



Volume 22, Issue 6

July, 2021



**President Phyllis Weidman**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

How can it be that it is July already? One should know by the weather – hot and sticky. But wait that was our June meeting! Even if hot and sticky, there was a great crowd. We need to thank Melinda.

The curved streets and stunning homes made a wonderful background for our gathering on her back patio. We had our meeting and a history lesson all in one. She also arranged for us to visit Dr. John Merkle's garden. It was amazing too. A beautiful neighborhood.

The July meeting (hot and sticky of course) will be out West, in St. Charles County. Yes, we have members everywhere. We will visit Karen Frey's and David Birenbaum's gardens. Each has its own character and will be fun to see. Read the newsletter to get all the details.

We have several new members and I hope we make them feel at home. Simply say hello, invite them to visit your garden, share a hosta, or answer their questions. Talk to them, they want to learn. Hostas were called the Friendship Plant so let us live up to our plant. See you all at Karen's and David's.

*Phyllis*

## **Welcome New Members**

**Jane Hogg of Webster Groves, MO**  
**Kathie Soehngen of St. Louis, MO**

Thank you for joining our society. We hope you are able to join us at the upcoming meeting and garden walk scheduled for July 18 in St. Charles County.

## 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- July 15-17**                      **AHS National Hosta Convention (Virtual)**  
**Kalamazoo, MI**
- July 18**                              **Garden Walk/Meeting**  
**1:30 PM, Home of Karen Frey, then drive to home of**  
**Anne and David Birenbaum**
- September 19**                      **Meeting with Speaker TBA**  
**1:30 PM, TBA**
- October 17**                              **Meeting with Speaker TBA**  
**1:30 PM, TBA**
- November**                              **Board Meeting**  
**Time and location TBA**



*photo from kirkwoodhistoricalsociety.com*

### Mudd's Grove Project

Mudd's Grove, located in Kirkwood MO, is one of the largest homes built in the Greek Revival style in St. Louis County. Built in 1859, it derives its name from Henry Mudd who was a farmer, county auditor, state legislator, curator of the University of Missouri and president of the state horticultural society.

In 1992, it was purchased by the Kirkwood Historical Society which has labored to restore it to its original elegance. The Society operates it as a library, museum and resource center.

Earlier this year Phyllis was contacted by a master gardener who is working with the Mudd's Grove staff to renovate some of the beds surrounding this magnificent home. They would like to incorporate hostas into the shady areas of the grounds and are asking our help. The project would entail our donating plants from members' gardens. The Mudd's Grove staff and volunteers would be responsible for preparing, planting and maintaining the beds.

Members present at the June meeting thought this was a worthwhile community project and agreed that Phyllis should meet with the Mudd's Grove staff this fall to determine the number and types of hostas that would be needed. She will help formulate a suitable bed design.

Stay tuned for more information on this project, either this fall or early next spring.

## July 18 - Garden Walk/Meeting 1:30 PM

**Home of Karen Frey  
2 Bridgers Pass Court  
St. Peters MO 63376 (636-379-1047)**

**And then onto  
Home of Anne and David Birenbaum  
209 Brook Lane  
O'Fallon MO 63368 (314-650-5200)**

On July 18 members have to opportunity to visit two gardens in the western reaches of the St. Louis metropolitan area. The day will begin at 1:30 pm at the St. Peters home of Karen Frey. After viewing her garden, members may travel on to the O'Fallon home of David and Anne Birenbaum. Put on your sunscreen and floppy hat. Masks are required if you have not been vaccinated. Water will be provided and snacks available at the Birenbaum home. Throw a lawn chair in the trunk just in case. Feel free to bring your own food and drink.

It has been seven years since members have visited Karen's piece of heaven. It will be quite interesting to see how her plantings have changed. A stroll along her brick-edged wood chip paths quickly divulges Karen's desire to try anything different or unusual. Her yard is a riot of color. Although generally planting perennials, Karen mixes annuals in her borders and numerous pots. Her biggest passion is for daylilies, clematis, hostas and unusual sun-lovers. In 2014 Karen said her goal was to have no grass, only garden plants. Join your fellow members to find out if Karen has met her goal.



**Front entrance in 2014.**



**Ligularia with clematis in background**

### **Directions to Karen's from St. Louis:**

- From the intersection of I-207 and I-64/US-40/US-61) take I-64W to State Hwy K. (15.6 miles)
- Take EXIT 9 from I-64W toward O'Fallon and merge onto Sate Hwy K.
- Continue on State Hwy K to Laura Hill Road. (4.7 miles)
- Turn right on Laura Hill Road and continue to Butternut Stage Dr. (0.67 miles) If you reach Stage Coach Landing Dr. you have gone 0.1 mile too far.
- Turn right onto Butternut Stage Dr. and continue to Santa Fe Trail Dr. (0.26 miles)
- Turn left onto Santa Fe Trail Dr. and continue to Bridgers Pass Court. (0.15 miles)
- Karen's address is 2 Bridgers Pass Court.

After spending time with Karen Frey, David Birenbaum has graciously invited fellow members and their friends to visit his garden. Feel free to stay awhile to socialize. There is plenty of shade both on their back deck and amongst the many trees that surround their property. Nestled in the woods in front and behind their home are hundreds of hostas and companion plants. David asks that you wear a mask when inside his home.

David gardens in the shade while Anne enjoys the bright sun. In a location at the entrance to their home, Anne's sun-lovers greet visitors with a riot of bright colors – pinks, oranges, yellows and purples. When we first visited in 2017, Anne had created colorful flower boxes which straddled the railing around their deck.

The hosta garden was young in 2017. It'll be fun to see how it's grown.



View towards woods behind their home



Flower box straddling railing of deck

#### Directions from Karen Frey's garden to David Birenbaum's garden:

- From Karen's house travel North 0.01 miles to Santa Fe Trail Drive.
- Turn left onto Santa Fe Trail Dr. and travel 0.15 mile to Butternut Stage Dr.
- Turn right on Butternut Stage Dr. and travel 0.26 miles to Laura Hill Road
- Turn left onto Laura Hill Road and travel 0.64 miles to State Highway K.
- Turn left onto State Hwy K and travel 4.25 miles to Crusher Drive.
- Turn right onto Crusher Drive and travel 0.37 miles to Weldon Spring Road.
- Turn right onto Weldon Spring Road and travel 0.78 miles to Brook Lane.
- Continue **straight** onto Brook Lane.
- David's address is 209 Brook Lane, approximately 0.5 miles.

#### Directions from David Birenbaum's home to St. Louis:

- Head southwest on Brook Lane toward Dianne and travel about 0.5 miles
- Brook Lane becomes Weldon Springs Road. Continue **straight** onto Weldon Springs Road and travel 1.03 miles to Technology Drive which is just past Crusher..
- Turn left onto Technology Drive.
- In 440 feet, turn right onto State Hwy K.
- In 0.28 miles merge onto I-64E toward St. Louis.
- Travel on I-64W 15.6 miles to the intersection of I-64 with I-270.

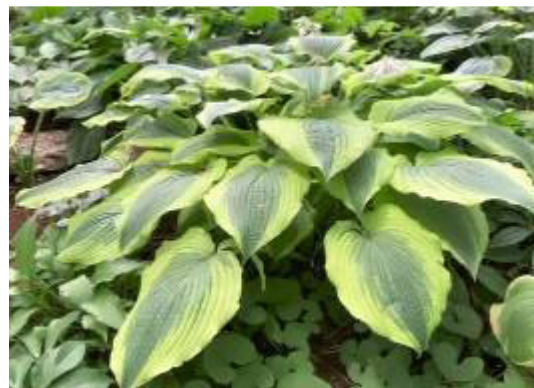


## June Meeting and Garden Walk – Home of Melinda Ligon

Melinda's garden may be small in square feet, but it is packed with beautiful and interesting plants. Every which way we turned was another cultivar that was new to most of us. Although the full color of her sun loving back yard doesn't peak until August, there was plenty to admire. Thank you Melinda!



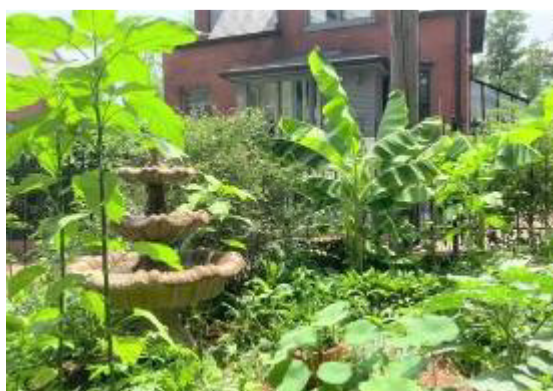
**Melinda's front yard is very shady, perfect for her collection of hostas and other shade lovers.**



**A large hosta featuring dark green leaves with lighter green margins anchors one side of her front yard.**



**Elegant wrought iron gates admit one to her sunny backyard.**



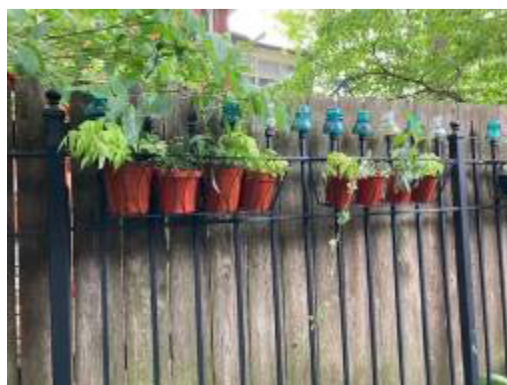
**The backyard is filled with sun-loving plants growing directly in the ground or in numerous interesting pots. This section features a three level fountain.**



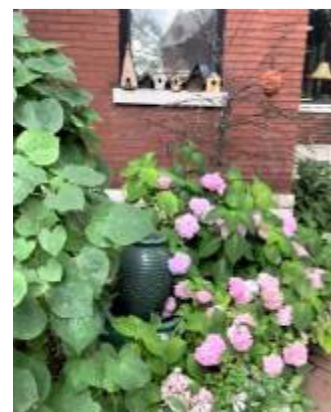
**Melinda made the ceramic tower that accents the back of the carriage house.**



**An old birdcage displays some of Melinda's potted plants along the edge of the brick walkway.**



**When one gardens in a small space, you have to be imaginative. Melinda has attach a rack to the top of her fence to make room for more pots.**



**A beautiful hydrangea is nestled in one corner by the patio.**



## Home of John Merkle – Compton Heights neighborhood

Melinda arranged with a nearby neighbor to tour a completely different type of garden. John Merkle lives a few blocks away in a Spanish style home that was built for the 1904 World's Fair. John's yard is eclectic. The front features several large beds filled to overflowing with masses of colorful perennials. The backyard contains a boxwood formal garden where all shrubs are meticulously pruned. A ginkgo and a conifer were pruned to resemble a lollipop. Interesting edgings, statuary and pots grace the borders. Thank you John for allowing us to visit. Thank you again Melinda for organizing this peek at a historical part of our city.



**The entrance to John's Longfellow home.**



**A second colorful bed extends along John's driveway.**



**Tall columnar conifers form a living fence. A row of large pots sits in front of the conifers.**



**Imaginative diamond-shaped planters are situated at the base of a rock wall.**



**A formal garden of meticulously pruned boxwoods features statuary and a pond.**



**Boxwoods pruned into the shape of pyramids stand guard at one end of the formal garden.**



## Problems, problems, problems

At the June meeting, President Phyllis Weidman brought several leaves from her garden that were exhibiting problems. As they say 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' Members examined the leaves and then discussed causes and possible remedies.

After the meeting I strolled through my garden and found the same problems lurking there. Take a look, maybe you too have one of these common hosta conditions.



June meeting on Melinda's patio.



Anthrachnose is a fungal disease that thrives in warm, wet weather. Think this week in St. Louis. The symptom is large, irregular spots surrounded by a dark border. Once the centers of the spots fall out, the leaves will look torn and can be mistaken for pest damage. Try to give your plants space so that air can circulate. Avoid overhead watering which results in wet foliage. Both of these tips are hard to achieve. A fungicide spray in spring might help. This disease is not fatal.



This was a huge beautiful clump of *H. 'Devil's Advocate'*. I found half of the clump lying on the ground turning yellow. The petioles were mushy and brown where they attached to the crown - a classic case of Southern Blight. Hot, humid, wet conditions lead to this common problem. Treat with a 10% bleach solution or an application of Bayer's Advanced Disease Control for Roses, Flowers and Shrubs or Bayer Advanced All-In-One Rose and Flower Care. Make sure one of the active ingredients is **Tebuconazole**.



This hosta leaf is not dirty. The dark substance cannot be hosed off. Insects such as scale and aphids that are feeding on trees secrete a substance called honeydew. This excrement contains a high concentration of sugar which promotes the growth of sooty mold. This is mostly a cosmetic problem but if the buildup is heavy it can block light from reaching the leaf surface. You can try to wash it off with warm soapy water. Sooty mold seems to be especially bad this year.



In St. Louis, slugs seem to be dainty eaters, causing numerous small round holes in your leaves. Big holes, such as these, are caused by cutworms or caterpillars. Cutworms feed at night. If so inclined, you can come out after dark and pick them off or during the day dig them out from the soil around the base of the plant. I'm too squeamish for that. I've had luck dusting affected plants with Sevin. The best way is to prevent them by keeping the area around your plants weed free.

## What's new in your garden?

At the June 24 Midwest Regional Hosta Society meeting, Bob Solberg gave a talk with the intriguing title "Hostas Up, Down and Upside Down." As we soon discovered, the title referred to popularity. Which hostas were going up or down in popularity as judged by the various polls and nursery sales figures.

Bob stated that his favorite hosta changes constantly, but that doesn't seem to be true of the population at large. In the last 40 years, only five hostas have held the #1 position in the AHS Popularity Poll. *H.* 'June' has dominated the polls for 16 years, *H.* 'Sum and Substance' for nine years and *H.* 'Sagae' for five.

Why are certain plants our favorites? Is that hosta connected to some special memory or was it given to you by a special person? Or, perhaps, it is its catchy or meaningful name. Maybe it is the one you can grow reliably well and your neighbor can't. But is your favorite also popular with others?

What makes a hosta popular? Some are glamorous, some are priced reasonably, some have great names, and some are unique and rare. Most have benefitted from a wide distribution system. Bob maintains that today Walters Gardens is a driving force getting certain cultivars available in numerous nurseries and big box stores. Thus these are the ones we see often and get to know and want.

Are popular hostas superior? For many years *H.* 'Great Expectations' appeared on every poll. It is glamorous, but it doesn't grow. *H.* 'Gunther's Prize' is rare and sought after but it is hard to grow and the streaking unstable. *H.* 'Golden Tiara' lost its allure when it became a nematode magnet. *H.* 'Gold Standard' succumbed to the stigma of HVX. Will perennial favorite *H.* 'June' develop some flaw that will cause it to drop out of favor?

The polls seem to indicate that people like big plants and the old favorites. A separate poll had to be created for the minis so they would receive the recognition they are due. Bob is now looking at his plants "upside down". Turn a hosta upside down and what do you see – petioles and leaf backs. Look for new intros from Bob that emphasize these two aspects. Will any break into the top 25? What will the polls look like in 10 years? In 20 years?

Last year a member asked what new plants were we growing that were doing well in our gardens. Which of the newer hostas like the heat and humidity and unpredictable winters of the Midwest? Walk out into your gardens and note which are doing well. How are the ones that you recently purchased? Last year we welcomed *H.* 'Road Rage' into our garden. Although it is now in the "creep" stage, it is doing very well. The same applies to *H.* 'Light of Day', *H.* 'Atom Smasher' and *H.* 'Gabriel's Wing'.

What is new in your garden? Is it a more recently introduced cultivar or one that is older but new to you? How is it doing? What is your favorite hosta and why? Does your favorite change from year to year? Or day to day like Bob Solberg. Where do you obtain your hostas? Good topics to discuss at our July garden walk as we relax on David's back deck.



## St. Louis Hosta Society Officials

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## St. Louis Hosta Society Membership Information

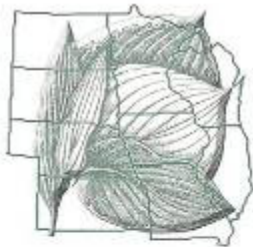
**Contact:** Dave Poos  
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Crestwood, MO 63126  
[david.poos@att.net](mailto:david.poos@att.net)

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

Meetings held 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](http://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](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:

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/>