

MICHIGAN HOSTA HAPPENINGS

Newsletter of the Michigan Hosta Society



Save the Date!

Saturday May 16, 2020

MHS Spring Workday
Hidden Lake Gardens
Tipton, MI

Saturday June 27, 2020

MHS Hosta Show & Sale
Soil & Science Building
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

TBD

MHS Garden Walk

Sunday August 16, 2020

MHS Fall Workday
Hidden Lake Gardens



Letter from the President

Dear MHS Members,

Greetings to all. I hope you have had a great summer and your gardens were in spectacular shape. Mother Nature, with all her splendor, once again provided some challenges for some of us and she helped others. Rain was once again almost non-existent in the south-central part of the state, while weather radar maps showed lots of rain to the north. Sometimes it might have been too much rain for our fellow northern gardeners. But those are the challenges we face today and we have to learn to somehow adapt to these changing weather patterns that are most likely due to climate changes.



Photo by Marla Greanya



Photos by Bev Wolf

Fun Facts about Hostas

The longest registered name is H. 'Crows Landing Rippled Truffles', registered by P. Stygall in 2011. The name has 27 letters. The ICNCP requires that all names consist of no more 30 characters. On another note, the most difficult-to-spell registered name is 'Academy Brobdingnagian Viridity', an introduction registered by S. Chamberlain in 2006.



Hostas are the most widely sold perennial in the United States!



The American Hosta Society was founded by Alex Summers in 1969.



The first year in which hostas were registered was in 1969. That year, four hostas were registered: 'Golden Nugget', 'Midwest Gold', 'Rough Waters', and 'Roundabout'. The first three are still available from various retail sources.

Courtesy of Don Rawson

In August we had a great get together at Hidden Lake Gardens working on the Hosta Hillside. About 50 people showed up and pitched in to move Clarence Owens' hostas in his hybridizer bed to a new and more prominent place near the Patio, the former Herb Benedict bed. A small group of our strongest men headed by Don Rawson removed all of Clarence's plants from his bed; divided the hostas up; and, planted them in his new bed. They were dirty and sweaty when they finished, but they all had a smile on their face for what they accomplished and many thanks go out to them for their help. We also auctioned off some of Clarence's OS (original stock) divisions to a few lucky bidders in our plant auction later in the day. Some of Clarence's plants are just not available anywhere else in the trade.



Photos by Bev Wolf

We also had many workers who spruced up beds by deadheading and weeding, while a crew of our remaining strongest guys and gals carted wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of mulch to beds that were in dire need of covering. When it was all over around noon, Hosta Hillside looked as good as it ever has and many more thanks go out to all who took a day off from your own gardens to travel sometimes hours to the Hillside to help out. Without your help, we would not be able to keep up this beautiful garden.

Following our time on the Hillside, we convened to the large tent for lunch and the awards and plant auction. It's a darned good thing we had that tent too! In what might have been the only significant rain we have ever really had at our work day, at least in the minds of the old timers who have been coming forever, the sky opened up for about 20 minutes as a deluge hit with a blast of wind that caught us all off guard - blowing plates and cups up in the air - and briefly blowing rain in our faces. But no sooner had inclement weather slightly dampened our spirits than the sun was back out and all was well once again.

The Clarence Owens Distinguished Service Award was given to Annette Gavit from Saginaw. Annette has been very active in the Michigan Hosta Society volunteering to do any task that needed attention. She currently sits on the Michigan Hosta Society Board and opened her garden for the MHS Garden Walk this past summer and has opened it to many other garden groups. She is a frequent loyal attendee of our workdays at Hosta Hillside where she seemingly does the equivalent work of three 20-year-old men. It is almost tiring to just watch her work! Congratulations to Annette for all she has done for us. She is most deserving.

Sincerely,
 Grey Gitzen
 MHS President

*Michael Greanya contributed Hosta Hillside information.



Photos by Bev Wolf



Collecting and Drying Hosta Seed

By Don Rawson of Comstock Park, MI

Q: Can I grow hostas from seed?

A: Yes, you can! Growing hostas from seed is fun and easy. Most hostas produce plenty of good seed and growing seedlings during the long winter months is a lot of fun. While there are a few guidelines, basically it's just a matter of planting the seed, watching it germinate, providing enough light, and watering occasionally. Not much different than growing green beans, sweet corn, or flowers.

Another reason growing hostas from seed is so much fun is because you can develop your own new hybrid, since hostas don't come true from seed. That means that every seed will produce a new and distinct variety. It's very rewarding to create a brand new hosta which has no one has ever seen or grown before!

Q: From which hostas should I collect the seed?

A: First off, if you want to collect hosta seed from your garden, don't cut the scapes off when they're done blooming! Secondly, when it's time to walk around and collect the seed, there's one thing to keep in mind: generally, only a streaked pod parent (the mom) can pass along variegation, so if you want variegated seedlings, you should collect seed from streaked hostas such as 'Galaxy,' 'Ice Age Trail,' and 'Sea Prize.'

In addition, hostas with speckled leaf centers such as 'Allegan Fog' and 'Revolution' will often pass on the speckled coloration to their seedlings.

Other hostas which have a "stable" variegated leaf pattern, such as 'Great Expectations,' 'Patriot,' and 'Paul's Glory,' will not usually produce any variegated seedlings- they will all be solid colored (blue, green, or gold). There's nothing wrong with that, but many gardeners prefer variegated hostas over those which aren't.

If you do not want to collect your own seed, you can purchase it online from several retail sources.



Photo by Michael Greanya

Q: How can I know when the seed is ripe?

A: The seed should be allowed to mature before harvesting. Six weeks after pollination is usually enough time for the seed to develop, but eight weeks is better. So, if you know when your hosta bloomed, you can determine when the seed will be ripe.

Seed pods will gradually turn yellow in the fall, which is a good sign they're ready to pick. Don't wait too long! Once the pods turn brown and start splitting open, your seed will

fall out and be gone forever. In addition, plump juicy pods are a favorite snack for deer, mice, and chipmunks, so better to pick them as soon as they're ripe.

Seed on late blooming hostas may not be ripe even in late fall. In this case, the entire scape can be cut off, brought indoors, and placed in sugar water.



Photo by Michael Greanya

Q: How do I dry the seed and clean it?

A: The pods can be picked and placed in paper lunch bags or envelopes. The parentage should be written on the envelope and stored in a cool, dry place.

Separating the seeds from the pods is quite easy once the seed has completely dried, which may take a few weeks. Many of the pods will split open on their own and the seed will drop right out.

Another method is to put the pods in a sieve. The pods are crushed enough to let the seeds fall out into a dish. Then the pods are discarded, leaving behind the clean seed.

Mature, viable seeds are dark brown or black and have a plump kernel at one end. On the other hand, white seeds and those which are light brown never fully matured and are no good. They won't germinate and should be separated from the good seed.

Q: How do I label the seed?

A: Write the pod parent (the mom) first. The pod parent is the plant from which you collected the seed. Then write the pollen parent (the dad). For example, 'Galaxy' x 'Big Daddy'.

If you did not do an intentional cross, then the seed was open pollinated (OP), which means the cross was made by the bees, wind, or by some other natural means. Growing open pollinated seed is just fine, but often it doesn't take long before such an enthusiast becomes interested in making his own crosses.

Q: How long can I store the seed and when can I plant it?

A: You can plant the hosta seed right away or store it to grow at a later date. You do not need to cold treat it or wait for a specific period of time. Just keep it in a cool, dry place.

If you plan to wait for three months or longer before planting the seed, it can be placed in an airtight container (such as a glass jar) and placed in the freezer. Hosta seed stored in the freezer should have the parentage and year written on each packet. The seed, if dried and stored properly, should last for years. Then when you're ready, you can remove it from the freezer, plant it, and have fun watching it grow to become beautiful new varieties you will surely enjoy!



Photo by Michael Greanya

Biographical Sketch of Donald Rawson

Don and his wife Pam live on four country acres near Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since childhood, Don has always enjoyed gardening. Together, they grow several hundred hosta cultivars, tall bearded irises, lilies and

daylilies, and an assortment of other companion plants. Don does some hybridizing on the side, growing several thousand hosta seedlings each year. His best known hosta is 'Rhino Hide,' which has the

distinction of being the thickest-leaved cultivar available. *Hosta* 'Gabriel's Wing,' a sport of 'Empress Wu,' with a creamy white, wavy margin, is his latest introduction.

As a founding member and the president of the West Michigan Hosta Society, Don speaks occasionally to local gardening clubs. In addition, he is active in the American Hosta Society, of which he has been a member for over 20 years. He serves as co-

chairman of the Nomenclature Committee and compiles the list of miniature hostas for the AHS website.

Don is also responsible for two publications — *The Hosta Lists* and the *Hosta Hybridizer's Manual*. *The Hosta Lists* booklet is a compilation of 102 individual lists of hosta species and cultivars based upon various characteristics. Many lists for hosta theme

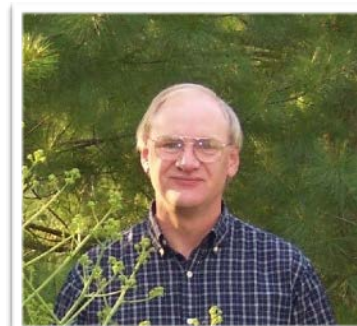
gardens have also been compiled. The booklet represents two decades of work on his part and currently includes over 29,000 entries.

The second booklet — the *Hosta*

Hybridizer's Manual — is a collection of articles from various authors and well-known hosta hybridizers. This publication is probably the most practical and helpful resource offered to the beginning hybridizer, covering all aspects of germinating and growing your own hosta seedlings.



Photo by Bev Wolf



Ask the Expert!



With Don Rawson

This article is the 4th in a series that has appeared in our past newsletters written by Don Rawson.

In this segment, Don will review how HVX is transmitted from one hosta to another, discuss what we can do to prevent HVX from spreading, and learn about how garden tools should be cleaned to stop the HVX virus from infecting other plants in the landscape.

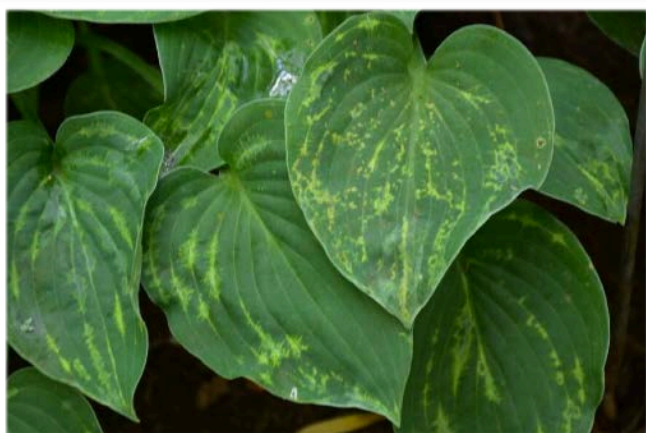


Photo by Brenda Fox

How is Hosta Virus X spread?

The primary danger of Hosta Virus X lies in its ability to spread to other healthy plants. In reality, a hosta in your garden may already be infected with HVX and you may not even know it because the symptoms of HVX can take several years to show up. Therefore, it is very prudent to take every precaution to avoid purchasing and planting HVX-infected hostas, to remove any diseased plants as soon possible, and to take steps to prevent the

virus from potentially spreading throughout the landscape.

HVX is transmitted primarily through the contact of the sap of an infected plant with a healthy plant. This occurs most commonly whenever cuts are made and the cutting tools (pruners, knife, shovel, etc.) or hands are not disinfected afterward. Dividing a hosta, cutting off the scapes, removing leaves, stepping on it, and even running the lawnmower over a hosta can spread the HVX virus.

What can I do to prevent Hosta Virus X?

The good news is that there are some safe practices you can follow in order to help prevent HVX from infecting or spreading throughout your own garden. First of all, when purchasing a hosta, be on the lookout for any diseased plants and do not buy any that show even the slightest hint of HVX in the batch. Secondly, periodically inspect your garden to ensure your hostas look healthy and symptom-free. Thirdly, remove and discard any hosta which appears to have HVX unless it is tested and proven to be virus-free.

Remember, there is no cure for plants infected with HVX and it won't eventually go away on its own. Even if you don't see the symptoms in the following season, the virus is still there and it is still able to infect other plants. Fourthly, carefully clean and disinfect your tools and hands when working in your garden, particularly if you are cutting, planting or transplanting hostas.

How should I clean and disinfect garden tools?

Since the HVX virus is spread by transferring the sap of an infected hosta to another, it is wise to clean gardening tools thoroughly before moving on from one plant to another. Furthermore, HVX can survive on garden tools for as long as three weeks, so a thorough cleaning of tools used in the garden is important.

Cleaning and disinfecting are two separate steps. Cleaning requires carefully removing all soil and debris, and should precede any effort to disinfect your tool. Soil or organic matter which is left on the tool reduces the effectiveness of a disinfectant.

Tools must be scrubbed with a brush... not simply rinsed off. Keep in mind that if you use a brush, be sure to disinfect it along with your garden tools. Otherwise, wipe your tools down with a damp rag or paper towel to remove any soil and debris, then discard it.

Among the various disinfectants you could use, chlorine bleach is a good option since it is inexpensive, effective, and readily available. Use a 10% solution (one-part bleach to nine-parts water), thoroughly cleaning all shovels, garden forks, pruners, and knives which come into contact with hostas. If possible, allow the tools to soak in the bleach solution for 30 minutes.

Now, there is one thing you should know: the bleach solution has a short lifespan - effectiveness is cut in half after two hours - so fresh batches should be made for each round

of cleaning. Rinse tools with clean water after soaking to prevent corrosion.

An ammonia and soap solution is also adequate, as well as household disinfectants such as Lysol. In addition, there are several commercial disinfectants available, typically only through horticultural suppliers. Products include Green-Shield® and KleenGrow, and for use on greenhouse surfaces, equipment, tools, and on plants, ZeroTol and Oxidate.

Regardless of which disinfectant you use, be diligent to keep your tools clean so your hostas can be healthy and virus-free. While cleaning your garden tools may seem like a trivial and unnecessary task, it is essential to sterilize as frequently as possible while working in the garden. This is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of HVX throughout your landscape. When done, you can rest assured that you've done everything you can to have a healthy and beautiful hosta haven.



Photo by Joseph Rand

MHS Annual Treasurer's Report, August 2018 - August 2019

Compiled by Patty Creal, Treasurer



Balance in checkbook as of 8/13/19	\$13,797.14
Balance of savings account as of 7/13/19	\$15,684.37
	\$29,481.51

Fund balances

Scholarship	\$6,138.00
Hillside	\$10,756.71
Benedict Tribute	\$135.96

Deposits

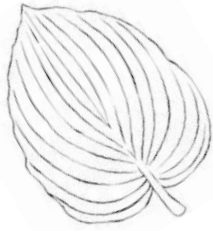
Memberships	\$873.00
Work day, August 2018	\$1,700.25
Lunch donations	\$174.25
Auction	\$1,526.00*

*(split between Scholarship fund and Hillside fund — \$763.00 each)

Interest on checking	\$14.07
May work day raffle	\$340.00
MSU plant sale 2019	\$3,470.02
	\$6,127.34
\$270 change monies for auction, plant sale and raffle	-\$270.00
2018/2019 income	\$6,127.34

Expenses

Board expenses	<i>Total: \$941.00</i>
Michigan Corporation fee for 2019	\$20.00
Liability insurance premium	\$587.00
GLRHS Membership dues (167 x \$2.00)	\$334.00
August 2018 work day	<i>Total: \$460.00</i>
Lunch	\$164.00
Balance on tent, table, and chairs rental	\$296.00
August 2019 work day - tent deposit	\$296.00
MSU Garden Day donation for 2019	\$500.00
May work day 2019	<i>Total: \$427.27</i>
Lunch - special for Wades	\$105.16
Doughnuts	\$36.65
Lodging for Wades	\$139.00
Thank you speaker gift card	\$50.00
Signs for Wade thank yous	\$96.46
MSU Garden Walk - refreshments	\$40.56
Hillside expenses	\$848.12
Labels, tapes, Hostas, plant stakes, test strips	
Convention loan to SWMHS	\$5,000.00
MSU Plant Sale 2019	<i>Total: \$2,391.05</i>
Hostas Rosewind Gardens	\$1,800.00
Table rental	\$197.40
USA Today ad for show	\$393.65
Newsletter, copying, postage	<u>\$555.24</u>
Total expenses	\$11,459.32



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Secretary

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Treasurer

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Vice President

Gary Neidert
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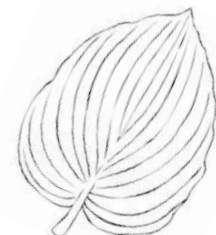
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Newsletter Editor

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Saginaw Valley Hosta Society

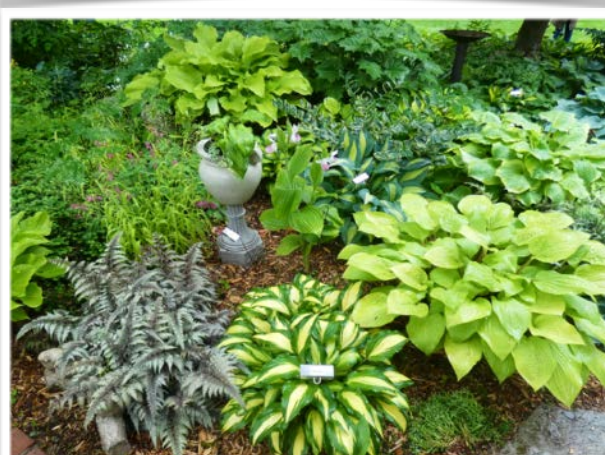
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West Michigan Hosta Society

Don Rawson
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Photos by Michael Greanya

Membership in the Michigan Hosta Society

If you wish to find out more about Hosta, please consider joining the Michigan Hosta Society. We welcome new members and friends who share our interest in hosta and their many uses in the landscape. The society maintains a large hosta display at Hidden Lake Gardens near Tipton, where many varieties of hosta can be seen. "The Benedict Hosta Hillside" is one of only two nationally designated Hosta display gardens.

Activities of MHS include:

- ▶ A summer tour of gardens that feature Hosta
- ▶ An auction/sale of hostas contributed by members
- ▶ Speakers and educational programs
- ▶ Local chapter meetings
- ▶ A workday and information sharing at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton where the Society has a demonstration garden
- ▶ A listing of MHS members who retail Hosta
- ▶ A yearly membership directory

Members receive the Michigan Society Newsletter "Hosta Happenings," as well as the newsletter of the Great Lakes Regional Hosta Society. If you are interested in joining please complete the attached application form.

You may also want to join The American Hosta Society. They have two colorful journals each year, and an annual national convention featuring a Hosta Show, garden tours, scientific programs and a plant auction.

Contact: www.americanhostasociety.org

MHS Membership Application

Last name: _____

First name: _____

Last name of 2nd member: _____

First name of 2nd member: _____

Street Address:

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ - _____ - _____

E-mail:

Choice of **either** black and white newsletter via First Class US Mail or full color newsletter via e-mail. All the pictures are in color and there are often bonus pictures not included in the mailed version. Please check one: Mail ____ E-mail ____

Check if you wish to receive an updated membership directory when published: _____

New Member: _____ Renewal: _____

Dues are \$15 per household for up to two people, good for 2 years.

Total remitted: _____

Mail to:

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2509 Wembly Lane
Troy, MI 48064-1280

Make checks payable to: The Michigan Hosta Society