

MICHIGAN HOSTA HAPPENINGS

Newsletter of the Michigan Hosta Society



Well, we are approaching the end of another gardening season. I don't know about you, but the older I get, the more mixed emotions I have about saying goodbye to my plants for the winter. On the one hand I am sad to see my leafy friends go into a months long deep sleep. But then I think of how much harder it is to keep up with the company that garden plants hang out with in the summer.

Like the way they invite their seedy and weedy friends over for big parties and leave messes all over. Darn weeds.

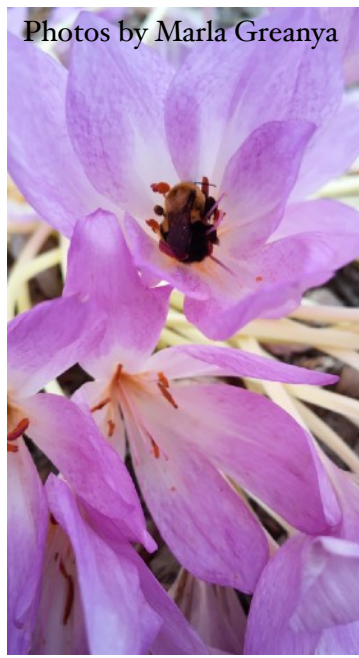
The season culminated with several prestigious awards presented to our own Michigan hosta gardeners at the American Hosta Society annual convention in Ames,

Iowa on June 7-10, 2023: Joanna Kovalcsik for a photo she entered in the photo competition for the Buds and Bracts category; Sandy Wilkins for the best hosta newsletter article in the country for "*In a*

Moment..."; Herb and Dorothy Benedict were posthumously awarded the Eunice Fisher Award for their work in hosta hybridization; and Hans Hansen for winning the Benedict Garden Performance Medal for the best hybrid hosta in the country (H. 'Neptune'). Congratulations to all of our winners!



**Hosta at the end of its season, fall-flowering
Colchicum at the beginning of its season, and a
bumble bee at the end of its life.**



Photos by Marla Greanya

In January, Don wrote an article about tools that can make our fall cleanup easier (Favorite Tools Make Garden Cleanup Easier. *Hosta Happenings* V. 33 (No. 1), pages 1-4). I encourage you to go back and re-read Don's article to refresh your memory for this time of year. Also in January, Hans wrote a very popular article on Heucheras

(Heuchera. *Hosta Happenings*. V. 33: No. 1, pages 5-13), which drew interest across the country from other newsletter editors who wanted to use his article in their newsletters! He also wrote a very interesting article on *Spigelia* in April (Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica*)). *Hosta Happenings*. V. 33: No. 2, pages 11-14). I have been fascinated by this plant for years, probably because I have killed it more than once and have been determined to grow it successfully. Hans encouraged me to not give up and try one of the newer hybrids Walters Gardens has put in the trade. And because of his article, I believe the reason for my failures was because I transplanted it at the wrong time of the year, which I should have done in the spring. Go back and re-read his article if you too have had a problem growing them.



Featured in this final newsletter of the year is a fun puzzle and a couple great articles from Don Rawson.

To start the newsletter and to keep you busy as the gardening season winds down, entertain yourself and your brain with the wordsearch puzzle "*Working in the Garden*" by Don Rawson. The words might be forward, backward, diagonally forward, or diagonally backward. Unlike some other wordsearches, this one is challenging, so

expect to spend some time solving it. Good luck! Please send an email to mhs@hostahappenings.com and tell us how you did.

Perhaps as your curl up with a cup of tea and work on your garden-centric wordsearch, you could also learn about cup-shaped hostas in Don Rawson's article *Concave & Convex Hostas: My Cup of Tea*. These unique hostas are sure to catch your eye and are bound to end up in your garden after reading this article!

In Don's series on *Unusual Woodlanders*, we were treated to articles about Christmas ferns in January; Japanese Umbrella Plant (*Syneilesis aconitifolia*) in April; *Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty' in July; and to end the year he discusses the attributes of a Lily of the Valley hybrid by the name *Convallaria majalis* 'Fernwood's Golden Slippers' that you too may fall in love with.

I hope you have enjoyed the Michigan Hosta Society's, *Hosta Happenings* newsletter this year. If you have any ideas, comments, suggestions, please let me know. If you'd like to write an article for *Hosta Happenings* for a future newsletter, I encourage you to send me an email at mhs@hostahappenings.com and we can discuss it. Happy Holidays and we will be back with another newsletter in January.

Michael Greanya

WORKING IN THE GARDEN

WORDSEARCH by Don Rawson

A	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	C	E	D	T	E
W	E	E	D	E	R	A	K	E	S	N	A	S	K
O	M	S	S	T	R	A	W	H	A	T	R	O	A
R	O	L	S	R	A	E	O	W	D	M	E	P	T
R	N	U	G	E	E	V	G	I	S	U	W	M	S
A	G	G	L	P	E	N	G	D	R	L	O	O	O
B	N	B	O	L	I	D	U	I	E	C	L	C	O
L	E	A	V	R	R	R	L	R	P	H	B	L	B
E	D	I	E	A	O	S	S	A	P	O	F	A	M
E	R	T	Y	B	T	P	R	I	O	S	A	Y	A
H	A	Y	R	P	A	I	L	N	L	E	E	P	B
W	G	A	R	D	E	N	S	T	O	O	L	O	S
B	E	E	D	A	P	S	I	L	L	E	R	T	H
R	E	Y	A	R	P	S	T	N	A	L	P	A	C

Words to find

GLOVE	RAKE	SPADE	BAMBOO STAKE
SHOVEL	STRAW HAT	WATERING WAND	ARBOR
SEED	RAIN	PLANTS	SNIPS
MULCH	GARDEN GNOMES	GARDEN STOOL	PEAT
PRUNERS	PEN	PAIL	COMPOST
WEEDER	SLUG BAIT	DECORATIONS	YARD
WHEELBARROW	HEDGER	HAY	SLUGGO
DIG	LOPPERS	LEAF BLOWER	HOSE
SPRAYER	CAP	CLAY POT	BEE
HOE		TRELLIS	

Answer key on page 11 & 12

Concave & Convex Hostas: My Cup of Tea

By Don Rawson

From the blue-leaved 'Love Pat' and 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' to the gold-leaved 'World Cup' and 'Super Bowl', I love cup-leaved hostas. I am not sure why they get my attention, but I find a bowl-shaped leaf more exciting than foliage which is flat, plain, and horizontal. And adding a powdery white back to a cupper is better yet.

This is despite the objection often raised by gardeners that cup-leaved varieties are plagued with an unsettling flaw: they collect debris. A friend of mine complains that he is always cleaning out the "belly buttons," especially immediately prior to garden tours. This can be done with the fingers, forceps, or a leaf blower. Of course, you will want to make sure there are no frogs nestled in the middle before doing so!

Cupped and Corrugated — Characteristics of *H. sieboldiana*

Have you ever noticed that cupped hostas are almost always corrugated? That is because both cupping and corrugation are characteristics of *H. sieboldiana*. In fact, can you think of even one cupper that is not puckered? Looking at the list of over five-hundred cupped cultivars posted at http://www.hostalists.org/hosta_list_cpl.php, the vast majority are corrugated to some extent — some more than others. And for the hybridizer, breeding cuppers which are NOT puckered is quite the challenge.



Photo by Noah Schwartz. Used by permission.

This cup-leaved hosta is a comfortable resting place for a Gray Treefrog (*Dryophytes versicolor*), a species native to much of the eastern United States and southeastern Canada. As the scientific name implies, gray treefrogs are variable in color. This ability to vary their color allows them to camouflage themselves from gray to green or brown, depending on the environment around them.



Photo by Don Rawson

Cup-leaved hostas are almost always somewhat corrugated — characteristics of *H. sieboldiana*, as seen with this unnamed seedling.

Cupped Up . . . and Cupped Down

Some hostas are concave, while others are convex. Concave means “hollowed out or rounded inward” and is easily remembered because these surfaces “cave in.” The opposite is convex, meaning “curved or rounded outward.” Both words have been around for centuries but are often mixed up. So, if you need to distinguish between the two, simply remember that concave has the word cave in it because it is like a cave, while convex has the word vex in it because it is vexing that this word is hard to remember!

The most well-known convexly-cupped hosta is Olga Petryszyn’s aptly named introduction, ‘Hoosier Dome’. The registration gives the following succinct description:

Notable Characteristics: domed leaf and ruffled margins.

This origination is part of Olga’s series which commemorates the geographical features and landmarks of the U.S. Others in this series include ‘Continental Divide’, ‘Great Plains’, ‘Key West’, ‘Mississippi Delta’, and ‘Niagara Falls’.

At a cost of \$77.5 million, the Hoosier Dome was a domed stadium built in Indianapolis. It was the home of an NFL team, the Indianapolis Colts. The structure was made up of Teflon-coated fiberglass panels and weighed 257 tons, all of which were held up entirely by the air pressure inside the building. The ceiling was 193 feet high, though the height varied up to 5 feet as the materials expanded and

contracted with the weather. The last Colts’ game in the Hoosier Dome was held in 2007, shortly before the venue was demolished the following year.

Now, back to the hosta ‘Hoosier Dome’. Its uniqueness is noted by Mark Zilis in The Hostapedia which says, “‘Hoosier Dome’ offers the typical distinction and elegance that all of Olga Petryszyn’s hybrids display. The heavily rippled, deeply veined, rich green leaves are convexly cupped, creating a ‘dome-like effect.’”



Photo by David Bowe. Used by permission.

Registered in 1998, ‘Hoosier Dome’ is a hybrid of [‘Niagara Falls’ × (‘Silver Bowl’ × ‘Muriel Seaver Brown’)]. The dome-shaped leaves are not only cupped dramatically downward, but also include a nicely rippled margin.

Just How Deep Can We Go?

There is one cultivar which sets the standard when it comes to deeply cupped hostas: ‘Abiqua Drinking Gourd’. The effect is enhanced even more by its large size and rich, deep blue color. The round leaves have good substance and are strongly



Hosta photo by Don Rawson.

‘Catcher’s Mitt’ is a new introduction which will be offered by In the Country Garden and Gifts. The upright, deeply cupped leaves have frosty white backs. It becomes a medium-large hosta.

seersucker, but it is the cupping (up to 4” deep) which is so special. Because of its uniqueness, ‘Abiqua Drinking Gourd’ makes a superb specimen plant in the garden.

A new cupper soon to be available is ‘Catcher’s Mitt’ (D. Rawson – NR). The thick, stiff leaves with white backs are held upright, like a ballplayer’s glove.

‘Catcher’s Mitt’ will be offered exclusively by Josh Spece of [In the Country Garden and Gifts](#). If you like cup-leaved hostas, this is one to watch for.

The question is, just how deep can hosta



Photo by Don Rawson.

Still under observation, this unnamed seedling in the Rawson garden with its radically convex leaves shows some promise.

leaves possibly become? Can a hybrid be created which is so cupped that it is a sphere? That would certainly keep any detritus from collecting in the center, an issue that many find frustrating. But would gardeners find ball-shaped foliage attractive? I suppose that only time will tell.

One thing is for sure: cupped-leaved cultivars are here to stay. Both

‘Love Pat’ and ‘Abiqua Drinking Gourd’, among others, are regular entries in the AHS Popularity Polls. Whether concave or convex, perhaps it is time to add a few cup-leaved hostas to your own shady glade. That is, if it is your cup of tea.

Unusual Woodlanders for the Shade Garden: Lily of the Valley 'Golden Slippers'

By Don Rawson

Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), native to Asia and Europe, is renowned for its dainty white, lovely-smelling, bell-shaped flowers.

Cultivated in shaded garden areas, it grows from underground rhizomes that spread horizontally, often with amazing speed. It also reproduces from seed. These factors give the plant a bad reputation.

Its invasive tendency to form large colonies can threaten native plants. While it does not always do well in poor, dry soil or intense sunlight, Lily of the Valley is especially happy in shady, wooded areas where it grows like a weed, and it is this aggressive

behavior that should prompt you to think twice before planting this innocent-looking little plant.

However, without hesitation I introduce to you *Convallaria majalis* 'Fernwood's Golden Slippers', or simply called 'Golden Slippers'. Let me put your fears to rest by saying that this stunning gold-leaved mutation does not spread as aggressively as the species, although care should still be taken to site this plant properly and control its growth

when needed.

This stunning woodlander comes from Maine nurseryman Rick Sawyer, who discovered it at his Fernwood Nursery. Growing 8-12" tall, each plant has 2 to 3 parallel-veined, elliptical leaves up to

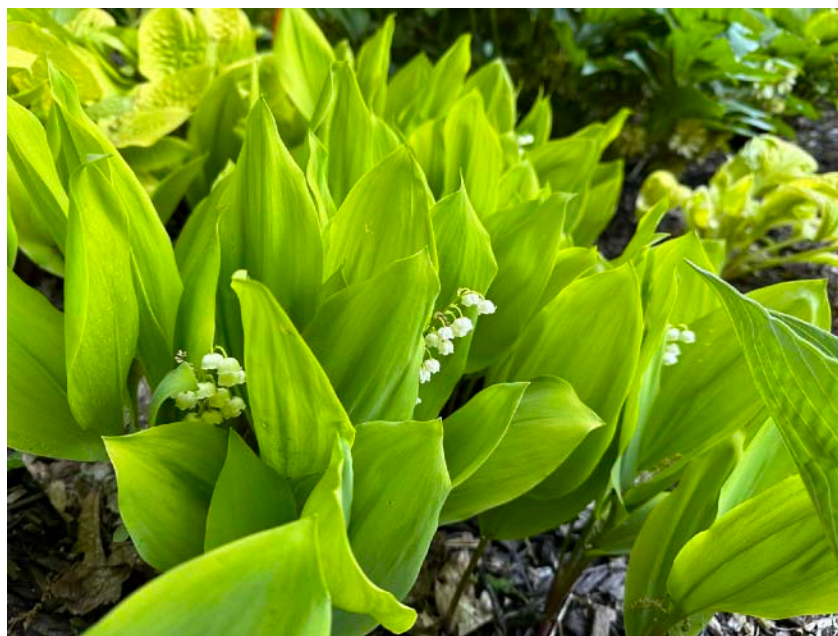


Photo by Noah

Schwartz. Used by permission.

The chartreuse golden foliage of 'Golden Slippers' is brightest in spring, accompanied by dainty white flowers.

5-10" long and 1-3" wide. The chartreuse golden foliage, which is brightest in spring, makes a slowly spreading deciduous groundcover...great for brightening a shady woodland garden.

An erect or slightly arching flower stem rises from the center of each leaf clump, bearing a one-sided raceme of nodding flowers which bloom in early to mid-spring. Each raceme typically contains 5-10 flowers. Like the common Lily of the Valley, the small white, dangling flowers of 'Golden Slippers' smell incredible! Round, orange-red berries may appear in fall, each berry containing 1-6 seeds.



Photo by Kirsten Bengtson. Used by permission.

Each raceme typically contains 5-10 dangling white flowers.

'Golden Slippers' — How It Got Its Name

Rick Sawyer writes, "'Golden Slippers' gets its name from the footwear of a dear friend of mine, Mildred Seaver. Mildred was an inspiration and terrific mentor within the hosta world, having spent many years breeding and introducing a number of wonderful hostas to the market. 'Golden Slippers' is a bright addition to the shade garden, and a forever reminder of my friend, Mildred."

Culture

Hardy from Zone 3 to 7, Lily of the Valley is easily grown in moist, fertile, organically rich, well-drained soil in part to full shade. It tolerates a wide range of soil conditions including clay and is long-lived. Flowering may decrease over time, at which point dividing the plants may become appropriate.

This cool weather woodlander is not recommended for growing in hot and humid summer climates where it will perform poorly. The chartreuse leaves do not look as tired and worn out at the end of the season if kept out of too much sun and the soil is not allowed to get too dry. It may be easily propagated in spring or fall by root division.

Other Interesting Facts

- The scientific name is *Convallaria majalis*. The genus name comes from the Latin word *convallis*, meaning "valley." The species name means "belonging to Maia," since May is its month of flowering.
- The flower is also known as the May lily, May bells, or French "Muguet des bois."
- Lily of the Valley is a symbol of purity, joy, love, sincerity, happiness and luck. It's actually the national flower of Finland. In France, on May 1st for La Fête du Muguet, Lily of the Valleys are gifted to loved ones.
- 'Golden Slippers' is a sport of 'Cream da Mint', another *Convallaria* introduction from Fernwood Nursery.

- In the spring, it emerges with very bright gold leaves that will eventually turn to a light chartreuse color later in the season.
- ‘Golden Slippers’ has larger than normal flowers. The red berries in fall are quite showy against the yellow foliage.
- It is deer resistant and makes an excellent cut flower.
- All parts of this plant are very poisonous because they contain cardiac glycosides. The plant is toxic even in vase water.
- Because Lily of the Valley can be aggressive and is considered invasive in parts of the northern United States, check local laws and recommendations before adding to your landscape. As previously mentioned though, ‘Golden Slippers’ is not as aggressive as the species.

Problems

Watch for aphids and spider mites. Stem rot, leaf spot, leaf blotch and anthracnose may appear but usually are not significant deterrents to growing this plant. Foliage decline will occur in hot summers.

Uses

Lily of the Valley is a ground cover where it crawls around the forest floor. As one gardener said, “I generally consider Lily of the Valley a weed. Overplanted for over a century, it persists in nature long after the homestead where it was planted has been demolished. I suppose this is a testament to its ruggedness, to its persistence through



Photo from Pinterest

Should Lily of the Valley be planted directly among hostas? Probably not. It is aggressive and will compete for water and nutrients. In addition, Lily of the Valley is very difficult to dig out. If you wish to do so, it should be confined to a container.

environmental change and adversity. That said, I am a sucker for foliar variants.”

With its glowing foliage, ‘Golden Slippers’ will brighten up a shady woodland path or border. It performs well under the shade of trees and shrubs, and creates a bright accent among some of its more subdued neighbors. The golden leaves make for a great combination with the blue or red shades of the foliage and flowers of other plants.

And, don’t forget that Lily of the Valley makes an excellent cut flower. Sometimes used for weddings, a small bouquet is typically around \$500, and larger bouquets

can be as much as \$1200. They are insanely small, so you need lots of them to make it look like something substantial.

Sources

Broken Arrow Nursery

[https://
www.brokenarrownursery.com](https://www.brokenarrownursery.com)

Dancing Oaks Nursery

<https://dancingoaks.com>

Far Reaches Farm

<https://www.farreachesfarm.com>

Plant Delights

<https://www.plantdelights.com>

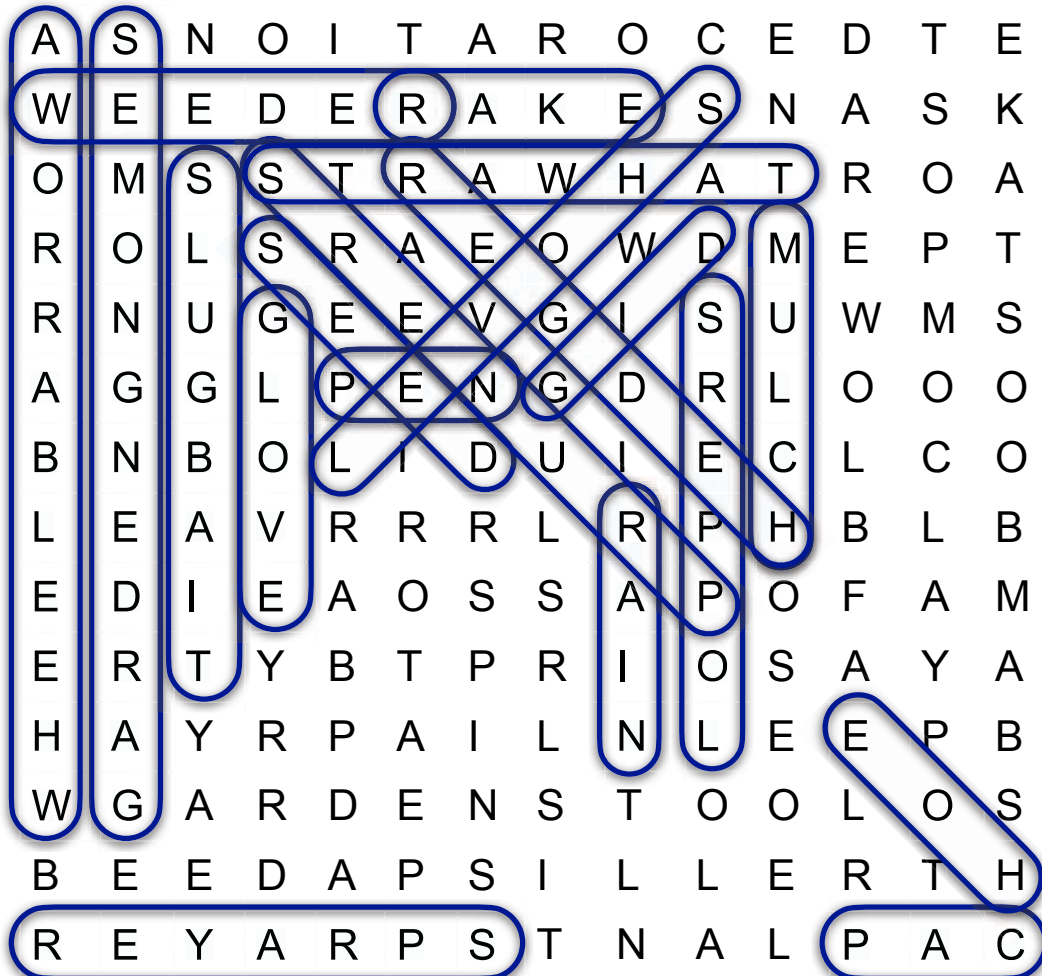


Photo from etsy.

**A bouquet of Lily of the Valley will
sweetly perfume the entire house.**



Answer key to *Working in the Garden* wordsearch
Columns 1 & 2



GLOVE

SHOVEL

SEED

MULCH

PRUNERS

WEEDER

WHEELBARROW

DIG

SPRAYER

HOE

RAKE

STRAW HAT

RAIN

GARDEN GNOMES

PEN

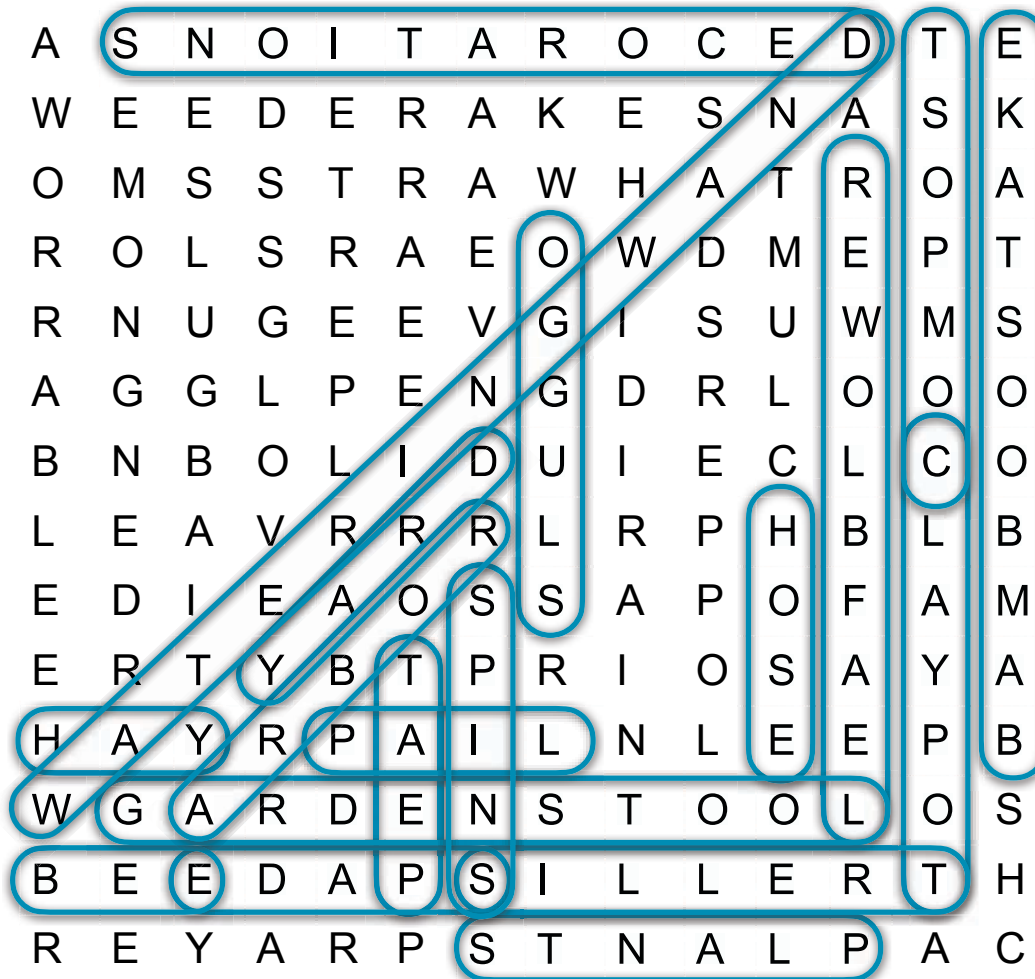
SLUG BAIT

HEDGER

LOPPERS

CAP

Answer key to *Working in the Garden* wordsearch
Columns 3 & 4



SPADE

WATERING WAND

PLANTS

GARDEN STOOL

PAIL

DECORATIONS

HAY

LEAF BLOWER

CLAY POT

TRELLIS

BAMBOO STAKE

ARBOR

SNIPS

PEAT

COMPOST

YARD

SLUGGO

HOSE

BEE

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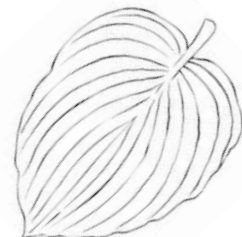
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Membership in the Michigan Hosta Society

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

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: _____

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