



# Shady Notes

Volume 23, Issue 8

September, 2022



President  
Phyllis Weidman

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We have had the privilege of visiting great gardens this year. We thank everyone for that privilege. I know there are still many out there to see and we hope that you will let the society come visit your garden. It does not have to be large like Bruce's or Dave Poos'. Most of us cannot handle a garden that large. Whatever the size, it is fun to have the society visit. You will meet more members and exchange hosta stories. To grow hostas in St. Louis is not easy, but you have a great resource – the St. Louis Hosta Society

One needs only to look at your own garden to realize it is September - especially my garden which you are invited to in September. Hostas have done their thing for the year and want to rest. Usually, hostas are finished for the season when they flower. Mother Nature tells the plants to concentrate on producing seeds, if it can, for next year and not to make leaves.

Now you will notice the damage to the old leaves. The damage has occurred all year but because the plants are no longer sending up new leaves, we get to see the damage. You see damage from slugs, nematodes, bacterial flow, black vine weevils, cutworms, thrips, mites, desiccation burn, melt out, chemicals, drawstring, fungus, and virus. Of course, there is also damage from the four-legged animals, deer, rabbits and voles. The damage is there and most of us say, "Next year".

You are correct. In the spring your garden will look marvelous. However, you can do things to help next year. Talk to other members and find out how they cope with some of these problems. You may be surprised how simple some solutions can be.

See you in my September garden for conversation, snacks, drinks and fun.

*Phyllis*

## 2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 18	<b>2 Garden Walks</b> <b>1:30 PM, Garden of Debbie Hadley</b> <b>2:30 PM, Garden of Phyllis Weidman</b>
October 16	<b>Meeting with Speaker Rob Mortko</b> <b>2:00 PM, The Des Peres Lodge</b> <b>1050 Des Peres Rd., Des Peres, MO 63130</b>
November 11	<b>Board Meeting</b> <b>Time and location TBD</b>
December 11	<b>Holiday Party at a member's home</b> <b>Time and location TBD</b>
February, 2023	<b>Midwest Regional Hosta Winter Symposium</b> <b>First weekend in February, location TBA</b>
June 7-10, 2023	<b>AHS National Convention</b> <b>Ames, Iowa</b>
July 13-15, 2023	<b>Midwest Regional Hosta Convention</b> <b>Rochester, MN</b>
July 11-13, 2024	<b>Midwest Regional Hosta Convention</b> <b>Fon du Lac, WI</b>

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

**Danette Davidson of Arnold, MO**

Come join us on our September Garden Walks. Debbie is a new member this year so this will be a first time visit to her garden. We will then travel to Phyllis' and wander around her beautiful space, relax and socialize. This is a wonderful time for all of us to get to know each other.



*photo from  
stljewishlight.org*

### Minda "Mindy" Keyser

Sadly I must report the passing of long time member Mindy Keyser on August 15, 2022. Mindy had a successful career in the advertising industry and then went on to teach children art. She led a rich life with a passion for gardening, birds and photography. She volunteered with our society, the Missouri Botanical Garden and Wild Bird Rehabilitation. She will be remembered for her friendliness and ready smile. Our society extends its sympathy to Mindy's family and friends.

**Garden Walk – September 18, 1:30 pm**  
**Garden of Debbie Hadley**  
**106 Summit Ave., Webster Groves, MO 63119**

New member Debbie Hadley has graciously opened her garden for our enjoyment on the afternoon of September 18. We will spend approximately 45-60 minutes in this lovely garden, then proceed to our second stop, the garden of Phyllis Weidman.

Information for this write-up was taken from an article written by Lucyann Boston for the ***St. Louis Homes and Lifestyles*** magazine's May 2022 issue.

Debbie and Bob Hadley live in a house built in 1895 and purchased in 1909 by her great-grandparents. Debbie ran a home daycare center for 20 years until, like her grandmother and mother, she “just got hooked on plants.” After obtaining a horticulture degree from Meramec she began her own landscape design and installation business. Now retired, she and her husband operate a B&B, Hadley Garden Inn.

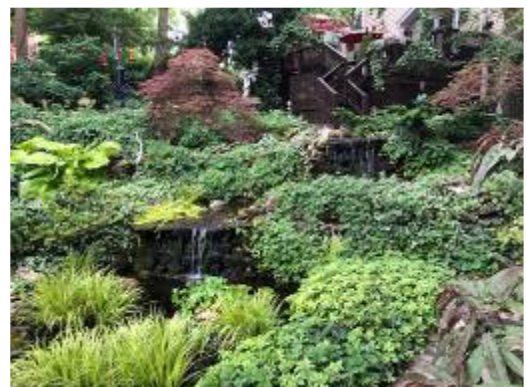
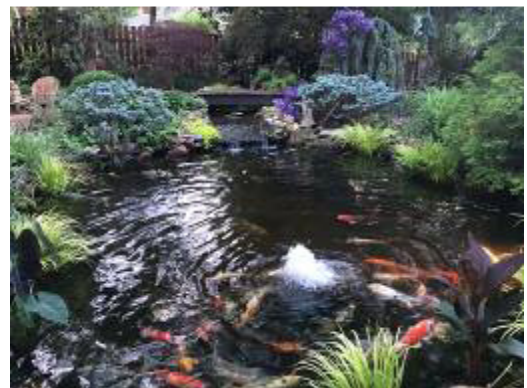
Towering Norway spruce, Canadian hemlocks and lacy false cypress trees delineate the boundaries of the garden. Yews, blue spruces, boxwoods, Japanese maples, ornamental grasses, hollies and a Blue Atlas Cedar add winter interest.

Eighty-year-old terraces, constructed by Debbie's grandfather, fall from the back of the house to a koi pond at the bottom of the slope. A two-tiered waterfall cascades from the top of the garden to the lower-level pond.

Meeting this busy woman and touring her Webster Groves garden is a delightful way to spend an early fall afternoon.

**Directions:**

- From the I-64 E/I-40 E and I-270 interchange, travel East on I-64 E/I-40 E.
- Take the Brentwood Blvd/Hanley Rd exit, EXIT31A. Keep right at the fork in the ramp and merge onto S. Brentwood Blvd.
- After 1.69 miles, turn Left onto Marshall Ave.
- After 0.38 miles, turn Right onto N Bompert Ave.
- After 0.71 miles, turn Left onto Sunnyside Ave.
- After 0.14 miles, take the first right onto Summit Ave. 109 is on the right.



*photos courtesy of Debbie Hadley*

**Garden Walk – September 18, 2:30 pm**  
**Garden of Phyllis Weidman**  
**508 Pointe Essex Court, Kirkwood, MO 63122**

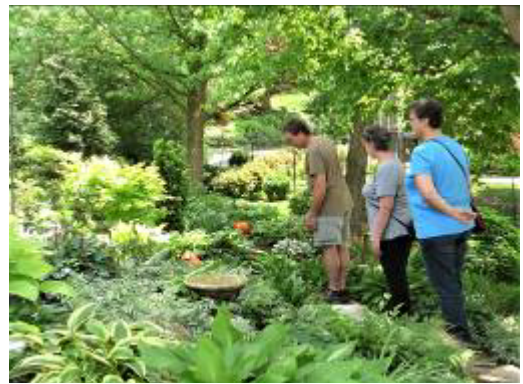
The afternoon continues at the home of our president Phyllis Weidman. Pulling up to the front of the house one is immediately beset with questions, questions, questions. How did Phyllis and her late husband Jim establish such a beautiful garden on such a steep hillside? How many rocks did they dynamite when creating the dry creek beds? However did they wheelbarrow mulch from the curb to the top and make it stay there during St. Louis rains? Her property backs to a wooded area. So, how does Phyllis keep Bambi and all her friends at bay? Most importantly what are Phyllis' secrets to growing such large, beautiful hostas?

Wander along the dry creek, admire the foundation plantings, check out the agave collection on the backyard retaining wall, climb to the sitting area at the top of the ridge, but most of all, relax on the back deck admire the many plants and talk with friends.

There will be no meeting or program. This is an opportunity to socialize and get to know each other in a beautiful setting. Please bring a snack to share. Non-alcoholic beverages will be provided, but feel free to bring wine, beer or any other drink that you would like. Throw a lawn chair in the trunk as seating might be limited. Remember the 40-50 members who came to the auction and to the Buehrig's garden.

Directions from Debbie's to Phyllis':

- Head southwest on Summit Ave toward E. Lockwood Ave.
- After 0.2 miles turn **RIGHT** onto E. Lockwood Ave.
- After 2.3 miles turn **LEFT** onto S. Berry Rd.
- After 364 feet turn **RIGHT** onto W. Lockwood Ave. After 0.7 miles, W. Lockwood Ave becomes E. Adams. Stay on E. Adams.
- After 0.9 miles, turn **RIGHT** onto N. Kirkwood Rd/Old Rt. 66 W.
- After 0.4 miles turn **LEFT** onto W. Essex Ave.
- After 1.1 miles, turn **LEFT** onto Pointe Essex Court (Just past Kirkwood High School)
- 508 Pointe Essex Court is at the end of the street on the left.



## August - Garden Walk with Chick and Bruce Buehrig

On a beautiful August afternoon, members of our society experienced a rare treat. Bruce and Chick Buehrig opened their award-winning conifer, hosta and daylily garden for our enjoyment. Despite the ravages of an exceptionally hot summer and nine inches of rain just a few weeks earlier, their garden was magnificent – cool, relaxing and quiet.

Bruce began with an introduction to conifers that grow especially well in the shade of hot, humid St. Louis. With 30 years of experience cultivating conifers he suggested three species that grow exceptionally well for him: Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), Oriental spruce (*Picea orientalis*) and Yews (*Taxus*). He has also had good luck with the Hemlocks (*Tsuga Canadensis*). Conifers novices should avoid in St. Louis are Fir (*Abies*), Cedar (*Cedus*) and Larch (*Larix*).

All of these species grow in different sizes, shapes, colors and textures. We think of conifers as being shades of green, but some have golden or blue coloring while others have white-tipped needles. Conifers can be columnar, globose, pyramidal and spreading. They range in size from less than one foot to well over 60 feet.

While all these perform well in shade, the yews are especially useful in our area. They are disease and insect resistant, drought tolerant and adaptable to shade.

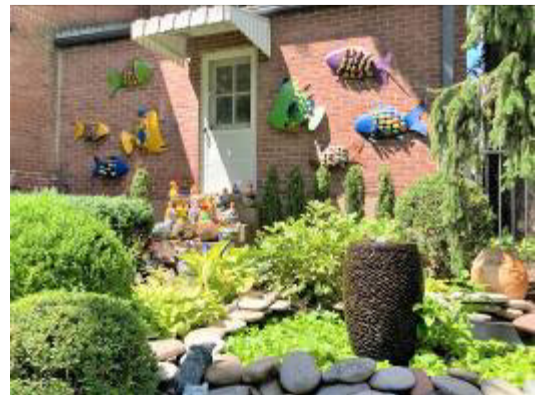
Bruce contributes the success of his garden to three things. While the steep slope of his property makes gardening taxing, it also provides excellent drainage. Due to the tall oaks and numerous understory trees, his conifers have afternoon shade. Finally, Bruce advocates water, water, water. Every conifer in his garden gets watered by hand at least every three days.

Numerous paths, some flag stone, others pebbles or wood chips lead to the far reaches of the Buehrig's back yard. The edges are stones or brick. Nestled among the rocks are collections of hostas, heuchera, bleeding hearts, rohdea and other shade lovers. One bed held a rare dwarf variegated Solomon Seal. In sunnier locations, Chick's beloved daylilies reside. In August their turn to shine is over, but one could imagine the colorful display just past.

The placement of the many conifers created rooms. The paths twisted and turned drawing one forward to see what lie ahead. What a beautiful place!



Gene Pulliam and Dave Poos chat in front of a Cedar of Lebanon. Note the height of these conifers.



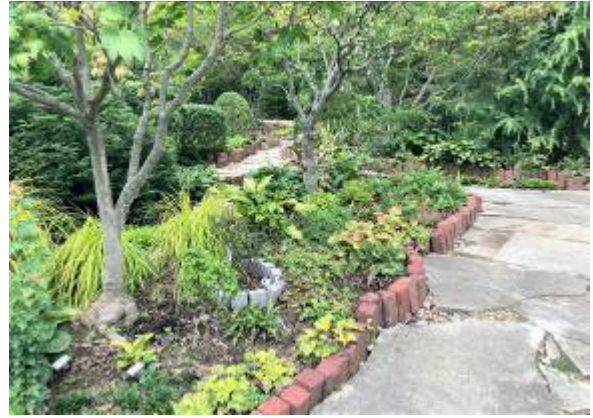
Colorful fish hang from the wall while bright pottery pots crowd the stoop at the back of the house.



One of many large hostas that are scattered throughout the garden. Bruce is one of the founders of the St. Louis Hosta Society.



Phyllis Weidman and Janelle Criscione begin the long trek to the bottom of the garden. The paths are wide enough for Bruce's Cushman to navigate.



Beneath the towering oaks and understory dogwoods and redbuds, companion plants abound. Here chartreuse heuchera, ferns, golden grasses, tiarella, allium and miniature shrubs mingle with the hostas.



A conifer hedge snakes along the edge of a path forming a room on the inside of the hedge. Small columnar conifers accent the front of the hedge.



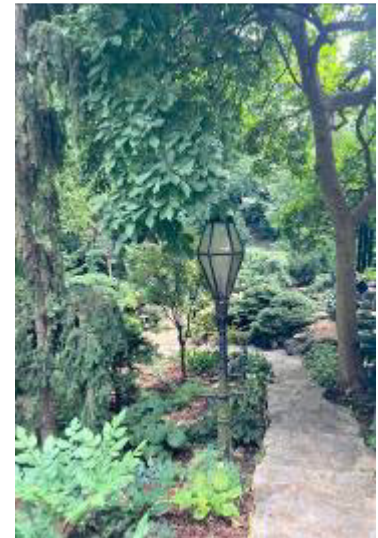
At the bottom of the slope, daylilies bask in the sun.



Not all the spectacular trees are conifers. Tall columnar Sugar Maple 'Monumental' and Sweet Gum 'Silhouette' dwarf one of our members.



A group has found a secluded glade in which to converse..



A peaceful way back to the top of the slope.

**Thank You Bruce and Chick for a delightful afternoon!**

## Appreciating Conifers in the Shade

By Chick and Bruce Buehig

(Originally published in Conifer Quarterly Winter 2014)

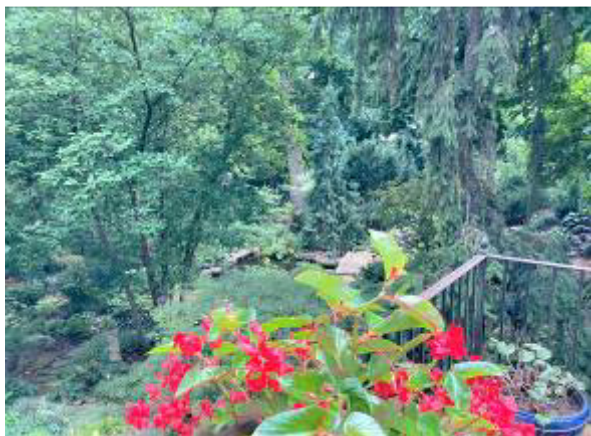
Why grow conifers in shade? Necessity is the primary reason my wife, Chick, and I have begun a self-taught, trial-and-error course in growing conifers successfully in a shady setting. One hundred year old oak trees cast their shadows over eighty percent of our sloping two acre plot. Growing grass is a challenge, and St. Louis, Missouri, sizzles in summer. Routinely, ninety-degree-plus temperatures coupled with matching humidity levels and a blazing summer sun force St. Louisans into the shade or air conditioning. Since gardening is a hobby for us and we enjoy being outdoors in summer, we have made our choice, the shade.

This garden's position on a steep, shade-filled hillside has presented several problems. How do we control erosion while maintaining moisture levels for plantings? And, how do we block that unobstructed view all the way down the hill? We have placed hosta, ferns, astilbe, helleborus, dicentra and other shade-tolerant perennials beneath the oaks. They have presented small obstacles to the rushing water during warm weather storms, but really haven't barred the open view. My brother Mark, a professional forester, suggested we plant an understory level between the towering oaks and the ground level perennials. Colorful Japanese maples, flowering dogwoods, redbuds and blooming shrubs have done a fair job of diverting one's view down the hillside during spring, summer and fall and have brightened the landscape. Too, because their root systems are larger, they snag more water run-off. These measures have improved the landscape during the growing seasons, but winter had remained a problem.

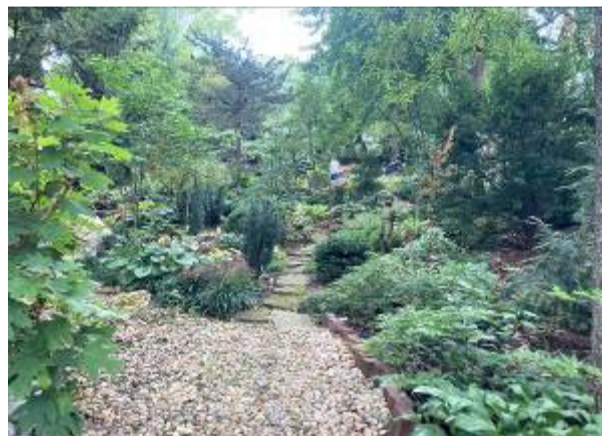
During winter, the perennials went into dormancy; trees and shrubs were leafless, and, once again, we were gazing down a scantily clad hillside. Needed were some winter-interesting eye-catchers. Brad Shanker, a consummate gardening friend (editor's note – Brad and Bruce were founders of The St. Louis Hosta Society), suggested we add another dimension to the back yard, conifers.

One early spring morning, Brad and I embarked upon our first of many trips to Rich and Susan Eyre's Foxwillow Pines. Rich and Susan are great conifer advocates and educators. They willingly share their knowledge with newbies.

Today our long treks to Chicago aren't a necessity, for we have in St. Louis a knowledgeable conifer enthusiast, Mike Curran, of Timberwinds Nursery. Mike searches the United States for rare and unusual conifers which will flourish in St. Louis.



View from the Buehig's back patio



One of many paths stretching down slope

Today Chick and I use the tips and experience garnered to grow successfully conifers in the shady parts of our yard. Judging light patterns became our first step in growing conifers in shade. All too often gardeners rely on the principle that at least six hours of direct sunlight are needed to grow conifers. Through study, we have learned that by recognizing the various types and degree of shade, conifer-growing opportunities can be achieved in less light. Every gardener looking to increase their use of conifers in the shady areas of their garden should carefully evaluate his or her available light by monitoring the garden's light patterns. This can be a year-long exercise because length of daylight, light intensity and sun location change with the seasons.

Some types of acceptable shade for growing conifers are filtered shade, dappled shade, traveling shade, light shade and high canopied shade. Generally speaking, there is more light available in shady spots than gardeners realize.

In addition to the study of light patterns, we have learned that some conifer selections grow better than others in reduced light conditions. *Tsuga canadensis* (hemlocks) is the first group we have placed in low light areas. Survival and growth have been outstanding with hemlocks. Varieties we have used successfully are 'Gentsch White', 'Stewart's Gem', 'Curly', 'Canoe', 'Spring Glory', 'Greenbrier', 'Devil's Fork', 'New Gold', 'Horsford', 'Summer Snow', 'Bennett', and 'Jeddeloh'. These hemlocks range in height from 1' to over 15' tall and 1' to 10' wide. In addition, our experience growing the smaller hemlocks (under 8') has proven that these smaller varieties grow better in more shade rather than less. We have noticed too that white tipped hemlocks succeed in shade, but may not produce colored tips consistently.

Having had success with hemlocks, we decided to try a more unusual selection, *Picea orientalis*. It is one of the most beautifully needled and shaped conifers we have planted. Great results have been achieved with 'Skylands', 'Bergman's Gem', 'Connecticut Turnpike', 'Repens', 'Gowdy', and 'Shadow Broom'. Sizes range from 2' tall by 2' wide to over 15' in heights.

Surprisingly, *Picea abies* is a superb candidate for low-light areas. These conifers provide a distinct contrast in their shape to any previously mentioned here. Because of their unusual forms and size range, they contribute much to a shade garden.

By accepting *Taxus* (yews) as a conifer, a gardener discovers unlimited offerings for shady spots. We appreciate the columnar varieties which add height and, for the most part, rarely need shearing or pruning. The following columnar styles are growing successfully in our yard: 'Flushing', 'Beanpole', 'Maureen', 'Stovepipe', 'David', 'Minuet', 'Sentinel', 'Citation', 'Erecta' and 'Standishii'. I particularly like 'Sentinel'. After eight years, it is 4' tall and 2' wide. Pruning hasn't been necessary. 'Flushing' and 'Maureen' with their stately height (20' tall by 2' wide), are great focal points. 'Citation' is a carefree 8' tall hedge in our garden and, in my opinion, far superior to 'Hicksii', which requires yearly pruning. Varieties of *Cephalotaxus* are similar to those of *Taxus*, but will thrive in more shade. We grow 'Duke Gardens', 'Fastigiata', 'Hedgehog' and 'Korean Gold'.

Another selection for height and narrowness is *Chamaecyparis* (aka *Cupressus*) *nootkatensis* (Alaska cedar). We use 'Jubilee', 'Green Arrow', 'Stricta', and 'Van den Akker'. Of these, 'Van den Akker' is superior. All grow well in low light, but when compared to those growing in more sun, do not obtain as much height. We have had to trim the skirt on 'Green Arrow'.



For good measure we also grow *Sciadopitys verticillata* (Japanese umbrella pine) which in St. Louis requires limited afternoon sun. The same can be said for *Cryptomeria japonica*. Both of these conifers have been in our garden more than ten years. *Ginkgo biloba* are unusual additions to the shade. 'Spring Grove' and 'Mariken' have been eye-stoppers, as have *Pinus cembra* and *Pinus sylvestris*.

In the year 2000, we constructed a rock garden beneath a row of pin oaks. We have hidden this garden behind a waterfall and conifer screen. The site has provided a perfect testing ground for all the conifer genera previously mentioned here and an additional *Picea glauca* and a *Pinus strobus*. All the conifers here exhibit good growth and color. There is very little needle drop or branch thin-out.

Chick and I have yet to finish our course in shade gardening. Each year we plant conifer additions to the shadowed places, and each year we grow fonder of their statuesque presence in our shade.



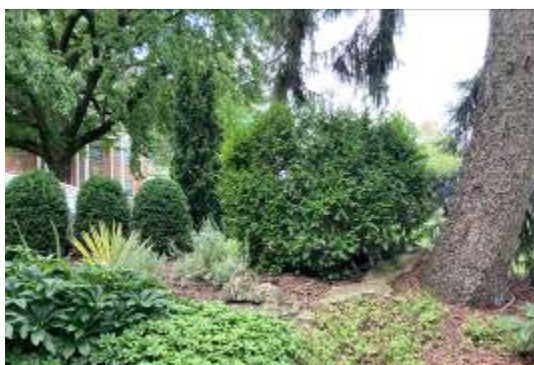
Gold-needled 'Skylands' which Bruce highly recommends for our area. Photo from Mo Botanical Garden website



Norway spruce 'Mustache' has a prominent position under the bay window in the border along the front of the Buehrig's house.



This Japanese Umbrella Pine is a focal point along one of the many paths leading down their steep hillside.



In one of the front yard borders, a ball-shaped yew 'Margarita' sits in contrast with a tall narrow yew 'Stovepipe'.



Melinda Ligon takes time to examine a hosta situated in the shade behind a Norway spruce 'Formanek'.

## St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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## St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

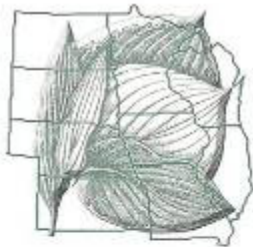
**Contact:** David Birenbaum  
209 Brook Lane  
O'Fallon, MO 63368  
[d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net](mailto:d.birenbaum@sbcglobal.net)

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

Meetings held at **The Des Peres Lodge, 1050 Des Peres Road, Des Peres, MO 63130** (near I270 and Manchester Rd) unless otherwise noted.

Visit our Web site: [www.stlhosta.org](http://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](mailto: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/>