



The American Hosta Society

July 2025

eNewsletter



H. 'Gabriel's Wing'

D. Rawson 2016

(Photo by Mary Vertz)

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President's Message

Chuck Doughty , Holbrook, MA

It is an honor to be president of the American Hosta Society. I have great admiration for those who preceded me. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the leadership of the current Board members, as we look to continue the wonderful and important work of the AHS.

The convention, taking place in East Peoria, Illinois had an impressive turnout of members from the AHS and the Midwest Regional Hosta Society, reaching across 25 different states. We experienced illuminating speakers, and toured stunning gardens. The leaf show had 61 entrants, who submitted over 600 leaves. The seedling show had 11 entrants, who submitted 51 seedlings. The auction was a great success, with donations from over 40 different donors. We appreciate the great generosity of those who used their time and effort to make this convention possible!

Plants have been my story for as long as I can remember, and I believe strongly in the success and mission of the AHS, which makes my acceptance of this position all the more exciting. The great joy, as always, of the 2025 convention was speaking with the committed and generous volunteers and members of the local *Hosta* societies that keep AHS running. I look forward to my role as president in growing these current relationships as well as fostering new members' roles and, of course, long live the American Hosta Society!

Chuck Doughty



Hostas and Associates

Glenn Herold, Cedarburg, WI

Autumn Spice

Photos by Glenn Herold

If not for trees, it would be impossible to have shade gardens. Most of our hostas would struggle in the full sunlight and heat of mid-summer. We love to garden under the shade of large oaks, lindens, and even maples, despite their shallow roots. But sometimes we don't need trees that are 80 feet tall. A smaller tree, or even large shrub, would suffice to protect our hostas from the elements.

A little-known shrub best recognized for its autumn leaf color and fruit display is Spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*. A member of the Laurel family (Lauraceae), it has a rounded form between six and twelve feet tall with a similar spread. Spicebush is native in every state east of the Mississippi River except Wisconsin and Minnesota. Though not part of the native flora of my home state, it adapts well and can be used in full sun or deep shade in moist, rich soils. It does especially well along streams or ponds and in rich woodlands, especially those with exposed limestone. Because of its preference for quality soils, early land surveyors used spicebush as an indicator of good agricultural land.

Spicebush is a dioecious plant, meaning that the male and female reproductive parts are found on separate plants. The flowers of each are greenish yellow and form before the leaves emerge. Neither are exceptionally flashy, but the male flowers tend to be somewhat showier than the female. Female plants get the upper hand in fall, however, when



Spicebush flowers

they produce a bright red oval fruit that is a magnet for birds. Often hidden by the foliage, the fruit makes its best display after the leaves have fallen in October. In order for fruit to form, a male pollinator must be in the vicinity of the fruit-producing female.



The colorful fruit of Spicebush attracts birds in the fall.



Spicebush autumn foliage color

The foliage of spicebush is attractive from spring to fall. During the growing season it is a medium green, which will exude a spicy fragrance when crushed, but then changes to a clear yellow in autumn. It is pest free, though the larvae of the spicebush swallowtail butterfly will dine on the leaves. The few holes that are formed are only a minor inconvenience, however. Autumn foliage color is best when the plant is grown in full or mostly sun.

Spicebush has many medicinal uses, past and present. Indigenous Americans made a tea from the bark which was used as a "blood purifier" and as a remedy for sweating, colds and rheumatism. Early settlers made a tea from the twigs for the treatment of colds, fevers, worms, gas, and colic. An oil derived from the fruit was used to treat rheumatism. Dried and powdered fruit is sometimes used as a substitute for the spice 'allspice.' Spicebush leaves contain a small amount of camphor and can be used as an insect repellant and disinfectant.

The generic name, *Lindera*, honors Johann Linder (1676-1723), a Swedish botanist and physician. The specific epithet, *benzoin*, means aromatic gum, a reference to the aromatic nature of the flowers and leaves. Just as Linder is known to few people today, so is this shrub. Use it in a naturalized woodland, next to a stream, or as a visual block along the border of your property. When I moved to Cedarburg, Wisconsin 14 years ago, I planted several under the canopy of my neighbor's ash trees. Though they are now in mostly full sun, they are beginning to capture the shade of oak trees that I planted at the same time. Running out of room for hostas under the few shade trees that the property had when we moved here, I thinned out the lower branches of the spicebushes to create spaces for more shade plants, most of which are hostas. They have thrived in the new environment. Thus, I can still bid on plants at convention auctions and purchase from vendors and not have to wonder where I can plant them! Though you may have to search for *Lindera* from nurseries that specialize in plants for naturalizing, this plant is well worth your efforts. The birds, butterflies, and hostas will thank you.

Additional articles about plants can be found on my blog: <https://thecottagegardener53012.wordpress.com>



A group planting of *Lindera benzoin*, Spicebush



Book Notice

Clyde Crockett, Carmel, IN

BEST SHADE PLANTS

Written by Stefan Buczacki

Published by Hamlyn : 1994

In case you didn't know like I didn't know, Stefan Buczacki is a quite famous British horticulturalist with the following credentials that suggest a very busy 79-year-old: TV presenter, botanist, journalist, novelist and, to be sure, gardener. To get a fuller picture, checkout his Wikipedia entry where you can learn about his many publication.

He introduces this handsome little (95 pp.) book with a wonderful story.

An elderly very experienced gardening friend was asked by someone how to cope with all the problems of a shady garden. He responded: "Look here, young man, don't talk to me about the problems of shade because I can tell you that if I didn't have a good deal of it in my own garden, I'd jolly well have to invent some." I think we can rest assured that our author is one of us.



Before you arrive at the plants, you find erudite discussions on types of shade, food and water, and pests and diseases, subjects I usually scan after I had admired the sections in plants. Reminds me of when I read a biographical work. I have never been able to resist the temptation to go directly to the photographs, skipping all the com-

mentary about the birth of the subject and how they excelled at Eton.

The plants section is divided into categories of plant type and the first we have is BULBS. Each entry begins with a commentary by Buczacki of his personal likes about the plant, his favorite varieties and charming side notes about his experience with the genus. Following the comment we have SHADE TOLERANCE, SOIL, HARDINESS, and SIZE. Tips on depth of PLANTING and CARE come next ending with PROPAGATION and PROBLEMS. Each entry follows this exact format.

Featured in BULBS are Anemone, Asarum, Fritillaria ,and Trillium to name a few of the standouts. There is a short section on ALPINES which are great addition if you have a rock component, alpines shine therein. Campanula headlines here.

SHRUBS take up 21 glorious pages. We are treated from Buxus to a beautiful variety of Vinca. PERENNIALS , FERNs and GRASSES round out the coverage . Yes, hostas are covered along with some other perennials that you will have to have. Similarly you will probably find some grasses new to you.



Carex morrowii 'Evergold'

I find this an excellent publication. The writing is beautifully composed and the photographs are superb. First class all the way around.

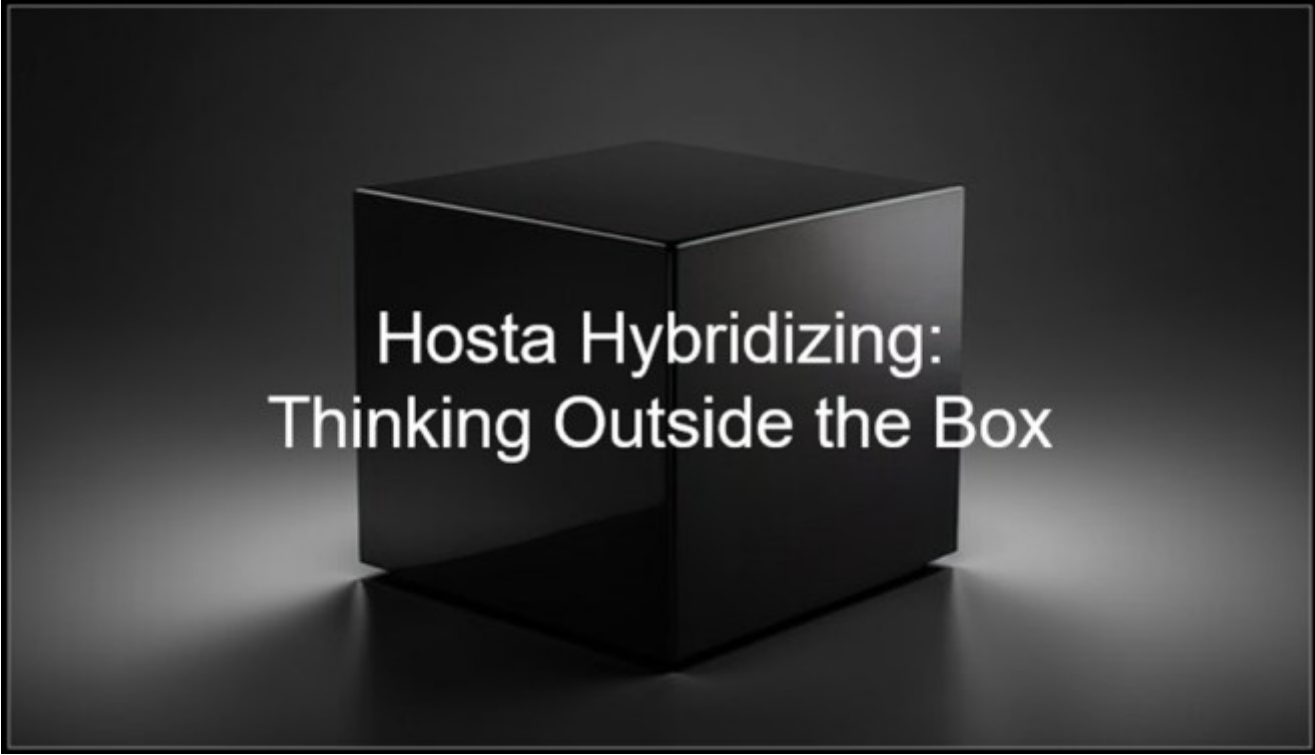
Happy gardening,

Clyde



Hostas Happenin's

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI



Hosta Hybridizing: Thinking Outside the Box

The following is a synopsis of a PowerPoint the author presented at the AHS National Convention in East Peoria, IL. While not everyone is a hybridizer, most readers will find the article fascinating.

Introduction

Hostas are endemic to China, Korea, and Japan, where they have grown in the wild for millennia. When they eventually reached the Western World 200 years ago, their placement within the plant kingdom was not at all clear. The primary influx to the West was initiated by Philipp von Siebold (1791-1866), a German physician and botanist who worked in Japan. Siebold's primary interest focused on the study of Japanese fauna and flora. He collected as much material as he could, making several shipments of hostas to Europe. The tradition of importing hostas from their native countries to the Western World continues even to this day.

When it comes to the taxonomy of the genus, traditionally *Hosta* has been placed within the Lily family (*Liliaceae*). Later, certain botanists, including W. George Schmid, assigned the genus its own single-member family, the *Hostaceae*.

Depending upon the source consulted, the genus includes as many as 41 species. However, three of these (*H. nigrescens*, *H. sieboldiana*, *H. tosayama*) are not recognized as species by some scholars, bringing the number to 38.

Hybridization of *Hosta* Species and Cultivars

For various reasons, hybridizers today are limited in their work, utilizing only two-thirds of all *Hosta* species. Some species have never been removed from their native habitats. Others are infrequently seen in landscapes because they do not make spectacular garden subjects. A few are in collections only. It is a shame that so many are not being utilized in breeding programs.

Species that have NOT been used in Hybridization Programs

<i>H. aequinoctiantha</i> (1)	<i>H. rectifolia</i> var. <i>australis</i> (8)
<i>H. albofarinosa</i> (2)	<i>H. shikokiana</i> (9)
<i>H. calliantha</i> (3)	<i>H. takahashii</i> (10)
<i>H. crassifolia</i> (4)	<i>H. takiensis</i> (11)
<i>H. densa</i> (5)	<i>H. tardiva</i> (12)
<i>H. jonesii</i> (6)	<i>H. tosayama</i> (13)
<i>H. okamotoi</i> (7)	

All this is to say that hybridizers are working with just 28 of the 41 species. That means that all the cultivars in your garden — every one — is a hybrid of the 28 species listed below, or a sport of a species or cultivar. The same is true for all 6,830 hostas currently registered, as well as the thousands more that are not. As hybrids, they all are derived from the 28 species that hybridizers have worked with in the past.

Species that HAVE been used in Hybridization Programs

<i>H. alismifolia</i> (1)	<i>H. pachyscapa</i> (15)
<i>H. capitata</i> (2)	<i>H. plantaginea</i> (16)
<i>H. clausa</i> (3)	<i>H. pulchella</i> (17)
<i>H. fluctuans</i> (4)	<i>H. pycnophylla</i> (18)
<i>H. gracillima</i> (5)	<i>H. rectifolia</i> (19)
<i>H. hypoleuca</i> (6)	<i>H. rupifraga</i> (20)
<i>H. kikutii</i> (7)	<i>H. sieboldii</i> (21)
<i>H. kiyosumiensis</i> (8)	<i>H. tibae</i> (22)
<i>H. laevigata</i> (9)	<i>H. tsushimensis</i> (23)
<i>H. longipes</i> (10)	<i>H. ventricosa</i> (24)
<i>H. longissima</i> (11)	<i>H. venusta</i> (25)
<i>H. minor</i> (12)	<i>H. yingeri</i> (26)
<i>H. montana</i> (13)	<i>H. nigrescens</i> (27)
<i>H. nakaiana</i> (14)	<i>H. sieboldiana</i> (28)

Furthermore, all the hostas in your garden — every one — is the product of crossing one hosta with another hosta. The only exceptions are those that are mutations (sports). Neither you nor I are growing a hosta that was bred with a member of another genus, which brings us to a perplexing situation: are we missing out on a great opportunity? As hosta collectors, connoisseurs, and breeders, we have overlooked that objective almost entirely. Nearly exclusively, hybridizers around the globe have ignored any attempt at making an intergeneric cross, even though it could very well be accomplished. Rather than solely crossing one hosta with another, it is high time to think outside the box.

So, can hostas be bred with members of other closely-related genera? Can an intergeneric cross be made? And if so, why has it not been done? What potential attributes could an intergeneric hybrid bring to the gardening world? Let us examine this exciting field of study.

in • ter • ge • ner • ic

adjective. occurring between two or more genera



Photo by Pam Rawson.

The author stands next to the tall scape of *Mangave* ‘Desert Queen’, an intergeneric hybrid between *Manfreda* and *Agave* bred by Hans Hansen of Walters Gardens in Zeeland, MI.

Science Lesson First!

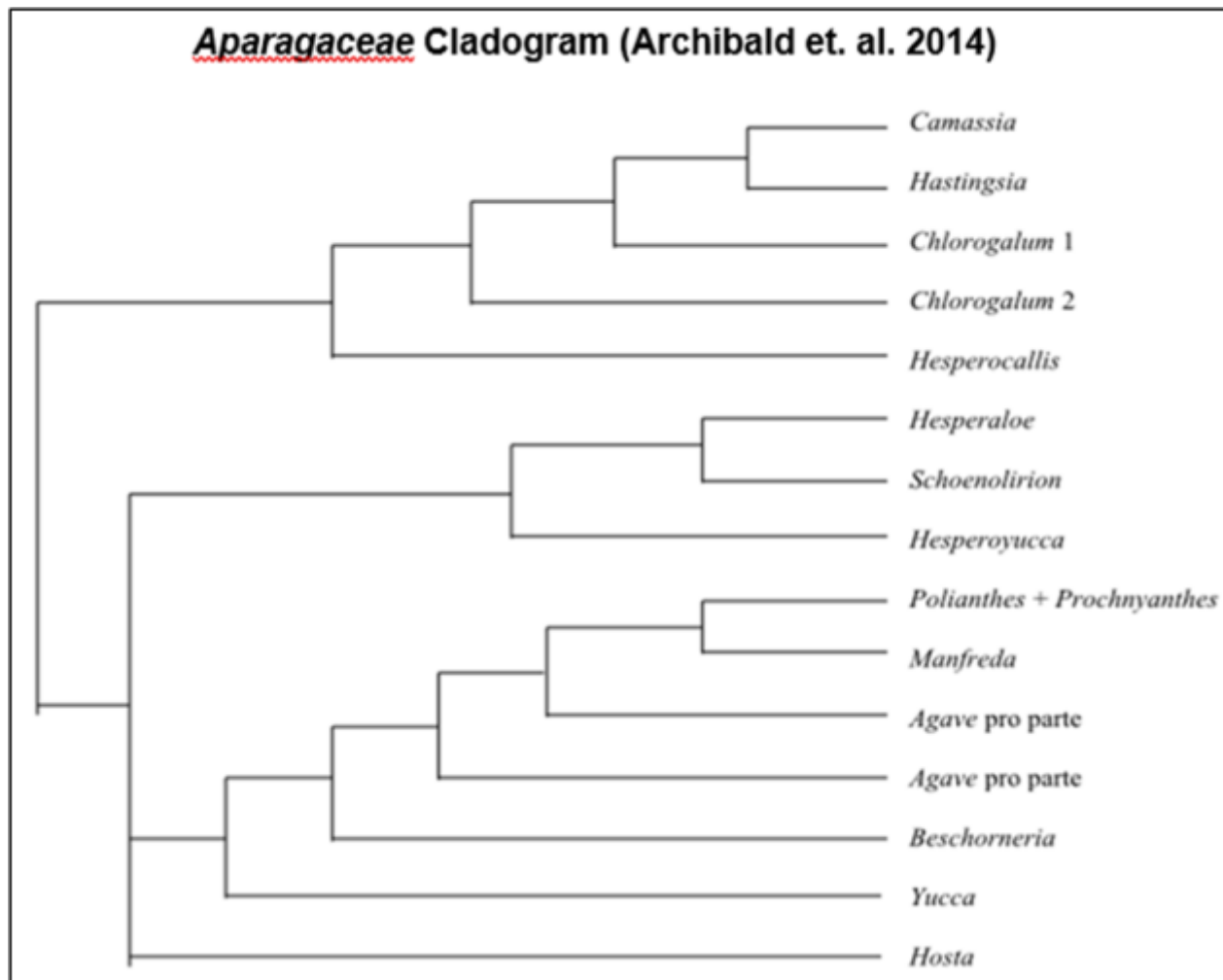
The taxonomic system has eight levels: Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species. We have already mentioned that with *Hosta*, there are about 41 species.

Formerly, the genus was placed within the *Liliaceae* family, and later was assigned its own monotypic family, the *Hostaceae*. Most taxonomic systems were based on morphology — the form and structure of a plant. The Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG), an international group of systematic botanists, periodically collaborate to establish a consensus on the taxonomy of flowering plants (angiosperms). Four incremental versions of a classification system have resulted from this collaboration, published in 1998, 2003, 2009 and 2016. The most recent revisions included the input of 56 researches, with each revision superseding the previous system. The fourth version (APG IV) was published in 2016. It arose from an international conference hosted at the Royal Botanical Gardens in September 2015. This system, based upon a modern, molecular-based system of plant taxonomy for flowering plants, places *Hosta* in the *Asparagaceae* family, under the order Asparagales.

clad • o • gram

noun. a diagram used to show relations among organisms. It shows the relationships in a graphic that looks like a tree, with branches connected to a common ancestry.

It is helpful to look at a cladogram. A cladogram is a diagram that is used to exhibit relations among organisms. It shows the relationships in a graphic that looks like a tree, with branches that connect to a common ancestor. For example, a cladogram of the 340 different dog breeds would link them all to a common ancestor, the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), native to Eurasia and North America. Below is a modern cladogram published by Archibald and others in 2015.¹ Established upon a molecular-based system of plant taxonomy, the diagram shows that the genus *Hosta* is closely related to 12 other genera.



Can *Hosta* be crossed with any of the other 12 closely-related genera? Can an intergeneric hybrid be created? Has it ever been attempted before? Let us begin by looking at the possibility of a cross between *Hosta* and *Hesperocallis*.

Intergeneric Cross: *Hosta* × *Hesperocallis*, *Hesperocallis* × *Hosta*

One possibility for an intergeneric hybrid would be to cross *Hosta* with *Hesperocallis*. W. George Schmid indicated how closely they are related:

Hesperocallis is nearest to *Hosta* (*Hostaceae*) and the *Agavaceae*. Although their base chromosome numbers are different (24 in *Hesperocallis* and 30 in *Hosta*), they share a strongly bimodal karyotype with *Hesperocallis*.¹

“Bimodal karyotype” refers to two sets of chromosomes of contrasting sizes, known as macro- (large) and microchromosomes (small). Besides plants, bimodal karyotypes are mainly found in reptiles, birds, fish, and insects, but surprisingly, not mammals.

Hosta has 30 base chromosomes. *Hosta* are normally diploid, so this equation is expressed as $2n = 60$. The “n” is the number of chromosomes in a gamete, and “2n” is the number of chromosomes following fertilization. A total of 30 chromosomes are inherited from the pod parent and 30 from the pollen parent, for a total of 60. On the other hand, the genus *Hesperocallis* is expressed as $2n = 48$. While the total chromosome count is different, an intergeneric cross may still be possible. Of the 60 chromosomes found in *Hosta*, 12 are large and 48 small. With those of *Hesperocallis*, 12 chromosomes are large and 36 are small.²

Schmid also noted the similarity of pollen grains between *Hosta* and *Hesperocallis*, particularly that of *Hosta plantaginea*: “*Hesperocallis undulata* and *Hosta plantaginea* have pollen grains with similar unibaculate muri [similar surface grain].”³ Furthermore, the following resemblance has been observed: “*Hesperocallis* may be similar to *Hosta plantaginea* since they both are fragrant and have similar pure white flowers, and both grow well in plenty of sun and heat.”⁴



Photo by Bob Wick. Used by permission.

***Hesperocallis* is a genus of flowering plants that is comprised of a single species, *Hesperocallis undulata*. Common names: Desert Lily, Ajo Lily.**

Hesperocallis is a genus of flowering plants that includes a single species, *Hesperocallis undulata*. A perennial that grows from a bulb, the plant has blue-green leaves that are 8-20" long by 1/2" wide, with very wavy margins. It produces large, white, trumpet-shaped flowers with a silver green mid-stripe on the petals. Scapes up to 24" bear fragrant flowers, blooming from February to May after winter rainfalls, making it one of the showiest desert species. The flower spike is quite similar to those of hostas. Pollinated by sphinx moths, including *Hyles lineata*.

The bulb, 1/2 - 2 1/4" in diameter, grows 12 - 24" below the surface of the soil. They were eaten by Native Americans □ raw, baked, or boiled. Distribution: sand flats and dunes in the desert areas of SW United States and NW Mexico. USDA zone 8-11.

Desert lilies have few natural predators, thanks to their tough leaves and stems. One report states that "Leaves and flower stalks are sometimes eaten by rabbits and hares, but the vast majority of plants we have observed do not have visible damage."⁶

Dark brown in color, *Hesperocallis undulata* seed is available from a few commercial sources and can be germinated using a well-draining, seed starting mix in a warm location. It is important to keep the seedlings in growth and not allow them to go dormant. Once the seedlings go dormant, getting them to break dormancy is a challenge. Even a few who have gotten them to come into growth again have not had success in getting plants to bloom.

There are several potential attributes that a *Hosta* × *Hesperocallis* hybrid may possess. The plant could be quite slug resistant. It could also prove to be deer resistant, which is particularly valuable since many gardeners are faced with increasing pressure from these nuisance creatures. Other qualities may be better heat, sun, and drought tolerance as well as new leaf and flower characteristics.

If we ever are to create a hosta that is truly deer-resistant, it is unlikely that it will be accomplished by breeding one hosta with another. The goal will more likely be achieved by making a hybrid with a member of a closely-related genus that is already very deer-resistant.

Intergeneric Cross: *Hosta* × *Agave*, *Agave* × *Hosta*

With more than 200 species, *Agave* is native to the hot, arid regions of SW United States, Mexico, and tropical areas of South America. The plants are perennial, but most species flower once and then die, a trait known as monocarpic. Monocarpic plants, also referred to as semelparous plants, undergo a single cycle of reproduction and produce a maximum number of offspring. During flowering, a tall stem or “mast” grows from the center of the leaf rosette and bears many short, tubular flowers. After development of fruit, the original plant dies, but suckers are frequently produced from the base of the stem, which become new plants. With this said, five *Agave* species are polycarpic, meaning that they flower and set seed multiple times before dying.

Along with plants from the related genus *Yucca*, various *Agave* species are popular ornamental plants in hot, dry climates, as they require very little water to survive. It is a common misconception that agaves are cacti. They are not related to cacti (*Cactaceae* family), nor are they closely related to *Aloe* whose leaves are similar in appearance. Like *Hosta*, members of the genus *Agave* have 60 chromosomes.

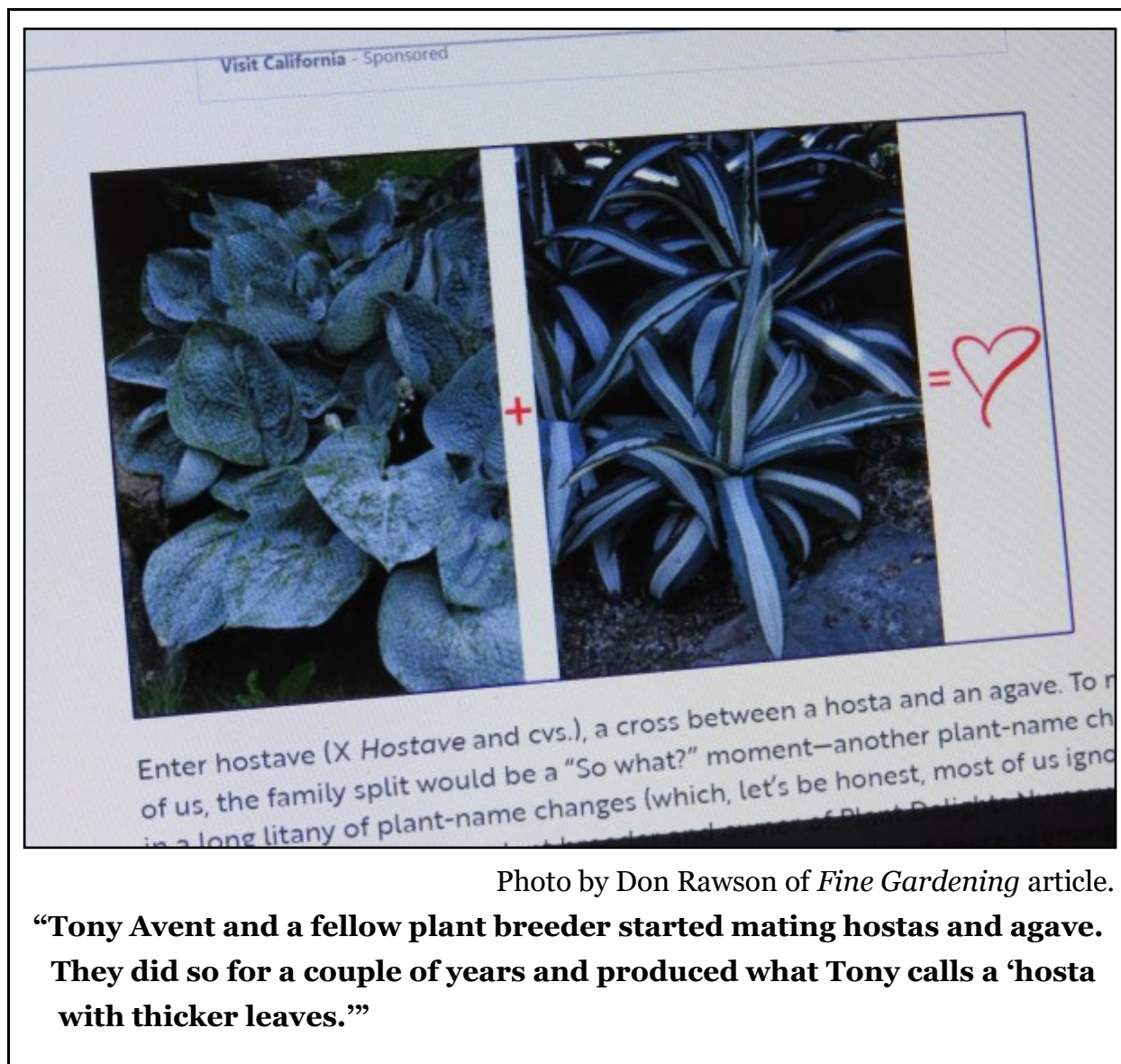


Image by Genome Research Limited, <https://www.yourgenome.org/theme/what-is-a-chromosome/>.

***Agave*, *Manfreda*, *Polianthes*, and *Yucca* are closely related to *Hosta*.**

All have 60 chromosomes.

Creating an intergeneric hybrid between *Hosta* and *Agave* is not a theoretical possibility, but in fact a reality. Tony Avent and Hans Hansen have already achieved it. In a 2018 issue of *Fine Gardening*,⁷ the author described the work of these two well-known hybridizers in the making of the first “Hostave.” “It didn’t look all that different from a hosta,” says Tony, “so we weren’t sure if the breeding, in fact, created a hybrid.” They sent a specimen to a renowned researcher in the Netherlands, telling him only that it was a hosta. But the researcher concluded otherwise. “He told us that the chromosomes were not those of a hosta, and that’s when we knew we were onto something.”



Agaves are deer-resistant, drought-tolerant plants with an amazing garden structure. They face relatively few menaces compared to other landscape plants. The most significant pest is the agave snout weevil (*Scyphophorus acupunctatus*), a half-inch-long black beetle with a downward-curving proboscis that enables it to pierce

an agave's core, where it lays its eggs. A hybrid could potentially pass these qualities — pest resistance and drought tolerance — on to its intergeneric offspring.



Photo by Pam Rawson.

From seed to three months old, *Agave* is easy to grow. The author poses with seedlings of *Agave parryi* var. *couesii*. Germination of *Agave* seed usually approaches 100%, so do not put more than three seeds per cell and plan on dividing them later into individual pots. Bury the seeds 1/4" to 1/2" deep. If the seeds are planted too shallow, the seedlings will develop weak root systems and often rot or fall over.

As a side note, one *Agave* has red foliage. *Agave stricta* f. *rubra* is a small species, forming balls of skewer-like leaves that resemble a very nasty porcupine. It has the tightest spherical shape of any agave and will form offshoots to create a colony of rosettes. Narrow, evergreen leaves, about 14" long, are thick at the base, then narrow at the end to form a very sharp spine. The form *rubra* has thin red longitudinal lines on the leaves, giving it a red color that enhances under stress conditions (especially drought, strong sun and cold). Seeds are commercially available.

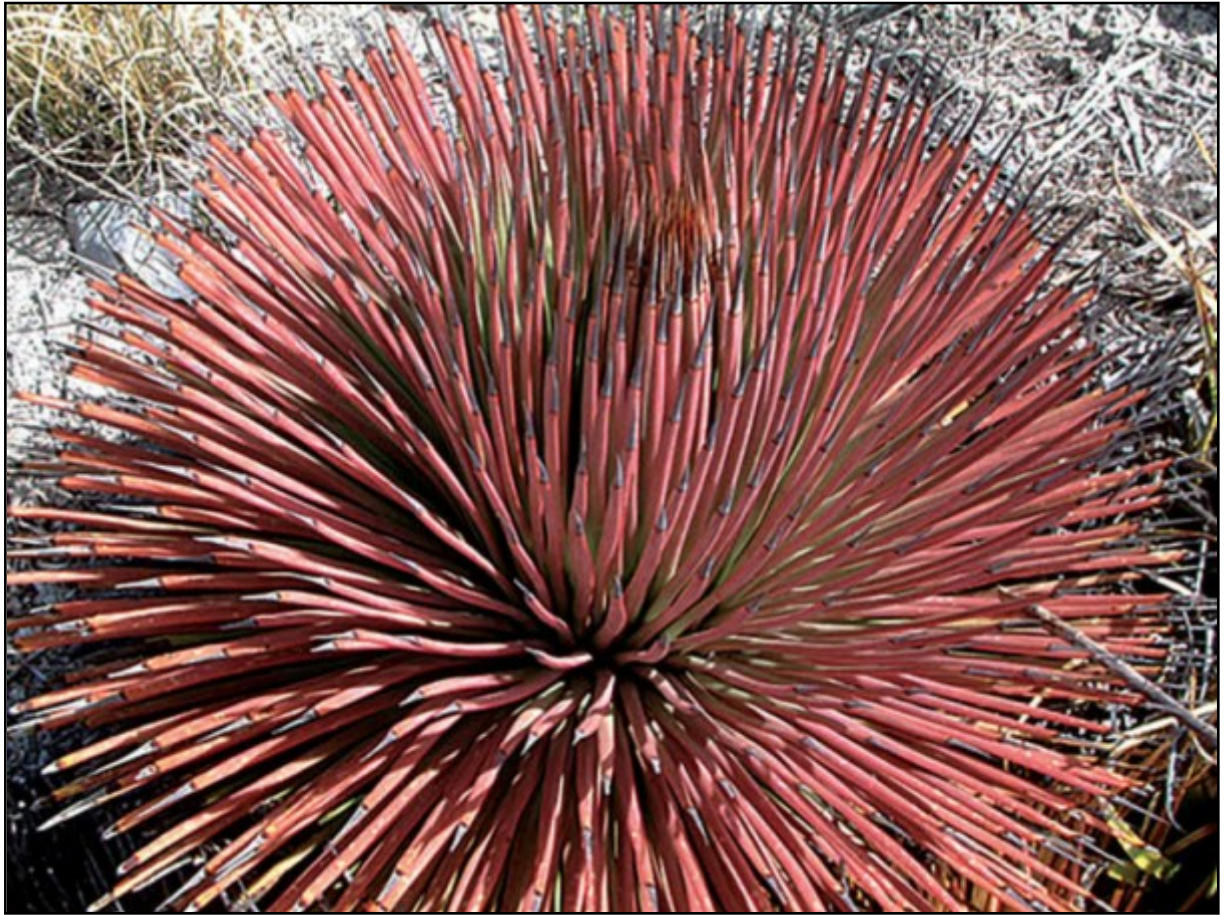


Photo by insukuland.com. Used by permission.

***Agave stricta* f. *rubra*.** A red-leaved agave could help in our quest to create red-leaved hostas. An intergeneric hybrid may also aid in deer resistance.

Intergeneric Cross: *Hosta* × *Yucca*, *Yucca* × *Hosta*

Like *Agave*, *Yucca* is a perennial with sword-shaped leaves. Known also as Adam's Needle or Spanish-bayonet, there are 50 species that are native to North America from Canada southward to Panama. *Yucca* moths pollinate the flowers and then lay their eggs in the seed capsules.

Yucca seeds are best collected in the fall. They are dark brown and flat, ¼" in diameter, and look much like those of *Hesperocallis*, except slightly larger. *Yucca* seeds are easy to germinate, and the seedlings, in my experience, grow very well.

Yucca are resilient to all types of environments, making them virtually indestructible. An intergeneric hybrid would probably be more pest resistant and drought tolerant. Deer will eat the blooms of some *Yucca* species, but spare the foliage.

Preferring full sun and moist, well-drained soil, *Yucca* species range from small shrubby plants to tree-like giants such as this middle-aged *Yucca gigantea*. This particular species is an evergreen that is widely cultivated as a garden ornamental.

How large could a hybrid between a hosta such as ‘Empress Wu’ and *Yucca gigantea* become? Could it far exceed the dimensions that we commonly expect among the genus *Hosta*? We simply will not know until someone creates an inter-generic hybrid, but for now, it is fun to dream about a mega-giant “Hostucca!”



Photo by Edward Gilman, UF/IFAS, Pub. #ENH-831, March 27, 2024. Used by permission.

Other Intergeneric Hybrids?

There are several other closely-related genera that could perhaps be crossed with *Hosta* to create new hybrids with outstanding attributes. These include *Beschorneria*, *Camassia*, *Chlororgalum*, *Hesperaloe*, *Hesperoyucca*, *Manfreda*, *Polianthes*, and *Schoenoplectus*. The beneficial features that intergeneric hybrids may bring is a matter of speculation until it becomes reality.

In the introduction, it was stated that all the hostas currently in our gardens — every one — is a species, a hybrid of *Hosta* species, or a sport of a species or hybrid. They all are the product of *Hosta* × *Hosta*. The potential merits of intergeneric hybrids are paramount, overriding all other goals we could establish for a hybridizing program. I invite you to consider working with me toward this end. It is time to explore. It is time to think outside the box!



Photo by Tom Bech. Used by permission.

***Camassia* species and cultivars, including *Camassia howellii* (above), put on stunning floral displays. Additionally, their bulbs are rodent resistant. Could a *Hosta* × *Camassia* hybrid be created with bright blue, spider flowers, and be resistant to vole damage at the same time?**

Comments? Contact the author at donrawson1@gmail.com.

Notes

¹ C. S. Rafinesque, *Analyse de la nature*, 197. Apr-Jun 1815 [Iridisia] and V. Doweld, Tent. Syst. Plant. Vasc.: lvi. 23 Dec 2001 [Iridanae], <http://angio.bergianska.se/monocots/Iridales/Iridales.html>

² W. George Schmid, "The Taxonomy of the Genus *Hosta*, https://www.hostalibrary.org/species/pdf/species_part2.pdf, " (2006), p. 9.

³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵ Morfología de polen de las Agavaceae y algunos géneros afines. *Grana* 26 (1987).

⁶ D. Rideout and T. Chester, "*Hesperocallis undulata*, Desert Lily, Fact Sheet," https://tchester.org/bd/species/agavaceae/hesperocallis_undulata_facts.html.

⁷ L. Felici-Gallant, "What do you get when you cross a hosta with an agave?." *Fine Gardening*, Issue 184, December 2018.



Hybridizer Corner . . .

Don Rawson, Grand Rapids, MI

In this column we are learning how to make crosses to create new hosta originations. Along the way, the hybridizer often faces obstacles and challenges. We will explore some of those in this issue.

Review

Hostas species and cultivars bloom at different times throughout the growing season, a situation which the hybridizer must remedy if crosses between early and late bloomers are to be made. In the last issue, we learned about some methods for making out-of-season crosses. These ranged from various ways to make early flowering varieties bloom later, and conversely, making late flowering cultivars bloom earlier.

Late blooming can hostas can be forced to leaf out and bloom earlier than normal. The dormancy period can be shortened by potting these late bloomers up and placing them in an unheated garage. Then in late winter or early spring, they are brought indoors to leaf out.

On the other hand, early bloomers can be encouraged to flower later than normal. One technique to delay blooming is to cut the foliage off before the plant has a chance to produce scapes. Another technique is to bareroot hostas in the fall, place them in peat, and then extend their cold dormancy.

By following these methods, the hybridizer can arrange for two previously selected cultivars to bloom simultaneously so that a successful cross can be made.

Obstacles Faced by the Hybridizer

There are many challenges encountered in a hybridizing program. For example, sometimes despite one's best efforts, a cross just will not take. The pod parent may abort after a seedpod begins to form, or on the other hand, no evidence of pod formation may be apparent at all.

One possible cause for failure to set pod is excessive heat. Temperatures over 80 or 85°F significantly affect pod set and in extreme cases, may even cause pods to abort during the following days. However, there are some things that you can do to help in this situation. Firstly, if the pod parent is potted, you can bring it indoors for a few days and place it under grow lights to do your crosses. Place it outdoors again as soon as cooler weather returns. On the other hand, if it is growing outdoors in the

garden, you could try making the cross early in the morning before the midday temperatures peak. Adequate soil moisture is essential during and after pollination, particularly during hot, dry spells.



Photo by Teresa Maki. Used by permission.

Sufficient soil moisture is crucial during and after pollination, especially during hot, dry periods. Temperatures over 80°F can be high enough to make fertilization impossible. Move potted hostas to a cooler area. Placing hostas indoors under grow lights is a feasible alternative when temperatures peak.

Deeply watering the pod parent the night before may increase your success rate, or if potted, placing it in a tray of water and keeping it in the shade. Low temperatures are not usually an issue.

Excessive humidity is another obstacle that can adversely affect pod set. Unfortunately, high temperatures are usually accompanied by high humidity. Pollen deteriorates rapidly when wet and may be useless before fertilization occurs. Moisture in the form of rain, excessive humidity, heavy dew, or water from an errant sprinkler all destroy pollen. To ensure optimal pollination, consider temperature, humidity, time of day, etc. If pod set is unsuccessful, try multiple times under various weather conditions.

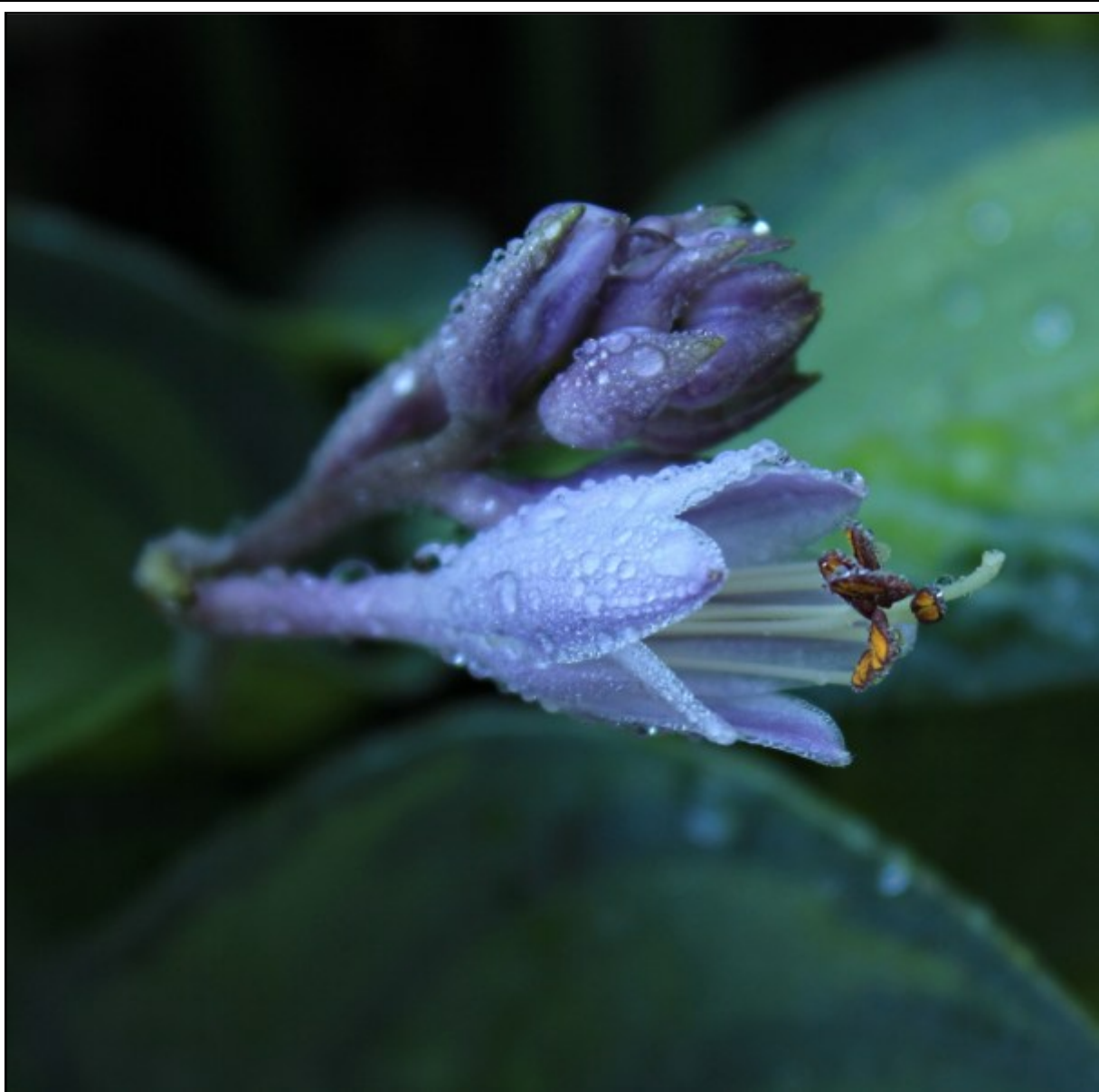


Photo by Joanna Kovalcsik. Used by permission.

Excessive humidity, including heavy dew, is destructive to pollen — one reason to collect pollen the day before. For best success, store fresh pollen in a cool place and replenish it every few days to ensure it remains viable.

Most hostas begin to open during early morning. As a flower opens, the filaments and pistil seem ready to burst out through the end of the flower. Then within a few hours after opening, the stigma becomes receptive to receiving pollen. This is the best time to place fluffy, ripe pollen on the stigma. Subsequently, a bead of liquid on the stigma will form. The secretion that covers the stigma's outermost surface is known as stigma exudate. At this point, no more pollen will be accepted and you will have to wait until another flower opens to make a cross.



Photo by Joanna Kovalcsik. Used by permission.

Stigma exudate, the secretion that covers the stigma's outermost surface, is a reservoir of water, secondary metabolites, cell wall precursors and compounds that serve as an energy supply for rapid pollen tube growth. This secretion also contributes to the senescence of the stigma after pollination, thus restricting the stigma from receiving additional pollen.¹

Pod and Pollen Sterile Cultivars

It is not uncommon for some cultivars to be pod or pollen sterile, or in rare cases, both. Hybrids such as 'Neptune' and 'Skywriter' produce poor pollen or no pollen at all. Others including 'Krossa Regal' and 'Deep Blue Sea' are almost entirely pod sterile. Checking the list of Sterile Hostas posted at https://www.hostalists.org/hosta_list_sterh.php can save the hybridizer a lot of headache and wasted effort. Keeping detailed records of each attempt that is made to make a cross will come in handy days, weeks, or even years later.

Pollen that was dried and frozen improperly may not be viable. There is no value in working with pollen that is of poor quality. Use fresh pollen whenever available, and furthermore, replenish the pollen every few days for best results. If you must resort to using frozen pollen, ensure that it was dried and stored according to the procedure outlined in the January 2025 eNewsletter posted at <https://americanhostasociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/January2025.pdf>.

***Hosta plantaginea* — A Challenging Pod Parent**

Hosta plantaginea can be a difficult species to work with, especially as a pod parent. While its large, fragrant, pure white flowers make it a popular specimen plant, it is the most atypical of all hosta species. To name a couple of differences, the flowers of *H. plantaginea* open at night and the pollen grains are atypical in shape and size compared to all other species. Due to its unique phenotype, *H. plantaginea* has been placed in its own subgenus, i.e. *Niobe*.

Using *H. plantaginea* in a hybridizing program is quite worthwhile, since it adds fragrance to its progeny. However, as mentioned above, it is difficult as a pod parent. When trying to make a cross, do so in late evening shortly after the flowers open. Try mixing its own pollen with the pollen that you wish to use. Or, smear its own pollen around the perimeter of the stigma and place the intended pollen in the center. With any luck, the cross will be successful and it will set pod. If not, you will have to resort to using it as a pollen donor.

Facilitating Scape Production

A hybridizing program centers around the ability to cross one hosta with another, and that assumes there are scapes with flowers waiting to be pollinated, and others from which to collect pollen. But, what can be done to encourage your top breeding plants to produce scapes in the first place?

The best insurance is to keep your hostas healthy and adequately watered. Using a good, free draining mix is crucial for potted hostas. Those planted in the garden should likewise be provided with prime growing conditions. Potted hostas as well as those in the garden should be supplied with an application of a balanced fertilizer (e.g., 10-10-10) in spring and a second application in early July. For your most prized breeders, the application of a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote or Nutricote should be considered.

Another product that encourages growth and flowering is Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster, a water soluble, high-phosphorus plant food specifically formulated to promote bloom. Bloom Booster should be mixed in a watering can and applied every 1-2 weeks, beginning 10 weeks prior to the expected bloom period. Organic fertilizers such

as compost, bone meal, or fish emulsion can also enhance flower growth. Bone meal is particularly high in phosphorus, which is beneficial for blooming.



The application of a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote or Nutricote is a good way to promote season-long growth, as well as Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster, which is specifically designed to encourage bloom.

If a particular hosta continues to be reluctant in scape production, try repotting it in fresh mix and ensure it receives an ample amount of water along with bright sunlight. Some hybridizers even place potted hostas in trays of water while flowering to increase their success rate. Doing so should help with flower production and fertilization as well as with seed set and maturation.

“When the plant begins to flower, I move the container under a very large shade tree on the north side of a building. This provides the coolest conditions for the crossing to take place. Here, the mother plant receives extra fertilizer, and water twice daily.”

Mary Chastain

Summary

Often, there are obstacles encountered when trying to make successful crosses. Faced with such difficulties, the hybridizer should strive to find ways around them so that the desired cross can be made. Those who are patient and persist are rewarded once the progeny from a successful cross is grown and matures.

Besides the reluctance of a hosta to produce pollen or set pod, other setbacks and issues must be dealt with. In some cases, the intended pod parent is too immature to produce flowers or set pod. Young, immature plants may set seed poorly, but

do better when older. Insects are another dilemma, pollinating a flower before the hybridizer has the chance to do so or eating the pollen right off the stigma, preventing fertilization. Mice and chipmunks are major culprits when it comes to eating the seedpods or removing the tags that record the cross, not to mention the havoc that deer can raise. Strong wind and rain can break the scapes right off, a very discouraging ordeal for the hybridizer.

In the face of it all, the one who perseveres will be richly rewarded once the seed is planted, grown, and matures into many marvelous, brand-new creations. While it can be quite challenging at times, hybridizing is extremely rewarding. If you are a budding hybridizer, or are thinking about giving it a go, just do it. It is a lot of fun!

¹J. Rejón et al, "The plant stigma exudate," <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4091586/>.



Photo by Tricia Torrens-Burton. Used by permission.

Oh deer! My scapes are gone — just one of the many obstacles faced by the hybridizer.



Welcome to My Garden

Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey



Gail Russo

Please meet Phil and Gayle Alley from Pleasant Hill, Missouri



In the heart of our country, there is a small town in Cass County, Missouri, just south-east of Kansas City named Pleasant Hill. Pleasant Hill attracts residents who are seeking a peaceful setting in the country with all the benefits of the city close at hand. In 1983, a young man named James Phillip ‘Phil’ Alley decided he wanted a piece of this setting, and he purchased a 150-acre plot of timberland, using every penny he had saved. More than 40 years have passed since that day, and the transformation of this property is astounding. In 1999, Phil Alley married Gayle Hartley and together they have developed a small portion of the 150-acre woods into what they have dubbed “Hosta Alley.”



Many of you may recognize the name and know Gayle Hartley Alley as the American Hosta Society's International Registrar Genus *Hosta*; the person everyone must go through to officially register a hosta. It is only fitting that she and Phil have created an amazing hosta-filled garden hidden deep within the woods, or timber, as they prefer to call it.

After Phil purchased the property, he fully embraced the spartan lifestyle of roughing it, since he was a bachelor with little money left. Phil worked as an electrical engineer employed by Bendix, a contractor to the US Nuclear Weapons Complex, located more than 30 miles away from his property. Phil is the ultimate do-it-yourself handyman, excelling at carpentry, among other things. After working full days, he single-handedly built himself a home to live in. It was a single room, post and beam construction, but the most daunting situation was that there was no electricity or water service to this remote location, deep in the woods. Despite this, Phil constructed what he called "The Shack," and he lived in it for five years before electricity was supplied to the area and an additional 5 years before he could cease hauling water home in the back of his pickup truck.



The Shack circa the 1990s.



The living quarters of The Shack.

For many years Phil kept his eye on a young woman he noticed at work. Gayle Hartley was also employed at Bendix, as a mechanical designer, but she had no idea Phil even existed. One afternoon in 1990 Phil spotted Gayle in the parking lot of the local Walmart, and he made his move. Gayle was a shy suburban girl with absolutely no background in plants or gardening, and she had always wanted to live in the country. Here was a handsome, charming, intelligent gentleman who was interested in her, and he came with goats, beagles, 150 acres of timber and he actually worked at the same place she'd been working for the past ten years; all too good to be true!

In 1999, Phil and Gayle married, and she moved into "The Shack". It wasn't an easy lifestyle, but Phil had been busy preparing for the future. It was two years be-

fore they were able to move into what Phil calls “the greatest project of his life” - a timber frame, multi-level house that he had constructed by hand over the previous ten years. Gayle helped Phil with all the interior finish work necessary to turn the timber frame into a home: plumbing, electrical, sheetrock, cabinetry, and stain & polyurethane on ALL wood surfaces. They renamed “The Shack” to “The Shop” and it became the hub for all future projects.



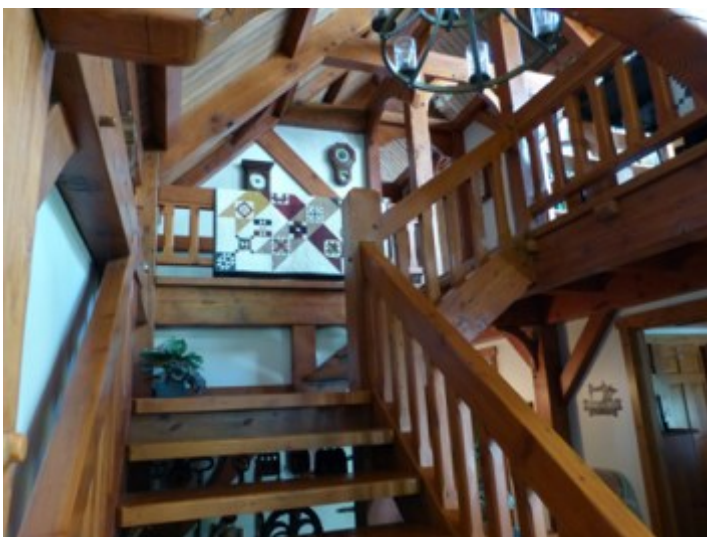
The greatest project of Phil's life- the multi-story timber frame home that he constructed by himself.



The view of the homestead on the ridge, from The Shop.



Above and next page a glimpse of the workmanship inside their timber frame home.



The interior of Hosta Alley, all hand-built by Phil, with Gayle's finishing touches.

Hosta Alley boasts several structures, all constructed by Phil and Gayle, often utilizing timber harvested from their property. These creations, identified as destination structures for visitors touring their property include The Wishing Well, The Lookout, The Pavilion, The Swing, and the gardens themselves, complete with both flagstone and wooden walkways. It also features a stream with a waterwheel and a cemetery!



A unique sitting area that serves as an introduction to the grand Waterwheel at the next stop on the path.



The Cemetery



Left, a view of the west side of the Lookout.

Right, The Waterwheel on the east side of the Lookout.





A view of the garden from the second story balcony of the Lookout.



Phil and Gayle's first garden building was the Pavilion.



The Overlook.



The Timber Frame façade on The Shop.



What would a garden be without water?
If only it worked!



A peaceful morning view of the house from beyond The Swing.



The Wishing Well.

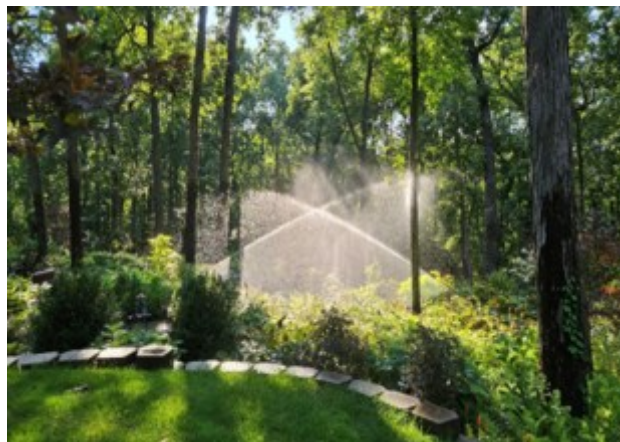
With their home completed, Gayle and Phil began landscaping their property. Phil's father conditioned him early on with his love of nature, which fueled his desire to purchase the remote timbered lot, but Gayle had virtually no background with gardening or plants. Phil knew about the 'green hosta' later identified as *Hosta ventricosa*, and he had planted them around "The Shack" years before. He was

happy to have chosen the perfect ‘no-fuss’ plant for his home. When Gayle moved in, she brought with her two young plants of *H. montana* ‘Aureomarginata’ and ‘Halcyon’. They soon became aware that the *Hosta* genus was available in many more varieties and during the next few years they purchased every cultivar they could find at their local box stores. It wasn’t long before the Alleys started searching out specialty nurseries, and online vendors to satisfy their urge for more (and more) varieties. In short order their collection grew to more than 1000 varieties! Because hostas thrive in their woodland setting, collecting hostas became a common obsession which proved to be the foundation for their ever-expanding gardens.

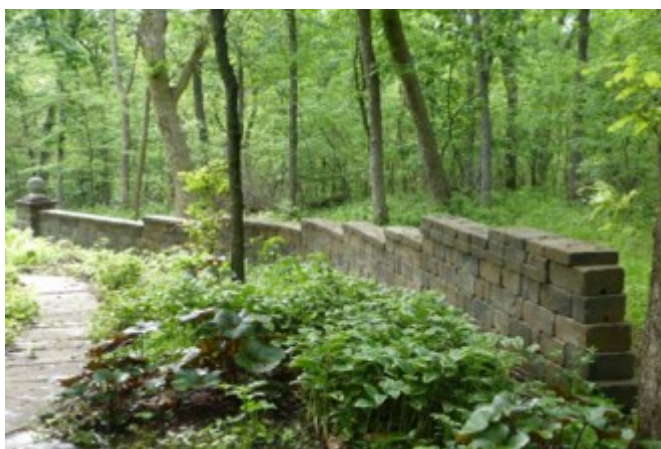
Located in plant hardiness zone 6a, Hosta Alley is comprised of a few inches of soil over rocky hills. The planting beds were created over many years by laying up landscape blocks in gentle arcs and undulating snake-like waves. Each wall was then backfilled with dirt that Phil (and his tractor) dug from overflow areas in their creek bottoms. The gardens of Hosta Alley are watered via nearly 50 sprinkler heads served by a homemade well system. The well derives its water from a natural creek system that is over one thousand feet away from the house & gardens atop the ridge some 70 feet higher. When the creek runs dry during drought conditions (each August for the last three years) the sprinklers can be switched to city water that is much slower and WAY more expensive! Keeping the garden beds hydrated is a priority, so providing a dry, stable walking surface became paramount as well.



Left, the terraced walls that define the planting areas.



Right, the sprinklers at full blast.



Left and right, block walls separate the timber from the gardens, many set with wooden walkways.



To date, Phil has created over a half mile of wooden sidewalks using boards he milled from readily available Osage Orange trees on the property. There are also flagstone walkways that encircle the house and reach outwards to major destinations (like the cemetery). Interspersed with these two major types of walkways are steppingstones (both store-bought and natural rocks hauled from the creeks). Most of the hostas are planted in the ground, with some set in pots throughout the gardens.



A section of the gardens, with *Hosta ventricosa* blooming everywhere, at just the right height to capture your attention and define the boundary.

Phil and Gayle currently grow approximately 1325 different hosta varieties, with many multiples of each, especially their first choice, *Hosta ventricosa*, which loves sun and casts a vibrant purple hue throughout the gardens when in bloom. They both like hostas that are not persnickety, claiming *H. 'Chorus Girl'* is one of their favorites due to its hardy nature despite assault by falling trees and then hot afternoon sun! They do not normally fertilize their gardens, preferring to amend their beds using composted material gleaned from combining kitchen refuse, shop debris, wood ash and grass clippings with their YARDS of autumn leaves.

All garden plants are labeled (by Gayle). The hostas and trees warrant using Kincaid P-style markers and PawPaw labels for all other perennials. Gayle keeps track of their hosta collection using an Excel spreadsheet, recording the common and botanical names, garden location, where and when they were purchased, and pertinent life details, such as diseases, dividing and relocating. The Alleys do not hybridize or grow hostas from seed, and they do not offer hostas for sale. Because hostas often sport and self-sow, they occasionally find themselves with unique hostas that warrant a name, and they have adopted the moniker “Alley” for these plants. *H. 'Alley's Stepchild'* is a fun seedling that they found growing underneath a step in the gardens. *H. 'Alley's Break of Day'* was given to them, mistakenly identified as *H. 'Daybreak'*. *H. 'Alley's Powerhouse'* is a variegated sport they found in a clump of *H. 'Sun Power'*.



Left, *H. 'Chorus Girl'*.

Right, *H. 'Alley's Powerhouse'*, described as similar to yet smaller than *H. 'Abba Dabba Do'*.





H. 'Alley's Stepchild', and its cute, curly flowers.

The timber is comprised of a broad diversity of very old-growth hardwoods, such as oak, ash, walnut and hackberry. To accompany the natural timber, many other species of plants have been added to the hosta gardens. They garner an overriding appreciation for the timber and all that grows and lives within it, believing that the gardens are merely an addition to the natural environment. The Alleys have planted approximately 40 Japanese maples, 50 dogwoods (sixteen different cultivars), and 30 redbuds (13 different cultivars), with *Cercis canadensis* 'Carolina Sweetheart' being Gayle's favorite. Their woodland setting is perfect for ferns, and their collection includes 17 varieties of *Dryopteris*, 16 varieties of *Athyrium*, 7 varieties of *Polystichum*, and a few each of *Osmunda*, *Phegopteris*, *Arachnoides*, *Onoclea*, *Cystopteris*, *Adiantum*, *Cryptomium*, *Pteridium*, *Matteuccia*, *Chilanthus* and *Asplenium*.



Adiantum pedatum, or Five Finger Maiden-hair fern makes a statement in the woodland garden.



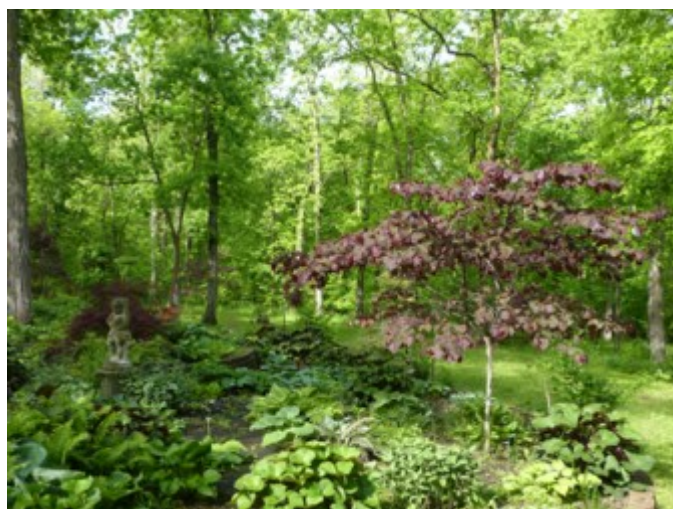
Ostrich ferns, or *Matteuccia struthiopteris* expands quickly to fill in tough areas of the shade garden.



Above, gargoyles rest atop wooden risers throughout the gardens, disguising the sprinkler



Left, *Cercis canadensis* 'Flame Thrower'.



Right, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'.



Left, *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood'.



Right, *Acer shirasawanum* 'Golden Full Moon'.



Cercis canadensis
'Golden Falls'



Cercis canadensis 'Ruby Falls'



Cercis canadensis
'Merlot'



Left, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'.

Right, Autumn is Gayle's favorite season, and this maple tree celebrates its arrival.
Acer x pseudosieboldianum
'North Wind'.



Phil back from a visit to the nursery – he can't help himself; he just loves trees!



Cercis canadensis 'Carolina Sweetheart'.

In all, approximately three of the 150 acres comprise the home and gardens. Phil and Gayle design, modify and maintain the 20-year-old garden themselves. Everything on the property was built by Phil, from the house to the barn, the Shop, the long driveway through the woods, the garden structures, to the miles of paths and wooden sidewalks. There is not a thing on the 150 acres that doesn't have Phil's sweat and pride all over it.

Due to the woodland setting, deer are a big threat to most of their plants. During the growing season they employ the use of motion detectors that alert them to intruders at night. They apply tree and shrub guards during the deer rut in late fall. Voles, however, are the most devastating pest they battle. The wooden sidewalks offer the perfect haven for them to travel at will, undetected. Over the years, they have experimented with poisons, live traps, lethal traps, animal urine, castor bean oil, wind vibrators, voodoo— nothing really worked. After losing too many hostas to these varmints, they began utilizing hardware cloth to protect them. For the past ten years, every hosta in their garden has been planted inside a circular ring of ¼" hardware cloth, 8 inches deep and bottomless. This has proven to be an effective long-term method of protection, and their cages are large enough that growth is not severely restricted. They also battle root competition, which is understandable, given the number of trees on the property. Every year Gayle identifies an area or two that needs help. She digs up everything she can and cuts away any roots within the top ten inches, amends the soil and replants the hostas

Right, the bottomless baskets made from hardware cloth that each hosta is planted in to protect from vole destruction. Callie is trying to hide in the middle from the beagles.



It's a good thing they are retired, because maintaining these gardens is a continual process. Every day of his life, Phil walks the gardens looking for ideas for additional plants or new garden structures. He even walks the gardens during the cold winter months for inspection and inspiration. They wish they could find a way to safely reduce the density of the overhead tree canopy. Phil abhors paying anyone to do a job he could do himself, yet at his age, he's not willing to rappel into the canopy

with a chainsaw. Their biggest regret is when Phil purposely planted Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma*). They also wish that they had begun planting their slower growing trees and shrubs earlier as they take so long to mature.

Phil and Gayle share a blended family. Phil's daughter Kimberly has one daughter named Gabriella, and two sons named Aidan and Landon, for a total of three grandchildren. Gayle's son Eric, who passed in 2021, has a daughter named Amanda and had a son named Logan, who passed last August after a lifetime struggle with leukemia. Gayle's daughter Vanessa has two daughters named Kennedy and Kory. Thus, they share 6 grandchildren between them. They also count their pets as part of the family, since caring for 11 of them is quite a task. Phil loves to listen to his beagles as they run through the timber while the three cats patrol the gardens. George is the king of his domain and can't be bothered to get too excited about anything - it's beneath him. Molly is young and curious about everything and thinks she's a great hunter. Orville is not really a cat at all- he's more like a duck! He loves water, whether it be from a faucet, bucket, sink or showering over him from the sprinklers.



George is perched atop his throne, watching everything.



Above, young Molly is on the hunt amidst the shade garden.



Phil and his pack of beagles

Below, Orville is playing, taking a break from the water in the gardens, which is his favorite way to pass time.



Living so close to Kansas City, it is only natural that Phil is a Chief's football fan, while Gayle only wears the Chief's gear. When they are not building things or tending the gardens, they enjoy strolling the undeveloped acres of their property, often with three cats. Phil enjoys hunting the woods for deer during season, which also helps protect their gardens. During the winter, while the gardens sleep, Phil plans and builds new items for the gardens, metal detects for artifacts and stockpiles the timber they burn to heat their home. Gayle is an accomplished quilter and is always working a jigsaw puzzle on the dining room table. Gayle also spends many hours weekly completing her duties as the AHS registrar. They are active members of the American Hosta Society, also belonging to the Midwest Regional Hosta Society, Gayle is also a very active officer with the local *Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society*. Gayle serves as an officer of the Lee's Summit Quilter's Guild and her quilts have won numerous ribbons.



Quilts crafted by Gayle, that are as colorful and beautiful as the gardens!



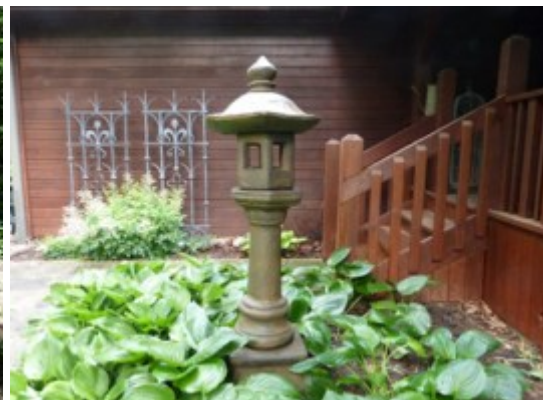
Ribbons that Gayle's quilts have received.



Gayle's vintage Singer Featherweights are on display in her office

Phil and Gayle enjoy having visitors at Hosta Alley. They call their garden theme "eclectic" with their hardscape varying from classic to rustic to whimsical. They have hosted many local garden clubs, family groups and other clubs such as The Red Hat Ladies Club. Thousands of visitors have enjoyed walking in their gar-

dens. Phil's advice to hosta gardeners is to delve into the nuance of your plants. "Knowledge will incentivize you to learn more —scientific knowledge of the plants in your garden or plants within their natural environment is something every gardener should have." Gayle believes there are two things that every gardener should have: ten (or even fifty) pairs of good washable garden gloves, so you can always find a pair, and a handheld cultivator hoe. She recommends the Mud brand gloves, bought in bulk for a very reasonable price and Hestra's Job gloves for a more expensive yet durable and comfortable option. She also offers the following advice: "First off, try it! It's not a big deal if it doesn't work, but you might be pleasantly surprised by what happens. And secondly - go to hosta conventions! It's fun, the people are wonderful, and you get great ideas for your own garden." Gayle recalls attending the 2024 AHS convention held in Marlborough, MA where she became obsessed with a *Zelkova serrata* 'Goshiki' that she saw in Viktoria Serafin's back yard. It took some searching, but Gayle finally found one on eBay and planted it a month later in her own garden, hop-



Gayle's two recommendations to all gardeners: gloves and a cultivator hoe.



The foundation of the shady gardens at Hosta Alley is hostas, as the name implies. However, there are many worthy perennials that help create a well-balanced garden. Phil claims that he does not have a favorite perennial, but he finds all the plants they have attractive and desirable. With the very high oak and hickory canopy and ground level offerings such as hostas and ferns, they noticed a need to expand their mid-story inventory of shrubs and small cultivated trees. As the mid-story slowly fills in, Phil gains greater pleasure in his daily walks, finding that the acceptable balance between living plants and the hardscape brings it all together. They live within 150 acres of very old growth hardwood complete with hiking trails and gardens that complement the natural timber, marrying the native indigenous plants with cultivated varieties. Over time, even their timber frame home has become part of the garden experience, as they open their doors to visitors. If you are ever in the Kansas City area and wish to visit Hosta Alley, or if you have any questions about this feature content or any of the photos, please contact

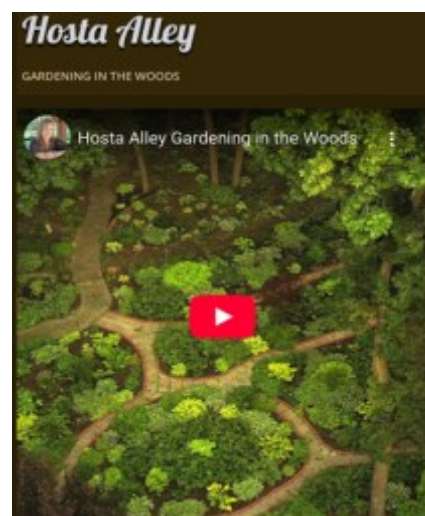
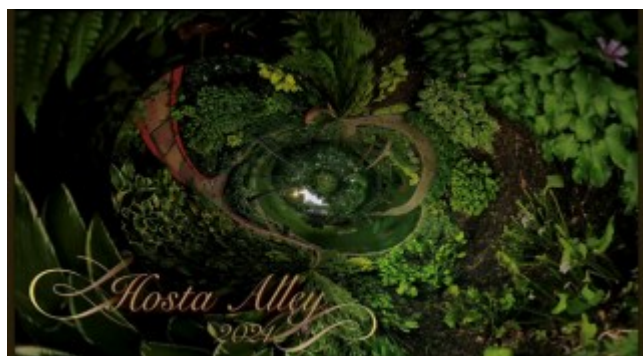
Phil via email: jpagha@gmail.com

Or Gayle via email: Giboshigayle@gmail.com

Phil and Gayle hired a drone photographer to capture Hosta Alley in 2021 for two reasons. More garden clubs were hearing about Hosta Alley, and they'd warn them about the driveway (it can be impossible to navigate if you're in an older rear-wheel drive vehicle). Many people would take the warnings and then still get stuck when they arrived, which didn't make for a very pleasant visit. Thus, the first reason for the video was to show prospective visitors the approaching drive. Unfortunately, it doesn't convey the driveway threat at all; but they loved the end results so much that they overlooked that small detail. Secondly, they knew they were getting older and who knows what might happen. They wanted a permanent record of what they had created for their own enjoyment and to show friends (like you) who cannot visit in person. Please click the link provided here to view the video that is published on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/6VYhgMGgvxo?si=W36MsUHiI8tr2X5g>

or more information and a more detailed description with photos of the construction of all their projects, please visit their website at <http://www.HostaAlley.com>



Phil and Gayle both have Facebook/Messenger profiles, where you can connect with them and chat:

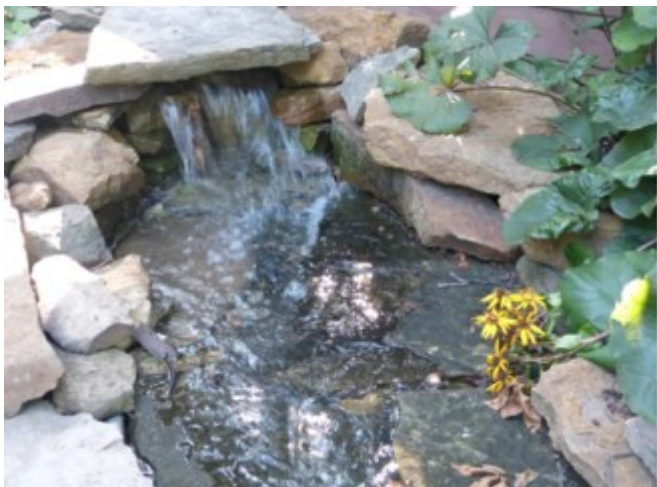
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1EbQLXneAG/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/15tYx3WsfX/?mibextid=wwXIfr>



If you are ever afforded the opportunity to visit Hosta Alley, consider yourself lucky and don't pass on it! In the meantime, enjoy the photographic tour offered here.





Mama turtle and baby wander between *Hosta* 'Pixie Vamp' and an unnamed Mouse seedling.



An old wood burning stove from Phil's early days in the Shack sits in the garden as a reminder of the "old days."







Above and below, Phil created a gong station where three different mallets are used to strike a Wuhan Gong or the large oxygen bottles.





Above and below, the Overlook waits patiently for a weary guest to rest and enjoy the garden.



The Wishing Well draws your attention and your mind towards your future wishes.



Left, a five-foot-tall oriental lantern post sits stately in the garden.

Cercis canadensis 'Flame Thrower' sits amidst clockwise from bottom, *Hosta* 'Rembrandt Blue', *H.* 'Summer Fragrance', *H.* 'Fried Bananas', and *H. ventricosa* 'Aureomarginata'.



When the Waterwheel is still, the creek bed stays dry.



The Lookout with a sitting area on the path to it.



Left, the back of the house (south facing) has windows and skylights on the south side to bring the natural light inside.





Above, a cast stone/fiberglass obelisk sits stately overlooking the east gardens.

Left, a sea of Ajuga carpets the area underneath a *Cornus kousa* 'Wolf Eyes'.



Above, *Weigela florida* 'MonRigney' or Golden Jackpot Weigela.

Left, a pergola with dangling repurposed nitrogen bottles that only ring when water from the irrigation sprinklers hit them.





Polygonatum odoratum 'Variegatum' and *Ligularia dentata* 'Britt-Marie Crawford' line the lower side of this stone retaining wall.



Berberis thunbergii 'Orange Rocket' and *Coto-naster apiculatus* outline the hosta and fern bed including *H.osta ventricosa*, *H.* 'Frank Lloyd Wright', and *H.* 'Eclipse' with *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, or Ostrich Fern and *Lysimachia nummularia* or Creeping jenny all around.



Left, *Cornus kousa* 'Wolf Eyes' and *Berberis thunbergii* 'Orange Rocket' with the pergola in the background provide nice contrasting colors.





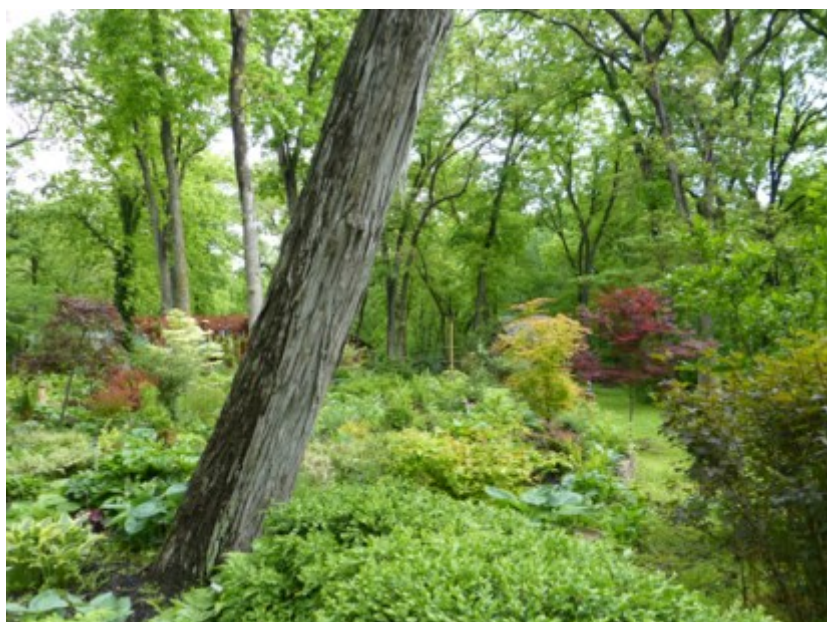
A cherub guards *Hosta* 'Kifukurin Hyuga'

A commonly reproduced statue that stands lovingly next to an uncommon variety of *Polygonatum* whose variegated leaves twist and curl wildly. Gayle purchased a small pot with three stems from the auction at the 2017 AHS convention in Indianapolis.

Below, *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood', *Acer shirasawanum* 'Autumn Moon', *Cornus kousa* 'Summer Fun', and *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Summer Wine' (Ninebark) stand out amidst the sea of hostas and other lower growing perennials.



Above, *Cornus kousa* 'Summer Fun' draws you through the arbor into the woodland garden.





In the foreground above, clockwise from bottom: hosta seedling, *Hosta* 'Bedford Rise and Shine', hosta seedling, *Anisocampium niponicum* 'Pictum' (Japanese Painted Fern), *Hosta* 'Carolina Blue', *Helleborus x hybridus* 'Cherry Blossom', green hosta seedling, *Cotinus coggygia* 'Winecraft' (Black Smoke Tree), green hosta seedling, *Hosta* 'Lakeside Rhapsody', *H.* 'Golden Friendship', small yellow hosta seedling in the middle.



Polygonatum odorata 'Variegatum'

Right, clockwise from bottom: *Heuchera* 'Brownies', *Hosta* 'Alex Summers', *Pulmonaria* 'Raspberry Splash', *Hosta* 'Mardi Gras', *H.* 'Piedmont Gold', dark green hosta seedling, *Dryopteris clintoniana* (Dixie Wood Fern), *Hosta* 'Rich Uncle', *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple', *Heuchera richardsonii*.



A row of Barberry and Diervilla shrubs line the wooden sidewalk.



Acer palmatum 'Oshio Beni' and *Acer shirasawanum* 'Autumn Moon'.





Left, the handmade wooden sidewalk with front to back: *Dryopteris x australis* (Dixie Wood Fern), green hosta seedling, *Hosta* 'Hanky Panky', *H.* 'Lakeside Zinger', *Convallaria majalis* 'Crème de Mint', *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Emerald Mist', *Hosta* 'Golden Gate', *H.* 'Winfield Gold', *Ajuga* 'Petite Parakeet', *Hosta* 'Winter Snow', *Athyrium niponicum*, *Liriope muscari*, *Hosta* 'Gaiety', *H.* 'Effervescent', *H.* 'Blitz', *Aruncus dioicus*.

Right, clockwise from bottom: *Hosta* 'Brother Stefan', *Hakonechloa macra* 'All Gold', *Helleborus* 'Ivory Prince', *Syneilesis aconitifolia* (Shredded Umbrella plant), *Hosta* 'Leola Fraim', *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Queen of Hearts', *Dryopteris tokyoensis* (Tokyo Wood Fern), green hosta seedling.



Left, one of the Four Seasons statues stands alongside *Filipendula purpurea* 'Elegans' (Meadowsweet), *Picea orientalis* 'Skylands' (Oriental Spruce), *Acer palmatum* var *dissectum* 'Tamukayama' and *Hosta* 'Delona's Smile'.

Right, *Cercis canadensis* 'Golden Falls' stands in the middle of clockwise from bottom: *Pulmonaria*, *Hosta* 'Crocodile Socks', *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple', *Ajuga* 'Black Scallop', *Hosta* 'Permafrost', *H.* 'Rare Breed', *H.* 'Envy', *Heuchera* 'Sparkling Burgundy', small green hosta seedling, green wavy hosta seedling.



Left, *Hosta* 'Cold Heart' and *H.* 'Blueberry Waffles' compete for attention with *Rhododendron* 'Herbert' (Azalea).

Right, the colorful view between the east gardens and The Shop.





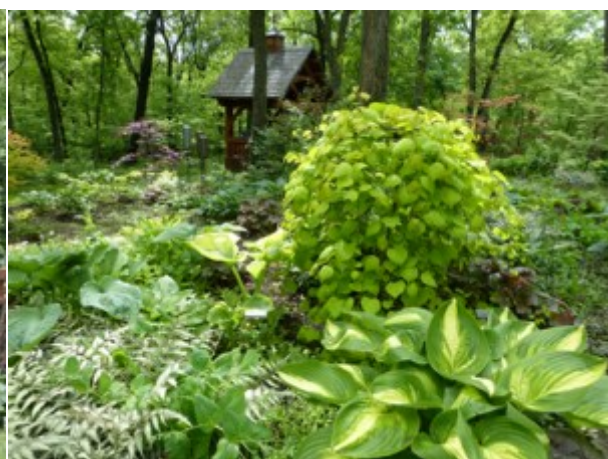
Left and above, The Shop with a fountain tucked under a shed roof.



Cercis canadensis 'Carolina Sweetheart'

Above and right, the east gardens behind The Shop and east of the home.





Above, *Cercis canadensis* 'Golden Falls' is flanked by *Hosta* 'Final Victory', *Athyrium niponicum* 'Painted Regal' and *Hosta* 'Rare Breed'.



Above, a timber frame façade on The Shop.



Left, a timber frame façade on the barn, with custom fit doors and decorative fencing to match around the dog kennel.



Another one of the many large, unnamed hosta seedlings that crop up everywhere.

Cercis canadensis 'Carolina Sweetheart' sits in a small grassy area between the colorful azaleas and the barn quilts on the back of The Shop.

Right, *Hosta* 'Royal Standard' fills an area between an *Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku' and a *Wisteria sinensis* 'Rosea'.



Left, *Arundo donax* spikes just emerging that will grow to be almost ten feet tall by September.

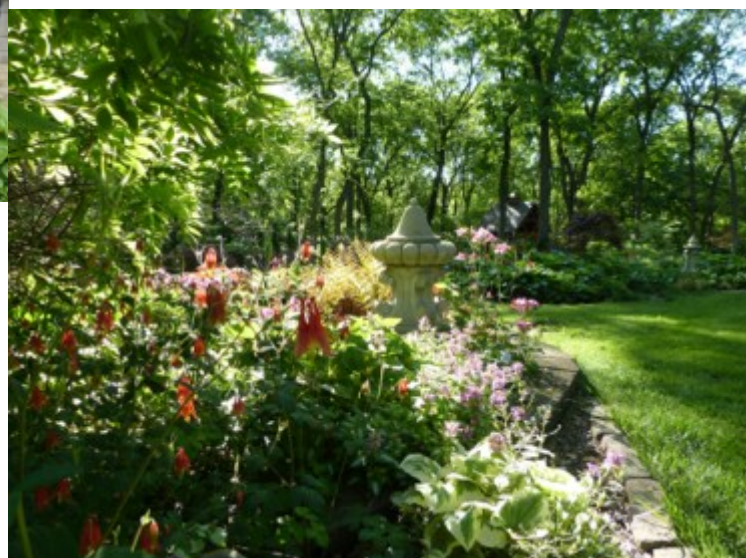


Below, *Cercis canadensis* 'Rising Sun' is the star of this hosta bed on the west side of the ridge.

A small garden bed is home to many *Polygonatum*, multiple types of ferns, a *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Ruby Slippers' and one very nice *Hosta* 'Frances Williams'.



A rear view of The Shop with Gayle's barn quilts added for color.



A jumble of *Aquilegia caerulea* 'Songbird Robin', *Brunnera macrophylla* and *Trillium grandiflorum* gather beneath the *Wisteria sinensis* 'Rosea'.



Left, *Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku' is surpassing its predicted height. Pretty good for a specimen that was rescued from the discard pile at Westlake Hardware!

Below, *Pachysandra* covers the ground all around The Pavilion. Only tall hostas like *Hosta* 'Tom Schmid' and *H.* 'Rembrandt Blue' can peer over it.



Right, a view of The Pavilion with an array of mid-story shrubs and trees to soften the image.



Above, a HUGE *Helleborus orientalis* 'Ballard hybrid' is about three feet tall and over six feet in diameter! They might have to move *Hosta* 'Shades of Green' before it disappears.





Above, this is a view of the house from The Overlook. The retaining wall you see is the first of many block walls created to keep rain from rushing down the hill to the creek.

Right, this view from the west porch shows two of the seven benches that Phil has restored and placed in the gardens.



Left, many *Hosta ventricosa*, *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Variegatum' and fern varieties surround a *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Ruby Slippers'.



Gayle insists on keeping “some” grassy areas!



A raised bed made with old railroad ties contains *Hosta* ‘June Fever’, *H.* ‘Sea Yellow Sunrise’, *H.* ‘Christmas Tree’ and *Brunnera macrophylla* ‘Emerald Mist’.



Phil’s homemade Shishi-odoshi sits behind The Shop close to the *Wisteria sinensis* ‘Rosea’.



Picea orientalis ‘Skylands’ contrasts beautifully with *Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* ‘Tamukeyama’.



Hosta 'Allegan Emperor' sits amid a sea of *Onoclea sensibilis* (Sensitive Fern) with *Arum italicum* and *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Center Glow' (Ninebark) in the foreground.

A view of the house from the pergola. Their first *Cornus alternifolia* 'Golden Shadows' (Pagoda Dogwood) has decided it wants to present the appearance of both a first and second floor!



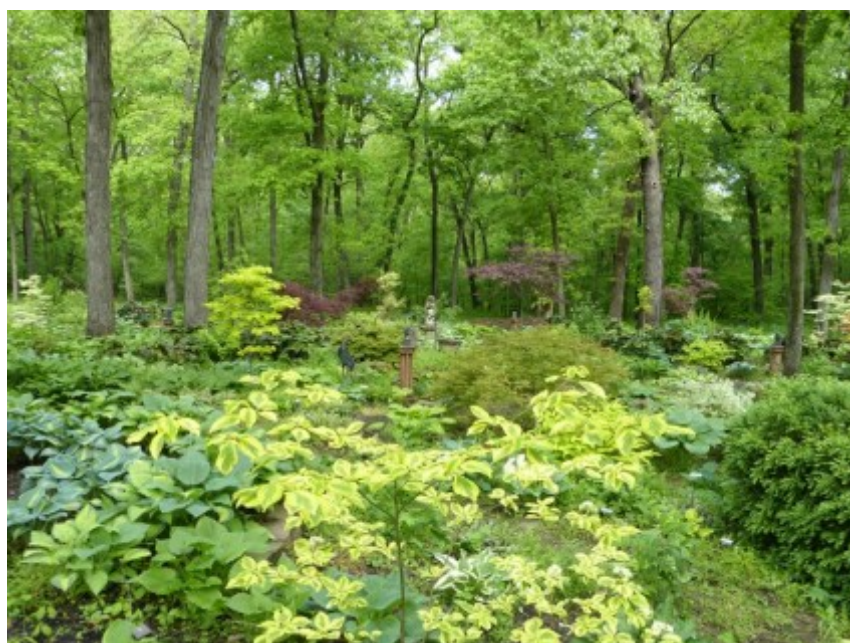
Below, an ornate birdcage provides a secure method to keep the cats from breaking off portions of the delicate sedums.



This view of the west end of the house provides a feel for how the elevation steadily drops away from the house. The airy branches of the *Cornus kousa* 'Wolf Eyes' are easy to see with the dark redwood siding as a backdrop.



Left, a *Sambucus nigra* 'Instant Karma' floats above *Hosta* 'Blue Cadet', *H.* 'Chantilly Lace', *H.* 'Emperor's New Clothes', *H. fortunei* 'Aureomarginata', *H.* 'Frosted Frolic', *H.* 'Honey Bee', *H.* 'Old Cardboard Boxes', *H.* 'Popcorn', *H.* 'Sagae', *H.* 'Wolverine', and numerous potted hostas that get moved around regularly.



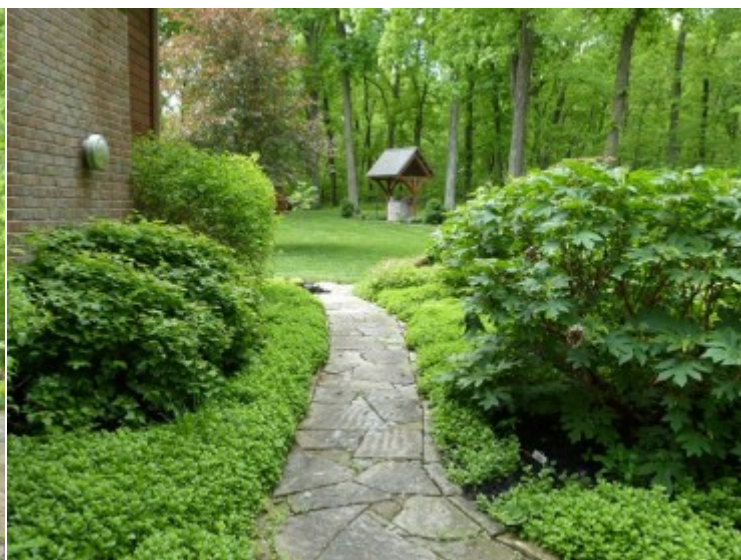
Cornus alternifolia 'Golden Shadows' (Pagoda Dogwood) in the foreground looks towards an *Acer x pseudosieboldianum* 'Ice Dragon' and other Redbuds, Dogwoods and Maples in the rear.



A view of the house from the barn that overlooks a rough area filled with *Convallaria majalis* and *Houttuynia cordata*.



“Leopold” greets everyone to Hosta Alley.



Above and below, *Viburnum opulus* ‘Compactum’ (European Cranberry bush) hugs the chimney while *Hydrangea quercifolia* sits across the walkway; both with lush sedum underfoot.

Lion statues in front of houses generally symbolize strength, protection and prosperity. They are believed to ward off negative influences and bring good luck to the home and its inhabitants.

These are opposing views - above looks towards the Wishing Well in the distance and below looks towards a *Cornus kousa* ‘Wolf Eyes’ that is off the west porch.

Below, Leopold’s little brother “Leo Jr.” stands guard on the west side of the drive. His planting bed contains *Amsonia illustris* ‘Blue Ice’ surrounded by perky *Sedum rupestre* ‘Angelina’.





Right, *Hosta montana* 'Aureomarginata' and *H.* 'Victory' are now at their prime!

Below, the west side of the Lookout has a large area devoted to *Kirengeshoma palmata* (Yellow Wax Bells), a rarely seen specimen in perennial gardens. This bed contains 27 individual plants!



Above and below, the many *Hydrangea quercifolia* (Oakleaf Hydrangeas) are blooming and they attract hundreds of butterflies!

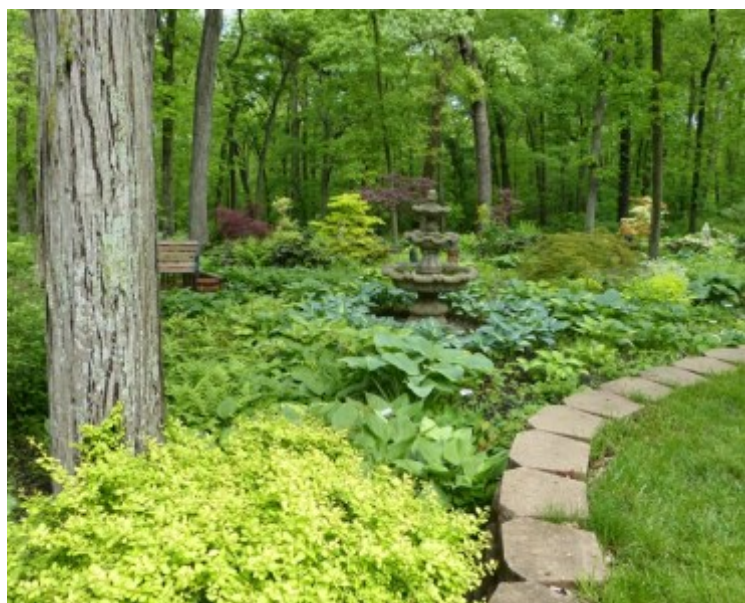




A bench sits in the middle of this heavily planted west garden. This scene would serve as a nice setting for a game of “EYE SPY”!



This area at the west end of the house gets hot sun from noon to almost 4:00. This won't work for hostas, but boxwoods, bar-berrys and Oakleaf hydrangeas seem to like it. Orville seems to like it too, as he relaxes on the wooden sidewalk.



Above and right, the fountain is circled by a ring of *Hosta* ‘Touch of Class’ and surrounded by a larger ring of *H.* ‘Paul’s Glory’. The bright yellow bush in the foreground is a volunteer Barberry that chose this setting to thrive in, along with numerous volunteer hosta seedlings.





Left, *Hosta* 'Satisfaction' is the star player in this bed. Surrounding her are *H.* 'Angelique', *H.* 'Big Daddy', *H.* 'Dinner Mint', *H.* 'Ey++++e Declare', *H.* 'Lakeside Hoola Hoop', *H.* 'Undulata Errromenna', *H.* 'Wizard's Illusion' and *H. venusta*.

Right, the early spring color of the *Acer shirasawanum* 'Autumn Moon' and the dark red of the *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' contrast well with the dark green *Decumaria barbara* 'Barbara Ann' (climbing hydrangea.)





Left, a cement water urn that Gayle just HAD to have!



Above, a view of the garden with undeveloped woods in the background. Large clumps of *Ligularia denata* 'Britt-Marie Crawford' have self-seeded and established itself profusely.



Left, *Cercis canadensis* 'Flame Thrower' is strutting its spring color above a large yellow flowering Hellebore (a gift and their first ever Hellebore) with *Hosta* 'Sea Yellow Sunrise' and *H.* 'Gold Regal'



Below, an oriental lantern sits outside the west porch, welcoming guests, with an iron gate trellis decorating the garage wall.





A cement falcon guards the *Hosta ventricosa*



Left, *Acer palmatum* 'Butterfly' is surrounded by *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald n Gold', *Liriope muscari* variegata, *Acanthus spinosis* and an arc of *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen' as a backdrop.

Right, the rocks shown were scattered throughout the trees (excavated for the home's foundation) and Gayle kept tossing them into a pile every time she planted something. Next thing you know- there's enough of them to construct a wall! After that, the spot cried out for a structure - which planted the seeds for a Pavilion. Amazing how that happens!

Hosta 'Rembrandt Blue' and *H.* 'Yosemite Vally' sit atop the wall while *H. undulata*, *H.* 'Undulata Erromena' and *Athyrium felix-femina* disguise the base.





Cercis canadensis 'Rising Sun' is central to this bed filled with hostas, hellebores, ferns and many other shade perennials. At center front is *Hosta* 'Gosan Sunproof'.



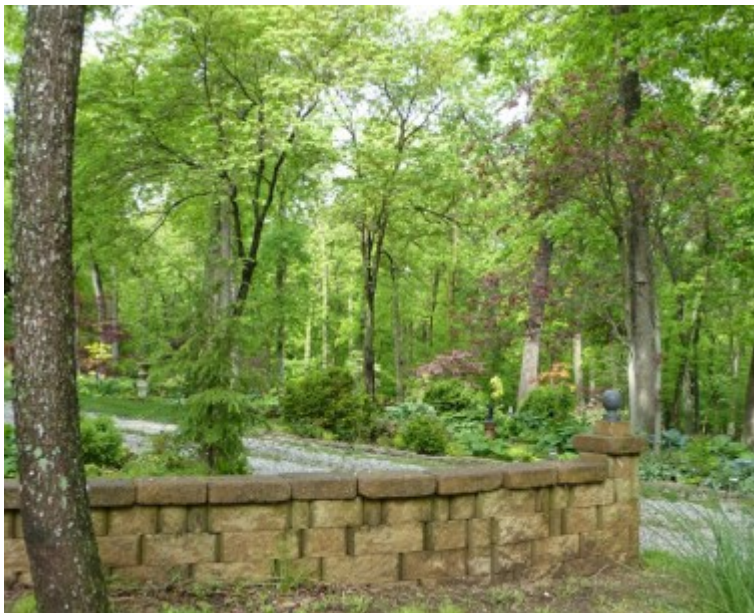
Above, this bed for miniature hostas also contains an old water pump and broken portions of an old birdbath. The hostas planted include: *Hosta* 'Baby Booties', *H.* 'Baby Bunting', *H.* 'Bounty', *H.* 'Cascades', *H.* 'Fair Maiden', *H.* 'Fairy Dust', *H.* 'Fantasy Island', *H.* 'First Mate', *H.* 'Fruit Cup', *H.* 'Fruit Loop', *H.* 'Gold Bug', *H.* 'Ground Sulphur', *H.* 'Hideout', *H.* 'Lemon Zest', *H.* 'Light the Match', *H.* 'Little Treasure', *H.* 'Mary Marie Ann', *H.* 'Mighty Mouse', *H.* 'Moonstruck', *H.* 'Pixie Vamp', *H.* 'Remember Me', *H.* 'Runt', *H.* 'Sporty Mouse', *H.* 'Stand by Me', *H.* 'Teaspoon', *H.* 'Tick Tock', *H.* 'Twinkle Little Star', *H.* 'Xanadu' and *H. venusta*.

Below, another view of the rock wall with *Matteuccia struthiopteris* on top and *Hosta* 'Lakeside Lagoon', *H.* 'Goblin', *H.* 'Fried Bananas', *H.* 'Eagle's Nest', *H.* 'Grey Ghost', *H.* 'Gold Standard', *H.* 'Heart and Soul', *H.* 'Regal Splendor', *H.* 'Sharmon', *H.* 'Stained Glass', and *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Let's Dance Starlight' just emerging from its winter sleep, all clustered at the base.

Can you believe that all of these hostas are in there?



Right, this bed contains much larger hosta varieties. *Hosta montana* 'Aureomarginata' and *H.* 'Victory' are the two variegated plants in the foreground. You might also see *H.* 'Alice Gladden', *H.* 'Allan P. McConnell', *H.* 'Black Hills', *H.* 'Dark Shadows', *H.* 'Deep Blue Sea', *H.* 'Diana Remembered', *H.* 'Fragrant Blue', *H.* 'Great Arrival', *H.* 'Hanky Panky', *H.* 'Julie Morss', *H.* 'On Stage', *H.* 'PeeDee Laughing River', *H.* 'Rainforest Sunrise', *H.* 'Richmond', *H.* 'Rosedale Golden Goose' and *H.* 'Tambourine'.



They own too many cats for this to be inhabited by birds, but they frequently house a toad or two in "This Old House."

Right, a large clump of *Hakonechloa macra* 'All Gold' draws the eye towards this area. *Hosta* 'Arc de Triomphe', *H.* 'Dream Boat', *H.* 'Ebb Tide', *H.* 'Lady in Waiting' and *H.* 'Venetian Star' are a few of the visible varieties in this scene.





Left, this little peninsula is home to approximately twenty *Hosta* 'Blessings', an older hosta variety that was all but lost. In 2020, Gayle had a portion of her single specimen sent for tissue culture. During the 2022 AHS convention in Minneapolis MN, Gayle gave a TC seedling to anyone who would participate in a quiz about the [Hosta Registry](#) website that Gayle works endlessly on. More than 300 were given away to individuals and local hosta clubs.



Shown above are the few tiny, bedraggled seedlings that nobody wanted to take home. They seem to thrive underneath the *Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku' (Coral Bark Maple).

Below, the view of the deck with dappled sun. The view is through a very strange looking *Acer palmatum*. Gayle thinks it identifies as a sumac.

Above, this *Acer palmatum* 'Koto-no-ito' (Harp String Maple) refused to grow- until they put in the stone sidewalk. THEN, it went crazy! Underneath are *Hosta* 'Krossa Regal', *H.* 'Holy Mole', *H.* 'Abiqua Recluse', *Dryopteris erythrosora* 'Brilliance' (Autumn Fern) and many green *Brunnera* and *Hosta ventricosa*.





Left, this walkway invites visitors to stroll the gardens.

Hostas are widely known as the “friendship plant” and it brings people from all over the world together. The stained-glass sign right was hand-crafted by a dear hosta friend and generous soul. It graces the front of their home welcoming all who visit.



This interview was conducted by Gail J Russo, Cedarville, NJ.

If you would like to see your garden or the garden of a friend featured in this publication, please contact Gail Russo at Russo4@comcast.net for the questionnaire.

All the photos printed in this column have been provided by the featured gardener with their permission, unless otherwise noted, and are the property of the featured gardener, so contact them if you'd like permission to use a photo, or if you have any questions about photo content.

We are trying to bring lovely, remote gardens to the readers who would not be able to see them otherwise and get to know the person behind them.

International hosta gardeners are encouraged to join us. We would love to meet you and enjoy your gardens, but you must communicate in English.



Vendor Spotlight

Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Glenbrook Farm
142 Brooks Rd
Fultonville, NY 12072
1-518-922-5091





Viktoria Serafin and her homestead at Glenbrook Farm.

Are you one of the “hostaholics” who is always searching for something different to add to your collection? Glenbrook Farm is a small business nursery specializing in hostas located in Fultonville, NY. Since they grow more than 2,000 varieties of hostas, It might just have that special hosta you’ve looking for. Shipping to your door is one of the advantages offered by this special vendor.

Viktoria Serafin has been gardening since she was seven years old! Born in Finland in a time before the internet, they also had no phones, television or electricity in their home. With few toys or books, children had to find ways to entertain themselves and nature was all around them, for free! Viktoria found herself helping with the family kitchen garden, and she enjoyed it.

When she was 20 years old, she immigrated to the United States, choosing New York to settle in, which has a climate similar to Finland and a low cost of living. Her first career was as a graphic artist in advertising. When she married and began raising her children, she opted to work from home and became an antiques dealer. Eventually, she married Bob Serafin, and they purchased the farm where she raised sheep until the last of her four children left home for college. She decided to try that too and earned a college degree in Plant Science. After graduating, she found that the “green industry” hired primarily 25-year-old brawny males. She was not about to let that discourage her, so she decided to open her own nursery and Glenbrook Farm was born. Located on Brooks Rd, which begins in the town of Glen and crosses a drainage channel before reaching her farm, Viktoria dubbed the channel a brook to name her venture.



Glenbrook Farm as it was when purchased in 1984, with sheep in the barnyard.

When they purchased the farm, the idea of a hosta nursery was not even a thought. The property had four ponds on it, but none of them were suitable for swimming or irrigation. It had a house, a barn and fields. When she decided to sell off the sheep to open a nursery, Viktoria told her husband Bob that the proceeds would fund a pond renovation. The property now boasts a 650,000-gallon pond that is used for swimming and irrigation that is replenished naturally with rainwater runoff. Viktoria and Bob have been married for more than 40 years and they share many interests, but Bob is not a gardener. He helps around the nursery by mowing the lawn and fields; maintaining machinery; operating the tractor; and helping with necessary chores. Viktoria always preferred trees and shrubs, but because she started this venture later in life, she needed to select a specialty that was quickly profitable. A melanoma scare pushed her choice towards shade gardening. Hostas were the fastest growing segment of plant sales at that time, so Glenbrook Farm became a hosta specialty nursery. Bob began building shade structures and Viktoria began designing the growing beds around the existing trees and shrubs. Viktoria spends eight to twelve hours per day tending the plants and maintaining the display gardens.

They do not plan to expand the gardens any further as it is already getting difficult to maintain as they age.



Bob Serafin walking the field.

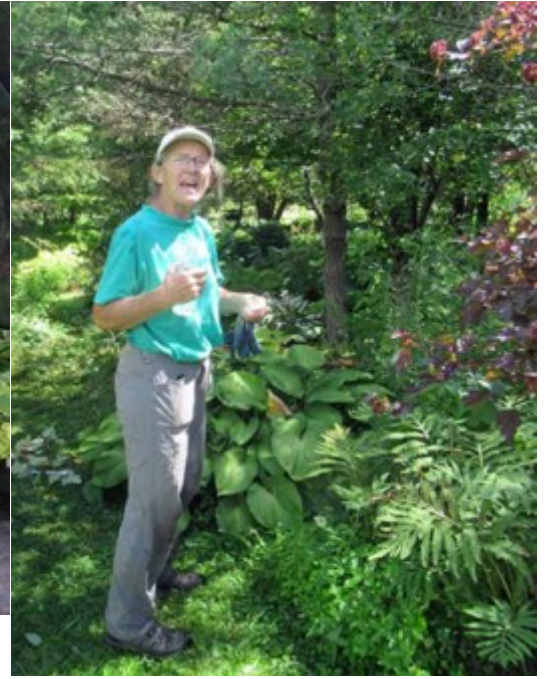
Fultonville, NY is in plant hardiness zone 5, and Viktoria prefers to grow hosta varieties that tolerate full sun in her zone. In her opinion, if it can't tolerate full sun in her zone, it is not garden worthy for warmer zones. The nursery offers only plants for sale, including hostas, perennials, shrubs, and trees, and it boasts impressive display gardens. There are more than 150 varieties of trees, a couple dozen varieties of lilacs, more than a hundred varieties of peonies and numerous other perennials planted amongst the more than 2,000 varieties of hostas. There is always something different to see, starting with the native wildflowers and thousands of bulbs in the spring and ending in the fall with vibrant foliage color.



Many of the hostas offered for sale are already potted and maintained in a greenhouse, but they also dig and divide field grown hostas to sell. Janet is Viktoria's right hand when she has the time. Viktoria calls her a friend even though Janet calls her "Boss". Glenbrook Farm has been in operation for 28 years. Last year, Viktoria made the hard decision to shut down their website because it generated more business than they were able to handle. The majority of hostas sold are offered for sale on their Facebook page. They offer shipping via Parcel Post through the USPS, in the continental USA only. Most hostas are shipped bare root after being thoroughly washed except for miniature varieties that may remain potted. The nursery is often inspected by the New York State Department of Agriculture and no issues have ever been identified. To prevent the introduction of Hosta Virus X, they only acquire stock from growers known to take all precautions, including random testing. Viktoria is well versed in symptoms of Hosta Virus X and she educates her customers upon request or when she recognizes a need. They use metaldehyde to control slugs and a pre-emergent weed control regularly. Rodent bait is used to control voles, while deer and rabbits are kept at bay by Viktoria's dogs



The greenhouse, with irrigation.



Viktoria's friend and right-hand, Janet.

Glenbrook Farm is a member of the American Hosta Growers Association (AHGA) and the American Hosta Society, although the AHGA recently underwent dissolution. Viktoria is also a member of the Upstate New York Hosta Society, where she serves as vice-president and former president. Local garden clubs have toured the gardens, but it is too remote to be included on an AHS tour, though Viktoria has proclaimed she would love to be included on an AHS agenda since she loves having visitors tour the gardens. When asked why potential customers should want to visit Glenbrook Farm besides to buy a hosta, Viktoria replied, “For the peaceful, quiet, scenic location, three acres of display gardens and lots of interesting and rare plant material besides hostas.”

Viktoria does not intentionally hybridize or grow seeds from hostas, however, most hostas self-sow their seeds when left intact, and Viktoria has found many interesting seedlings and hosta sports that she has named and registered. Originations from Glenbrook Farm often include the moniker “Glen” but not always. A few well-known introductions include *Hosta* ‘Glen Luminaria’, *H.* ‘Glen Tiara’, *H.* ‘Glen Triumph’, *H.* ‘Glen Eyeful Tower’, *H.* ‘Steffi’ and *H.* ‘Babycakes’. *H.* ‘Babycakes’ is her favorite selfintroduction and *H.* ‘Sagae’ is the one she would choose if she could only grow one hosta variety.



Above and below,
H. 'Babycakes'.



H. 'Steffi'



H. 'Glen Triumph'



H. 'Glen Eyeful Tower'



H. 'Glen Luminaria'

Because it is very cold in Upstate New York, and they receive an average of 73 inches of snow per year, which keeps the ground covered in snow for most of the winter, Viktoria enjoys cross-country skiing to stay in shape for spring in the nursery. When not skiing, she passes the cold months reading, editing photos she captured through the season and updating her inventory and plant descriptions for future sales. Her hobbies besides gardening include reading, music, photography and traveling. Viktoria tries to plan a vacation to her native homeland annually to visit family and friends. As a result, Viktoria is fluent in Finnish and Swedish, as well as understanding a few other European languages besides English. Her favorite public garden is the Denver Botanic Gardens, which offers art and music within the spectacular gardens and water features.

Glenbrook Farm may be in a remote area, but if you're ever able to visit, it is well worth the trip to see the spectacular gardens that offer much more than hostas. Viktoria is willing to dig and divide a hosta that you just have to have a piece of. She shares many of her other perennials that you may find interesting, most of which are not offered for sale otherwise. Much of the nursery is fairly level and handicapped-accessible, though they do not have paved walkways. Children will not be allowed to run freely, so they are best left on the playground. Viktoria's dogs are kings of the

farm, so your pets are not allowed to visit. Viktoria notes that there is not a business sign at the entrance of the property because the locals kept trying to drive into the farm to buy tomatoes and Babycakes that were just not on the menu!

There are no official business hours, but visiting is encouraged. Anyone wishing to visit must contact Viktoria to schedule time so she can give you her undivided attention and make your experience worth the travel. Having made the trip myself, I can attest that you won't regret it!

To schedule a visit, contact Viktoria via phone: 518-922-5091 or via email: glnbrook@yahoo.com

Since the website is no longer active, Viktoria lists hostas for sale in her Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/14EM73poFaz/?mibextid=wwXIfr>



Glenbrook Farm >

Public group · 764 members

Joined ▼

Invite

You

Chats

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In the meantime, we invite you to enjoy a virtual walk through the farm to entice you to visit!



Nyssa sylvatica, commonly known as Black Gum or Tupelo in its fall foliage.



Lilium henryi stands tall in the foreground of the flowering bed.



Below, *Polygonatum x hybridum* 'Grace Barker' graces the middle of a bed of hosta seedlings.



Right, *Hosta* 'Squash Casserole' is complemented by Primrose and *Dicentra* 'King of Hearts'.





Paeonia 'Cora Louise'. (Itoh Peony)



Left, *Chionanthus virginicus*, commonly known as White Fringe Tree



A Clematis showing off its double purple blooms, towers over the hostas.





Above, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Zinfin Doll' stands out against white snowball hydrangeas.



Phytolacca americana 'Variegata', or variegated Pokeweed.





Rhus typhina 'Bailtiger' or Tiger Eyes sumac sets off a bed of hostas, featuring *Hosta* 'Aztec Treasure' and *H.* 'Alex Summers'.

Above, Viktoria educates her guests while they tour the gardens.

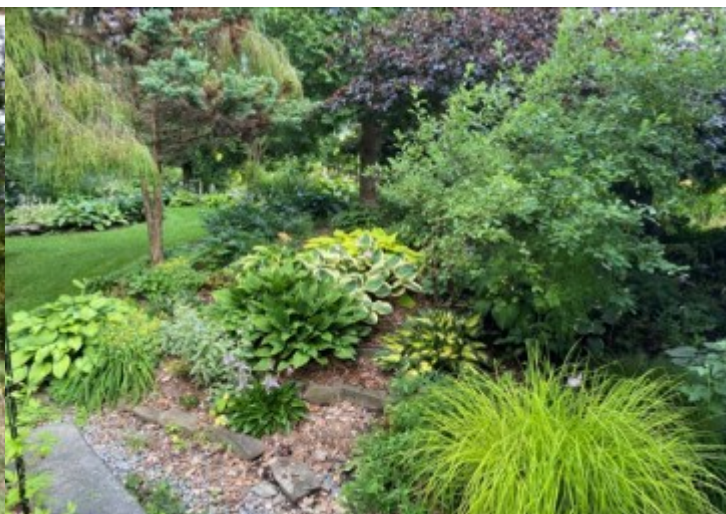


Above, *Helleborus* 'First Dance'.

Below, *Paeonia* 'Red Charm'.



Nutsedge and pine seedlings compete for space in the field.



Miscanthus sinensis also known as Silver grass or Maiden grass ushers in autumn.



Left, *Cornus alternifolia* glows in front of a Siberian Iris.



Above, the dock on the renovated pond allows Viktoria to cool off after a long day's work in the summer.



Left, *Hosta* 'Regal Splendor' and *H.* 'Golden Sculpture' dominate in this bed of unnamed hosta seedlings.



Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyck's Gold' stands behind *Hosta* 'Olive Bailey Langdon', highlighting its golden edge.



H. 'Guardian Angel', *H.* 'Saint Elmo's Fire' and a green hosta seedling.



Left, *H.* 'Frosty Glen'.



Below left, *H.* 'Montana Moonshine'.



Below, *H.* 'Cerulean Lagoon'.



H. 'Glen Fetish'



Above, *H. montana* f. *macrophylla* proudly towers over rocks on the edge of the field.



H. 'Silver Platter'

Below, *H. 'Summer Rainbow'* stands amidst colorful daylilies.



Bottom left, clockwise: *H. 'Maya Infatuation'*, *H. 'Terry'*, *H. 'Jaws'*, *H. 'Monkey Business'*.

Below, *Solenostemon* complements *Oxalis triangularis* in a colorful pot



Hosta 'Shimmy Shake' with Oriental lilies.



Above, *H.* 'Bottom Feeder'.

Below, the deep blue of *H.* 'Dream Weaver' is surrounded by a sea of yellow with *H.* 'Lakeside Contender', *H.* 'Solar Flare' and *H.* 'Blaze of Glory'.



Below, *H.* 'Gay Search'.





Left to right, *H.* 'Eclipse', *H.* 'Sum and Substance', *H.* 'Foxfire Palm Sunday', and *H.* 'Sara's Sensation'.



Above, a leaf from *H.* 'Viktoria's Dark Secret', named by her helpful friend Janet.

Right, *H.* 'Glen Luminaria'.



Left, there are many unnamed hosta seedlings growing throughout the trees, since Viktoria does not harvest the seeds, allowing them to fall and germinate naturally.



Left, this hosta bed starts with *H.* 'Regal Rhubarb', *H.* 'Tom Schmid' and *H.* 'Linda Sue' before continuing in a sea of hosta color.

Right, the maple's red wings look like flowers on this *Acer tataricum*, which stands tall over the hosta bed. Clockwise from bottom: *Hosta* 'Lakeside Dragonfly', *H.* 'Enterprise', *H.* 'Sea Beacon', *H.* 'Lady Isobel Barnett', *H.* 'Captain Kirk', and a volunteer hosta seedling.



Left, a huge patch of *H.* 'Avocado' is surrounded by *Pseudofumaria lutea*, or yellow Corydalis and hostas including *Hosta* 'Lakeside Neat Petite', *H.* 'Ivory Necklace', and *H.* 'Faithful Heart', among many others.



H. 'White Wall Tire' mingles with *Convallaria majalis*.



Above, a woodland setting with *Pseudofumaria lutea* or yellow *Corydalis* and clockwise from bottom: *Hosta* 'Monkey Business', *H. 'Sum and Subtle'*, *H. 'Montana Moonshine'*, *H. dark green seedling*, *H. 'Avocado'*, *H. 'Ivory Necklace'*.



Syringa vulgaris 'Charles Joly'



Above left to right, *Hosta* 'Wooden Nickel', *H. 'Island Breeze'*, *H. 'Emerald Edger'*.



Left, *H. 'Montana Moonshine'*.



H. 'Monkey Business'



Above, *Fagus grandifolia* 'Umbrella' with the white flowering *Exochorda racemosa* or pearl bush in this woodland setting in early May.



Left, many unnamed hosta seedlings compete for attention in this bed with *Hosta* 'Lakeside Paisley Print', *H. 'Medusa'*, *H. 'Beauty Little Blue'*, and *H. 'Silk Kimono'*.

Right, contrasting colors, sizes and textures give this bed lots of interest, including *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'*, *H. 'Lakeside Butterball'*, *H. 'Lakeside Meter Maid'*, *H. 'Sea Yellow Sunrise'*, *H. 'Devon Desire'*, *H. 'Gay Search'*, *H. 'Sea Beacon'*, and *H. 'Eric's Gold'*.





Left, Viktoria's home at Glenbrook Farm decorated for Christmas.



Pictured here with Kathie Sisson and Carol Brashear, Viktoria received numerous awards including Best of Show at a First Look seedling competition for *H.* 'All Rise', which is a sport of *H.* 'Black Hills'.

This photo is copyrighted by Steve Shaw, and was taken during the awards ceremony.

Right, *H.* 'All Rise.'





Above is an example of Viktoria's fabulous photographic skills with this photo of reflections on her pond.

Viktoria uses a Canon PowerShot SX620 HS to capture her wonderful photos.

This interview was conducted and compiled by Gail J Russo, of Cedarville, NJ

The objective of this column is to allow the hosta gardeners of the world to learn about the existence of your business so they might plan to visit your business or if available, place an order online. All the photos printed were supplied by the business featured unless otherwise noted, so please contact them for permission to use photos or with questions about photo content.

If you would like to see your hosta business featured in this column, free of charge, please contact Gail Russo at Russo4@comcast.net for the application questionnaire.

International vendors are welcome to be featured, but only if they ship to the USA. If you do not ship but have lovely display gardens, consider applying to be featured in the "Welcome to my Garden" column of this newsletter instead. You must communicate in English.

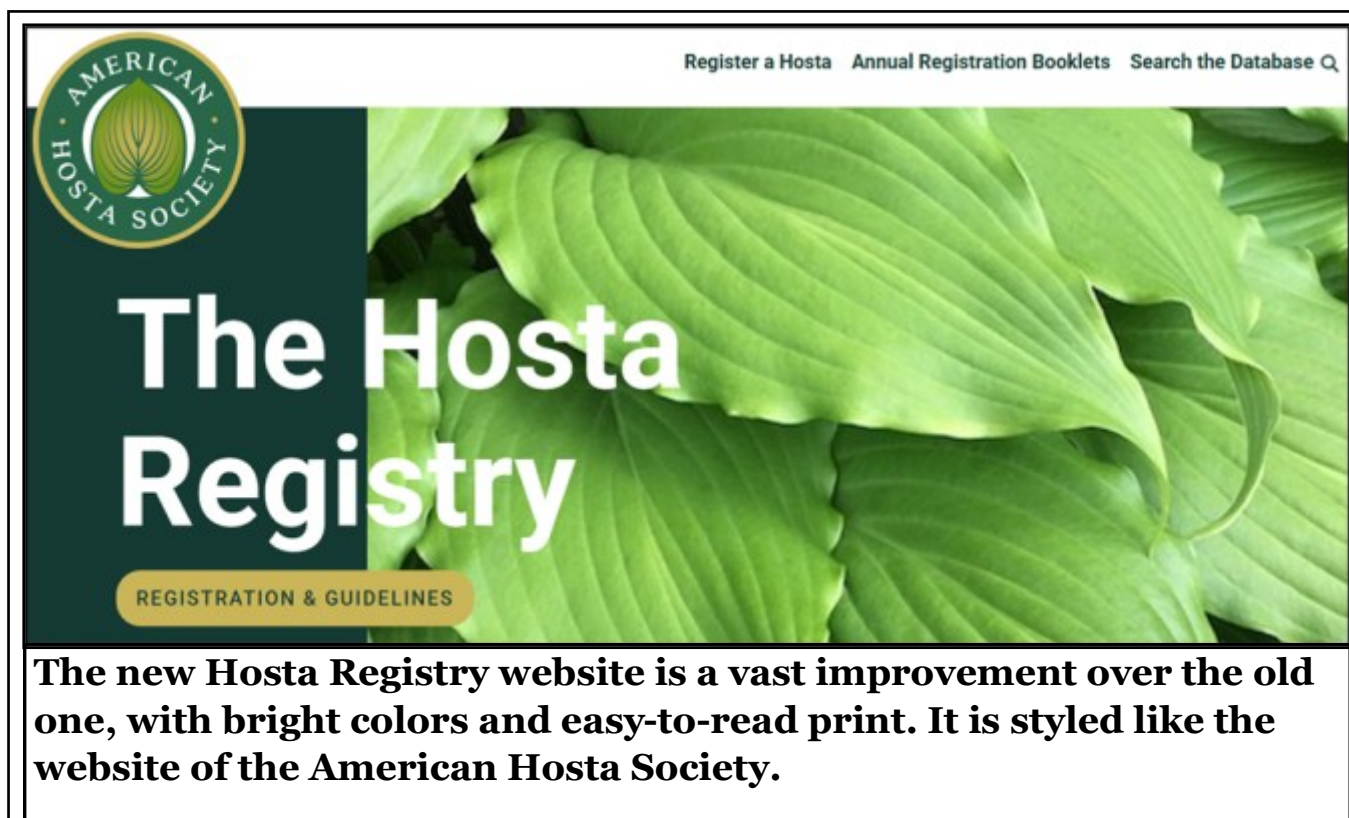


And In Other Hosta News . . .

AHS Launches New Hosta Registry Website

After months of work, the American Hosta Society has launched the new Hosta Registry website at <https://www.hostaregistrar.org/>. The website is a radical improvement over the previous one, formerly called the Hosta Treasury.

Bright colors and easy-to-read print dominate the new website. The three links in the top toolbar — **Register a Hosta**, **Annual Registration Booklets**, and **Search the Database** — allow for easy navigation to the appropriate pages.



The entire process of building a new website began back in 2023 with a thorough review of the old website by a team of individuals. The previous website had been online since 2006, having an unappealing brown background with small font, which made it somewhat difficult to read. The main page was way too “busy” with much unnecessary information.



The old website was created nearly 20 years ago. While it served its purpose, it was time to update with a fresh, new look that corresponds with the website of the American Hosta Society. A big thanks to Registrar Gayle Hartley Alley for overseeing the entire process!

The process of registering a hosta is now much less intimidating, with a nice photo of Hosta Registrar Gayle Hartley Alley that greets users with her friendly smile. A link to the **Registration Guidelines** provides all the information you need to know, and **Register Online** allows one to complete a registration for a new hosta immediately. As soon as the required fields are filled in and submitted, the new registration can be viewed online instantly.



International Registrar Genus Hosta
Gayle Hartley Alley

Register Online



Registration Guidelines - Everything you need to know to Register your Hosta

Registration Guidelines

The friendly smile of Hosta Registrar Gayle Hartley Alley is very inviting, making the registration process more personal and less intimidating.

One convenient feature that was added to the new website, is the ability to print each registration as a single-page pdf. So, the moment a new registration is submitted, it can be easily printed and filed for your own records. Furthermore, the pdf includes two new fields: the Section Class (which is used for Hosta Shows) and the Patent/PBR Number.



Simply by using the “Print” button, a pdf file allows any registration to be printed off as a one-page document. This is helpful for those who wish to print and file copies of those hostas they have registered.

All in all, the new website is very inviting, stylish, and user-friendly, It complements the website of the American Hosta Society. A big “Thank you” to all those involved to make this a reality!



The new website includes a printable pdf for every registered hosta, which can be hole punched and saved in a three-ring binder. It is also great for framing and showing to friends.

2026 AHS Convention

Hosted by the Central Ohio Hosta Society

Buckeye Hosta Fever



**Join us in the Heart of Ohio for Buckeye Hosta Fever
In Dublin OH (a suburb of Columbus).**

Registration for the convention is limited to 350 participants. Register early to reserve your place! Download registration form at AmericanHostaSociety.org

All the events will be there: Hosta Show, educational presentations, live auction, garden tours, convention plant, vendors, and evening hosta-tality.

Registration forms will be available at the AHS Peoria convention.
Learn more at the Saturday evening closing banquet.

Buckeye Hosta Fever

2026 AHS NATIONAL CONVENTION

June 10-13, 2026 – Dublin, Ohio
Embassy Suites by Hilton, 5100 Upper Metro Place, Dublin, OH 43017

HOSTED BY THE CENTRAL OHIO HOSTA SOCIETY (COHS)



Make hotel reservations by using the link at the AHS convention website:
www.Hostaconvention.org beginning June 30, 2025

REGISTRATION DETAILS (Please print clearly – ONE attendee per form)

Name:	Preferred Name on Badge:
Address:	City, State, Zip Code:
Phone:	Email:

STANDARD REGISTRATION if received by 5/15/26 (Thurs. BBQ dinner included)	\$235	
LATE REGISTRATION if received after 5/15/26 (Thurs. BBQ dinner included)	\$260	
Friday & Saturday Banquet COMPANION MEALS ONLY or Vendors Meals (Registration includes your Banquet meals. This is only if you are bringing a guest with you)	\$105	\$
GARDEN TOUR BUS Includes bus fee and box lunches for Friday & Saturday **Bus seats limited to 160 attendees** Box lunches for Tour Bus Riders ONLY – Lunch on your own for self-drive Friday – Choose One ☐ Deli Ham ☐ Deli Turkey ☐ Vegan Wrap Saturday – Choose One ☐ Deli Roast Beef ☐ Deli Turkey ☐ Vegan Wrap	\$110	\$
2026 Convention T-Shirt - Unisex Sizes ☐ S ☐ M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ 2XL	\$20	\$
CANCELLATION POLICY: Registrar must receive written request by: April 2, 2026 (100% refund); received by May 1, 2026 (50% refund); NO refund after May 1, 2026.		
	Total Due →	\$

Friday Banquet Meal Choice: ☐ Grilled Bone-in Pork Chop ☐ Beef Tips with Gorgonzola ☐ Ratatouille (vegan)	Saturday Banquet Meal Choice ☐ Grilled Salmon ☐ Chicken Marsala ☐ Eggplant Parmesan (vegetarian)
--	---

Check Payable to:
Buckeye Hosta Fever
MAIL PAYMENT AND FORM TO:
Debi Gerrick, Registrar
1638 Doone Road,
Upper Arlington, OH 43221

List any special dietary restrictions/allergies:

Hosta Show: Please check if you wish to
☐ Judge ☐ Clerk
 Plan # _____ entries in Hosta Leaf Show (Limit 20)
Ed Elsager Seedling Competition:
 Plan # _____ entries in Seedling Competition (Limit 10)
 \$5 per seedling entry fee paid at convention
 Rules & Regulations available at
Hostaconvention.org

Friday night auction
 I plan to donate _____ items for the auction

I am willing to volunteer during the convention
 ___ YES ___ NO

Hosta Judges Clinics: I will attend _____ Clinic I _____ Clinic II _____ Clinic III | Need Judges Handbook _____
 (\$10 payable at Clinic)

Registration is limited to 350 participants. Questions? – contact Debi Gerrick at:
debigerick@gmail.com or (614) 205-8187

Videos now available on the AHS Website

Brendan Shick, AHS Video Producer

This quarter we have launched a video section on the AHS website. At present, three presentations and two garden tours are available to view in total. Garden tours were featured at American Hosta Society conventions and include interviews with the gardeners themselves. We look forward to producing similar content during the next AHS National Convention (Peoria, IL) in June 2025 and including this on the AHS website in the months to follow.

Non-members may **preview** some of the content available to members at <https://americanhostasociety.org/videos> and enjoy a full-length sample presentation on Hosta Virus X. Meanwhile, members of the American Hosta Society have exclusive access (password protected) to the extended garden tour videos and presentations at <https://americanhostasociety.org/members/resources/videos>.

Grab a beverage, sit back and relax, and watch these videos as you glean design ideas, jot down your favorite hostas, ooh and ahh over impressive landscapes, and maybe learn a thing or two. We hope these pieces will also serve as a resource for local Hosta Clubs to use at their gatherings.

Editor's Note: You can also go to <https://americanhostasociety.org/> to explore all that is available on the website including the Videos and Members Only area.





And In Regional News . . .

**The Daffodil & Hosta Society of Western Pennsylvania and
Western New York Hosta Society
PRESENT**

2025 FALL HOSTA FORUM



Saturday, September 20th, 2025

9 am till 4:30 pm

Edinboro University - Edinboro, PA

**Four Speakers, Vendors, Lunch,
Live and Silent Auction**

THEME: *PIRATES*

Bonus Friday night preview & speaker



Find us on Facebook

Details at: www.wnyhosta.com

Speakers

Doug Beilstein
I'm Seeing Red, Are You?

Kevin Kelly
Fall-Planted Spring-Blooming Bulbs
Growing Native Ferns

Laura Robles
Hosta Breeding, Production and
New Hosta Varieties at Walters Gardens

REGISTRATION

Karen Schmidt
(724) 679-3818
hostaforum@gmail.com

2025 REGISTRATION FALL HOSTA FORUM PIRATES... ARRRRRRR

Saturday, September 20th
8:00 am – 4:30 pm



Complete and return with check payable to: **FALL HOSTA FORUM**

Karen Schmidt, Registrar

Fall Hosta Forum

111 N. Benbrook Road

Butler, PA 16001 (karensmg@aol.com)

**REGISTRATION
MUST BE RECEIVED
BY 9/10/25**

Name #1 (list additional persons below)

Address

City/State

zip

Area code/phone number

e-mail

Name #2

Enclosed please find \$_____ for _____ registrations (Friday too, add \$25 pp)

NOTE: US CASH OR CHECK ONLY – PAYABLE TO FALL HOSTA FORUM

- ☐ Check here if you are bringing an item (INTRIGUING hosta or other interesting item) valued at **\$20 or more** (one per attendee – **AND PLEASE, WE DO COUNT ON YOU!**)
Registration is \$75 per person UNLESS you bring an item as above... then \$65 per person

- ☐ Please let us know if you will be arriving Friday night for vendor preview plus sandwich & salad*, so that we can make the necessary reservations and arrangements – 5:30 pm dinner (\$25 pp, reservations REQUIRED). *Note - \$25 price covers only our costs; food, room rental, staff and voucher

Sorry! no refunds after September 1st due to our own obligations

DONATIONS

Please list donations so that we can prepare an auction list in advance
(if you don't know yet, just indicate you WILL donate and follow up when you have decided).

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

Join us for a Golden Celebration in Madison, WI.
We are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the
Midwest Regional Hosta Society.



July 9-10-11 2026
Sheraton Madison Hotel



The 2026 convention plant, grown by Don Dean, has been named Golden Celebration. It's a small/medium bright yellow hosta. The perfect name for a perfect celebration.

2026 MRHS 50th Anniversary Celebration Convention

REGISTRATION FORM



July 9-11, 2026 – Madison, Wisconsin

Sheraton Madison Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI 53713

Make your hotel reservations by calling (608) 251-2300 or use the link at the

MRHS convention website: midwesthostasociety.org

Remember to request the special 2026 MRHS Room Rate

(\$129 per night – plus \$20 per person for breakfast)

REGISTRATION DETAILS *(Please print clearly - one attendee per form)*

Name:	Preferred Name on Badge:
Address:	City, State, Zip Code:
Phone:	Email:

**Please see cancellation policy at midwesthostasociety.org 678-4119*

EARLY REGISTRATION if received by 3/15/26

\$ 189

STANDARD REGISTRATION if received by 6/15/26

\$ 199

LATE REGISTRATION received after 6/15/26

\$ 219

MEALS ONLY (companion or vendors)

\$ 141

\$
\$

Optional Thursday night welcome event – Olbrich Botanical Gardens with private use of Bolz Conservatory

\$ 30

\$

Friday Banquet Meal Choice:

___ Caribbean Mahi Mahi

___ Steak au Poivre

___ Vegetarian

Saturday Banquet Meal Choice:

___ Rosemary Chicken

___ Grilled Pork Tenderloin

___ Vegetarian

TOTAL DUE

\$

Please list any dietary restrictions or food allergies. _____

Make Check Payable to: Wisconsin Hosta Society

MAIL THIS FORM AND PAYMENT TO: Dave Collura, 13600 W. Graham St., New Berlin, WI 53151-2572

Hosta Show: Please check if you wish to ☐ Judge ☐ Clerk Plan # _____ entries in the Hosta Leaf Show Seedling Competition: Plan # _____ entries in Seedling Competition Rules & Regulations available at MIDWESTHOSTASOCIETY.ORG	Friday night auction I plan to donate _____ items for the auction. Saturday Gardens tour ride sharing transportation: I can provide transport for _____ persons. I will need transport for _____ persons.
--	--

BECOME A MEMBER!



- Receive *The Hosta Journal*, mailed to you
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HOSTA.ORG
or call to join 309-678-4119

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

- Receive two print issues per year of our popular publication, *The Hosta Journal*. This 84-page publication is filled with color photos and current information regarding Hostas.
- Receive a copy of *The Hosta Adventure – A Growers Guide* and the *Hosta of the Year* booklet, both filled with color photographs and a wealth of information.
- Receive access to the members-only section of the website to read our *Online Hosta Journal* and access other publications and our member directory.
- Attend national and regional meetings where specialty vendors offer the most recently introduced *Hostas* and companion plants and where a live auction offers rare and distinctive *Hostas* and other garden items.
- Enjoy garden tours open only to AHS members.
- Exhibit your favorite *Hostas* and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional cut-leaf shows.
- Vote on the most popular *Hostas* with our popularity poll.
- Enjoy the camaraderie of fellow *Hosta* enthusiasts.

For more information or to join go to hosta.org or call 309-678-4119.



A reminder that the cost of eMembership in the American Hosta Society has been reduced!

Previously \$20

**Join as an eMember now for one year for only \$12.
A three-year eMembership is only \$32.**

Join Online at HOSTA.ORG or

Call the Membership Secretary for details. 309-678-4119

eMembership in the American Hosta Society will unlock the following benefits:

- Full-color issue of *The Hosta Journal* available [to read online](#) twice each year
- Unique digital edition of *The Hosta Journal* emailed once each year
- Access to "Members Only" section of the website
- Eligibility to purchase a member-only hosta every year
- Exclusive invitation to exhibit hostas and compete for recognition in AHS-sanctioned Hosta Shows
- Updates on speaker programs, events, awards, plant auctions, news, and more!

FIRST-TIME MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVE

- \$15 voucher for use at participating nurseries
- *Hosta Adventure—A Grower's Guide*, a primer on hostas outlining what every gardener should know
- *Hosta of the Year Booklet*, a full-color publication featuring the American Hosta Growers Association Hostas of the year

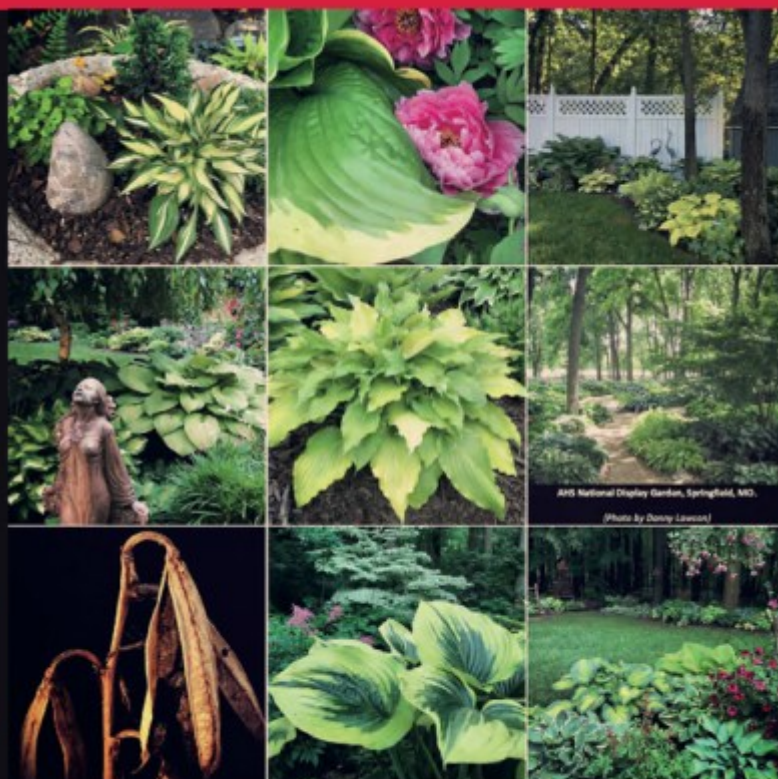
**An eMembership also makes a great gift for your
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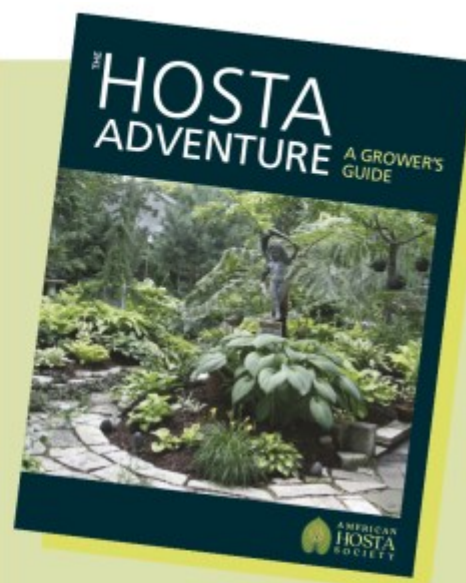
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The American Hosta Society's

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Newly updated...

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The Hosta Journal back issues are \$5.00 each plus shipping; contact Barry Ankney to verify availability and shipping charge.

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SPORTING IN HOSTAS: A PRIMER



This educational booklet explains the process of sporting in hostas, with a new section, "Inheritance of Yellow Leaf Color in *Hosta*."

Drs. Zonneveld and Pollock have produced the most definitive work on this subject. The serious hosta enthusiast will want to add this booklet to their hosta library. Photographs and illustrations supplement and enhance the scientific information.

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Photo from AHS Hosta Registry
***Hosta* 'American Halo' is a sport of *H. 'Northern Halo'* registered by Van Wade.**



Photo from AHS Hosta Registry
***Hosta* 'Andrew' is a sport of *H. 'Blue Mammoth'* registered by Hans Hansen.**



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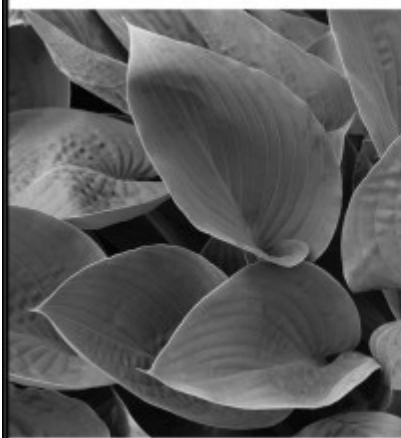
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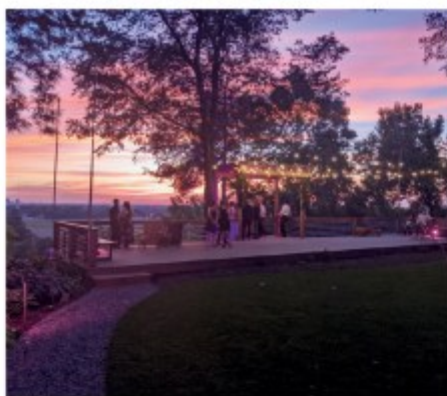
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About Us



Come out and explore our family Hosta farm and display gardens, just a 15-minute drive from St. Louis. With over 500 unique hosta varieties, 4 goats, and our trusty dog Sophie, our dedicated team is ready to welcome you. Since 2016, we've been growing and shipping our plants with passion and expertise. Can't make it in person? No problem - we ship nationwide with care. With a breath taking view of the St. Louis skyline and over 3 acres of stunning display gardens, you will find yourself in a shade gardeners paradise!

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H. ‘Gabriel’s Wing’

D. Rawson 2016

(Photo by Mary Vertz)