

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

central illinois hosta society
www.cihshostaclub.org

june 2009
volume 15, issue 4

president's letter



A photo from the 2008 CIHS bus trip, right after a downpour at Anderson's Japanese Garden in Rockford, IL

What a year for hostas! Our hostas look great this year, better than ever! The rain came at the right time to give the hostas what they needed.

On the downside, many of our boxwoods took a hit this past winter. Bob thinks it got too cold too quick for the boxwood. We have already removed one and it is not looking good for 3 other ones we have in the front yard.

In May we enjoyed a lovely evening in Theresa Roth's garden in Morton. I enjoyed the feeling of her garden, her flowing beds and her Tri-color Beech! Theresa loves to garden, has a passion for plants and it shows in her garden! Thank you Theresa for inviting us over in May! The hostas we moved to our new garden last year have filled in and I can't wait to hit the Flower Factory on the CIHS bus trip to buy a couple of new hosta for the remaining area.

June is packed full of summer events and I hope your calendar is marked with all the CIHS hosta happenings. The bus trip will be over when you receive this letter. Our next event is June 16th, our monthly meeting at the Glover's in Peoria. Our hosta garden walk is the weekend of June 20th &

21st. Ten gardens, two days for \$10! Please invite friends, family and neighbors to check out the Garden Walk; it is a wonderful way to enjoy some beautiful gardens and introduce people to CIHS. Finally, take some time, kick back and relax in your garden!

Warmly,
Golda Ewalt, CIHS President

june meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 pm
Don & Cynthia Glover's Garden
3320 N. Bigelow Street, Peoria

We moved to our house 18 years ago and we brought one hosta with us. Ten years ago we had over a hundred hostas and now we have well over 225. We have become interested in who introduced the different hostas so last year we made new signs for all the hostas which included the name of the person who registered or introduced the hosta, the year and the year we added it to our garden.

Since we have a lot of sun in our yard, in addition to hostas, we have many perennials, an NBA garden with mostly native plants that are over 6 feet tall, a daylily bed, a rose garden, a vegetable garden, grass and weeds. It is obvious that we are plantaholics and not planaholics

Notice: To provide adequate time for viewing Host Gardens, each Garden will be open to visitors ½ hour early at 6:00, while the meeting starts at 6:30.

Directions: From the corner of War Memorial (Route 150) and Knoxville Avenue (Route 40), head west and turn at the first left onto Bigelow

hosta of the month

Hosta Reptillian Aptly named with warty scaly looking bluish gray foliage, cupped and puckered on the margins, with reddish petioles and flower stems, mature plants have a lot of character.

Hosta 'Bold Ruffles' A large hosta, forming a stiff, upright mound of blue-grey, crumpled & puckered leaves with very distinct rippled edges; Pest resistant. Bell shaped white flowers in mid summer. Will tolerate some sun but best look is in dappled to full shade.

Hosta 'Salute' is a small hosta with narrow blue, wavy, ovate, pointed leaves of heavy substance and prominent veins. 10-11" in height and spread it forms an upright clump of pointed blue leaves that resemble a dwarf 'Krossa Regal.'

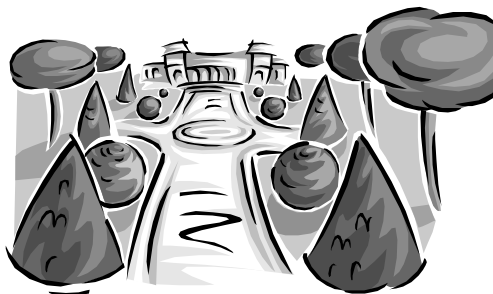
Hosta 'Chiquita' is early to emerge and a brilliant splash of yellow. Bright yellow lanceolate/ovate leaves fading to lime green by late summer. Lavender flowers mid-summer. Extremely bright spring color for your garden.

Hosta 'Key West' is a member of Olga Petryszyn's "Americana Series.," It is a cross between *H. nigrescens* 'Elatior' and 'High Noon'. The bright gold, heart-shaped leaves are very large and form a clump of foliage that when mature will reach over six feet across. Bright filtered shade draws out the most intense gold coloration. Lavender flowers top the clump in early summer.

(Donated by Bob Solberg) Hosta 'Crumb Cake' ('Cinnamon Sticks' X 'Cracker Crumbs') - Small, (4" X 12") This rapidly growing hosta makes a very tight flat mound of honey-gold round leaves with mahogany petioles that are shiny, wonderfully wavy, and have very good substance. Its mahogany scapes have pretty lavender flowers in July.

By Douglas

cihs garden walk June 20-21st



The gardens included in the walk are:

Debbie Dietrich's Garden, 2 West Beech Street, Chillicothe
Michael Higgins & Lynette Schurtz's Garden, next to the Dietrich Garden
Jeanette & Tom Hoerr's Garden, 2722 West Cedar Hills Dr., Dunlap
Sandy Svob's Garden, 128 W. Northridge Lane, Peoria
Don & Cynthia Glover's Garden, 3320 North Bigelow, Peoria
Dan Callahan's Garden, 439 North Malvern Lane, Peoria
Jalayne & Bob Lapke's Garden, 5104 North Merrimac Avenue, Peoria
Carolyn & Don Jones' Garden, 400 Shady Knolls Drive, East Peoria
Sue Eckhoff's Garden, 11846 Ropp Road, Tremont
Lee Gardens, 25986 Sauder Road, Tremont (Bonus Garden)

Also, included with the walk, we will conduct a plant sale, featuring some very nice hosta from Solberg's Green Hill Farm (list on page 3). Of course, CIHS Members will get an opportunity to shop early; stay tuned for more details.

Please contact John Machens, Garden Walk Chair, or sign up at the next meeting if you want to help host a garden. You will receive a free ticket for your help in hosting a garden. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at any of the gardens. This will be our primary fundraiser for the club this year, so encourage your friends and neighbors to go on the garden walk. Thank you to all those participating; we have some really wonderful gardens and generous gardeners in the club.

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Kildeer, IL 60047

American Hosta Society
\$30 individual, \$57/2 years
\$34 family, \$62/2 years
Send dues to:
Sandie Markland
AHS Membership Secretary
8702 Pinnacle Rock Court
Lorton, VA 22079-3029

garden walk... solberg hosta

These hosta, from Bob Solberg, will be available for sale at the Svob Garden during the Garden Walk. As members of CIHS you don't have to wait!!! Another perk...as a CIHS Member, you can shop early!!! **The night of the June Meeting (June 16th), they are available to members from 4-6pm at Luthy Botanical Garden.** Sales will be cash or check only.

Hosta 'Baby Blue Eyes' (Solberg 2006) - ('Cody' X 'Dorset Blue') - Mini-Small, (6" X 16") This little hosta is a darling. It is a very cute tight, flat mound of heart-shaped pretty blue leaves that grows fast. Not too big for a large trough, it is also tough enough to show off in the garden. Light lavender flowers on short scapes in July. **\$12**

Hosta 'Barbara May' (Solberg 2004) - [(H. pycnophylla X 'Harvest Dandy') X ('Blue Arrow' X 'Sea Fire')] - Medium, (14" X 30") This beautiful blue hosta has everything you want, great bright blue color with abundant white wax on the top and bottom of the leaves, interesting, almost triangular leaves with delicately ruffled margins, strong veins and good substance. A "long season" hosta that holds that blue color well, producing light lavender flowers in July and August. **\$15**

Hosta 'Corkscrew' (Solberg 2003) - ('Tortifrons' X 'One Man's Treasure') - Small, (9" X 22") Like its parent, 'Tortifrons', the leaves are dark green and contorted but unlike its parent, it grows very well making a full clump quickly. The small clump of upright and arching twisted, shiny dark green leaves produces lavender flowers in September and October, frequently on forked scapes. Winner of 2002 Best Seedling Award at First Look. One of a kind! **\$15**

Hosta 'Dragon's Eye' (W. Lefever, Solberg 2008) - ('Riptide' seedling) - Large, (22" X 36" or more) This large hosta has frosty, undulating gray-green leaves with tall purple petioles and very waxy white leaf backs. Lavender flowers appear on waxy purple scapes in August. Good in the garden or as part of your breeding program, (sets seed). **\$16**

Hosta 'Fat Cat' (D. & J. Ward 1996) - ('Sage' seedling) - Large, (29" X 60") A large yellow gold hosta is always impressive, just like a sleeping, fat yellow cat. This hosta has large almost round deep yellow leaves and some nice quilting at maturity. The near white flowers bloom in June. **\$16**

Hosta 'Friends' (B. Scott, G. R. Goodwin 2007) - ('Spritzer' seedling) - Small, (6" X 15") A very friendly little hosta that has pretty wavy and slightly twisted, narrow yellow leaves. A fast growing hosta that has bright

lavender flowers in August. The perfect "pass along hosta". **\$20**

Hosta 'Frost Giant' (W. Lefever, Solberg 2008) - ('Galaxy' seedling) - Large, (28" X 66" or more) Big blue-green, sturdy, leaves that have a bright yellow margin that becomes cream in late summer make this a very stately hosta. Straight scapes produce near white flowers in June. A nice addition for that big hole in the back of the bed. **\$16**

Hosta 'Lime Smoothie' (W. Lefever, Solberg 2008) - ('Galaxy' seedling) - Large, (22" X 48") This is not just another variegated hosta! Its undulating leaves have waxy green centers and broad, lime green borders that become cream colored in late summer, a very unique coloration. Light lavender flowers in June and July. **\$16**

Hosta 'Ocean Isle' (Chopko 2006) - (Sport of 'El Dorado') - Large, (22" X 48") This impressive hosta has long, thin pointed, wavy blue-green leaves with a wide, bright gold margin. The leaf center becomes a shiny, rich green color by mid-summer. It has very good substance, a high vein count, and light lavender flowers in June and July. Winner of Best Sport at 2004 First Look. It becomes better with age. **\$16**

Hosta 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' (Solberg 2008) - ('Whiskey Sour' X sibling) - Medium (12" X 26") I have been hybridizing hostas that are very bright, translucent yellow with bright red, not purple, petioles. This is one of my best to date. It makes a medium clump of "screaming yellow" foliage that holds that color well in morning sun and produces pretty lavender flowers in July and August. A great container hosta that shows off its bright red petioles well. A healthy solution to your hosta cravings. **EXCLUSIVE CLUB PLANT, SOLD ONLY TO CLUBS! \$40**

2009 meetings & events

June 24-27, 2009

AHS National Convention
Lansing, Michigan

Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 pm
Carol Koch's Garden
456 S. Montana, Morton

Tuesday, August 18, 6:30 pm
Luthy Botanical Garden
2218 N. Pospect, at corner of Gift & Prospect; Peoria

Tuesday, September 15, 6:00 pm
Annual Banquet
(note earlier time)
Speaker: Mark Zilis

Plant Bingo!!!!!!!



June 18th

616 West David Street, Morton
Knights of Columbus Hall, behind Post Office

Doors open at 6pm, play starts at 6:30pm

Play bingo and win plants and garden related prizes
Bring your own snacks

Sponsored by Tazewell County Master Gardeners

Eric Smith
2008 Hosta Hybridizer

This is a fascinating article...Golda and I had the opportunity to visit Hadspen Garden where many of his introductions were displayed in all their grandeur. We had a great cup of tea and marveled over the beautiful little nursery.

It would difficult to build a good hosta collection today without being influenced by the hybridizing efforts of Eric Smith. He was the first person responsible for combining the blue color of the large *H. sieboldiana* type hostas with the smaller more landscape friendly *Hosta 'Tardiflora'*.

Eric Smith was born in 1917 in Southhampton, England, to a middle-class family. His father was a banker. He was educated at a local school until it closed, then home schooled. He joined the army in 1940 to fight in World War II and was stationed in Southern Italy. He was educated as an architect and became an assistant with Dale & Tuttle in Southampton for 4 years.

Smith's love of plants led him to be an herbaceous plant propagator at Hillier Nursery in Winchester. It is interesting to note he rode his bicycle to work each day and arrived at 7:15 A.M. It was a 15 mile trip! A dedicated employee, it is said that he worked right through lunch time. Hillier employees commented on his ability to spot a seedling with good potential or notice a plant throwing a variegated sport.

It was at Hillier's in the fall of 1961 during his first year that Eric Smith spotted *Hosta sieboldiana* (believed to be 'Elegans') in bloom. This was highly unusual as *Hosta sieboldiana* traditionally flowers in

early summer (July). *H. 'Tardiflora'* was also flowering at Hillier's as it usually bloomed late September into October.

Being a gifted plantsman, Smith realized the value of a cross between the two hostas, and transferred pollen from *H. sieboldiana* 'Elegans' onto *H. 'Tardiflora'*. He germinated seeds and raised 30 seedlings. The progeny were named "Tardianas", using the first part of 'Tardiflora' and the last part of *Hosta sieboldiana*.

The Hostas 'Halcyon' and 'Happiness' are from this initial cross. Smith went on to intercross the first generation of Tardiana hybrids and named the following from his crosses: 'Blue Moon', 'Harmony', 'Dorset Blue', 'Blue Skies', 'Hadspen Blue', 'Blue Dimples', 'Blue Wedgwood', 'Hadspen Heron', and 'Blue Diamond'.

Smith tried repeating the original cross (*Tardiflora* x *H. sieboldiana*), but was never successful. Mike Shadrack notes Eric Smith pollinated with a rabbit's tail and kept meticulous records. Each plant was labeled with a number that corresponded to entries in a book.

After his early success with hosta breeding Eric left Hillier's in 1964 and returned to Dale & Tuttle. In 1965 Smith partnered with Jim Archibald and formed "The Planstmen" nursery in Dorset specializing in rare plants. There were cases where people would happily travel a hundred miles to purchase unique plants from him. Smith devoted his energy to developing new plants and Jim concentrated on the office work, catalog, shipping and maintenance.

In addition to continued interest in hostas, Eric Smith worked with *Kniphofias*, *Bergenias*, *Crocasmia*, *Euphorbias*, and *Agapanthus*. Several selections, including *Kniphofia* 'Torch Bearer', *Bergenia* 'Brahms', *Anemone* 'Hadspen Abundance', and *Agapanthus* 'Blue Moon', are plants that he introduced that later received awards from the Royal Horticultural Society Wisley perennial trials. *Sedum* 'Sunset Cloud', *Rheum* 'Red Herald', *Brunnera* 'Hadspen Cream', and *Symphytum* 'Goldsmith' are other Smith introductions. The last two were developed from diligently stabilizing variegation patterns from a few initial streaks.

Smith was also interested in Hellebores. He initially crossed *H. sternii* with *H. niger* while at Hillier's. The resulting seedling was the fantastic plant with dark marbled leaves and rose-flushed flowers that now bears his name: *Helleborus x ericsmithii*. He is credited as the first individual to cross the two species. His work with additional *Helleborus* species while at Dorset was significant. **continued on page 5**

His selections 'Sirius', 'Cosmos' and 'Aquarius' reflect his interest in astrology and remain good garden plants even today.

Following the closure of "The Plantsmen" nursery in 1975, Smith worked for Penelope Hobhouse at Hadspen House, in Somerset, as Head Gardener and Propagator for five years. He continued working with his hostas, further selecting plants from seedlings developed at Dorset.

Eric retired to Southampton to live with his brother, Ronald, in the family's home after dispersing his hosta collection. He passed away in March of 1986.

By all accounts Eric was shy and private. Diana Grenfell stated, "He preferred to retire behind his plants rather than compete in the hassle of commerce and publicity. Totally shunning the limelight, he sometimes allowed others to reap the pleasures and benefits of the plants he raised Plants dominated his life."

Eric Smith's legacy lives on through his Tardiana Group hostas. Even after over twenty years since his passing, many of his hostas are widely grown today. The popular *H.* 'June', 'Devon Green', and 'First Frost' are sports of 'Halcyon'; they would not be with us today were it not for his work.

Hosta 'Halcyon' remains the benchmark in which the new mid-sized blue hosta seedlings are judged. The Tardiana Group as a whole are excellent garden subjects. Their nice size, blue coloration and slug resistance lend themselves to many landscape uses.

Special thanks for assistance from Mike Shadrack, Diana Grenfell and Warren Pollock.

By **Hans Hansen** of Shady Oaks Nursery and furnished to MHS by Ron Dow...thus it is now being reprinted from the Maine Hosta Society Newsletter...

Bill's "Hidden Pot" Trick

I recently came across an article authored by Bill Jarvis, a Houston, Texas hobbyist / hybridizer of daylilies, entitled Bill's "Hidden Pot" Trick, see <http://www.ofts.com/bill/hidpot.html>

I'm guessing most of you reading this are thinking Bill's article is about placing potted plants in the garden to shield them from aggressive tree roots and/or voles, as this is a trick often used by hosta enthusiasts. If so, you are incorrect.

Bill's use of plastic nursery pots is unlike any I can remember hearing of. Although the writing specifically pertained to daylilies, the same basic principles could apply to other plants, including hostas.

He purchased a quantity of 5-gallon black plastic pots, cut off the bottom 2/3 of each, which left a circular plastic ring about 4-5 inches deep (see picture). He then placed a ring around each individual clump of daylilies, sinking it about half way into the dirt. When finished, the daylilies looked like they were growing in pots which had been sunk in the ground.

I'm guessing most hosta gardeners wouldn't like this appearance, but with a layer of mulch outside the rings, combined with seasonal foliage maturation, the rings would virtually disappear.

Bill's stated advantages include:

- When watering daylilies, water would run down to the lower places in the bed resulting in uneven distribution. The ring around the plant now prevents the water from leaving the area where the roots are concentrated. *Note: Even after a good rain, the root zone under some hostas' foliage often remains dry.*
 - In the spring, Bill liked to give his lilies a boost by applying a tea made from fish emulsion and other organic nutrients. This liquid is applied to the roots of each clump individually and if applied too fast, would drain away from the plant before it could sink into the soil. He now can just dump in the required amount quickly and go on to the next plant. The ring keeps the formula from draining away and it sinks right down to the roots. *Note: Haven't we all experienced this dilemma?*
 - According to Bill, when a daylily becomes infected by crown rot, completely soaking the roots with the systemic fungicide Subdue is necessary to save the plant. The ring allows him to quickly make sure the roots get completely drenched.
 - The final benefit is to keep the mulch from getting too close to the plant. *Note: Keeping mulch away from the base of hostas helps to prevent Crown Rot and/or Petiole Rot.*
- continued on page 6**



If not receptive to purchasing 5-gallon pots, rings cut from smaller pots can be used for small and mini hostas.

For those of you that are willing to try this technique on just a few plants, I suggest first trying this on hostas that are believed to need just a little extra attention to grow well. Also, those gardening on slopes may find this method particularly advantageous.

A number of gardeners save plastic nursery pots for various reasons and would likely be happy to share. Another way to recycle nursery pots is to donate them to Luthy Botanical Gardens. They accept 6", 1 gallon and 2 gallon pots. Contact Bob Streitmatter for more details.

By Ray Rodgers

How about a Cutting Garden?

Of course you don't have time to even *plan* a cutting garden, let alone plant the flowers, water, weed, and fend off the rodents. But there's a little Martha Stewart in us all, isn't there? A vase of colorful *real* plant material artfully arranged can create a very happy experience in your home. (You know this!)

So I thought I would spotlight some flowers, plants, and shrubs that you might already have growing in your garden that take well to a vase. I'm including some tips, too.

Allium, phlox, bee balm, columbine, daisies, astilbe, bleeding hearts, coral bell, coneflower, hellebores, clematis, daffodils, peonies (picked as buds), cosmos, dahlias, grasses—of course I can't list them all here. But don't forget your shrubs as you cast your eye for candidates: forsythia, caryopteris, barberry, beautyberry, golden privet...you know them well.

If you wish, toss seeds of appropriate annuals out amongst your perennials. Suggestions include cornflowers, Shirley poppies, calendula, calliopsis, cosmos, snow-on-the-mountain, teasel, celosia, amaranthus, cleome, ageratum, marigolds, sunflowers, China Asters, scabiosa, tithonia, zinnia, nasturtium, hyacinth bean and castor bean.

Just as you might for an outdoor container or window box, keep in mind the "thrillers, fillers and spillers" mantra of design as you gather material. (I frequently

use hosta leaves for a dramatic, yet mellow, filler. If this is a horrible confession, please Don't mention it to anyone.)

Some tips:

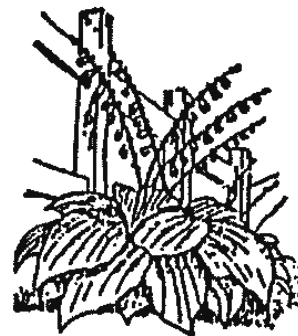
- Cut in the morning if possible, else in late afternoon when it's cooler.
- Flowers keep best when cut with a sharp knife (unserrated) to avoid squashing the stem.
- After cutting, immediately put flowers in lukewarm, not cold, water. Some flowers like dahlias should be completely submerged.
- Once in the house, make a new stem-end cut while holding it under water. (This prevents air from getting into the stem and blocking the flow of water.)
- Always make a cut on a slant, as it exposes more stem surface area
- Remove leaves that will be under water in the arrangement, but do not remove thorns from roses as it tends to shorten their life
- Life support for cut flowers includes an antibacterial agent, an acidifier, and sugar for food. You can use a commercial product or make your own (e.g., one part lemon-lime soda (not diet) to 3 parts water. To each quart of this solution, add 1/4 teaspoon bleach. Thereafter, add 1/4 teaspoon bleach to the vase after each 4 days of use.)

An excellent book that addresses beginners and small gardens as well as people willing to be professionals or those with all-out estates is *An American Cutting Garden*, "a primer for growing cut flowers where summers are hot and winters are cold" by Suzanne McIntire. (I like to buy used hardcover books online at www.bookfinder.com.)

So take your cutting shears out with you as you wander about and do a serendipitous gathering of lovely things. Experiment! Have fun! Be delighted! Smile a lot!

By Diann Thoma, reprinted from the April 2009 issue of the Prairie Hosta Society newsletter

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