



Volume 17, Issue 7

September, 2016



President Diana Plahn

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Hosta Lovers:

If you are like Craig and myself you have been watering like crazy. I hate to see that water bill come in!

Our Auction was a success thanks to all those who donated plants and all those who bid on them. I don't have a number for you, Kim, our treasurer should. We should get a report at the next meeting.

Not much else to say from my end, except kept watering. Eventually the heat will break.

Diana

**Whether the weather be fine
Or whether the weather be not,
Whether the weather be cold
Or whether the weather be hot,
We'll weather the weather
Whatever the weather,
Whether we like it or not.**

Anonymous British Poem

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 18	Meeting with Speaker Connie Alwood 'Birds in the Garden' 1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
October 16	Meeting with Speaker 'The Gourd Sisters' 1:00 PM, Creve Coeur Government Center
November TBA	Board Meeting TBA
December 4	Holiday Party TBA
January, 2017	Winter Conference Meeting Naperville, IL



Connie Alwood
photo from SLMG.com

September 18

Connie Alwood 'Birds in the Garden'

What's that brown bird sitting in my dogwood singing his heart out?
What bird made that mud and twig nest in the rafters of my deck?
What birds are taking their Saturday evening baths in my pond?
What kind of bird is sitting on the sundial eyeing the goldfish in my pond?

Connie Alwood has been a Master Gardener since 2004 and is the co-author of 'Birds in the St. Louis Area: Where and When to Find Them'. At our September meeting, Mr. Alwood will share his passion for our native bird population. He will teach us how to identify birds common, or maybe not so common, to our back yards. Do we look for a particular body type, color pattern or song characteristic? Does that bird reside here or is he just passing through? Is he young or old? What types of plants and shrubs should we have in our yards to attract desirable birds? Should we feed wild birds and if so, when and what? Many questions. Connie Alwood will give us the answers on Sunday afternoon, September 18.



Congratulations!

Phyllis and Jim Weidman

AHS President's Wall of Honor

The American Hosta Association created the President's Wall of Honor to thank those members of local societies who have worked tirelessly for many years to ensure the smooth running of their societies. Members nominated by their local societies have their names listed on the AHS web-site's Wall of Honor.

This year the St. Louis Hosta Society nominated two members who have spent countless hours enriching our society with their knowledge, humor, passion and boundless energy.

Phyllis, a past-president, spearheaded the effort to establish an AHS Display Garden at the Missouri Botanical Garden. She and Jim spend each Thursday at the Garden working with the MoBot staff to improve the presentation, hosta selection and overall health of the hosta beds. Each spring they organize a Work Day for our members to help with its maintenance. They also coordinate our big annual fundraiser, the Hosta Sale at the Botanical Garden.

Phyllis and Pam Wolkowitz created a DVD entitled "Hosta 101" which can be used by them or any other member to present talks to groups interested in growing our favorite plant. Phyllis often speaks to garden clubs spreading her love of hostas.

Jim was the chairman of the 2008 AHS National Convention held in St. Louis. He and Phyllis organized the Hosta Show at this summer's AHS National Convention. Both have held positions on the Board of the American Hosta Society.

A society is only as good as its members. It is an honor to have these two passionate people as a part of ours.



(Photos of the Weidman's backyard from Jim Weidman)

2016 AHS National Convention Open Garden

Elaine and Tom Fix



Elaine and Tom have opened their beautiful garden to members on several occasions, the last of which was this summer as a pre-convention tour garden. Elaine mentioned that a fair number of attendees made the drive to their Winfield Mo home.

When I decided to include pictures of the pre-convention gardens in the July newsletter, I found that I had none of their yard. Elaine has generously sent me a few and a description of their oasis.

Like many of us, the Fixes started out with a large number of *H. 'Royal Standard'*. Soon to follow were 300 plants from Gilbert Wild & Sons, "hosta by the handful - \$1.00 each". It took three days to get them all in the ground. Over the years, these plants were moved to create the borders around their beds.

Their first water bill when they tried to plant the two acre lawn was \$500. The water bill in 2006 when our society came to visit topped that at \$700. Elaine exclaimed "Did you know that soaker hoses put out seven gallons of water a minute!" Since then they have dug a well. Tom added pop up sprinkler heads that eliminated all those soaker hoses. But the result, as you can see from the pictures, was worth every penny.

Besides hosta, the garden includes a large *Ligularia japonica*, a gift from dear friend Pam Wolkowitz and a bed of Butterbur which is Tom's favorite. In the picture at left, Elaine displays a huge leaf of one of the Butterburs.

Many thanks to Elaine and Tom for opening their garden for our enjoyment.

Keeping up with Hosta Friends



While you all sweltered in the St. Louis July heat, the Weidmans and Pooses escaped to Silverdale Washington to visit former Society members Kelly and Jeff Hall.

Kelly, pictured at left with their dog Finn, keeps her hands dirty landscaping their new home with huge hydrangeas, the Japanese maples and confers that they both so love, and plants that only grow well in the cool Northwest. Jeff spends as much time as possible on their fishing boat 'Bite-N-Time'.

Kelly and Jeff send good wishes to all their St. Louis friends.





Member Auction – July

It was a typical July day, hot, humid and hazy. The perfect type of day to spend INSIDE.

The tables were lined with hostas and companions, donated by members, ready to be taken to new homes by successful bidders. Fears that there would be few plants this year due to the demands of the recent convention were unfounded. Our members, as always, came through.

Volunteers Mike Schmitt and Craig Plahn helped arrange cultivars in alphabetical order. Dave Poos prepares to record the winning bids and bidders. Jim Weidman reads the descriptions and prices of each plant as it was placed on the auction block.

Auctioneer Basil Honaker, with his able assistant Ted Piekutowski, checks a pot to determine how many eyes this hosta has. ***The Hosta Finder*** is used to determine a suggested retail selling price. This useful publication lists the cost per eye of hosta cultivars selling at nurseries across the nation. This information helps bidders decide how much they are willing to offer for the plant.

Many of the plants donated by members were not ones that are readily available at local nurseries. There were plants for every taste, from the smallish 'Little Miss Magic' and 'Lakeside Zinger' to a large 'Frozen Margarita' to the even larger. 'Sagae' and 'Blue Diamond'. There were golds and blues and variegations galore. Some were bargains, others, coveted by multiple members, commanded big bucks.

Thanks to all our members who brought and bought or just came to watch the bidding wars.



The 2016 Benedict Garden Performance Medal Winner

The Benedict Garden Performance Award recognizes hostas that demonstrate superior garden performance. The American Hosta Society states these are “garden worthy plants that have passed the test of time, that exhibit cultural superiority, and that can be appreciated in the landscape both from a distance and under close observation.”

The Benedict Medal is named in honor of Dr. Ralph Benedict, one of the great pioneers in hosta hybridization and a staunch promoter of hostas as the premier shade perennial. To be a winner, the cultivar must be selected by AHS Garden Performance Judges in different regions of the country. This is a multi-year process. These are hostas that perform well in the South as well as the North, on the coasts as well as the Midwest. These are the plants that we want in our gardens.

The 2016 Benedict Medal was awarded at the AHS Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Normally only one cultivar is selected each year. However, in 2016 there was a tie. The winners are **H. 'Blue Angel'** (F. Shaw – 1986) and **H. 'Sun Power'** (unknown – 1986).



H. 'Blue Angel'

bluestoneperennials.com

Past recipients are:

'Sum and Substance'
'Leading Lady'
'First Frost'
'Niagara Falls'
'Blue Mouse Ears'
'Sagae'
'June'
'One Man's Treasure'
'Whirlwind'
'Gold Standard'



H. 'Sun Power'

photo from www.perennialnursery.com

How many of these outstanding plants are in your garden?

Join the Fun - Visit us on Facebook

Earlier this summer, member Mike Schmitt suggested I mention in the newsletter that a Facebook page exists for the St. Louis Hosta Society. Mike set up the site and is the administrator. A number of our members regularly contribute to the site.

On your Facebook account, use the 'search Facebook' line and enter the name St. Louis Hosta Society. You do not need to join a group to browse the information. However, to reply to messages, post information or display your own photos, you must join the group. Simply click on 'JOIN GROUP'. The administrator will either accept or ignore your request. Once in the group, add the group to your favorites. The group name is 'St. Louis Hosta Society'.

People can also join the AHS Facebook page. In the search for friends, type in AHS Hosta Society and then browse the information or request to join their group.

Oh no, not again!

My husband and I returned from a ten day vacation to find our garden in fairly good condition considering the ferocious weather St. Louisans had endured in July. While away, our yard had been cared for by our daughter and three young grandsons. Imagine three small boys with water hoses – what fun!

Of course the weeds had grown a bit out of control. I have yet to instill in the boys the joys of pulling weeds. But as a whole all looked well.



Photo from www.hort.uwex.edu

A week later I noticed the leaves of two hostas were turning yellow. This is to be expected when temperatures are in the upper nineties and rain is a bit scarce. But these were different. On closer inspection my fears were confirmed. Southern Blight!

The leaves easily pulled free, were mushy at the base and covered with what look like tan mustard seeds. Each year I hope to escape its appearance, but usually have a few plants that suffer this fate. This year is to be no exception.

Southern Blight is caused by a fungus, *Sclerotium rolfsii*, which attacks hostas at their leaf bases. The fungus overwinters as mustard-seed-sized sclerotia. In warm, humid conditions (that's St. Louis) these round mustard seed looking objects germinate into spreading webs of white mycelia. They look like spider webs around the base of the petioles. This mycelia release oxalic acid that destroy cell walls, causing the leaf to collapse. The mycelia can also produce new sclerotia which remain dormant on leaf debris or in the soil. Thus the cycle can continue if left unchecked.

The fungus is in the soil, not the plant. Begin by removing all affected leaves, the mulch around the plant and any visible sclerotia. Place all this debris in the garbage can, not the recycling can. Some articles I've read recommend throwing the entire plant and several inches of soil away. Unless the plant is severely damaged or can be easily replaced I think this is too severe without first trying a bit of TLC.

Other articles recommend drenching the plant and surrounding soil with a 10% bleach solution. Some remove and soak the plant. I have used this remedy in the past with some success.

However, I have had excellent results with a fungicide: **Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose and Flower Care** or **Bayer Advanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs**. This is a systemic product that control insects and diseases, while fertilizing the plant. Read the label to make sure one of the active ingredients is **Tebuconazole**. There is no need to lift the plant, just saturate the crown and surrounding soil. I usually wait a couple of weeks, then repeat. I also retreat the plants the following spring regardless of whether or not they display symptoms.

One of these two plants is heavily infected and will probably lose all its leaves. As hot as the temperatures are and this late in the season, my *H.* 'Ghost Spirit' may go dormant or put out a few new leaves. I have yet to completely lose a hosta that I have treated in this manner. Let's hope this isn't the first.

If any of you have had success with other methods of control, please let me know. I will publish your results in another issue.

Fall is the time to fight voles!!!



Photo - www.hiltonpond.org

By Bob Solberg

(Reprinted from the October 2011 Issue of the Illinois Prairie Hosta Society newsletter)



Photo - www.volecontrol.com

Just when you thought you could take a break from lugging hoses and cutting flower scapes, suddenly it is Vole Season. So go down to your favorite outfitter and get your vole hunting license. Be sure to stock up on traps, peanut butter, and poison pellets. It is time to go to war!

September is the time that voles start to look for winter residences along your house foundation, among the landscape timbers or in that dry spot under your largest hosta. They are looking for nesting sites so that they can' successfully raise three or four generations of youngsters over the winter.

First, don't make it easy for the voles to move into your garden. I like to blow all the leaves off the garden; it usually takes a time or two unfortunately, removing any loose material that the voles can hide under during the winter. Pine straw is the perfect housing for pine voles. Don't save your garden clean-up until spring, you may find you have a lot less to fertilize.

Know where to look. Our voles love to start under the old beech tree by the front door and then cozy up to the sidewalk and the porch. Fresh holes will tip you off to 'their presence. Start looking now.

When you find a hole you can place a peanut butter baited trap over it, under a pot of course, or just put poison right down the hole. If the poison disappears then they have moved in, if not they may have moved on. A wider search may be necessary.

Steve Greene of *Hosta Finder* fame digs a pit to trap voles. The theory is that they jump in but can't jump out. It is baited and covered with a rock to keep larger mammals out. An entrance hole is left for the little critters. Others use PVC pipe traps curved into an "s" with plastic elbows.

These traps encourage voles to come to a "safe" (for hostas) location in the garden and then hopefully "take the bait". I do not know if I or my voles are that clever so I just seek and destroy. The most important thing is to start looking now and keep searching all winter long, especially as the snow melts.

I have had several customers that had a brazen vole attack this spring as soon as they planted their new hostas. I know because they had to come back and buy more. When you plant do not make your soil too loose. If you can dig in it with your hands, so can the voles. Gravel helps but do not do the entire bed, just encase your hostas in it.

Finally, products, like castor bean oil and moth balls do not successfully repel voles. I know many of you are a little squeamish when it comes to killing anything but extermination is the only way to deal with voles. A little habitat adjustment can't hurt either. Just don't hope they stay away. They have probably already moved in!

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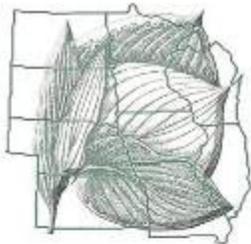
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Dues: \$7 per year, \$18 for three years
Family or Individual

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

Visit us on Facebook, **St. Louis Hosta Society**



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/>