

MICHIGAN HOSTA HAPPENINGS



Newsletter of the Michigan Hosta Society

MHS Updates

By Michael Greanya

HOSTA HILLSIDE (spring 2021)

2021 has been quite the year for the Michigan Hosta Society. In May, approximately 35 members came to the Hosta Hillside to help spruce up our showpiece. Sticks were removed, weeds were eliminated, and pine straw mulch was used for the first time in a few of the hybridizer's beds.

In 2019, Hans Hansen and Don Rawson were given garden beds at Hosta Hillside to plant some of their hybridized hosta and we planted their plant contributions in their respective beds. In doing so, they joined the ranks of well know hosta hybridizing pioneers like Herb Benedict, Van Wade, Jim Wilkins, Clarence Owens, 'Indiana Bob' Balitewicz, Pauline Banyai,



Clarence Falstead and others (Van from Ohio and 'Indiana Bob' from Indiana were adopted by Michigan Hosta Society because they were a fixture at our hosta activities for decades). Michigan has been blessed with hosta enthusiasts that have contributed to the propagation of the genus *Hosta*.

AHS 2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION

In June, the Southwest Michigan and the West Michigan regional hosta groups finally hosted the American Hosta Society's annual convention. Originally scheduled for 2020, the planned convention had to be cancelled because of COVID 19. Early in 2021 a decision had to be made whether or

not to host the convention in 2021. Because the decision was made before a vaccine was authorized for emergency use, the in-person convention was cancelled. However, our Southwest and West Michigan regional groups stepped up and decided to host a

virtual convention rather than cancelling the event again.

A tremendous amount of effort was required by these groups to plan the event. For all other previous national conventions, the 'AHS Convention Planning Guide' prepared by the American Hosta Society, has been used to help convention hosts plan their event down to almost every detail. The AHS planning guide had to be thrown out the window because no convention in the history of AHS had ever attempted an online version.

This year's planning convention committee literally wrote the book on it, and boy were they successful!

Organizers followed a very similar format to the in-person conventions. There were speakers like Bob Iames whose topic "Cohesion vs. Chaos... Creation Design in the Collector's Garden" told us how to have one of everything and still have a beautiful and harmonious garden, and Rob Mortko whose topic "The Hot Hostas of Tomorrow" discussed many of the hostas Rob thinks will become the most popular as they make their way to the market in the near future.

There were also virtual workshops. Bob Solberg discussed the "Hosta of the Year"

program by the American Hosta Growers Association. "The American Hosta Growers Association is a trade organization for nurseries that specialize in the growing and the sale of hostas." Members of this group are growers and distributors of hostas. They vote annually for their favorite hosta for "Hosta of the Year". This year's Hosta of the Year is H.



Multi-award winning H. 'Rainbow's End'

'Rainbow's End' hybridized by Hans Hansen. More about the American Hosta Growers Association and all of the Hostas of the Year from 1996-2020 can be found on their website at

www.hostagrowers.org. Chris Wilson, former co-owner of Hallson Gardens gave a wonderful and educational discussion on how to recognize the HVX virus and how to stop it. And finally, Robert Emmitt talked about the Agdia HVX testing strips. His discussion focused on instructions how to use the test strips.

Although we unfortunately weren't able to tour the convention gardens in-person this year, nine garden hosts plus Walters Gardens opened up their fantastic gardens virtually. We appreciate all of the hard work these gardeners did to ready their gardens for the cameras. I am sure that everyone would agree that these gardens were nothing short of spectacular! Our thanks to

Walters Gardens (who also supplied us with the convention gift plant H. 'Silly String'), Sue and Bill Binning, Linda and Terry Gage, Gary and Lois Neidert, Arleigh Smyrnios, Kay and Mike Maitner, Pam and Don Rawson, Bonnie and Noah Schwartz, Brenda and Bob Sinke, and Kay Anderson.

In early 2021, the American Hosta Growers Association Hosta of the Year voted Hans Hansen's H. 'Rainbow's End' the 2021 winner. Although this award

was not part of the AHS convention and the Hosta Growers Association is not directly affiliated with AHS, we were glad to see that Hans received recognition for his great hosta introduction and we are mentioning it here in recognition of this much deserved award. Way to go Hans!

A big part of an AHS convention focuses on awards and quite a few Michiganders cleaned up this year. Hans Hansen also won the coveted Benedict Medal from

the AHS for H. 'Rainbow's End'. The Benedict Medal is the highest award given by the American Hosta Society for a hosta cultivar. It is a rigorous and multi-year competition that pits hostas against each other in a 3 tier process to ultimately determine the winner. Because of amendments to the Benedict Medal voting process, the competition now relies on votes from AHS members rather than Garden Judges. The ballot will be available in the fall paper Journal from the AHS and will also be available online on the AHS website. Any AHS member can vote and when you receive you ballot we hope you



will take a few minutes to vote and be a part of the process. Look for it in November. Congratulations Hans on this very special award!

After receiving the Benedict Medal, Hans was not finished with his awards run. He also was given the Eunice Fisher Award from the AHS. "This award is the highest award offered by the American Hosta Society in recognition of outstanding achievement in hosta hybridizing. It is awarded to a member of the Society who has truly advanced the genus *Hosta* through hybridization." Hans has done this and a whole lot more. He has registered close to 100

cultivars with the AHS. Quite a few are household names and it is likely that you have some in your gardens. A few of his many hosta cultivar introductions include H.

'Atlantis', H. 'Autumn Frost', H. 'Cameo', H. 'Coast to Coast', H. 'Country Mouse', H. 'Earth Angel', H. 'Fire and Ice', H. 'Journey's End', H. 'Neptune', H. 'Pandora's Box', H. 'Spartacus', H. 'Rainbow's End', and H. 'Vulcan'. Many more great hostas from Hans are in the pipeline that you can look forward to in the near future. I hope Hans has a special room at home for all the awards he has been given in his lifetime!

As the convention progressed, the awards continued to roll in for Michigan when it was announced that *Hosta Happenings* newsletter editor Marla Greanya won the award for best newsletter for the July 2019 newsletter

(there were no 2020 awards from the AHS). Congratulation Marla for a great job on this edition and all of our newsletters!



Janet Hommel Mangus presenting the Eunice Fisher Award to Hans



The American Hosta Society also gives out awards for various categories for the best photographs of hostas for the American Hosta Society Journal photo contest. For

extremely important for day-to-day operation of the AHS and these pins recognize the value of these people to the organization. Thank you Don!



Category Five:
Artistic Expression

Winner: Hosta 'Patriot's
Fire' Fall Color

Ginny Pearce
Grand Rapids, Michigan

The Ed Elslager Hosta Seedling awards, showcase the best new cultivars that are under development by hosta hybridizers. The awards are presented for various categories. In addition to others from around the country who won awards in their categories, winners from Michigan were Don Rawson and Joanna Kovalcsik. Don

Category Five: Artistic Expression, first time winner Ginny Pearce from Grand Rapids took home the award for 'Patriots Fire' Fall Color! The Reserve winner for Category Five: Artistic Expression was Joanna Kovalcsik from Vassar for Outside the Box, Hosta 'Crackerjacks' flower. Congratulations Ginny and Joanna!

won 7 categories including winning the People' Choice Grand Award as well as Best in Show for gold hostas. Joanna won awards in 2 categories. Great job Don and Joanna. We look forward to seeing your cultivars in production in the years to come.

Don Rawson was awarded a Service Pin for outstanding volunteer service as Nomenclature Chair for the AHS. These pins are given to individuals who have been in a volunteer position for 5 years for the American Hosta Society. Volunteers are



Category Five:
Artistic Expression

Reserve: Outside the Box,
Hosta 'Crackerjacks'
flower

Joanna Kovalcsik
Vassar, Michigan



HOSTA HILLSIDE (summer 2021)

On August 15, MHS members gathered at Hosta Hillside for our annual summer get together. It was great seeing everyone again that could attend. After the pandemic sidelined us in 2020, it was determined that it could be safe enough for us to meet outside for our annual event that included some sprucing up on Hosta Hillside while enjoying some award-winning Hinkley donuts from Jackson. Thank you, Sarah DaPra, for arranging and picking up the donuts (and a special thanks to Sarah from this author who so looks forward to his annual cream stick from Hinkley's!). The sugar rush that followed might explain how so many improvements to the entrance to the Hillside and the hybridizers gardens could be accomplished in just 3 hours of work.

At noon we convened to the tent for our annual picnic luncheon. After running up and down Hosta Hillside many times, the lunch was welcome and necessary. Many thanks to Patty Creal who arranged for the tent as well as planning the meal and

gathering much of the food and Bob Berarducci for making the sloppy joes.

A short business meeting followed lunch. Patty Creal reported that the MHS is on solid ground financially. Other reports were presented pertaining to Hosta Hillside and the Newsletter. MHS President Grey Gitzen gave congratulations to Marla Greanya who won the best newsletter award in 2020 by the American Hosta Society. Following the business meeting, the annual hosta auction began. A collection of some of Jim Wilkins' more obscure hostas were auctioned to an enthusiastic crowd as well as many other hostas and companion plants. Patty Creal reported a profit of over \$1,400 from the auction for the Michigan Hosta Society. Thank you everyone who contributed plants to the auction and thanks for all who generously bid. We hope you enjoy your new plants and hope to see you at Hosta Hillside in the spring 2022.



In his final installment about growing Humongous Hostas, Don Rawson wraps up his series of tips with Tip #10. I hope you have a good idea of how Don grows such large hostas.

Part IV: The Bigger, The Better — Growing Humongous Hostas

by Don Rawson

There's just nothing quite like wandering through a shady landscape that is flourishing with lush and colorful foliage plants... and especially gardens with enormous hostas everywhere you look! In the final part of this series, we are covering the final tip, #10, on how to provide the perfect environment for growing giants in your own hosta glade. You, too, can raise these monsters in your own hosta haven simply by following the tips we cover in this series. Here are some final recommendations to consider.

Tip #10: Safeguard against pests and diseases, and protect against late spring freeze

Be on the lookout for any pests and diseases which may disfigure and weaken

your great looking plants...the ones you've worked so hard to create and enjoy. Common pests and diseases include:

- Deer and rabbits
- Voles
- Slugs, Crown Rot (Southern Blight), Virus HVX

Go to the Hosta Library at www.hostalibrary.org and click on "Pest and Disease" for more information.

In addition, a hard frost or freeze in late spring can cause irreparable damage to the crown, resulting in stunting and fairy ring. This can set a large hosta back several years and some may never recover. You cannot afford to let your prized specimens to be affected, so protect the hosta crowns



H. 'Empress Wu'

with blankets, tarps, buckets, and pots whenever frost is in the forecast.



H. 'Key West' and Olga Petryszyn

Final Suggestion - Be patient!

If you've ever encountered a really enormous hosta before, it's most likely over 4 years old...perhaps even 6 to 8 years old or more! With each year, the root system has a chance to really grab and work its way into the soil and that foundation creates the huge leaves that very large hostas are known for. Slow-growing and giant varieties take 5 - 7 years or longer to reach maturity. That means that this is an investment with a long-term payoff. So, keep your giant hostas healthy and growing well, and as the years go on, you will be rewarded with the biggest and best hostas on the block!

Following these tips will send you well on your way to growing some absolutely enormous and **HUMONGOUS HOSTAS**. Happy gardening!

- Tip #1: Select the Best Location
- Tip #2: Prepare the Planting Site Well
- Tip #3: Plant on a Raised Mound
- Tip #4: Select a Cultivar that gets BIG
- Tip #5: Allow Enough Space
- Tip #6: Provide Adequate Light
- Tip #7: Prevent Root Competition
- Tip #8: Mulch and Fertilize
- Tip #9: Water, Water, Water
- Tip #10: Safeguard against pests and disease, and protect against late spring freeze.



H. 'Minke'

MHS Annual Treasurer's Report, August 2019 - August 2021

Compiled by Patty Creal, Treasurer



| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Balance in checking account as of 8/15/2021 | \$14,620.87 |
| Balance of savings account as of 6/26/2021 | \$15,796.06 |
| | \$30,416.93 |

Fund balances

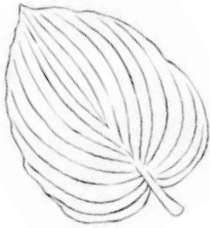
| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Scholarship | \$6,990.50 |
| Hillside | \$11,170.63 |
| Benedict Tribute | \$135.96 |

Deposits

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Membership dues (2 years) | \$1,059.00 |
| Work day, August 2019 | |
| Auction | \$1,705.00 |
| Lunch donations | \$147.00 |
| Interest on checking | \$4.88 |
| | Total \$2915.88 |

| Expenses | |
|---|-------------------|
| Board expenses | |
| Michigan Corporation fee for 2020 | \$20.00 |
| Liability insurance premium for 2020 & 2021 | \$794.00 |
| Donation Memory of Jim Munson | \$100.00 |
| Tecumseh Tent - deposit on tent for 2020 | \$300.00 |
| Tecumseh Tent - balance for 2019 rental | \$296.00 |
| Work day 2019 lunch & donuts | \$181.29 |
| Clarence Owens award plaque for 2019 | \$28.26 |
| Domain registration fee | \$39.99 |
| Hillside expenses | |
| Supplies - tape | \$32.32 |
| Newsletter | |
| Copying and postage | \$441.49 |
| Total expenses | \$2,233.35 |





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Past President
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Hosta Hillside
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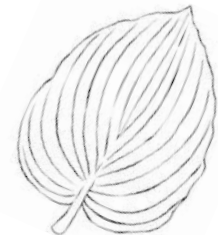
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Photos by Marla Greanya



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:

Michigan Hosta Society
2509 Wembly Lane
Troy, MI 48084-1280

Make checks payable to: The Michigan Hosta Society