



Volume 25, Issue 8

October, 2024

A Word from Your Editor

Yesterday I received in my PC's Inbox the latest copy of the American Hosta Society's eNewsletter. Its arrival is always a welcome sight nestled among political solicitations and Amazon ads. This online magazine is filled with articles of interest to the hosta grower, from scientific dissertations to book reviews. This issue is especially meaningful to me.

Two of the articles dealt with the task of "down-sizing" a garden that has become too much to maintain. This was a decision my husband and I faced this summer. Looking at the age of the membership of our various garden clubs, I realize it is a decision many others will be facing too. Our gardening space will decrease from three quarters of an acre to an eleven square foot balcony. That's down-sizing.

Several other articles in the eNewsletter described different ways to grow and over-winter hostas in pots. That is something we can do on our balcony. There is plenty of room for a handful, but what handful. Which of our collection of over 750 cultivars would make the journey with us.

The first choice was obvious to us both. *H.* 'Best Friend', named in honor of a dear friend Jim Weidman, had to come. My husband selected his favorite, 'El Nino', because it looks outstanding in a ceramic pot given to us one Christmas by our daughter. The last hosta we purchased last spring, before this moving idea took control of our brains, was 'Wild Imagination'. I thought this an apt description of this next phase of our life. The last selected was 'Blood, Sweat and Tears'. This was given to all our garden hosts during the 2008 AHS National Convention by hybridizer Don Dean. That title sums up most of our gardening experiences – that along with immeasurable joy and great friendships.

Look around your garden; think about your hostas. What ones would you take?



H. 'El Nino' - photo from landofthegiantshostafarm.com



H. 'Blood, Sweat and Tears' photo from plantsgalore.com



H. 'Wild Imagination' photo from waltersgarden.com

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 20

**Meeting with Speaker Kathie Soehngen
Presentation on the Jewel Box**

Note Location change

**2:00 PM, Des Peres Lodge
1050 Des Peres Rd., Des Peres, MO 63130**

November

**Board Meeting
Time and location TBD**

February 21-22 2025

**Midwest Regional Society Winter Symposium
Milwaukee, WI**

June 5 – 7, 2025

**AHS National Convention and
Midwest Regional Hosta Convention
(combined conventions)
Peoria, IL**

NOTE: This is the last newsletter of 2024

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Rebecca Hunsel of St. Louis, MO
Matthew and Brooke Kalisiak of Sunset Hills, MO
Colin Keller of St. Louis, MO
Lori and Joseph Markham of Kirkwood, MO

It is exciting to have you as new members in our society. We hope that you will be able to join us at the next and last meeting of the year. This will be the last chance this year that current members can get to know you.

Fall Board Meeting - November

**Be a part of the action! Join in the fun!
See what happens behind the scenes. Make your wishes known.**

All members are invited to join our Board members at the 2025 planning meeting. The date, time and location have not yet been set. You will receive an email with this information. The meeting agenda includes such items as setting 2025 meeting dates, establishing the 2025 budget, brain-storming about possible speakers and scheduling other interesting events.

Let the Board know what you want for your Society in 2025. Get to know your Board members – they are open to your ideas. They're really a lot of fun to be around, are enthusiastic about gardening, hostas and your Society, and are quite generous with their time and expertise. Don't worry; they won't assign you a task if you come.

October 20, 2:00 PM
Des Peres Lodge
1050 Des Peres Road
Des Peres, MO 63130

Kathie Soehngen
'The Story of Forest Park's Jewel Box'

Anyone who has driven through Forest Park has noticed this distinctive Art Deco building with the three reflecting pools in front. The Jewel Box in Forest Park is one of the most beautiful sites in St. Louis now primarily used for business banquets, wedding ceremonies and receptions.

But was that always so? Originally built in the 1930s, what was the vision of its creator? How was it built – what design and materials were used that enabled it to survive the complexities of St. Louis weather? How is it maintained and where does the funding come from?

Hosta society member, Kathie Soehngen has all the answers. Kathie is quite active not only in our society but also in the St. Louis Water Gardening Society. These are the people responsible for the beautiful water lilies in the three pools in front of the Jewel Box structure. Much work goes into keeping these plantings healthy and in bloom throughout the summer.

Join fellow members at the Des Peres Lodge to hear the history of this St. Louis treasure.

Directions to Des Peres Lodge:

From the intersection of I-44 and I-270, travel north on I-270 toward Chicago. After 2.8 miles, take Exit 8 for Dougherty Ferry Road, then turn left. Travel 0.3 miles. Turn right onto Des Peres Road/Old Des Peres Road. After 1.2 miles The Des Peres Lodge is on the right.

From the intersection of I-64/40 and I-270, travel south toward Des Peres. Take Exit 9 for MO-100 W/Manchester Rd. Keep right at the fork, follow the signs for MO-100W/Manchester Rd W. Merge onto MO-100W/Manchester Rd. After 0.2 miles, take the Des Peres Rd exit. Turn right onto Des Peres Rd. After 0.4 miles, The Des Peres Lodge is on the left.



Kathie Soehngen, center, during a garden walk in her beautiful back yard



The Jewel Box – photo from web-site

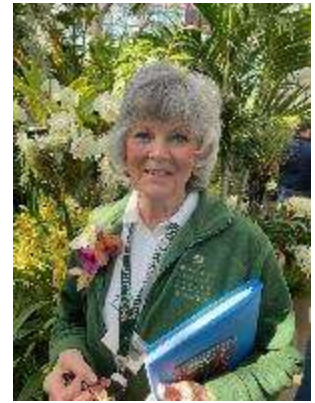


Inside the Jewel Box, set for a wedding reception

August meeting - Ginny Johnson

'Making the connection: How indigenous American people use native plants'

As I lie stretched out on the sofa recuperating from a cold, perhaps I should recall words from our August speaker Ginny Johnson and go brew myself a cup of elderberry tea. If my fever doesn't break soon maybe I should grind the leaves of a sassafras plant and make a potent drink. Then there is purple coneflower which seems to be a cure for most anything that ails you.



Ginny Johnson

Ginny has spent much time researching the use of native plants by indigenous American peoples to treat many common ailments. She has found that Mother Nature has a recipe for everything. She chose 40 of the more popular and readily available plants to present to us. Some of us probably have these growing in our gardens today. I know that I can find the common dandelion sprouting between my daylilies and hostas.

The Indians knew a great deal about plants. They used the plants around them not only to heal the body but to purify the spirit and bring balance to their lives and surroundings. Plants were a gift from the Creator. Medicine men and women sought the help of the spirit world to treat aches and pains and restore harmony to their lives. They learned their uses by watching the wild life around them. How did animals react after eating certain plants?

After looking at Ginny's presentation notes, I noticed that most of the plants listed contained toxins or had bad side-effects if not prepared correctly. On second thought I think I will just swallow a couple of aspirins, pull the blanket over my head and sleep.



Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)



Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)



Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)



Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



Dandelion (*Taraxacum*)

September – Bob Solberg

At one time or another in our lives, we have all tried our hand at propagating plants. Maybe it's rooting a cutting from a special begonia, starting in water a leaf from our grandmother's African violet, scattering seeds saved from last year's poppies or planting seeds harvested from our own hybridized daylilies or iris. Some attempts are quick and easy resulting in beautiful plants or blooms the next year, others take a bit more time. What's the scoop on hostas? How does Bob Solberg do it?

In September, society members were privileged to hear Bob's story. He is one of the leading introducers of new hosts in the world. His nursery, Green Hill Farm, sells both retail and wholesale, shipping plants nationally and international to nurseries, hosta clubs and individual collectors all year long. From seed to selling table, his nursery is one of the few that does it all.

First step is evaluation. Finding a new cultivar that is destined to be a good plant. Besides being different than its predecessors and looking good, it must grow well preferably in all parts of the country. In addition to searching his own stock of seedlings, Bob is asked by other hybridizers to cast a critical eye on their efforts. He spends much time traveling the country visiting gardens.

Once a candidate is found, how does he make more. Bob explained the process of division either in our own gardens or in a tissue culture lab. Anyone with a fork and a sharp knife can divide a hosta. But should we? Bob recommends not dividing our large hostas – it takes years for them to regain their size and some never do. Divide the small, fast-growing ones instead. Leave at least two to three divisions on each piece removed and replant at least six weeks before the first hard frost. The very best time to divide is middle to late August.

How long does the complete process take? The first year is spent making the cross and hoping that a seed pod develops. Then it requires three years to grow the seeds and evaluate all the resulting seedlings. After three years, those selected are sent to a tissue culture lab for reproduction. The lab processing takes at least two more years. The new plantlets are returned to Bob, bare-root sealed in plastic bags to eliminate chances for contamination. Bob then has only hours to unpack and pot up plants. Eight to twelve weeks later, the small plants, now called liners, can be shipped. So, after only seven years, that seed might make it to a sales table. It's a wonder that there are as many hostas available as there are.

Bob is passionate about understanding the science behind hosta growing and educating others. We quickly came to appreciate the amount of time, hard work, long hours and persistence that is required to produce a new introduction. It was evident that Bob loves what he does. He left us with his mantra "Hostas are supposed to be fun!"



New introduction from Bob Solberg - *H.* 'Ruby Earrings'

Origin of the Society

By Bruce Buehrig



Did you say saltwater fish? Yes!!! Saltwater fish caused the formation of the St. Louis Hosta Society.

Bruce and Chick Buehrig were having a saltwater aquarium installed by Dave Bennett of Bennett Tropical Fish. While working on the installation of the fish tank, Dave, also an avid gardener, noticed that the Buehrigs had a bunch of hostas growing in their garden. One of Dave's other clients was Brad Shanker (DDS), and his wife Debbie. Dave thought Brad and Bruce should meet because of their mutual interests in fish and hostas. Brad and I had a telephone conversation and then in December, 1992, we met in person and agreed to attempt the formation of a hosta club in St. Louis, Missouri.

The American Hosta Society was contacted seeking information concerning the requirements needed to be recognized as an official hosta club in St. Louis, Missouri. At that time the AHS didn't have requirements or applications for groups seeking official recognition by the AHS. Only individual memberships were accepted.

Arlie and Nancy Tempel, Duane Cookson, and Gene Fink, all gardeners and patients of Brad Shanker, were intimately involved in the club start up. Our first organizational meeting was held at the Missouri Botanical Garden on December 11, 1992. Letters had been sent to iris and daylily clubs as well as to other interested gardeners about joining a new hosta club. A larger than expected group assembled and we were able to launch the club. Brad Shanker was named President and Duane Cookson, Vice President. Many of our charter members were Brad's dental patients and/or professional associates as were Craig (DDS) and Diana (DDS) Plahn.

Initially the club's activities were extremely limited until solid footing could be established. It was agreed to have a regular business meeting and a member garden tour once each year. Most of our early meetings centered around sharing and trading hostas. Back in those days tissue culture wasn't known and new hostas were expensive ranging in price from \$50 to \$250 per division. By sharing plants, collections could be more rapidly increased. Only a few nurseries in St. Louis carried hostas but Minner's Nursery was the place to go. They carried the largest selection in town.

Charter members became very involved and sought, as well as encouraged, more activity in the organization. Among those members who were influential in creating a more active group were Arlie and Nancy Tempel, Joan and Larry Hummel, and Bob Squire. They sought to move the club forward from an informally organized social club into the St. Louis Hosta Society we know today.

Our first two years' meetings were held at members houses and gardens. As the club took root more meetings with speakers, garden tours, and promoting regional and national conventions created a more robust club. Successive leadership has continued to make the dynamic club we enjoy today.



The Nation's Largest Hosta Event June 19-21, 2025

"Hosta Double Feature"

The American Hosta Society national convention is organized by a group of hosta enthusiasts. We are excited to have you join us to celebrate the friendship plant and to share our passion for gardening. This year, we are combining the AHS national convention with the Midwest Region convention. The convention is being hosted by the Central Illinois Hosta Society.

Attendees get a chance to tour multiple private and/or public gardens; attend educational seminars; compete in the accredited Hosta Show; attend Hosta Judges Clinics; shop vendors featuring the latest and greatest hosta additions, companion plants or garden-themed accessories; bid in the AHS auction for that unique "must have" hosta; and best of all, get together with old friends and make new ones in Hostatality.

Conventions are a lot of fun. Just ask Gene Pulliam and David Birenbaum who recently experienced their first. It's a great opportunity to meet some of the hybridizers behind your favorite plants. The tour gardens bound with ideas that you can incorporate into your own gardens. The vending tables are a candy store for hosta lovers. Being in Peoria Illinois, just a few hours' drive from St. Louis, this is the perfect opportunity for members of our society to experience the excitement of a national event. Mark your calendars for next June.



Little did I realize in 2008 when I answered Arlie Tempel's plea for a new newsletter editor that I would still be at the reins 17 years later. But the time has come to pass my quill and inkwell down to younger and more technical savvy hands.

I thank all of you for your tolerance of misspellings, grammatical errors and any unflattering snapshots I may have taken of you over the years. I am grateful for your constant support, encouragement and many appreciative words.

Regards, Joan

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St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

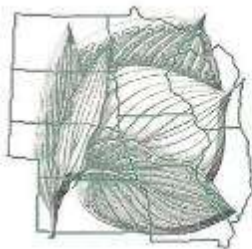
Contact: Lynn Teller
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Crestwood, MO 63126
Lynn.teller@gmail.com

Dues: \$10 per year, \$20 for three years
Individual or Household

Meetings held at Commerce Bank Center for Science Education (CBEC), 4651 Shaw Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63110 unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: www.stlhosta.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:

Barry Ankney, AHS Membership Secretary
1104 Oxford Ct
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

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/>