. Yes, house insurance will cover this, but the theft is so much more than just plants. In my mind, it is equivalent to someone breaking into a home and stealing grandma's prized antique Tiffany necklace. For all the sweat equity that has gone into planting the green jewels, for all the hours that you poured over gardening publications, for all the hours of joy and glee when acquiring the treasures; not to mention the long-term care of weeding, composting, trimming, etc., etc., etc. – there is no insurance for that. How does one get compensated for the small part of your heart and soul that has been stolen?

It saddens my heart that some people think this behaviour is okay. Some think that it's okay to go into a garden centre and steal a leaf of a plant in the hopes of starting it at home. I know I am over-exaggerating, but it really bugs me.

We are very fortunate here to have security cameras, as most garden centres do. We also have our back-up system in the form of five watch dogs. Not too much escapes their notice. Unfortunately, I am on the lookout from year to year for a couple of people. Maybe it's a hit and run situation where they won't return to the scene of the crime. I don't know. I don't understand it.

What I do know is that the hosta is called "the friendship plant" for a reason. If your neighbour, cousin, friend has a hosta that you absolutely adore, ask them if you could have a bit. Most hostas divide easily and you will be surprised at the positive response. If the answer is no, then accept that with grace and a smile and head to your local hosta retailer. Someone somewhere can help you out.

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*In case you're not on their mailing list,
Wild Things Plant Farm is closing its doors on
Monday 3 September after 22 years in business.
Visit their website for details.*

Jayne Christiani
Hosta Vista, Baby!

Ontario Hosta Society

Is pleased to invite members and friends to our

September Annual General Meeting and Auction!

This important meeting which will include our annual business meeting and elections.

For your enjoyment, the executive have planned *something different, something unique and something entertaining . . .*

Lizzie Matheson, is a highly regarded floral and art designer who has won several awards and achievements for her many talents. She is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association and has wowed and entertained groups across Ontario for several years. You won't want to miss the quirky antics of this very talented floral designer/entertainer's presentation, *"Conversation Pieces"*; featuring funny stories and the creation of 3 exceptional floral designs focusing on the beauty of **h**ost**a** **l**e**a**v**e**s.

September 9, 2018 — Noon to approximately 4:00 p.m.

Nassagaweya Community Centre, Brookville Hall, 2005 Cameron Drive, Campbellville L0P 1B0 (Part of the Town of Milton). [Directions available on ontariohostasociety.com](http://ontariohostasociety.com)

AGENDA

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 12:00-12:30: | Doors open - Registration For Auction |
| 12:30 - 1:00: | Complimentary Lunch: Pizza, Caesar Salad, Desserts and Beverages |
| 1:00 - 2:00: | "Conversation Pieces" by Lizzie Matheson & Draw for Lizzie's creations |
| 2:00 - 2:15: | Business Meeting |
| 2:15-2:30: | Break |
| 2:30 - 2:45: | 2018 Bus Trip Highlights Presentation |
| 2:45 - 3:30: | Hosta Auction |
| 3:30—4:00: | Adjournment and Cash Out |



For ordering lunch purposes, please RSVP Lynne Limpert at lynnelimpert@hotmail.com 905-878-3366 or Donna Hussey at hussyede@sympatico.ca 519-582-4523 (evenings) by September 1, 2018. **Thank you and hope to see you there!**