

Volume 3

Summer
Edition

July 2006

SHADES of GREEN



HOSTA SOCIETY

Of

Southeast

Minnesota

Presidents

Column

Recently I've received a few requests to help identify hostas whose tags have been lost or misplaced, an invitation I always enjoy for the chance to see your gardens as well as the challenge of getting the name right! You will all find as you visit each other's gardens and see more well-grown, mature specimens, that your own ability to distinguish one hosta from another will improve.

At the American Hosta Society national convention last month I attended Judging Clinic I – a four-hour long introduction to judging ethics and application that was extremely interesting and educational. We had the opportunity to do some practice judging after going through the handbook for judges and took a written test on the material in the handbook. Having passed the test, I am now a provisional judge, though there are a couple more requirements that have to be completed over the course of the next two years. I highly recommend that you who have seen many gardens and grow many varieties of hosta consider participating in judging clinics so that we will have enough members in this region to someday conduct an accredited leaf show. If you've never been to a leaf show, you'd be delighted by beautiful leaves as well as the wide range of cultivars displayed. It is definitely an aspiration that someday SOGHS will host a leaf show open to the public – it's a fantastic way to educate the public about the varieties available.

As at every AHS convention, the highlights are the many high caliber gardens featuring perfectly grown hosta specimens and wonderful depth of companion plants (alas, many of which are not hardy here – I suffered considerably from zone envy!). Of the companion plants that are hardy here, however, five of my favorites were wonderful drifts of Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'), Japanese painted ferns (*Athyrium nipponicum*), European ginger (*Asarum europeam*), Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), and *Ligularia*. Of the hosta we saw, one in particular created a buzz – H. 'Emerald Ruff Cut', in the garden of Walter Cullerton. There was a stampede from the buses to the vendors when we returned that afternoon and all H. 'Emerald Ruff Cut' plants were gone in a matter of minutes. Even the plants I tried to purchase online upon my return home were snatched up before my order could be filled...but I am consoled by the fact that there will be more available next year. That's the beauty of gardening...there is always next year.

Lastly, I want to leave you with a special story of how a small hosta got its name. On the shuttle ride from the hotel to the airport, I had the great pleasure of sharing the trip with Roger and Kak Koopmans from Faribault, MN, and with Richard Jolly, of Pine Forest Gardens in Tyrone, GA, and an entertaining woman whose name I can't recall (my regrets to the story-teller!), but who related this story to us about the Hosta 'Hidden Cove': Alex Malloy was given a miniature Hosta to name and introduce, but it struggled and failed to thrive. During this same time in Alex's life, his grandson was born prematurely and similarly failed to thrive and struggled for weeks in the hospital, until gradually growing stronger and eventually being released to his parents' care. Alex noted that at the same time his grandson was sent home from the hospital, finally thriving, his small plant was also finally thriving. So, he named it after his grandson, Cove, giving the small but strong plant the name 'Hidden Cove'. I love this story because it demonstrates how plants weave themselves into the fabric of our lives as gardeners. ***The excitement is growing! Cindy***

Shades of Green Hosta Society
of Southeastern Minnesota

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MEMBERSHIP

Shades of Green Hosta Society
\$10.00/yr individual, \$15.00 family
Send dues to Mona Keehn
1635 Chippewa Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Calendar

August 10 Garden Tours
Rochester and Pine Island
5-8:30 p.m.

Sept 9 Founder's Day Potluck Picnic 11 am-3pm
Tomashek Gardens, Preston, MN

Oct 5 General Meeting

Other Important Hosta Memberships

Midwest Regional Hosta Society
\$10./yr Send dues to
Peter Postelwaite
2112 Andover Road
Kildeer , Il 60047

1-847-438-7790
www.MidwestHostaSociety.org

American Hosta Society
1 yr \$25. Individual/ \$29. Family
2 yrs \$47. Ind/ \$52. Family
3 yrs, Ind/\$65./ \$75 Family.
Send dues to: Sandie Markland,
AHS membership Sec.
8702 Pinnacle Rock CT
Lorton, VA 22079-3029
www.hosta.org

Carpooling for Tours / THANK YOU KAREN NOLTEE

The July garden tours were warmly received and well attended.
The car-pooling invitation extended by Karen Noltee was a smashing
success for members (and smashing to the petroleum industry, too!).

Karen has been a source of perpetual energy and drive and thoughtful
“connectivity” for our organization. Thanks Karen and keep the ideas
flowing!

Cindy Tomashek reports that she will be at the August member tours
and will have three seats for carpooling! Join the carpool brigade.

See you at Karen's for launch!

August Hosta Tours

August 10 5pm-8:30pm

1. **Jeanne Truestedt garden, 12 Elmwood Dr NE, Pine Island, MN 356-8934**

Depending on your point of view you might describe this garden as woodsy, wild, whimsical or eclectic, endless and eccentric. This garden is different things to different people in our family and has been almost thirty years in the making. Friends, children and now grandchildren have left their marks on the décor, but the plants have grown to fill other yards and properties as well as our own with lush shades of green. It is a work in progress and all visitors are welcome to view, chat, and exchange ideas for improvement.

2. **Jean and Gerry Meyer garden, 10236 95th AV NW, Pine Island MN 356-4830**

Located on a shady wooded hillside this is "collector's garden" with about 600 different varieties of hosta. Some are over 20 years old. Others are recently acquired. We have several that are described as giant hostas and are starting to approach that description. We also have an area that features small and mini hostas. Native ferns, plants and wildflowers are used as companion plants as well as other ferns, daylilies, monarda, pulmonaria, astilbes, trycertis. Several astilbes, bugbanes and clematis are also part of the collection. We dabble and experiment with other plants but hosta reign supreme here.

3. **Cynthia Schaefer garden, 5217 Chateau RD NW, Rochester 285-9736**

I planted my first hosta about 15 years ago. It was a chunk my Mother-in-law cut off of one of her plants. I still have that plant. Of course it's been divided and transplanted many times and a lot of it has been given away to other hosta newbies. I started 'collecting' hostas in 1996 when I discovered the Hosta of the Year. Every year I add new plants and I now have 160 different identified hostas and over 350 hosta plants. We have several garden areas, both sunny and shade gardens. The sunny perennial gardens are slowly becoming hosta gardens...just because hostas are easier. After visiting a couple of the club member gardens recently, I have started work on creating a hosta glen on the north side of our home. My plan is to move several of my generic/common hostas to the glen to make room for more specialty hostas. So you will find that area under construction.

4. **Pat Heck garden, 2153 Haralson LN SW, Rochester 259-9416**

I call my garden 'The Postage Stamp' garden, but I like to show people how they too can garden on a small city lot. I have 2 dozen hardy roses, including several climbers, numerous perennials and flowering shrubs, all planted in an English Cottage Style garden where volunteers of poppies, larkspur, mallow, alyssum and verbena bonariensis pop up in unexpected places. There is a small pond which I call my puddle, but it is enough to give me the sound of water and to harbor 4 small gold fish and a few water plants. The white garden on the north side of my house, lights up the shady garden for passer bys.

Originally having a very sunny yard, I had mostly sun plants. But now the trees have grown and I am finding that I need to take out sun lovers and replace them with shade lovers. This hasn't been a problem for me since I have always loved hosta. My collection includes roughly 80 varieties which are all labeled. Many have just been growing the past 4 years, but I also have some that are well established. My pride and joy is my Montana Aureomarginata which stands 3 feet tall about 5 feet wide, the largest in my garden, but also my miniature collection which is planted in a bird bath.

Founder's Day Pot Luck Picnic, Hosta Walk and Fun Day

Hosted by Cindy and Mike Tomashek

RSVP # of guests to
Cindy at
507-289-2614 or
prestonplants@aol.com

RAIN DATE
Sunday
September
10

Saturday, September 9, 2006
12 noon to 4 p.m.

At Camp Creek Pharm, 21587 US 52, Preston, MN

Hot sandwiches, plates, plastic ware, napkins and bottled water will be provided. Please bring a dish to share! Also, bring: lawn chairs, picnic blankets, other drinks that you may desire, sun screen, insect repellent and a smile.

The day is meant to be a relaxing get-away with lots of time to socialize and to get to know each other better! Bring your family, your fishing gear (and license), and your bikes or comfortable walking shoes.

First, enjoy the gardens and hostas.



Trout fishing on Camp Creek is also available for the anglers. License required.



Explore the Preston/Harmony Bike Path just a short jaunt away. Head back down the driveway and through a gate onto a mowed path. It is



downhill on the way out -- and uphill coming back. Plan accordingly.

Directions:

Take Hwy 52 S to Preston, and follow Hwy 52 through/around Preston. From the bridge over the Root River it's $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the driveway on the right or west side of Hwy 52 as you go up the hill heading east/southeast out of Preston. (If you get to the John Deere dealership at HWY 16 and HWY 52 you have gone too far!)

There are metal gates, which will be open, with a wooden beam overhead and a cattle guard across the driveway. Go slow as there is a lot of pitch and curve to the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long driveway. Beware the cow pies... There is parking available in the yard and above the former grain bins.

Notes from the National and Midwest Hosta Conventions

Growing Hostas Better

Extracted from a talk by Warren Pollock

1. **Watering** – most important factor in growing hostas. They do not like to dry out. Keep evenly watered through growing season but especially when it heats up.

2. **Fertilizer** – hostas respond well to slow release fertilizers and especially nitrogen early in season. Scotts Starter Lawn Fertilizer, 20-27-5, Miracle Gro “Shade & Feed, 10-10-10, and Nutracote “Dynamite, 18-6-8, are all good possibilities.

Foliar fertilizing every 7-14 days in spring is another possibility. The new Miracle Grow 12% nitrogen bottle can be used but dilute by half. Empty half the bottle and use another time.

3. **Tonics** promote a strong second flush of growth. Kelp or sea weed could be used. Roots Pro, granular, is another.

4. **Minimize Weeds** manually or with herbicides. Pre emergence granules such as Preen are effective. Apply early, before weeds germinate for effective control. Be sure to water in to activate. For existing weeds use of Round-up is effective. In close quarters “paint” the weeds on both sides of the leaves rather than spraying.

5. **Slug Control** – start *early in the season*. Commercial slug baits are quite effective. Ortho “Bug Geta” (3.25% Methaldehyde) and Rain Tough “Deadline” (4%M) have worked well. Copper metal barriers also work. Iron Phosphate compounds such as “Sluggo” are also good, especially where children and pets are a concern.



Newest of the New

Representatives from 3 major tissue culture labs were on hand to discuss “What are Criteria for Introducing New Hostas?”

Clarence Falstaff from Walters Gardens, Hans Hansen of Shady Oaks, and Mark Zilis from Q&Z each gave their thoughts on what they look for in new introductions.

Newest continued:

Falstaff said they look for something unique or distinct and plants that have multi season appeal and that will perform well in a variety of climate zones. They want a plant that will look good in a container at a young age so it can sell well in a nursery and yet look good later in the season, Disease and pest resistance are also sought. Hosta “Clovelly” with extreme piecrust edge was an example that Walters Gardens hope to introduce in the next year or two. Americana, a Loyalist sport with upright growth, deep green leaves with a narrow nearly white center is a new introduction. Singing in the Rain, also new, is a reverse Dancing in the Rain, with blue green color and narrow gold edged leaves with deep impressed veins. Razors Edge, Alakazaam, Empress Wu and Big Kahuna are names to watch for.

Zilis said he looks for distinction with something bold and different, good color, durability and disease resistance. He also commented that bigger hostas sell better than smaller hostas. He mentioned the following newer introductions: Blaze of Glory, a fantastic vivid gold with slightly wavy leaves is a new hosta; Orange Crush is gold with white margins and moderate corrugation; Ooh La Lah is a medium hosta with white centered dark green leaves and Rhinestone Cowboy. Look for the following in 2007: Cajun Sunrise; Lollapalooza; Amber Waves pf Grain; Scarlet Ribbons, red petioles and rippled white margined hosta.

Hansen looks for the “wow” factor, good growth, long season appeal, ease of production, high number of true plants that can be gotten in tissue culture, marketability, and a good photo of a mature plant. Mentioned new hostas were Lakeside Hula Hoop, Beach Captain, Artic Blast and Red Hot Poker.

Editor's note: Hansen had a leaf in the cut leaf show that definitely had a “WOW” factor. It had exceedingly red petioles that extended up into the leaf itself. There was a lot of buzz on this one. No name yet. But it was hot, hot, hot.

A Hosta Gardener's Lament

By Cindy Tomashek

Before I left for the Midwest Hosta Convention (hosted by the Southeast Wisconsin Hosta Society in Brown Deer, Wisconsin), I confidently prepared my garden for my absence by weeding, watering, and applying deer repellent (Deer Stopper and Liquid Fence and Milorganite). While I was gone, (three whole days!) it rained hard, but briefly. Upon my return, I unpacked, unloaded my convention purchases and gave them a good drink of water. Then I toured my garden to relax for a few minutes, BUT IT WAS FAR FROM RELAXING.

Dialogue with a Deer: (Not to be confused with *Dear*...my husband requested clarification)

What? Who told you I was gone...how did you know? Why didn't you go to the neighbors' feeder when your stomach was growling?



you're at it, eat some of the wild geranium (it's getting a little rampant) and

Why Hosta 'Big Daddy' – it's got tough leaves – you are supposed to leave it alone! Why the H. 'Lancifolia'? (OK the 'Lancifolia' is dispensable). Eat all the violets you want (please!). While

what's with the ginger -- no one else reports deer browsing on ginger, so why mine? And while I'm ranting, why did you have to ravage Sumac 'Tiger Eyes'? It's been sprayed with Liquid Fence – 3 times over three weeks – for Pete's sake. AND I'm really ticked off that you're so blind and thoughtless that you stepped on numerous hostas and now they are practically ruined. How can you be so -- deer-like?

What's with topping the *Kirengeshoma palmata*? AND the Lady Ferns? You don't eat waxbells. , Ferns are only good in the spring...do I have to provide you with a list of what you don't eat? You should know better.

Why not try the digitalis? IT'S DELICIOUS... Or the Monkshood? They're really tasty – REALLY.

And did you think I wouldn't notice that the entire south half of Hosta 'Nakaimo' is nothing but petioles? I'm taking notes...

What I don't get is why the juicy stuff in the bog at the bottom of the valley isn't sufficient for you – your palette isn't THAT sophisticated is it? I have a lot at stake here, so you're on my HIT list...with my BB gun that is. Better be prepared to run, John and Jane, 'cause I have you in my sights.

And a bow-hunter coming this fall.....

What do you do to keep deer and other critters out of your gardens?

At the National Hosta Convention in the Philadelphia area all of the tour gardens were surrounded by deer fence. This fence was very tall and dark colored and was generally well hidden by plantings. It was necessary to protect plantings. We have all had problems. How do you solve yours?

Email me with your ideas on how you control the local critter population and keep your hostas safe. We will run a column on the ideas you have come up with.

jeanmeyer@att.net



Favorite Hostas

What are your favorite hostas? We would like all of our members to vote for up to 10 favorite hostas. Please take the time to vote on your favorite hostas.

E-mail me at jeanmeyer@att.net or mail me at Jean Meyer, 10236 95th AV NW, Pine Island, MN 55963.

Just list your favorite hostas in order of preference with top choice first.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Any serious hosta disappointments? List those hostas and the problems you found with them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Midwest Convention Notes

This convention (hosted by the Southeast Wisconsin Hosta Society) left nothing to be desired...it offered fantastic tour gardens (it is great to see how other gardeners put plants together), a terrific leaf show, entertainment that was light and lively (German song and dance), and unparalleled camaraderie in sharing stories of triumph and tragedy. In my book, it was a winner.

Each of you should consider attending a regional or national convention. The cut leaf shows plus artistic design and container grown divisions are worth the price of admission. Registration fees usually cover your tour bus expenses for the garden tours; some meals (check the registration materials for details). And goodies provided upon registration. The major goodie is a "convention" plant. Our 2006 Midwest Hosta Convention plant is Hosta 'Rootin' Tootin". You do have to pay your own hotel fees at special convention rates but that can be split among the number of people in the room. **And then, you always need to plan for your vending purchases. There are always wonderful and new hostas to purchase!**

Start planning and budgeting for conventions next year. You won't regret it.

President Tomashek Makes the Head Table

Cindy Tomashek received three Best of Section awards, all of which made the "head table" and a tie for Best of Show in the cut leaf show at the Midwest Convention. The head table hosts the best of the best in the show. Cindy reports that this convention was a personal best and her goal to make the head table was ably realized. She said, "It was rewarding to be acknowledged for knowing what a good leaf should look like." Growing and preparing winning leaves for show is a great accomplishment also.

Cindy, having some experience now in successfully showing leaves at various conventions, would gladly run a clinic on cut leaf selection, conditioning, cleaning and staging. Please contact her if you would be interested in a session on this topic.

CONGRATULATIONS

