

THE HOSTA LEAF

Shades of Green Hosta Society, Rochester, MN

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The President's Letter

When I sat down to write this news article several weeks ago, the world was a much different place. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus has impacted all our lives. Shades of Green Hosta Society (SOGHS) wants you to know your health and safety is in the forefront of our minds as we evaluate our calendar of events.



Along with the cancelation of the April 2nd Member Meeting, we have now placed **ON HOLD all future activities**. We will re-evaluate our calendar of events later in April.

As for the HOTY orders, we are looking for ways to insure a safe and conscientious distribution of orders. If we must cancel or if Naylor Creek cannot supply the order, refunds will be made.

GOOD NEWS: Our dear Newsletter Editor, Mary Lanier, has volunteered to provide a "Special Edition" Newsletter in early May to give you the latest news and plans for our calendar of events as well as updates on other hosta related activities we hear about such as the MRHS Convention and AHS Convention.

Should we deem it in the best interest of our membership to cancel the Spring Open House, Tours and/or the Annual Hosta Plant Sale, we will notify you via email, website and special edition newsletter. In the meantime,

please let us all take a deep breath, adhere to the governor's guidance and watch carefully as events transpire. Let us not forget to keep hope alive, help our neighbors and those at heightened risk and first and foremost, take care of yourself!



I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and happy. May this edition of the "Hosta Leaf" will bring you a dose of medicine that raises your spirits. Stay well. -

Kathy Rustad, President



Hummingbird Expert February's Guest Speaker

The speaker at the February 6, 2020, meeting featured hummingbird expert and bander **Don Mitchell**, who is especially well known in the ornithology world for banding hundreds of hummingbirds. Don holds a Master of Science Degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota and has conducted studies of hummingbirds and the plants they pollinate in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Colorado, and California. His talk highlighted hummingbird biology, including how hummingbirds hover and extract nectar, and their role in pollinating thousands of plant species in Minnesota (eastern columbine, Indian paintbrush, jewelweed and cardinal flower). He described the various types of hummingbirds, noting that Minnesota and Wisconsin are home to only the ruby throated hummingbird. He also provided insights to determine the ideal flowers, trees and shrubs to attract hummingbirds, and methods to fill feeders to attract them to our yards and to keep them as annual visitors.

**Chris Parisi, Immediate Past
Education Committee Chair**

Send Jan Your Event Photos

Have you taken pictures at various Shades of Green Hosta Society events? Maybe you have some great shots from one of our Winter Gala events or photos of beautiful gardens featured on our tours . What about those fun photos you took of people at a convention, meeting, plant sale, or workshop?



This is a reminder that we are working to gather photos from our SOGHS events to begin to capture and create annual histories of our society's activities. We are looking for photos from 2011 forward, so if you have taken pictures in the past or

are taking them this year, please consider sharing them to help document our organization's history.

Thank you to those who have sent photos so far, but we need many more! If you have some, but are unsure how to get them to us, just call **Jan Gerke** at **(507) 259-7096**, and I'm sure we can figure it out!

We hope to start with 2014 (and 2015 later this year), then work back as far as we can to 2011 to recapture the big events of the past several years.

Please send photos (with the event and year identified for each photo) to Jan Gerke (**janice.gerke@gmail.com**). Call Jan or send her an email with questions. If you'd like to join this committee to preserve the annual highlights of the organization, we welcome you.

We look forward to sharing the results of this effort with you in the future! Remember your cameras as you enjoy the summer's events!
- **Jan Gerke and Linda Brech**

SOGHS Spring Open House

*Silent Auction Thursday,
May 28*



*Donations Welcome
and Appreciated*

Sue Martino – Membership Fundraising Chair

SOGHS 2020 Hosta of the Year (HOTY) Offerings

Order Right Away!!! Don't Miss These Beautiful Plants at Great Prices

Members can pick up some hard-to-find Hostas at very discounted prices by sending in your order form and check to Sue Martino 40437 Ryans Bay Rd Zumbro Falls, MN 55991 Orders will be accepted until Saturday, **May 9, 2020. Pick-ups will be Tuesday, May 26, and Thursday, May 28th**



H. 'Monster Ears' \$8.00 (Mini)

Round, green leaves; pale lavender flowers. These easy-to-grow hostas are a great accent to bright, colorful annuals. Their thick foliage resists slugs and snails better than many other hosta varieties. They have a medium rate of growth



H. 'Smiling Mouse' \$11.00 (Small)

Blue-green leaves have a chartreuse margin in spring that turns almost pure white by late summer. Some leaves fold in half due to the rippling and remind me of a rolled tongue. Lavender flowers held in perfect proportion to the clump in summer. Medium growth rate.



H. 'Midnight Oil' \$10.00 (Medium)

Small to medium-sized hosta (15" tall x 30" wide) with unique, shiny, very dark, corrugated and cupped green leaves that stand in an upright manner and create a vase-like structure. The pod parent is H. 'Potomac Pride.' H. 'Midnight Oil' has a medium growth rate and grows in either sun or shade.



H. 'Fireplace' \$8.00 (Medium)

New sport from H. 'Fire Island' with light green leaves and a yellow margin. Leaves are held on red petioles. Leaves have a gentle waviness and some corrugation at maturity. Vigorous grower.



H. 'Golden Meadows' \$ 8.00 (Large) A stunning sport of Hosta sieboldiana 'Elegans' that forms an 18" tall x 3' wide clump of creamy white-centered leaves that age to muted gold, edged with a heavily stitched, wide blue-green border. More morning sun helps to keep the leaf color bright. Medium to slow rate of growth.

Plants are from Naylor Creek, www.naylorcreek.com



SOGHS 2020 Hosta of the Year (HOTY) Order Form

1. One hosta of each variety per member, maximum 5 plants total. If two SOGHS members are in the same household, orders may be combined for a maximum total of 10 plants (two of each variety).
2. Check made out to SOGHS must accompany order form. Orders received without payment will not be honored.
3. Orders are accepted until **Saturday, May 9, 2020**
4. Member agrees to **pick up plants**. Pick-up dates are: **Tuesday, May 26, 2020** at 40437 Ryans Bay RD Zumbro Falls (Lake Zumbro) between 5:00-7:00 p.m. **OR Thursday, May 28th** at the Spring Open House Paula Zollman’s Home -2317 Lenwood Drive SW Rochester

Name	Price	Quantity	Total \$
H. Monster Ears	\$8.00		
H. Fireplace	\$8.00		
H. Midnight Oil	\$10.00		
H. Smiling Mouse	\$11.00		
H. Golden Meadows	\$8.00		
			Order Total \$

Member(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Return the completed order form & check made out to SOGHS to Sue Martino (40437 Ryans Bay RD Zumbro Falls MN 55991) by May 9, 2020

Questions? Call Sue at 507-753-2430 or email suewmartino@gmail.com

A Little About the 2020 AHS Convention



The nation's largest event of its kind is coming to Minnesota, June 10-13, 2020. Hundreds of garden enthusiasts from around the country and the world are expected to attend the annual American Hosta Society (AHS) National Convention, being held at the Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park, MN. Founded in 1968, the AHS is a non-profit organization that has grown from a handful of members in its early days to about 3,000 active members today. As the world's leading association promoting the hosta plant, their purpose is to foster the development of the genus and its public interest and, of course, share with others the enjoyment that hostas and gardening in general offer.

In 2018 the AHS celebrated its 50th anniversary at the annual convention held near Philadelphia, PA. In 2020 the Minnesota Hosta Society is hosting the annual convention for the third time. Convention organizer Amy Peterson says, "The MHS is proud to once again host the convention. Our membership is excited to join in fellowship with other hosta gardening enthusiasts, often termed "hostaholics." Our theme "**Hosta Vision 2020**" reflects

the ever-expanding use of the genius *Hosta* in the garden as one of the top perennials of choice due to their versatility in use and form in the landscape. Plus they are very hardy in Minnesota's Zone 4 climate! A major part of the convention involves touring area gardens. Convention attendees may be transported by motor coach bus or choose a self-driving tour over the span of two days, with many gardens displaying over 500 hosta varieties. The accredited Hosta Leaf Show creates an opportunity for membership and the general public to see the plethora of variety in form and color the genius *Hosta* provides as a landscape plant. Also as part of the 2020 convention a philanthropic element is included and in alignment with our theme, we request that attendees bring used eyeglasses for donation to LIONS INTERNATIONAL.

For complete details and for updates, visit the www.hostavision2020.com

According to AHS President Andy Marlow, "As of now, the convention is on as scheduled. A number of things could change that. An order from local, state or federal authorities, a decision by the convention hotel to limit large gatherings, or enough cancellations by registrants could all have an impact. We expect to provide a definitive answer by May 1."

****** NOTE ******

THE SE MN tour on 10 June is FULL/CLOSED as of 27Jan2020

SOGHS Is A Proud Supporter of Convention

The SOGHS was an early sponsor and a fellow hosta society in Minnesota. They serve the SE Minnesota and Rochester areas. In addition to providing financial support, SOGHS is hosting the Wednesday all-day tour in their area. A number of SOGHS members have volunteered to be available for an Impromptu garden visit as you travel to and from the 2020 convention. The SOGHS financial support is being used to host one night of Hostatality!

American Hosta Society Membership/Dues

The American Hosta Society offers participation in all national activities, including a convention, and three issues of "The Hosta Journal".

Individual AHS dues are \$30/year or \$90/3 years. Make your check payable to AHS and send to Sandie Markland, Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 7539, Kill Devis Hills, NC 27948.





LOOK WHAT'S COMING JULY 16 -18

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR Hostas Chicago Style, this year's MRHS Convention in the Chicago area. Your hosts from the Northern Illinois Hosta Society (NIHS) are planning a warm Chicago-style welcome for you. This convention is going to be unique: speakers you haven't heard before, fabulous gardens where hostas share top billing with other distinctive plants and

unique designs, an evening garden visit, Chicago-style pizza, and more are included. Features you've always expected at hosta conventions will still be part of the event: reunions with hosta friends, vendors with the newest hostas, companion plants and other garden-related items, two new cultivars from Bob Solberg as gift hostas and a leaf show. There are plenty of speakers who will educate and excite you as well as gardens that will enthrall you and good old-fashioned midwestern hospitality. Headquarters for this do-not-miss event will be the same as for the 2013 Hostamania! Convention that you enjoyed so much. The name has changed from Lisle Hilton to Doubletree by Hilton, but it's the same accommodating place that gave you comfortable rooms at a great price, excellent food and super service. It's well-located near the Lisle/Naperville exit on I-88. In 2019 the MRHS Convention was combined with the AHS Convention in Green Bay, but in 2020 it will once again be the stand-alone event that so many of us have always looked forward to each year. Make plans now to be part of it. To add to your enjoyment, come early (or stay afterwards) to visit some of the area's spectacular attractions. Either way, be sure to join fellow hosta lovers in Chicago's western suburb of Lisle for Hostas Chicago Style, July 16 -18, 2020.

MRHS Dues and Information



MRHS DUES are \$20/2 years. Send your check to: Kathy Rustad, 4011 10th Avenue NW Rochester, MN 55901. There is a printable membership form on the website. Please include your name, address, telephone number and email address.

There are two meetings held annually. The Board of MRHS recently decided to reinstate the traditional Winter Conference, now named the HOSTA SYMPOSIUM, held in the Milwaukee, WI, area the first weekend in February.

In the summer, an annual convention, hosted by a local society, is held in different locations throughout the region. This three-day extravaganza features garden tours, a show of Hosta leaves, vendors selling the newest in Hosta plants, an auction of plants, a banquet, and an informational speaker. Foremost, however, is the fellowship of seeing old Hosta friends as well as making new ones.

The MRHS is considered Region 5 of the American Hosta Society and encompasses the nine Midwestern states of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Within the Midwest Region are 18 local societies.



“Gardening for the Health of It”

A Day of Gardening Enrichment

Spring Gardening Seminar
Saturday, April 18, 2020

\$49

Location: Heintz Center-Commons

8300.231 Sa Apr 18 8 AM-3 PM

CANCELED

XXXXXX

- 9-10:15 AM Keynote: “The Healing Power of Gardening” with Robert J. Stroebe MD, Mayo Clinic
- Three Breakout Sessions - You will choose one topic for each breakout when you register!
- Vendors will be onsite offering their products.
- Fee includes morning coffee break and light lunch.
- Registration Deadline: **Monday, April 6.**
- No refunds after March 15.

CANCELED

Cosponsored with RCTC Horticulture Program, Rochester Garden and Flower Club, Shades of Green Hosta Society, and the University of Minnesota Olmsted County Master Gardeners.

If canceled due to inclement weather, you will be issued a refund minus costs incurred (including supplies, food, and salaries).

XXXXXX

Session One 10:30-11:20 AM

Choose one

- Homeowners Guide to Tree and Shrub Care
Ryan Brick, Maier Tree Service
- The Art of Curb Appeal
Megan Magee, Family Tree Nursery
- Return of the Heirlooms
Harvey Buchite, Hidden Springs Flower Farm
- Urban Water and Soil Conservation
Aaron Gamm, Olmsted County Soil and Water Conservation District

Session Two 12:40-1:30 PM

Choose one

- Bees, Beekeeping and Pollination
Gary Keuter, University of MN Entomology Bee Lab
- Alternative Gardening Ideas
Robin Ruth-Lindsay MS, RCTC Horticulture Professor
- Edible Landscapes
Theresa Rooney, Hennepin County Master Gardener and Author
- Gardening with Nature: Creating Natural Play Areas
Jeff Feece, Rochester Park Dept

Session Three 1:40-2:30 PM

Choose one

- Humane Critter Control
Theresa Rooney, Hennepin County Master Gardener and Author
- Shade Gardening
Cindy Tomashek
- Backyard Farming
Brittany Wilcox & Cathy Nordstrom, RCTC Horticulture Students
- Indoor Gardening: Create a Healthier Home
Brice Bias

XXXXXX

CANCELED

REGISTER TODAY! www.rochesterce.org/register • 507-328-4000



RCTC.EDU
851 30th Avenue SE | Rochester, MN 55904
Equal Opportunity Employer/Educator

Fun, Friendship and Hospitality at the 2020 SOGHS GALA



A record-setting crowd of 70 SOGHS members and guests attended the Seventh Annual SOGHS GALA on Tuesday, Jan. 21 . Although the temperatures were cold, unlike our previous two GALAs, the weather this year cooperated and we did not have to reschedule.

The event was held at a new location, the Carriage House at Garten Marketplatz, in Byron. The *Camp Lumberjack* theme was evidenced by a sea of lumberjack plaid worn by many attendees, the spectacular decorations by Denice Cocker and Sherrie Bowe, the very popular hatchet throwing and word games designed by Denice Cocker, and posing in lumberjack garb and props for photos in the winter forest hand-painted canvas mural. Guests were treated to a delicious dinner by Omar’s Kitchen. Highlights of the evening included a SOGHS Trivia Table Game, chair door prizes, and an after-dinner sing along, including revised versions of the *Lumberjack Song*, and *What Do The Hosta Folk Do?*, both admirably led by Sue Martino. The evening was capped off with Emcee Joe Marchesani announcing winners of the vast array of door prizes.

Many very dedicated SOGHS members spend countless hours planning the GALA and ensuring its success. Thanks to GALA Planning Committee Members: Sherrie & Denny Bowe, Linda Brech, Rita Buegler, Denice & Dave Cocker, Mona Keehn, Gerry Meyer, Deanna Nash, Chris & Joe Parisi, Kathy Rustad, Barb Vroman, and Paula Zollman.

Very special thanks to: Denice Cocker & Sherie Bowe for the spectacular decorations, table settings, props and games, to Karen Nolte for designing the *Save the Date* postcard, Dave Cocker, Denny Bowe, Deanna Nash, June Stoehr, Joanie & Lloyd Meyer & Pam Schmidt for set up, take down, & all-around help, to Deanna Nash for the social hour treats and chair door prizes, to Barb Vroman & Rita Buegler for the creative door prizes, to Joe Marchesani for serving as Emcee, to Sue Martino for serving as Music Leader, to the many generous SOGHS members who provided door prize contributions and dessert, and to the SOGHS Board for underwriting much of the cost of the GALA.



Issues concerning venue, catering, and the SOGHS board assuming increased expenses need to be addressed. With the return of Willow Creek next year, these issues may be alleviated. Nonetheless, everyone who attended had a real GALA experience.

Joe and Chris Parisi, GALA Co-chairs (Photos, Joe Parisi)





SOGHS Fun and Fellowship at Spring Social

Once again, HyVee NW was the setting for the SOGHS Spring Member Social. It was another wonderful turnout!

HyVee is in the process of transforming this location into a “Walburger” restaurant so stay tuned for more information on the Fall SOGHS Member Social date and location!

Photo by Cindy Tomashek

2020 Hosta of the Year – ‘Dancing Queen’

Unlike other yellow hostas which emerge or turn chartreuse, H. ‘Dancing Queen’ emerges bright yellow and remains yellow all season long. The large leaves have a prominent pie crust edge, adding even more pizzazz to this colorful hosta. In mid to late summer, the foliage lightens to soft yellow, and the clump is topped with pale lavender flowers. This one is sure to brighten your garden. **(See related ‘Hosta of the Year’ article on pages 12 and 13.)**



Invite a Friend to Join Our SOGHS Membership



Spring is around the corner, and soon those thoughts of working in the garden and admiring flowers will turn to reality. My gardens are usually a little slow to sprout since it takes longer for the snow and ice to melt away. Recently, I read an article about eating hostas. They are part of the same family as asparagus so you can harvest the young shoots, even sauté the leaves and later in the season, the flowers are also edible. I do not intend on trying this any time soon but if you are up for some adventure, give it a shot; the Japanese have been eating them safely for centuries. Be sure to pick off the snails, not all snails are edible.

I have learned a great deal from the SOGHS family over the years and encourage you to invite a friend to join. There are many member benefits. Share the membership form on the website with your friends.

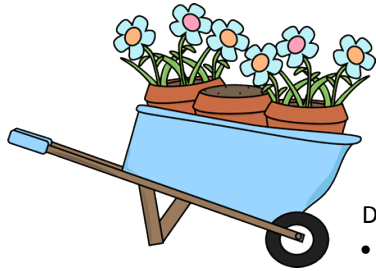
Joan Till-Born, Membership

Please welcome our newest members to the SOGHS family: Elfriede Klingfus, June Meitzner, Kathy Roberts, and Pat Basile

Spring/Summer Tour

Nurseries, Gardens, Overnights...."Oh, My"

Our tour committee has been busy working behind the scenes these past few months . We will again visit the wonderful Mennonite Nurseries in Iowa but we plan to go earlier than last year so as not to miss out on the newest plants. We hope you will join us. Our schedule, **subject to change due to Covid-19**, is as follows:



- **Monday April 20**, leaving from Deanna Nash's at 7 a.m. and the following **Monday April 27 at the same time**, for different Mennonite Nurseries .

Deanna's address is 5100 65th St. SW, Rochester, MN

- **Friday, May 1**, we will go to the Amish Nurseries around St. Charles, again leaving from Deanna's.

- **Saturday, May 16**, we plan to go to Iowa but to different nurseries: K&K Nursery in Hawkeye, Fox Produce and In The Country in Independence .Please remember to bring a lunch, water and snacks for the day.

- **Saturday, June 20**, will be our Annual Bus Tour to the Albert Lea area. Plans are in place to stop at Hosta Store in Hollandale and at a private garden near Faribault and another near Good Thunder. There will be more stops and gardens in the Owatonna and Albert Lea area. We will leave at 8 for a later start and plan to be back by 4. We want to be able to do this by bus this year and SOGHS has made this easier by paying for part of the cost of the bus. This means that when you sign up you will need to include the \$15 fee to be sure that your place is reserved.

Tuesday, June 23, 4-8 p.m. - Our Member Garden Tour. However, I am requesting that a couple more members sign up to open their gardens as some people who had planned to host in 2020 now find that they cannot . Usually four gardens work out great for everyone. Please let me know as soon as you can if you are willing to share your gardens with our members.

Thursday, July 30- Saturday, Aug. 1 - Overnight Tour

We have changed the annual overnight a little this year. This is again a car pool leaving from Deanna's. We will start on Thursday, July 30, and drive towards the St Cloud area. We have chosen a variety of nurseries and gardens to enjoy. This is a three- day "overnight," meaning that people can choose to go Thursday, July 30, and Friday, July 31 , and then go home. They can also stay on Friday, July 31, and stay over until Saturday, Aug. 1, and then return home. The other plan is to go for all 3 days , Thursday July 30, through Saturday, Aug. 1. Please read the sign-up sheets and choose the trip that best fits your schedule. This is a new area, and our members are working hard to discover new places to visit. We hope you will join us for lots of fun.



- **Valinda Wondrash, First Vice President, Garden Tours**
507-289-4234



Think Spring...and Think Plant Sale

Are you getting ready for the next SOGHS Hosta Sale? Let's hope that nature cooperates so that we will have ample time for our divisions to mature. Hopefully the flags you used last fall to mark which hostas to dig this spring weren't disturbed by animals.

This year's spring Hosta Sale is on Saturday, June 6, 2020, starting at 8 a.m. , subject to change due to Covid-19

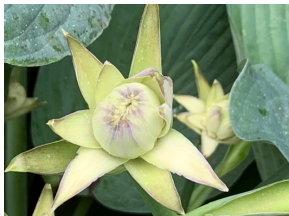
We need our club members' help in donating at least five hostas per person. Here are some of the things to keep in mind when donating:

- **Dig when the pips are just breaking through.** Transplants will look good at sale time. For a refresher on how to divide and transplant hostas, check out these videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9OmiSFQKjk>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOELV5cNteg>.

o If you need help digging or have a large number of hostas that need dividing, let us know. We have a Dig Team that can help.

- **Contribute ONLY one "common" hosta per donation** (not all 5). i.e.: h. 'lancefolia,' h. 'albmarginata,' and the common, solid green hostas.
- **SOGHS can supply you with dirt and pots.** We have them available at the the May Open House.
- **All companion plants can be donated to the sales offered by Rochester Garden and Flower Club.** The SOGHS sale will not offer companion plants.
- **Please refrain from donating plants if you know you have jumping worms.**

Sign-up sheets for volunteering for Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, 2020, will be at the May Open House. The sign-up sheets designate areas of specific needs such as cashiers, holding area help, food contributors and so forth.



Set-up will also need specific leaders to be in charge of the alphabetized hosta groups. These people will make sure set up is correct for their portions of the alphabet including checking that all plant I.D.s are in place and that plants are in their proper places on the tables.

Help us clean up! It is fun getting ready and going through the excitement of seeing the beautiful plants go out the door to new homes. But it's not quite over until the tables are cleaned and the floors are swept. Thank you in advance for supporting the plant sale of SOGHS. Proceeds contribute greatly to our operating budget.

- Jenifer Magera and Paula Zollman, plant sale co-chairs

Hosta of the Year History and Lineage

Because the April 2 meeting was canceled, our guest speaker, Glenn Herold, graciously agreed to submit an article outlining the history of *Hosta of the Year*, his meeting topic. Photos courtesy of Glenn Herold.

by Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

<https://theCottageGardener53012.wordpress.com>

The Hosta of the Year program was established in 1996 by the American Hosta Growers' Association (AHGA) to promote the growing of hostas and to help homeowners select quality varieties from the many on the market. The HOY is selected by a vote of AHGA members. Selected varieties must be readily available in sufficient supply, cost no more than \$15 in the year selected, and be good performers throughout the country. Starting with H. 'So Sweet' in 1996 up to and including H. 'Dancing Queen' in 2020, there have been 25 years of selection. Because this is the silver anniversary year, let's look back at the HOY history.

The exact number is unknown, but some estimate there are over 7,000 named hostas. Where do they all come from? Some come from hybridization or breeding programs. Usually the hybridizer has a goal in mind and selects parents that are most likely to pass on the desired characteristics to the progeny. Two or more cultivars or species are used and the hybridizer knows the identity of the parents. The resulting progeny may be released as is or further used in the breeding program.

Other cultivars are a result of mutation or sport of an existing plant. This may occur in the wild, in your garden, or in a lab during the process of propagating a cultivar. Because of the high volume of plants produced through tissue culture, many new cultivars and variations of cultivars have come out of these labs. Often, they start out as unstable chimeras, but through division and patience may stabilize and show improvement and variation from the parent.

A third source of new plants is from seedling variation. Some species are naturally more stable than others and show little variation in their seedlings. But breeders may self-pollinate a species to bring out recessive genes. This is often done in agriculture. A fourth source of cultivars is obtained through open pollination. Here the female parent is known, because that is the plant you collected the seeds from, but the male pollinator is not. Just like Forrest Gump's box of chocolates, you don't know what you'll get until you bite into it, or in the case of hostas, you germinate the seed.

Let's look at a few of the hostas of the year. Think of them in terms of characteristics inherited from their parents and also the source of the plant, as described above. H. 'So Sweet' was the first plant selected, in 1996. It is a cross between H. 'Fragrant Bouquet' and an unnamed seedling. Knowing that the flowers are fragrant, *Hosta plantaginea* must be part of the breeding lineage, since it is the only species with fragrant flowers. The flowers are also white, another characteristic of *H. plantaginea*. H. 'Patriot' followed as HOY in 1997. It is a tissue culture sport of H. 'Francee' with a much wider white margin and darker green interior. It is also the first recognized tetraploid sport. H. 'Fragrant Bouquet' itself was selected in 1998. Kevin Vaughn bred it in 1982 with a cross of H. 'Fascination' and H. 'Fragrant Summer.' Another plant with H. 'Fragrant Bouquet' in its genes is H. 'Guacamole,' registered by Bob Solberg in 1994 and selected as the HOY in 2002. Still a very popular hosta, it has a shiny golden yellow center, dark green edge, and fragrant flowers. From a tissue culture sport of H. 'Guacamole' came H. 'Stained Glass,' selected as the HOY in 2006. It has a much brighter gold center and a dark green margin. From this breeding line you can see that quality often begets quality.



H. 'So Sweet'



The first mini hosta selected as HOY was H. 'Blue Mouse Ears' (**photo at left**) in 2008. It is a
(Continued on Page 13)

'Hosta of the Year' History Explained

(Continued from Page 12)

sport of H. 'Blue Cadet,' which is likely a hybrid of a blue-leaved Tardiana, such as H. 'Halcyon,' and the naturally small species *Hosta nakaiana*. With its great slug resistance and small size, it quickly gained in popularity and resulted in the mini hosta craze and "Mouse" tsunami!

Though H. 'Halcyon' is in the lineage of many excellent hostas, including H. 'June,' the HOY in 2001, it has never received that honor. It may be a common plant, but is still one of the best blue hostas in the garden. An additional HOY that originated as a sport of H. 'Halcyon' is the 2010 selection, H. 'First Frost.' The margin of this plant changes from yellow in the spring to white in the summer, while maintaining a powder blue center.

Perhaps the most unique HOY selection is H. 'Praying Hands,' selected in 2011. Though its parentage is unknown, it is likely a 'Fortunei' type. The upright habit and folded leaves make it one of the most recognizable hostas in the garden.

A fine example of a successful breeding program is H. 'Brother Stephan,' the 2017 HOY bred by Olga Petryszyn. The corrugated leaves come from both of its parents, H. 'King Tut' and H. 'Mildred Seaver.' The yellow center is a product of the gold-leaved H. 'King Tut.' On the other hand, the 2019 selection, H. 'Lakeside Paisley Print,' is the product of two unknown seedlings that Mary Chastain crossed and registered in 2006. The fiery yellow center makes this hosta very unique and recognizable in the garden.

The 2020 selection, H. 'Dancing Queen,' displays one of my favorite hosta characteristics, a wavy piecrust margin, inherited from its parent H. 'Split Personality.' Unlike the parent, it is bright yellow in color.

Which hostas will be selected HOY over the next 25 years? No doubt, some have not yet been introduced. Others will come from mutations of current favorites. Looking into my crystal ball, I see several with red petioles and even red leaves. Will we see more minis, or will the HOY selections continue to be dominated by medium and large hostas? Solid green hostas are not favorites, but how about the queen of them all, H. 'Empress Wu'?

Each year I look forward to finding out what the newest selection is, and can't wait to see what is in store over the next 25 years.



1997's Hosta of the Year, 'Patriot,' left photo, is a mutation of H. 'Francee,' pictured at right.



H. 'Fragrant Bouquet,' 1998 HOY and parent of 1996 HOY 'So Sweet'



2002 HOY, 'Guacamole,' left, is a sport of H. 'Fragrant Bouquet' and 2006 HOY, H. 'Stained Glass,' (pictured at right), is a sport of H. 'Guacamole'



My Hosta Seed-Growing Story

by **Kathy Rustad**

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society's Winter Symposium on Feb. 1 in Milwaukee, WI, was filled with great speakers, a fun auction and many friendly hosta enthusiasts! I was so inspired by the talk on "Growing Hostas from Seed" by Jeff Moore, I could not wait to get home and plant my three packets of hosta seeds from the live auction. So here I am, determined to grow a register-worthy hosta!

It all started with good intentions. I purchased a grow light, organic soil specifically for seed germination and biodegradable cups so the seeds left after culling (the step where healthy germinated seedlings are kept while others are discarded) can grow without the need to transplant.

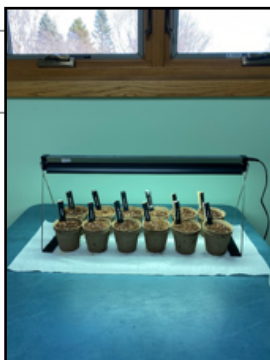
I chose to grow my newly adopted hosta seed babies in our laundry room where the temperature was more controllable and space was available. I call them seed babies since I am getting very attached to these little critters, and they seem to take a lot more attention than I expected.

Soil in the cups and seeds (10 seeds per 5-oz. cup) on top, I then used my label maker and wooden clothespins to label each cup with the parent's name (mostly open pollinators) and clipped the clothespin onto the side of the cup. Carefully, I lovingly placed each cup under a T5 grow light and misted faithfully with a hand spritzer for a week, watering lightly when the cup looked like it was getting too dry.

Now, as I sit down to share my experience, I look back at my notes from Jeff Moore's presentation and notice I have missed a step or two in my haste to get my seed babies in the soil. Hmm, looks like those little seeds should be kept dome-covered, in a plastic bag and in the dark, for one week to one month. They should be moist but not wet and kept moist with mist from a hand sprayer. I hurried downstairs (mid-sentence of this article I might add), to pop my seed babies into a plastic bag and, thinking it may not be dark enough, covered the bag with a beach towel. Oh, no. I've started to worry that they do not have enough moisture, so I spritz the inside of the bag.

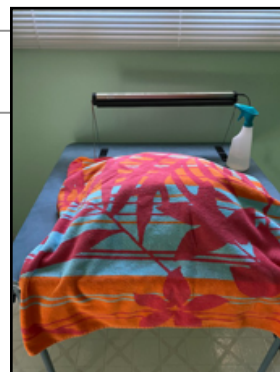
I am now reading that the temperature should be 72-73 degrees. Another trip down the stairs to check the room temperature shows the room at 70 degrees. I shut the door in hopes it will warm up the room. Meanwhile, my husband (who proclaims hostas are his "least-liked" plant) has raised the house temperature to help warm the room. Earlier he also provided me with a smart timer to turn my grow light on/off and also a room humidifier to ensure my seed babies had adequate moisture. He defends himself by saying that while he is not a hosta fan, "happy wife, happy life."

Well, here I sit waiting for the little darlings to germinate. Stay tuned for "The Rest of the Story" in the next issue of the SOGHS Hosta Leaf! Wish me luck!



Kathy's Hosta Babies:

Before, left



After, right

Calendar of Events

Disclaimer: Because of the uncertain nature of Covid-19, all events promoted in this newsletter are subject to cancellation or postponement. Please check the SOGHS website, SOGHS.org, for updates.

April 20 & 27 - Carpool to nurseries in Iowa

May 1 - Carpool to nurseries in St. Charles

May 9 - HOTY sales event deadline

May 16 - Carpool to Iowa nurseries

May 28 - Spring Open House at Paula Zollman's

June 5 & 6 - Annual Hosta Plant Sale at Olmsted County Fairgrounds

June 10-13 - National Convention in Brooklyn Park, MN

June 23 - Member garden tours

June 27 - Bus tour

Mary Lanier, SOGHS Newsletter

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