



Volume 16, Issue 2

March, 2015



Phyllis Weidman President
Photo by Kelly Hall

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What can one say about this weather?

It's St. Louis, so wait until tomorrow. Daffodils and tulips will forget how cold it was. We have snowdrops and winter aconites on our back hill to give us hope.

It is time to start gathering your thoughts about your spring garden. How are you going to take care of your hostas? Do you mulch? Do you fertilize? How do you discourage those garden pests?

The answers are right in front of you. We have people in the society who have been raising hostas for years. They know a lot! They know things that work and things that don't. This is one of the reasons you joined our society - to learn about hostas. My suggestion is to come to meetings early and stay late. Talk to these fellow hosta growers and you may be surprised what you can learn.

Not only can you learn about hostas, but you can also learn a lot about related subjects. At the March meeting, we will learn about dirt. We all have it and want to make it the best dirt possible for our hostas.

Phyllis

2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 15** **Meeting with Speaker Connie Goss**
“The DIRT on Soil”
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- April 19** **Vendor Day and Club Plant Pick-up**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- April 25** **Work Day at the Missouri Botanical Garden**
8 AM, Missouri Botanical Garden, AHS Display Garden beds
- May 2-3** **Plant Sale at the Missouri Botanical Garden**
Missouri Botanical Garden
- May 17** **Garden Walk in Member’s Garden**
Home of Sharon and Mike Schmitt
- June 18-20** **American Hosta Society National Convention**
Raleigh, North Carolina
- June 28** **Garden Walk in Member’s Garden**
Home of Phyllis and Jim Weidman
- July 9-11** **Midwest Region Hosta Society Convention**
Dubuque, Iowa
- July 19** **Members Plant Auction**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- September 20** **Meeting with Speaker TBA**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- October 18** **Meeting with Speaker TBA**
1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
- November TBA** **Board Meeting**
TBA
- December 6** **Holiday Party**
TBA



March 15, 1:00 PM

The “DIRT” on Soil

Connie Goss

For every aesthetically pleasing building, there is an underlying supporting structure that is not so glamorous. So it is with gardens. We cannot create a beautiful landscape, populated with healthy, long-lived plants if we don't pay attention to the soil beneath their feet.

Master Gardener Connie Goss will talk about ways to build healthy soil and create that rich environment that plants need to prosper. By understanding soil structure and learning how to improve a soil's nutrients, we can assure the long term health of our gardens.

Having retired after teaching Social Studies for 33 years, Connie has been able to get more deeply involved in her love of gardening. She obtained her Master Gardener certification in 2007 and an Applied Science in Horticulture Associate Degree in 2012. She has worked both professionally and as a volunteer in the horticulture field. She is a member of the Master Gardener Speaker's Bureau, a volunteer with Gateway Greening and Landscape and Green Sanctuary Co-chair for the First Unitarian Church in the CWE.

Join your fellow members on March 15th as Connie gives us tips that we can implement this spring. Paying just a bit more attention to the dirt beneath our feet can make all the difference to the plants that we love to grow.



H. 'Victory' sitting in a pot on then AHS President Tom Michelletti's deck. This photo was taken at the 2008 MRHS Convention in Chicago.

Victory (Zilies – 2002)

**American Hosta Growers Association
Hosta of the Year 2015**

This stunning sport of *H. nigrescens* 'Elator' is classified as a giant hosta with smooth, shiny green leaves. The large heart-shaped leaves are up to a foot long with wavy cream margins and prominent veins that produce a corrugated look. These large thick leaves are held upright as they emerge and form a massive mound when mature. Near white flowers appear on exceptionally long, arching scapes in midsummer.

2015 Membership Dues Are Payable Now

If you receive the newsletter by postal mail, check the two-digit number appearing after your name on the address label of this newsletter. Your membership dues are paid through the end of the year appearing after your name. For example, if '14' appears after your name, your dues are paid through the 2014 year and are now payable for 2015.

If you receive the newsletter by e-mail, check the attachment for a list of all members and the year through which their dues are paid. For example, if '14' appears after your name in the attachment list, your dues are paid through the 2014 year and are now payable for 2015.

Dues are \$7 annually (individual or family) or \$18 for three years. Make checks payable to SLHS (St. Louis Hosta Society) and bring to the next meeting or send to:

Cindy Michniok
14300 Quiet Meadow Ct.
Chesterfield, MO 63017



Let's Go Green - Give E-mail a Try

In an effort to bring the newsletter to you sooner with color pictures and hi-lights, SLHS would like to distribute your newsletter by e-mail instead of regular postal mail. Use of e-mail saves paper and will significantly reduce club printing and mailing costs. If you would now prefer an e-mail copy instead of a postal copy or if you have changed your e-mail address, just send an e-mail to SLHS Newsletter Editor Joan Poos at david.poos@att.net.

Hosta Finder

A Reference to Retail Prices and Locations

The **2015 Hosta Finder** is now available. This publication lists hostas that are currently offered for sale by a number of different growers. Each hosta entry gives a list of nurseries where the plant can be bought and its price. Also given is the Originator/Namer/Introducer/Registrant of the hosta, its registration year and some characteristics of the plant. Information about the nurseries, including mailing addresses, website addresses and telephone numbers is printed in the back.

The cost of the book is \$15 and can be obtained from our treasurer Cindy Michniok. If not sold out, copies will be available at our March meeting.

February Pot Luck Luncheon

Oh my, the choices!

What to pick?

Guess I will try a bit of everything!



Chairs Mike and Sharon Schmitt uncover trays of chicken and beef.

First on my plate was a lettuce salad sprinkled generously with soybeans and olives and a large bite of a 'Rich and Charlie's' style salad. Next came a sample of roasted cauliflower and carrots and then a spoonful of black-eyed pea caviar. Both were new and delicious taste sensations for me.

German that I am, a meal is not complete without potatoes. There were several salads that reminded me of good times at family reunions. I couldn't pass by a dish named 'torta espanole' – how can one go wrong with potatoes, onions and cream?

The fruit pizza and baked pineapple were tempting as were the vegetable and dip trays. By the end of the table, my plate had no room for the entree. Sharon and Mike Schmitt had created two delicious dishes – chicken with artichokes and barbeque beef. Both were tasty. My plate was overflowing, yet the dessert table beckoned. Cookies, brownies, cake – more choices!

Long after the last cookie had been consumed, members stayed and chatted. The holidays had come and gone. It seemed like such a long time since we had been together. Everyone was ready for spring. The potluck is the perfect remedy for an acute case of cabin fever.

Many thanks to Mike and Sharon for a party well done!



Melissa Byrd, Ewy Cobb and Jeff Heinrich sign in before the luncheon.



Meteorologist Melissa Byrd kept us informed about an approaching storm front.



Larry Hummel and Arlie Tempel chat while waiting for the food line to form.



Susan Hanratty, Carol and Fred Michalis, Jeff Heinrich and Sharon Schmitt chat while finishing their desserts.



Pam Wolkowitz, Spence and Jan Sorenson, Marian Murphy, Ralph Merola and Martha Lafata enjoy their meals.



Joann Rawson, Mindy, Ewy and Willard Cobb join Mario Carlos for lunch.



Dave Poos, Melissa Byrd, Jolly Ann Whitener and Kim and Ted Piekutowski stayed to talk about upcoming hosta events.

What's blooming in your yard?

Snowdrops (Galanthus)

These little beauties may look fragile but they are tough, often pushing their way up through ice and snow in late February and March. Snowdrops spring from bulbs planted in early fall. One alabaster bell-shaped blossom per bulb dangles from a slightly arching stem. Each stem has two to three strappy leaves.

Snowdrops are among the easiest plants to grow. It takes them a year or so to become established, but then require little care. Deer, mice and voles seem to avoid them.

In fall, plant in soil that drains well, in light to moderate shade. Space bulbs three inches apart with their pointed top two to three inches below the soil surface. Plant in drifts. Water well.

After blooming, allow the leaves to yellow and wither before removing. Emerging hostas and ferns will cover the wilted leaves. Snowdrops multiply by offsets. Immediately after blooming, dig up the clump and separate the new blubs from the mother blub. Replant immediately.

Snowdrops are fine additions to woodland gardens tucked around the bases of deciduous trees and shrubs. They are a welcome harbinger of spring.



Photo: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

Many of us are faced with the problems of growing hostas beneath trees which have very invasive roots or in beds which have very voracious voles. The technique described in the following article, reprinted from The Michigan Hosta Society's February 2011 newsletter, might be worth a try.

Pot-in-a-Pot Planting Technique

Chris Miller of Bluegrass Hosta Farm

Hostas sometimes thrive and then decline for seemingly unknown reasons. I would venture to guess that the majority of times it is tree roots that are the culprits!

Here at Bluegrass Hosta Farm, most of our shade to start with was under very root invasive trees: Maples, Sweetgums and White Pines. We began our quest for a solution by raising the planting bed with a very bad result; the tree just exploded with new roots with the increase in nutrients and water, and filled the raised bed and then some!

Our next attempt was to plant the hostas in pots sunk into the raised bed with much the same result as the roots found their way into the holes on the bottom of the pots and promptly filled the pots, robbing the hostas of all the water and nutrients.

Our final attempt had better results. I have found a source for fabric impregnated with a root inhibitor used in the nursery industry. That fabric, along with a layer of pea gravel and the hosta in a pot of its own has proven to really slow down the root invasions and allow the hostas to reach their full potential in most cases.

Here is the procedure:

1. Dig the hole for the "socket pot." Start the hole and fill with water to soften the soil if necessary. Choose a "socket pot" size that will allow the hosta, planted in its own pot, to grow to its mature size.
2. Sink the "socket pot" into the ground up to its rim.
3. Put the fabric into the "socket pot" with the black side down against the holes. Be sure to cover all of the holes with the cloth. Add a layer of pea gravel on top of the cloth to hold it against the pot sides all the way around the "socket pot."
4. Place the potted hosta into the "socket pot." If the potted hosta does not fill the "socket pot," use plastic bags or newspaper to fill the air space. This will insulate the hosta over the winter, and also provide a base for mulching up to the potted hosta in the spring. If the space is wide, as in the case of a hosta that must grow into the "socket pot" size from a small size, use a layer of newspaper over the edges of the "socket pot" and up to the potted hosta, to mulch over. The goal is to grow the potted hosta up to the size of the "socket pot." By that time, the hosta should be of a mature size and it can stay in the "socket pot" until it needs to be divided, usually several years.
5. Water and fertilize the hosta as you would in the ground. The advantages of pot-in-a-pot are that all of the water and nutrients go to the hosta, not the tree (until it drains,) and voles cannot get to the roots of the hosta to eat them. It is also easier to pull the hosta for division. Divide the hosta when the roots completely fill the pot and the hosta begins to decline.

2015 AHS Convention – Raleigh, North Carolina

June 18-20, 2015, optional tours on your own on June 17

Nancy and Bob Solberg invite you to visit beautiful North Carolina next June and have nothing but fun at the 2015 American Hosta Society National Convention. The theme is "**Back to the Future**". They plan to combine the friendliness and simplicity of the conventions in the 90's while focusing on the future of hostas and hosta gardening.

On Thursday evening we visit Tony Avent's [Plant Delights Nursery](#) and Juniper Level Botanical Gardens. The nursery and extensive gardens are renowned for their diversity of rare plant material including many new hybrids produced as part of their research mission.

On Friday, we visit 5 local residential gardens including [David Spain's nationally known moss garden](#). Our lunch stop is the North Carolina State Farmers Market in Raleigh. In addition to the wide selection of produce available from North Carolina, (it should be peach season), there are many interesting plants for sale.

On Saturday morning, buses take you to [Green Hill Farm](#) in Franklinton, owned by Nancy and Bob Solberg, which is one of the leading sources of new hostas.

Registration for the Convention is \$230. The deadline for registration is May 1, 2015. Hotel room rate is \$105.00.

For more information, access the convention web site: <http://www.2015ahsconvention.com/>

2015 MRHS Convention A Hosta Rendezvous

When: **July 9-11, 2015**

Where: Holiday Inn, 450 Main Street, Dubuque, Iowa 52001
563-556-2000 888-465-4329 (reserved Rate is \$124) [Hotel Information](#)



Gardens: There will be 6 gardens to tour on Saturday. (Optional Bus Tour with boxed lunch \$30 per person - limited to the first 50 paid advance registrants.)
Sunday - Optional garden tours (information provided at registration)

Dining: Thursday - Optional River Cruise with dinner (Prime Rib or Chicken) on the [Spirit of Dubuque](#). Special rate of \$50.00 per person. Limited to 60 registrants. Make reservations directly. (563-583-8093)

The following meals are included with your registration:

Friday - Dinner BBQ at the [Arboretum](#).

Saturday - Continental Breakfast and Evening Banquet

Registration: Printable [Registration Form](#).

Convention Schedule: Printable [Schedule](#).

Hosta Seedling Competition: [Seedling Competition Information](#).

St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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Secretary
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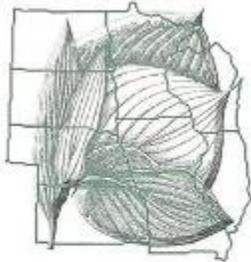
St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

Contact: Cindy Michniok
14300 Quiet Meadow Ct.
Chesterfield, MO 63017
Cmichniok@gmail.com

Dues: \$7 per year, \$18 for three years
Family or Individual

Meetings held at **1:00 PM** at the **Creve Coeur Government Center, 300 N. New Ballas, 63141** (between Ladue Road and Olive), unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: www.stlouishosta.org



Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter.

Please mail a check made payable to **MRHS** to:

Barbara Schroeder,
Treasurer
1819 Coventry Dr.
Champaign, IL 61822

along with Name, Address, phone, and email (Most correspondence is by email). For questions email MRHS.Hosta@gmail.com.



AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

Members receive three issues per year of The Hosta Journal, which includes color photographs of hostas, reports on national conventions, scientific information concerning current research pertaining to hostas, and advertisements of interest to hosta families.

Membership checks should be made out to "AHS," and mailed to:

Sandie Markland, AHS Membership Secretary
P O Box 7539
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

Dues for one year are \$30 for an individual and \$34 for a family. For more information, visit the AHS website: <http://www.americanhostasociety.org/>