



Volume 25, Issue 4

June, 2024



President

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Sunshine After the Storm

It's hard to believe that we were just anticipating Spring a few short months ago and Summer is around the corner. With the transition of seasons, many of us experienced the wrath of Mother Nature with recent storms that hit this time of year. If you're like me, when I hear the forecast of potential damaging conditions, nothing gets my attention more than the threat of hail. Usually, we take a deep breath as the storm passes and are thankful it didn't damage our beautiful Hostas. Well, not this time! As many of you read this you are looking at large holes, shredded leaves and

flattened gardens and question yourself "Why do I love this and keep up with it for something like this to happen?"

As I assessed my own garden and saw some of my most beautiful plants absolutely shredded, I was quickly reminded of the days growing up on the farm when this would happen to a farmer's entire crop and not only devastate the harvest, but have a major impact on the farm's income that year. What I learned then was the resolve to move forward and anticipate a new season, a new year and the bounty of the next crop. We love our hostas and will likely not be financially impacted, but the joy and beauty has been challenged.

You may be tempted to just cut them off but that's not actually the best thing to do. Wait a few days, assess the damage of each plant and trim the worst away. Be sure to leave plenty of green for the plant to recover and absorb the sunshine for the second growth of this season and be ready to come back stronger next year with your beautiful garden fully restored. Part of gardening is the anticipation of the new season and the opportunity to come back again and again after setbacks and challenges as we move forward with a memory of that passing storm into a new day, a new season and the love of our Hostas in a sunny day that reminds us of our love of gardening.

Gene

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 16 CANCELLED	Garden Walk with Speaker Bruce Buehrig 2:00 PM, Home of Bruce and Chick Buehrig 31 Bellerive Acres, St. Louis, MO 63121
REPLACED BY	Garden Walk 2:00 PM, Home of Deni and Barry Greenburg 7303 Vine Ave., Maplewood, MO 63143
June 18-22	AHS National Convention Marlborough, MA
June 29-30	Bus trip to Hornbaker Nursery
July 11-13	Midwest Regional Hosta Convention Fond de Lac, WI
July 21	Members Plant Auction 2:00 PM, CBEC Building 4651 Shaw, St. Louis, MO 63110
August 11	Meeting with Speaker Ginny Johnson 2:00 PM, CBEC Building 4651 Shaw, St. Louis, MO 63110
September 15	Meeting with Speaker Bob Solberg 2:00 PM, CBEC Building
October 20	Meeting with Speaker 2:00 PM, CBEC Building
November	Board Meeting Time and location TBD
December	Holiday Party Time and location TBD
June 5 – 7, 2025	AHS National Convention and Midwest Regional Hosta Convention (combined conventions) Peoria, IL

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Diane and Jason Wagner of St. Louis, MO

It is exciting to have you as new members in our society. Hope you found some good buys at the plant sale. Please mark your calendar for all the other exciting events occurring this gardening season. There are plenty of opportunities to meet more of your fellow members.

Garden Tour at Home of Bruce and Chick Buehrig on June 16 CANCELLED

Due to damage from last Sunday's storm, the Buehrigs will be unable to host our garden walk. While with time and money mulch can be replaced and rocks transported from the bottom of the hill back to the top, Bruce's vast conifer and tree collection is irreplaceable. We pray that they escaped serious damage.

June 16 2:00 PM Garden Walk Home of Deni and Barry Greenburg 7303 Vine Ave., Maplewood, MO 63143

Soon to be new members, Deni and Barry Greenburg have stepped in as a replacement garden for the Buehrigs and graciously invited our Society to visit their Maplewood home.

It's a beautiful corner lot with many varieties of flowers and greenery, plus Hostas! The obvious anchor in the back yard is a gigantic 100-year old Dawn Redwood. Be sure to take pictures of a perimeter waterfall that rushes into their koi pond and stream. Their home is in the heart of Maplewood on the corner of Vine and Marshall Road.



Did You See!

Do you know that we have a "Woman of Achievement" within our hosta family? Congratulations to hospitality chairwoman **Melinda Ligon** on her selection as one of the St. Louis area's 2024 "**Women of Achievement**"!

The purpose of the award is "to recognize and honor women of diverse cultures, roles and accomplishments who have demonstrated commitment to the betterment of the St. Louis region through significant voluntary contributions." Each woman selected has "helped to address a pertinent need, problem or issue, and has made a difference that improves the quality of life for others".

Melinda was recognized for a life-long commitment to helping others through cultural enrichment. Following a 25-year career as an emergency room physician, Melinda began volunteering at the Missouri Botanical Garden, Stray Rescue of St. Louis and the Prison Performing Arts. She continues to volunteer with the Prison Performing Arts group and is presently an active board member of several other arts organizations.

In her spare time, Melinda gardens. Our society was privileged to visit her Compton Heights oasis in 2021. Her shady front yard houses many beautiful hostas and companion plants while the sunny back is a riot of color all summer long. Unique plants and hardscape make her garden a joy to behold.

Congratulations Melinda for an honor well-deserved!



Phyllis Weidman and Melinda Ligon chat at Martha LaFata's Garden Walk

May – Missouri Botanical Garden Hosta Sale

The fun began on Friday night as members dropped off their donations for our annual sale. Plants had to be schlepped from the Garden's loading dock on the West end of the main building, onto a freight elevator, up a floor and around a corner, then through a maze of corridors to arrive at our sales room off the main lobby. There were many helping hands loading, unloading, pricing and placing hostas on the sales tables. It was exciting to see some of our newer members taking part in the fun. The work was so fast and furious that in an hour or two the task was complete.



Roger McFarland wheels in Dave Birenbaum's display plants.



Tables of minis, mediums, large and companions.



Astilbe from MOBot, ferns from Lynn



Marian Murphy helps friend at the 'large' table.



The people came ...



Treasurer Lynn Teller took their money. Dave Birenbaum and Janelle Criscione assisted. Roger McFarland was ready to help customers move purchases to their cars while Sue Erb welcomed potential buyers.



Part of Sat. sales force: Gene Pulliam, Barb Moreland, Phyllis Weidman, Janelle Criscione



And bought!

It had been an absolutely gorgeous weekend in St. Louis. The skies were clear and temperatures mild. People flocked to the Missouri Botanical Garden. Visitors wanted to see how the new native plant beds outside the Garden's entrance lobby were evolving, wanted to be out in the sunshine after a rainy week and of course, wanted to buy large pots of hostas.

The sale was a great success. By 1:30 every last hosta had found a new home! Even the Garden's species astilbe went out the door.

The Society thanks all the members who took the time to dig and donate plants from their gardens, who gave of their time to set-up, man sale and information tables and stayed to help cleanup. How wonderful it was to see so many of our newer members participate.

A special THANK YOU to event chairwomen Barb Moreland and Phyllis Weidman.

June Garden Walk Martha and Paul LaFata



A border of hostas and their companions guides the eye around and up the side of the LaFata's garden. Near the patio Martha created an area meant to be calm and serene. All variegated hostas were moved to other locations and replaced with cool blues, grasses, stones and a bubbler.



Halfway up this sloping yard is a hillside that once contained rocks, railroad ties, euonymus and overgrown plants. Martha painstakingly removed all and replaced them with a collection of hostas, peonies, grasses, conifers and small trees.



Members congregated at different spots to share their gardening experiences. After touring this beautiful space they relaxed on the patio. We thank Martha and Paul for giving us this opportunity to visit a truly wonderfully created and maintained garden. We thank Martha for giving us insights into her garden visions.

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

April and May in St. Louis has been an adventure. After three years of drought, Mother Nature paid us back. We as gardeners held our breaths and crossed our fingers whenever the weather man forecasted 'HAIL". And then it happened! It's appropriate to feature the following article, written by the late Jim Weidman, which appeared in the 2016 second issue of *The Hosta Journal*. (Vol 47 No 2)

A Disaster? Or, An Educational Moment?

By Jim Weidman Kirkwood, Missouri

Saturday, April 30, 2016, began as a beautiful day. In fact, the garden was looking the best it ever had, so Phyllis and I took pictures. We each had events we needed to attend that afternoon, but we arrived home about the same time – 5:00 pm. As it became increasingly dark, we stood at the kitchen door looking out over our deck and garden. It started to hail about nickel-sized hail, and it continued—just hail—for at least five minutes (or, an eternity in our minds). When it is just hail, it is amazing how fast it can accumulate. The whole property was covered in hail and in some places, it was a foot deep.

We took a deep breath, poured a couple drinks, and surveyed the results. Litter was everywhere. Every piece of vegetation was affected, but it was interesting to observe what was least affected. Our many Japanese acers, conifers, peonies, and narrow leaved hostas, grasses, and pulmonarias would be all right. Hostas, larger than narrowed leaved minis, were a disaster. The large stately hostas like *H.* 'Liberty', 'Victory', 'Empress Wu', 'Viking Ship', 'World Cup', and 'Eola Sapphire' were full of holes or shredded. Thousands of petioles were broken. Many of the mid-sized hostas such as 'Strawberry Banana Smoothie' and 'Lakeside Mom' were flattened.

What to do? We could not imagine how we could stay on the 2016 AHS Convention Tour, which was exactly 7 weeks (49 days) away. Our first decision was to make a couple telephone calls:

"Don, we just had a major hail storm. There is no way we can still be one of the gardens on tour at the AHS Convention!"

"Rob, we just had a major hail storm. There is no way we can still be one of the gardens on tour at the AHS Convention!"

Yes, we called the President of the American Hosta Society and the Executive Vice President in charge of Conventions. Phyllis and I were in tears, and, you guessed it, they had no sympathy. As if it had been rehearsed, each responded, "Everybody who raises hostas knows what hail can do. They will understand. Make it an educational experience." Everybody understands hail. That is what they all say, BUT this is us.

As a result, we decided to stay on the tour and do the best we could. Did we have a choice? We did receive sage advice from Don and Rob. We also consulted Bob Olson's great article, *Hostas in Shambles*, from a 2009 *Hosta Journal*. Do we cut them to the ground? Do we keep as much of each hosta as possible? We chose the latter knowing that there would still be holes for the tour, but we would preserve the integrity and the size that we knew we wanted and we thought the visitors to our garden would want. We also did not want the potential of smaller hostas the rest of the season and the following year.

Per Don's advice, we began by cutting off all the broken petioles. Our good friends, Joan and Dave Poos, arrived the next day to help. They agreed it was bad, but they cheered us up with a gift of H. 'Purple Heart'. By the end of the day, we had filled seven large recycle bags of just broken petioles. To keep this in perspective, our garden is not large, including approximately 375 cultivars. We also did the following:

- Began foliar feeding immediately with MiracleGro Tomato Plant Food and continued every two weeks
- Watered the hostas well
- Sprayed Bayer Advanced Disease Control Fungicide on May 6th and June 2nd
- Sprayed Bayer Advanced Multi-Insect Killer on May 6th
- Made sure Sluggo Plus was around each hosta
- Made an alfalfa tea—4 cups of alfalfa and one cup of Epsom Salts to five gallons of water; let it stand for four days; and put it around each hosta
- Spread three, five-gallon containers of coffee grounds throughout the garden

The goal was to apply all disease and insect preventatives and supply all the nutrients possible without doing too much. We continued with selective pruning until the day of the tour. We made signs and photos of hail and hostas before and after and then, of course, complained to everyone who came through the garden, each of whom said, "We all know about hail".

On June 18th, the bottom line was that the minis and almost all of the mid-sized hostas looked great. The large and extra-large still showed results of the hail storm but maintained their size and stature. One of the stars was H. 'So Sweet', AHGA's first winner of Hosta of the Year in 1996. It went from gorgeous to disastrous to gorgeous in seven weeks. In August, as this article is written, it is as large, or larger, than ever and ready to bloom.

It was seven weeks of hard work, none of which was on our original "to do" list, but, yes, Don and Rob, it was worth it, and it was educational as well.



Flattened and shredded



Not just the hostas!



H. 'Paul's Glory' before the storm.



H. 'Paul's Glory'

After hail storm



Six weeks later



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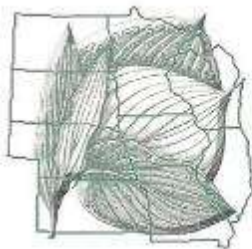
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Dues: \$10 per year, \$20 for three years
Individual or Household

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:

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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/>