



Volume 13, Issue 6

September, 2012



Phyllis Weidman President

Photo by Kelly Hall

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What a summer it has been! Our hostas look terrible, crunchy edges, faded color and just plain tired. Keep watering, maybe Isaac will bring us rain, and in the spring you will be rewarded. Remember there is always next year for that perfect garden.

I want to bring you up to date on the Missouri Botanical Garden Project. As you know in June we had our annual work day planting and moving over 60 hosta plants. The Garden wants to create a species garden, so over the last year we have found 30 of the 42 species. Eighteen were located at the Garden and 12 were donated by Jim King of Batavia, Illinois from his private collection. We have now purchased five more and received another donation from Berry Yinger. Six to go!

As far as we know, this may be the only such garden in the nation. Why are these hostas so important? Species hostas are important because of the gene pool they bring to making new garden cultivars. Cultivars are what you want to buy. Pollen or seeds of species are used by hybridizers to create the many characteristics you look for when you buy a cultivar. Traits like red or colored petioles, wavy edges, colored flowers, white backed leaves and many many more come from these species hostas.

Because of the society's financial support and the physical support of the membership volunteers, the hosta area of the Garden has now been recognized by the American Hosta Society as a National Display Garden. There will be articles in the American Hosta Journal and in the MidWest Regional Newsletter about our work at the Garden. You can also see the Garden listed on the AHS web page under Display Gardens.

Yet this year, we plan to purchase a Japanese maple tree to plant in one of the beds to help with shade and increase the beauty of the area. The plan for next year is to continue to look for those missing species, purchase new cultivars, and rearrange bed to make the area more interesting. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let me know. I hope we continue our work at the Garden, making it a resource for the community. It is something you can say you were part of creating.

See you all at Bell Gardens on September 16th.

Phyllis

2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 16

Note location change

Gateway Greening Bell Demonstration Garden Tour

1:00 PM, 3871 Bell Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108

October 21

Meeting with Speaker Larry Tucker

“Confessions of a Hostaholic”

1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center

December 2

Holiday Party

1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center



Bell Demonstration Garden Tour Specially Arranged for SLHS - Conducted by Hannah Reinhart, Community Development Coordinator

Sept 16, 1:00 PM

3871 Bell Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108

(The Bell Garden is located on Bell Avenue just east of Vandeventer Avenue and two blocks north of Delmar.)

The Bell Demonstration and Community Garden was purchased in 2001 by the Gateway Greening organization with the “goal of providing educational workshops and gardening materials to community gardeners to help them grow more food and invest in their neighborhoods.” The garden, comprised of 22 vacant lots, is maintained by the Gateway Greening staff and volunteers. A 2000 study showed that community gardens help to stabilize neighborhoods and maintain economic diversity because more people were investing in their homes.

Using raised beds, which is a common practice in most urban gardens, Bell Garden shows how to get the most out of small spaces. It displays what food crops are currently in season and which variety of a plant performs well in the St. Louis area. Food from the demonstration gardens is delivered to a local soup kitchen.

Besides being a public demonstration garden, Bell has also been an active community garden for over 20 years. Family members tend plots that allow them to grow fresh vegetables in an economical way. They share their knowledge with other family members and friends. Vegetable and ornamental plants and seeds and some tools, if needed, are provided by Gateway Greening.

In addition, Bell Garden offers workshops for educators, forums, how-to guides, leadership training and participates in the Great Perennial Divide. The Great Perennial Divide occurs on the first Saturday of May. Donated plants are made available free to more than 200 Gateway Greening Community Gardens and citizen-managed green spaces in the St. Louis inner city.

Plan to attend this special tour and learn how a group of dedicated volunteers is working to reclaim their city neighborhoods. Visit www.gatewaygreening.org for more information.

Welcome new members!

Karen Frey of St. Peters, MO
Mary Jones of St. Louis, MO
Mary McMahon of St. Louis, MO
Carolyn Ruland of Jerseyville, IL

Look for them at future meetings and the exciting events scheduled for the rest of the year. Introduce yourselves and show them how friendly we really are. We hope our new members and all our old friends will come to the specially arranged tour of Bell Gardens in September.



Coming Soon!
October 21, 2012

Nationally known author, speaker, columnist and self acclaimed Hostaholic **Larry Tucker** presents:

“Confessions of a Hostaholic”

His column "Made in the Shade," appeared in the Memphis Tennessee Mid-South Hosta Society newsletter for many years. It chronicled his trials and triumphs in his shady urban garden and his later down-sizing move to a sunny patio garden. His columns were filled with his and his wife Shari's gardening adventures and advice, almost always told with tongue-in-cheek and great wit. Having read his recently published book, a compilation of his many columns, I can't wait to hear his presentation. It's sure to elicit a chuckle and smile or two.

Save the Date

St. Louis Hosta Society Holiday Party

It may be 107 degrees right now, but before you know it the snow will be flying. While you're marking your calendar for Larry Tucker's talk in October, skip ahead to December.

Reserve Sunday, December 2 at 1:00.

Join your fellow members in closing out the old gardening year. Plans are in the works. More information will come in the next newsletter.

If it's July, it must be the SLHS Member Auction



Event chairman and auctioneer Mike Schmitt gets the festivities off to a good start.

The bidding was spirited. There were bargains to be had. Despite weeks of record-breaking heat and lack of rain, the donated hostas looked great. They had obviously been given plenty of TLC.

Mike Schmitt, newly ordained auctioneer, and able assistant Sharon Schmitt described the various plants then scanned the crowd for eager bidders. Large and small, blue, gold and green – all found new homes. The afternoon flew past. Thanks to all who took time to dig and donate.



Members Jim Weidman and Dave Poos compare notes while Bruce Buehrig and Catherine Mayer check donations.



Several members take notes; others check the names of plants they might like to add to their collections;



while others visualize where particular plants might fit into their landscape.

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Members have their bidding plates, have discussed the merits of different plants and chosen favorites.



Everyone take your seats, the fun's about to start.

A Good Time Was Had by All

Attending a National convention is a terrific way to learn more about growing the plant we all love, to hear what's in the hosta hybridizing future and to see what plants compliment the lovely hosta. Better yet it's a fine opportunity to just look at great hosta, grown well.

In June, thirteen members of the St. Louis Hosta Society traveled south to Nashville, TN for the annual American Hosta Society Convention. Seven gardens were visited over a two day period. Each had its own style and character. They ranged from ones featuring lots of container grown hostas to ones spotlighting Koi ponds and

waterfalls. There were small spaces with raised beds and larger terraced gardens. All were filled with hostas, hostas and more – Japanese maples, ferns, hydrangeas, camellias, hellebores and wildflowers.

National and Regional Conventions offer great garden tours, many educational opportunities, the chance to make new friends and much, much more. Just ask the St. Louis contingent pictured above. Consider attending a convention next year:

AHS – Milwaukee, Wisconsin – June 13-15, 2013
MRHS – TBA 2013; Green Bay, Wisconsin in 2014



**The intrepid St. Louis contingent
Front: Cindy Michniok, Arlie and Nancy Tempel, Chester and Pam Wolkowitz;
Back: Jim and Phyllis Weidman, Mary Lou Farrow, Shirley Suntrup, Mark Michniok, Pat Payton, Jean Hudson, Martha Lafata**

Member Sale

Need a special tree to brighten a corner of your yard?

Member Kelly Hall has a selection of Japanese Maples for sale at her home. Kelly has been collecting these specimen trees for a number of years and is quite knowledgeable about the different cultivars and their preferred growing conditions.

To obtain a list or to view her selections

Email her: skyridgegarden@att.net

Or call: 314-605-0008.



SUMMERTIME BLUES

By Reldon Ramsey,

(Reprinted from the Michigan Hosta Happenings, November 2011)

Well, I'm gonna raise a fuss
I'm gonna raise a holler
'Bout workin' all summer
Just to try to earn a dollar
Well I went to the boss man
Tried to get a break
But the boss said 'no dice, son,
You gotta work late'
Sometimes I wonder what I'm a gonna do
'Cause there ain't no cure for
The Summertime Blues.

So begins a Rock and Roll Classic I first heard in 1968. There have been many versions, but the one I heard first remains my favorite. In 2002, I discovered hostas and the "*Summertime Blues*" took on an entirely new meaning. I quickly fell for the smoky blues of the Tardianas before I even learned the name. *H. 'Halcyon'* was a very early purchase.

The first four Tardianas resulted from a chance late season cross made by British plantsman, Eric Smith, between *H. 'Tardiflora'* (pod parent) and a young *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'* (pollen parent) blooming out of season. When I read that in *The Hosta Handbook*, I was both intrigued and smitten. I had to have them all. But finding any Tardiana in the garden centers of Southwest Iowa and Omaha was not easy. They were few and far between. So if I chanced upon one at a convention auction - even the least blue of them all, *H. 'Eric Smith'* - I snatched it up. Better yet - I traded for it. *H. 'Osprey'* flew into my garden via a trade with an online acquaintance.

After the evening picnic at Fred and Audra Wilson's during the 2004 AHS convention in Des Moines, I rode back on the bus sitting next to online friend and AHS Treasurer, Kim Larsen. We had a wide-ranging conversation on that relatively short ride back to the hotel, and I remember distinctly at one point that she said, "I think Eric Smith was smoking something. The Tardianas all look alike".

I was a little shocked. I didn't agree. (Although I'll admit that several do look very similar.) I found the statement troubling - mainly because I had just discovered that not everyone was as enamored with the Tardianas as Mark Zilis and I. That made me look at blues beyond the Tardiana group, but oftentimes I would discover that they were related in some way. The Classic Blues have for the most part been developed from *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'*, the Tokudamas, and the Tardianas.

Eric Smith developed the Tardianas (*H. 'Halcyon'*, *H. 'Dorset Blue'*, *H. 'Blue Moon'*, et al.) over several generations. Then Dr. Herb Benedict took what he had created and pushed the Tardiana blues even further. *H. 'Amethyst Chip'*, *H. 'Blue Ice'*, *H. 'Blue Jay'*, *H. 'Blue Sliver'*, and *H. 'Purple Verticulated Elf'* are five of his better known results.

At the same time, hybridizers were working with *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'*, *H. 'Tokudama'*, and related hostas to create the large/giant blues and the puckered/cupped blues. *H. 'Blue Angel'*, *H. 'Blue Mammoth'*, *H. 'Blue Vision'*, *H. 'Love Pat'* and *H. 'True Blue'* are just a few attributed to Paul Aden. Kevin Vaughn developed *H. 'Aqua Velva'*, *H. 'Blue Blazes'*, *H. 'Nancy Gill'*, *H. 'Polly Bishop'* (parent of six of his registered blue seedlings), and *H. 'Twisted Sister'*. *H. 'Azure Snow'* and *H. 'Powder Blue'* came from Peter Ruh while the Queen of Hostas, Mildred Seaver, gave us *H. 'Queen of the Seas'*, *H. 'Sea Blue Monster'*, and *H. 'Sea Grotto'*.

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Our fascination with blue hostas continues unabated and today many hybridizers have focused their efforts on the creation of new leaf shapes, forms, and textures with colored petioles and blue coloring that holds late into the growing season.

In researching the New Classic Blues, I found that many have one *Tardiana* parent or the parent is *Tardiana*-related. This includes all of the Don Dean and Hans Hansen introductions on this page. A large number have *H. sieboldiana* genes and several are *H. 'Tokudama'*- related. Species contributing to these cultivars are *H. pycnophylla*, *H. yingeri*, *H. hypoleuca*, and forms of *H. longipes* and *H. kikutii*. Some hybrids are the result of complex multi-generational crosses.

However, one of the most popular blue hostas of all time is a sport discovered by Emile Deckert at a nursery where he was working in the late 1980's. It was a chance discovery that has literally changed the hosta world. *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* was named Hosta of the Year in 2008 and continues to lead the way in the popularity of small and mini hosta.

This summer in one AHS convention garden filled with massive hosta specimens, one caught my eye and held it. Naturally it was blue - a mature specimen with deep coloring and a mesmerizing, twisting form. Doug Beilstein's *H. 'Singin' the Blues'* appeared to be swaying to the music. It wasn't on my radar at all and instantly it became a must-have. Blue hostas are like that. And not just for me. I recently posted this request online at the AHS Facebook page and the Hosta Seed Growers Forum: "Name 3 favorite blue hostas and tell why you like them." The response in just over 24 hours was overwhelming. Not surprisingly, *H. 'Halcyon'* and *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* were among the favorites.

- Mike Groothuis: "I like *H. 'Blue Hawaii'* for its upright habit and intensity of blue, *H. 'Fragrant Blue'* for its neat form and terrific seedlings (even though it's finicky). Lastly, I like *H. 'Halcyon'* for long-lasting blue and excellent growth."
- Eve Vanden Broek: "*H. 'Halcyon'* is always beautiful, *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'*, and *H. 'Topaz'* look so nice by the corner of my house."
- Lori Widman, AHS Facebook: "*H. 'Deep Blue Sea'*- it's got wow factor even though it isn't real big, *H. 'Dorset Blue'* - great for a smaller size blue and I just got *H. 'Silver Bay'* this year and it's already stunning."
- Ross Johnson: "Based on intensity and duration of the plant to hold the color I would say: #1- *H. 'Powderpuff'*, #2- *H. 'Purple Verticulated Elf'*, and #3- *H. 'Silver Bay'*"
- Tony Avent: *H. 'Blueper'*, *H. 'Dixie Cups'*, *H. 'Elvis Lives'*, *H. 'Gemstone'*, *H. 'Hillbilly Blues'*
- Bob 'Indiana Bob' Balitewicz: *H. 'Bluetonium'*, *H. 'Troubled Waters'*, *H. 'Yankee Blue'*
- Doug Beilstein: *H. 'Abraham Lincoln'*, *H. 'Cloud Burst'*, *H. 'Singin' the Blues'*
- Monty Carlson: *H. 'Arctic Blast'*, *H. 'Blue Cascade'*
- Mary Chastain: *H. 'Lakeside Beach Bum'*, *H. 'Lakeside Blue Jeans'*, *H. 'Lakeside Old Smokey'*
- Don Dean: *H. 'Astral Bliss'*, *H. 'Her Eyes Were Blue'*, *H. 'October Sky'*, *H. 'Parisian Silk'*, *H. 'Pewterware'*, *H. 'Silver Bay'*, *H. 'Titanium'*
- Hideko Gowen: *H. 'Blue My Mind'*, *H. 'Cutting Edge'*
- Hans Hansen: *H. 'High Tide'*, *H. 'Neptune'*, *H. 'Prairie Sky'*, *H. 'Restless Sea'*, *H. 'Silver Moon'*
- Greg Johnson: *H. 'Blue Haired Lady'*, *H. 'Moonlight Sonata'*, *H. 'Mystic Star'*, *H. 'Rhythm and Blues'*, *H. 'Topaz'*, *H. 'Twilight Time'*
- Ron Livingston: *H. 'Blue Dogwood'*, *H. 'Childhood Fantasy'*, *H. 'Conquistador'*, *H. 'Cosmic Blue'*, *H. 'Preconceived'*, *H. 'Prescribed'*, *H. 'Ritz'*
- Bill Meyer: *H. 'Blueberry Muffin'*, *H. 'Gay Paree'*
- Frank Nyikos: *H. 'Awakening Angel'*, *H. 'Little Boy'*, *H. 'Little Brother'*, *H. 'Powderpuff'*, *H. 'ProTek Tor'*, *H. 'Uncle John'*
- Olga Petryszyn: *H. 'Amos'*, *H. 'Blue Hawaii'*, *H. 'Chesapeake Bay'*, *H. 'Mississippi Delta'*
- Bev & Dave Stegeman: *H. 'Skylight'*, *H. 'Smoke Signals'*
- Danny Van Eechaute: *H. 'Dewed Steel'*, *H. 'Flemish Sky'*, *H. 'Sky Dancer'*
- Mark Zilis: *H. 'Azuretini'*, *H. 'Stormy Seas'*, *H. 'Tidewater'*, *H. 'Ultramarine'*, *H. 'Venetian Blue'*

COMPANION CORNER

Arborvitae Fern

Selaginella braunii

Spikemoss Family (Selaginellaceae)

Other Common Names: Club moss, spike moss

Height: 8-12 inches, Zone: 6-10



Even though this plant is known as an arborvitae fern, it is not a fern at all, but a pre-historic fern relative called a lycopod. A lycopod is described by the online dictionary as a primitive evergreen moss-like plant with spores in club-shaped strobiles. This description easily explains its other common names – club moss and spike moss. Since it produces spores, it is often mistaken for a fern.

A native of China, the plant's scaly foliage reminds one of an arborvitae or cedar. The fronds appear delicate but actually are quite tough and leathery. Although a slow grower, arborvitae ferns form a clump that reaches a height of 8 to 12 inches. According to internet articles, the plant will grow in zones 6 to 10 and should be situated in partial to full shade in moist, well-drained, organically rich soil. However, in my garden these plants are performing well in almost full sun tucked among the rocks surrounding my pond and waterfall.

In fall, the fronds turn a rusty color which changes to tan after hard frosts kill the above ground portion of the plant. I leave the fronds intact for winter interest. I've found that in my garden the plant is slow to show new growth in the spring. It also doesn't seem to matter whether I cut off the dead foliage or not. So I now leave it alone and the new leaves grow through the old quickly masking them.

The ferns can be divided at any time of year (although probably not in our recent 107 degree temperature). Little roots form along the stems, so they are easy to propagate by division. Just separate the mature clumps. The cuttings root easily when inserted in soil and kept damp. It is also possible to grow the plants from their spores. The plants would probably benefit from a spring dose of all purpose, slow-release fertilizer.

I fell in love with this plant when I observed it growing beautifully in the Tempel's hillside garden. Arlie and Nancy have placed them in several spots among their hostas and true ferns. Another fine display can be found nestled in the rocks surrounding Jean Hudson's and Pat Payton's pond. If you ever attend a garden walk at either of their homes, look for this little jewel.

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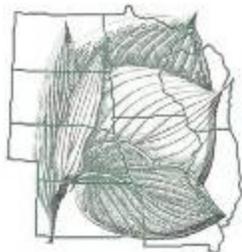
Dues:

\$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. Our mission is to promote education, research, development and enjoyment of Hosta.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter. This publication reports on events and information on Hostas in general.

Please mail a check made payable to MRHS to:

Kristine James
523 E Calhoun St.
Woodstock, IL 60098

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/>