



The Hosta Leaf

March/April 2011 Volume 6 Issue 2

OUR PRESIDENT'S PEN

Happy Spring Hostaholics!!

Spring is a time of rejuvenation, and rejuvenation we need after this past winter! With the snow almost gone now is a great time to look at the 'bones' of our gardens. Before our gardens wake up, we have a great opportunity this time of the year to survey our yards and take note of areas we may want to focus on for the upcoming garden season. Would some berming help, how about the addition of a large planter or other form of garden art? What plants need to be moved or pruned? It's a wonderful time to peruse our landscapes looking for ways to make our gardens their best this coming season.



Speaking of this coming season, Bob Solberg, an icon in the industry and the owner of Green Hill Farm, offers a wealth of information on how to prepare for and plant our favorite plant, hostas! Jeanne Truedtedt has worked with Bob to bring us our first ever Fall Hosta of the Year (HOTY) program. Read more on page 5.

Jan Gerke has been hard at work planning a fun-filled and jam-packed set of touring opportunities for us this year. Check out pages 4 and 5 for all of the details.

Last month at the Coffee and Catalogs event, I asked some of our more experienced members if they had a tip for controlling slugs as last year was such an awesome year for them. Interestingly enough, I heard the same tip over and over, and what a wonderful tip it is. Mix 4 parts water to 1 part ammonia and spray plants and the surrounding ground, don't forget the undersides of the leaves too! Now is a good time to start with this tip to get any eggs that are waiting to hatch and wreak havoc on our gardens.

I look forward to seeing you at our April meeting and at our many upcoming events!!

Kim

And now... a word or two from our plant sale coordinator:



Plant sale set-up will be on Friday May 20th from 2p-7p and sale day will be Saturday May 21st from 8a-12p, building 40 at the Fairgrounds.

The following areas need volunteers for the Plant Sale, and sign-up will be available at the meeting on Thursday.

General Plant Sale Set-up on Friday

-Arrange tables, post signs, receive/identify/price plants, arrange plants

Cashiers/Cashier Assistants

-Collect Money, remove price labels, write-up sales tickets

Customer Service/Wagon Wheelers

-Assist shoppers with large volume of plants, haul plants in wagons to holding area, haul plants in wagons to cashiers, help load plants into customer vehicles

Plant Holding Area

-Receive boxes of plants to hold for customers, give one copy of 'claim number' to customer

Plant Rescue/Digs

-Digging/Potting crew which is needed prior to the sale.-Plant Transport/Helping members get plants to sale

Plant Sale Tear-down/Clean-up

-Remove table coverings, sweep floor and clean tables, clean pricing tags

Customer Service (Master Gardeners)

-Assist shoppers and answer questions about plants. Earn volunteer hours by helping customers with plant information.

Food

-Help with donation/preparation of food for plant sale set-up day and day of the plant sale. Well fed volunteers are always happier!

The plant sale is the major fundraiser for our organization and our biggest opportunity to put our face out in front of the community. It helps to fund the different activities that support the mission of our organization. It is also a key time for us to introduce our organization to the public, obtain new members, distribute information to the public about the genus 'hosta' and, share our knowledge of individual plants to include size, shape, and ease of growing. Volunteering at the plant sale can be a great way to get to know other members of the organization.

This year at the Plant Sale we will focus on the miniature hostas by providing a greater selection of miniature hostas and provide specific info on their growing requirements. *Jason Leigh, Plant Sale Chair*

* Our President's Pen	1
* Our Board	2
NEW TO THE HOSTA LEAF:	
* SOGH's Featured Expert Educational Article, "Healthy Hosta Planting" by Bob Solberg	2/3
* 2011 Touring Update	
* Convention Chatter	4
* Fast, Frugal, Friendly" Article from our Fund-raising Chair	5
* HOTYs Sale Update	
* General meeting Invite	6
* 2011 Midwest and National Convention Reminder	
* Membership Moment	7
* Upcoming Events &	8

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This editions featured expert introduction
H. Margies Angel 2007

Hosta College Summary

March 11-12 I had a great experience attending Hosta College in Piqua, Ohio, for the first time. It's hard to say which part of the whole trip was more valuable - the time spent en route with travel companions Mona Keehn, Mary Schwartzbauer, and Tom and Becky Micheletti, or the various classes, vending and general socializing that is part of every hosta-related event. There was non-stop laughter and talking in the car and non-stop talking, learning, and listening once we arrived. It's a great boon to see lush plants (yes, even hostas!) when outdoors it's just brown and squishy (there was no snow there!). And yes, I bought some plants but only one hosta, H. 'Vivacious', as it looks like it could be a good breeding plant with red petioles and highly variegated leaves, and hybridizing is still on my list of Things To Do.

There were many classes to choose from that offered great information to get my gardening brain more energized. I especially enjoyed Tom Micheletti's "Overview of Hosta Species", Bob Solberg's "Advanced Hybridizing" and "How the Hosta World has Changed in the Past Thirty Years" (when Bob started in the business there were about 230 registered hostas!), and Chris Wilhoite's presentation on "Martagon Lilies". Mona and Mary also attended and enjoyed Chris Wilhoite's presentation on "Arisaemas".

As always, there were some old friends as well as introductions to new friends from around the country, making the trip especially worthwhile. I've put this on my Things to Do AGAIN list!

Cindy Tomashek, 2nd VP Programs and Education

Hosta Leaf's Featured Expert: Bob Solberg Healthy Hosta Planting

Hostas perform best when planted with ferns and other perennials in prepared beds. They can also be tucked into the landscape on a hole by hole basis if an area of at least 2-3 feet wide is prepared to a depth of 9-12 inches. When planted in the woods with wildflowers it is important to remove all surface tree roots within 2 feet of each hosta clump.

Bed Preparation: The most important ingredient in successful hosta growing is bed preparation. Good hosta soil should remain moist after a good rain yet drain well. It should have enough organic matter to provide plenty of air spaces for vigorous root growth but be firm enough to discourage voles and other rodents. It should have high fertility and a light covering of mulch to keep the soil cool in summer and retain moisture. Here is how we do it at Green Hill Farm.

Bob and Nancy Solberg own Green Hill Hostas in Chapel Hill, NC and not only sell many, many cultivars but have introduced many fabulous 'must have' hostas, as well. Check out the newbies section of their website if you are just getting started. They have great tips and suggestions!. For more information feel free to call them at 919-309-0649 or go to their website at <http://www.hostahosta.com>. Printed with permission from Bob Solberg, April 2011.



First the area to be planted is completely tilled with our old Troy Built tiller to its maximum depth of 8-9 inches. We remove all the surface tree roots that the tiller finds. If the soil is poor and/or hard, we will frequently add 4-5 inches of purchased topsoil, a good sandy loam, and till it in to the existing soil. Then 3 inches (about 30% of the total bed) of organic matter is spread over the bed and tilled in with some 10-10-10 fertilizer to "feed the bark". We usually use coarse pine bark nuggets in our beds that are locally available in bulk, but well-rotted sawdust, compost or manure will also work well. The coarser the organic material is the larger the air spaces in the soil will be and the longer they will remain in the soil.

The addition of gravel gives the bed mass, moderating soil temperatures as well as making it firmer. Also, it is a vole deterrent. If you can dig in your bed easily with your hands then the voles can too. We no longer spread gravel over the entire bed and till it in to a depth of 4-5 inches, although it has worked well for us in the past. We just add gravel where we plant our hostas and other perennials that voles might eat.

Finally, after a good rain to settle things a little, the bed is ready to plant. Hole Preparation: Hostas do not grow deep into the soil, usually no deeper than one shovel depth or so. Wide holes are better than deep holes, since hosta roots usually extend as far or further from the center of the plant as the foliage does. Dig a hole wide enough to accommodate all the roots of the hosta to be planted without cutting or folding them. Make a small mound in the bottom of the hole to rest the crown upon and cover it with about an inch of 3/8 inch gravel, either crushed granite or pea gravel. Take the bare rooted hosta and run its roots down the hill. Cover the roots and crown with another inch or so of gravel, making a hosta and gravel sandwich. Loosely fill the hole with soil that has been amended with some slow release fertilizer or

manure (especially if planting in the spring). Do not pack the soil around the plant. Water thoroughly and mulch with a thin layer of pine bark, shredded oak bark or what ever is your local favorite. Remember to keep the mulch off the hosta petioles in order to discourage fungal diseases. Also, deep mulches encourage voles.

When to plant: Hostas can be successfully planted any time that the ground can be worked. The best times to plant hostas are when they are actively making new roots, in the spring after the first flush of leaves has hardened off and in late summer once the hottest weather is past. Here in North Carolina that is usually early May and late August. Most plants that we ship to retail customers are sent during those optimum times. Planting at these times allows the plants enough time to establish a good root system before the droughts of summer in the first case and before they go dormant for the winter in the latter.

Containerized hostas can be planted with a minimum of shock throughout the spring, summer and into fall. They should be completely bare rooted before planting and their roots untangled. If your hostas arrive bare root they will probably appreciate being soaked in a bucket of water for several hours to rehydrate them before planting. Pinching a leaf or two will also reduce desiccation shock and usually stimulate another flush of leaves. Hostas usually acclimate completely to their new homes in 1-2 weeks and should be kept moist during that period. A topdressing of fertilizer will also encourage rapid new growth.

Finally, for hostas to achieve their maximum potential, the soil must be able to readily take up the water and nutrients that they need. Good bed preparation in the beginning makes all the difference. This however is not the end of the process. Over time tree roots will reinvade your beds robbing your hostas of water and heavy rains will compact the soil making it hard for any water to penetrate deep into the bed. Alas, then the beds will need reworking. Remember, a garden is never completed, it is always a work in process.

2011 Gardens, Shopping, Tours ...Hostaholics on the Road Again!



I'm sure you are as ready as I am for a year filled with lots of great garden touring and shopping opportunities! Here's an update on our 2011 plans.

Member Tours Survey Results. Many thanks to all (72 of you) who responded to the tours survey! Responses returned via hard-copy were added into the online survey data to provide a full compilation of results. You helped confirm that we are doing most things as you would like and also gave input for some fine-tuning and changes. The feedback from the bus tour section was used to help plan our June 11th tour. Based on feedback received, we are making the following changes for our member garden tours and other touring events:

1. Starting the member garden tours at 5:00pm rather than 5:30
2. Alternating between Wednesday and Thursday evenings for the member garden tours, plus adding an option at host/hostess discretion, to open the garden for tours on the weekend (Saturday or Sunday) or evening before or after the scheduled date. I will be checking with each host or hostess to determine if this works for them and if so, I will publish the extra dates on the SOGHS website. Please note that the SOGHS member garden tour signs will indicate that the garden is open for visitors. If no signs are out, the garden is not open for touring.
3. Providing one or two weekend tour opportunities via member carpool events

Identifying those going to the Midwest Hosta Convention in Madison to set up possible carpools both to the



convention and to gardens/nurseries pre- or post-convention

Spring Open House at Cindy Tomashek's on Thursday, May 26th, 5:00 – 8:30pm. If you can't make it Thursday, Cindy has agreed to also open her gardens on Saturday morning, May 28th, 9:00am to noon. Enjoy her beautiful gardens, the silent auction on Thursday only (donations appreciated), and maybe win a door prize. Bring a friend and if they join, you get two hosta bucks.

Bus Tour on Saturday, June 11th, 7:00am – 6:00pm. While the fuel surcharge will be higher than previous years, we are reducing the snacks provided to hold the cost at \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Water will be available all day. Fresh fruit will be supplied in the morning and cookies (any bakers?) in the afternoon. Please bring your own lunch. We will visit the Aspelund Peony Garden (www.aspelundgardens.com) with an added bonus...hosta gardens (north of Wanamingo), Ambergate Gardens (www.ambergategardens.com) (Chaska), Knecht's Nurseries (www.knechts.net) and their private gardens...hostas galore (Northfield and south of Northfield), and Cyndi Maas' gorgeous private gardens (Medford). Sign up will be opened to the public on May 1st. We will meet in the Walmart North parking lot in front of Gander Mountain at 7:00am and the bus will leave **promptly** at 7:15am and return to the same location at 6:00pm. Sign up at our April 7th SOGHS meeting. If you miss the meeting, please sign up by sending your name, address, phone number, and email address with your check made payable to SOGHS to: Jan Gerke, 5317 Timberidge Ct SE, Rochester, Mn 55904

Midwest Hosta Convention in Madison, WI. on July 7th - 9th. We are gathering a list of people going to the convention (sign up at the April 7th meeting), to help facilitate carpools to the convention and coordination of possible pre- or post-convention garden or nursery tours. As part of the convention, attendees will tour five private gardens. But there are numerous public gardens and nurseries in the Madison and Janesville or Milwaukee areas which we could visit! Watch our website.

If you're interested in helping with any of these tours, (Note: the June and July Member Garden tour and the July 23 tour are listed on the next page) please sign up at the April meeting or contact Jan via phone (507-259-7096) or email (jan_gerke@yahoo.com). We will have lots of touring fun with our hostaholic friends in 2011! *Jan Gerke, 1st VP Garden Tours*

C-ONVENTION C-HATTER 2012

The next Convention Planning Meeting will be on Saturday, April 16, at 10:00 am at the home of Rick & Mona Keehn. An email reminder will also come your way prior to 4/16. Hope to see you there!

Cindy and June



Member Garden Tours on Wednesday, June 15th and Thursday, July 14th, 5:00 – 8:30pm. To give more people the opportunity to enjoy these gardens, we are opening them up (at host or hostess discretion only) on another day before or after the scheduled dates. I will follow-up with each host/hostess to determine if their garden will be open another day and will update the SOGHS website accordingly. If the SOGHS member garden tour signs are out, that will indicate the garden is open. Please do not stop if the signs are not out.

Members who volunteer their gardens for a tour will be given a choice of H. 'Fatal Attraction' (a striking dark green with a creamy yellow margin) or H. 'Deane's Dream' (a beautiful blue) in appreciation. There are plenty of slots available for both the June and July tours, so please consider putting your garden on tour and get a great hosta for your generosity! Sign up at the April 7th meeting or call Jan at 507-259-7096 or send an email to jan_gerke@yahoo.com. Be sure to note your choice of H. 'Fatal Attraction' or H. 'Deane's Dream'.

Carpool Tour to Red Wing, July 23rd. We will visit Terry Yockey's gardens to see what she has done with ground-covers, in lieu of mulch. In addition, we will visit Peg Hansen's gardens and hopefully another garden or perhaps a nursery or greenhouse nearby. Tentatively the plan is an 8:00am departure but afternoon is a possibility if more members could make an afternoon tour. Please provide comments (pro or con) to Jan.

East, Frugal, and Friendly

Over the past forty years, a few foibles have been associated with the plant choices made for my garden. Some dare to call these little biases obsessive-compulsive fanaticism, but I think you all probably feel exactly the same way when contemplating your own plant purchases.



Firstly, there is nothing more important than the health of the plant materials chosen for the garden. Disease, pest riddled, or genetically inferior plants are costly. The extra chemicals, time, and labor involved with nursing, moving to isolation, or transplanting is not worth the time or effort. Even worse, the effect on healthy plants can cause us heartache as well as physical duress if problems are infectious. With that thought in mind, using a nursery that guarantees the plants we offer as Hosta of the Year choices are Hosta Virus X as well as nematode free is just smart shopping.

Appearances can be deceiving when plants are immature, improperly labeled, or victims of a long, hot summer...especially if we just consider the condition of leaves. Perhaps a better test would be to examine the roots instead. A good root system can buy us faster growth, especially when plants are kept carefully watered throughout the growing season by a conscientious grower, and then sold to us when cooler weather allows the plant to be well established before going dormant over winter. This system works really well in our climate and has provided some very mature looking plants for our plant sale for the past two years. That's why these HOTYs will be delivered in time for early fall planting.

Of course the sticker price of the hottest hostas can be a bit breath taking at the start of the garden season. But by taking advantage of the late summer sales of the grower, we can have more value for our money and still have the new, exciting plants we want. Quantities may be limited, payment will be made in advance, and pick up will be upon delivery of the shipment, but there should be bargains galore to fill all those special spots in your landscaping plans before the snow even thinks of flying!

With all these considerations in mind, Green Hill Farm, Inc. will be supplying our first Fall HOTYs for SOGHS members. Once Bob and Nancy Solberg make up their list of 'Scratch and Dent' plants, the list will be made available and you can make your choices. Your prepaid, bare root plants will be delivered in time for the Founder's Day Picnic so they will have plenty of time to settle into the garden before winter.

More details of this special offer will be shared as the season progresses, but it's exciting to inform you of this opportunity so you can plan ahead. Please feel free to explore the Green Hill Farm website to familiarize yourselves with the hostas sold there so you will know what is currently available and maybe write down some of your favorites. There's just so much to look forward to this year and we haven't even started spring! *Jeanne Truestedt, Member Fundraising*

Successful Spring HOTY Sale

Good news, bad news! Three of the four HOTYs sold out. Apparently the \$10 price on the three

Olga Petryszyn hostas was attractive enough to sell their limited quantities. And their limited availability in the hosta retail market this year was also a plus. No wonder order numbers for these three hostas exceeded our expectations based on previous years.

BUT, there is still an interesting hosta available...H.'Grape Fizz'. This hosta is a dense cluster of grape striped fragrant flowers that are real show stoppers when they appear in August. Plant near the garden path for close-up enjoyment. And this hosta is an exclusive for garden club members this year. See the SOGHS website

www.soghs.org for the order form.

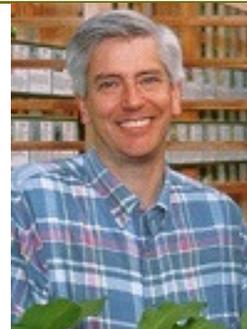


All orders are final, no refunds. Hostas must be picked up at Turkey Run Hostas May

13, 14, and 15th, Friday to Sunday, from 2pm – 7pm. Otherwise they will be donated to the SOGHS Plant Sale. Directions to Turkey Run Hostas are on the website: www.turkeyrunhostas.com

April 7th: General Meeting Speaker: Rob Mortko on "Tissue Culture for Dummies"

April 7 we will be treated to Rob Mortko's presentation of "Tissue Culture for Dummies", which is bound to be both informative and entertaining. Even if you have no interest in propagating hostas through tissue culture yourself, understanding the process might help us understand how to better handle those small liners!



At our April 7 meeting I will begin distributing the HVX test kits to members in good standing (dues must be current for 2011) along with information on how to properly store, handle and use the test. The test kits run slightly over \$4.00 each and will be a valuable resource in your garden this spring if you happen to have a hosta that just doesn't look right...it can either put your mind at ease or help you nip a potential problem in the bud by identifying and eliminating a diseased plant.

This fall we will have the opportunity to hear C.H. Falstad - topic TBD as we have yet to get to that brainstorming session to learn just what topics members are most interested in. Once we've narrowed down the interests of our group I will work with C.H. to find the program that best fits with your wishes. *Cindy*

Meetings are held at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (GSLC), 559 20th St SW, Rochester, MN



Remember, if you will need help digging plants, that service will be available again this year. We will request that any plants donated to the sale be healthy and in good condition. Dig plants as soon as possible in the spring and keep them watered well once in pots. We strive to provide a quality product to our customers.

Jason Leigh, Plant Sale Chair

AHS National Convention Marlborough, Massachusetts June 23-25, 2011



*"Hostas and Heritage"
Hosted by the New England Hosta Society*

www.hosta2011.org

*Drive, fly or come by train...
but don't miss the
"Hostas and Heritage" Convention
in New England!*

2011 MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA CONVENTION



July 7-9, 2011

Sheraton Hotel, Madison, WI

Hosta enthusiasts are invited to the annual Midwest Regional Hosta Society convention July 7, 8, and 9 in Madison, Wisconsin. <http://www.wihostasociety.com/html/registration.html>

Membership Moments

Spring is here and I'm sure you've all got the "fever". Hopefully by now it has been warm enough for you to get out in the gardens for an initial survey. I have to admit the spring tasks seems a little overwhelming, but I know when I get out into my gardens for the first time I will have new found energy to tackle those tasks.



We have a record number of members for this time of year and have already gained five new members in 2011. A big SOGHS welcome to Terry Yockey, Rita Bussmann, Bill and LuAnn Bond, and Mary Turner.

I would like to encourage you to bring your gardening friends to our Plant Sale at the fairgrounds and Spring Open House at Cindy Tomashek's. Any current member bringing a friend that joins SOGHS that day, will receive 2 Hosta Bucks. The Spring Open House occurs after the plant sale this year, so the Hosta Bucks can be used for the Silent Auction or be held for next year's plant sale. You'll find me at the membership table, or you can contact me through email at chum721@charter.net or call 288-3511. If you are looking for a membership form, check out the website at www.soghs.org

Happy Spring, *Mona Keehn Membership Chair*

SOGHS Hosta Container Gardening Workshop June 3rd 2011

6:30 PM at Tomashek's Garage
1288 Wicklow Ln SW - Rochester

Come ready to play in the dirt!




Container gardening is one of the fastest growing segments of gardening!

Members only Limited Class Size & only \$5.00 fee

Registration begins, with your \$5, at the April 7th Meeting!



Experience creative expression in small spaces!

Bring your own container, plants & small garden art objects!

Container size limited to what you can carry when completed
Min. 3 hostas no larger than small + companion plant(s)
Bring along any miniature garden art you'd like to use!

More information? Contact Karen Noltee 288-6730
gramaki@charter.net



Susy Olsen
SOGHS Newsletter Editor
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APRIL & MAY EVENTS

- April 7th General Meeting, detail on page 6
- May 1: Public sign-up for June SOGHS bus tour
- May 10 : Executive Board Meeting
- May 21 : SOGHS Annual Hosta and Shade Plant Sale, Bldg 40, Olmsted County Fairgrounds, details below and on page 6
- May 26 : Spring Open House for SOGHS members and guests, details on page 6

“Cut out and Share” Invite a Friend!

6th
annual
**Hosta
sale**



of Southeast Minnesota

May 21, 2011
8am - noon
Olmsted County Fairgrounds
Horticulture Building

Showcasing Miniature Hostas

www.soghs.org Complimentary plants for children