

Hosta growing

Most species hostas are native to Japan, with others found in Korea and China. In their native habitat, they inhabit both open and shaded locations, but also enjoy a plentiful supply of water. Here in the Delaware Valley, hostas grow quite well in partially shaded to shaded locations, or in somewhat sunnier sites if kept well-watered. Hostas will also do well in pots, but must have a cold dormancy period during winter (as in an unheated garage or shed).



A young 'Remember Me' with its parent, 'June.'
D. Teager photo

Some hosta lingo

Hostas grow as **eyes** (growing shoots) arising from **crowns** (rhizomes). Some hostas are **rhizomatous**, and spread as a loose mat of connected eyes, where others form more traditional clumps. Either way, hostas divide easily.

New hostas arise as seedlings or as **sports**, which are mutations of existing plants. Some new hostas (including the two pictured here) are **tetraploid** mutations from their parent hostas. In order to get a variegated seedling, it is essential that the pod parent (female partner) have a **streaked** variegation pattern; normal variegated hostas will give solid-color seedlings, although different colors of green, blue (caused by a **pruinose** wax coating), or yellow (which hosta growers often call “gold”) are possible.

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DELAWARE VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY

Growing together since 1982

Who we are:

The Delaware Valley Hosta Society was formed in 1982 to serve northern Delaware, southern New Jersey, northeastern Maryland and southeastern Pennsylvania. It is a regional division under the guidance of the American Hosta Society, which was founded in 1969 to promote the cultivation of hostas in America. One of the two founders of the AHS was Delaware resident Alex Summers.

The DVHS holds at least four meetings yearly. Spring and summer meetings generally include tours of member gardens, plant auctions, and potluck suppers. On alternate years, the DVHS holds an official Hosta Show, where individual leaves, potted hostas, and even floral arrangements featuring hostas are judged by AHS accredited judges. Our late winter meeting features a guest speaker with video presentation and a sale of new-to-the-trade hostas. Our fall meeting features members' garden photos and a guest speaker.

DVHS activities are detailed in seasonal newsletters, delivered to members in advance of meetings and available at our web site, www.delvalhosta.org.

DVHS activities

Why should I become a member?

Membership means that you'll receive the Newsletter and other notices of regional gardening events. Only DVHS members are permitted to buy plants at our special plants sales (but all are free to support our auction sales). The plant sales and auctions give you access to new and rare plants, as well as large divisions of old favorites, well-grown in member gardens.

Membership forms are available on-line at dvhosta.org. Annual dues are \$10 per household, and may be paid by mail or at one of our regular meetings.

What does the DVHS do for the community?

Setting up Hosta Display Gardens in the Delaware Valley is one of the major educational activities of the Society. They are one of the best ways we have of demonstrating the varied uses of this wonderful plant as groundcovers, dramatic drifts of foliage, architectural plants to define garden structure, beautiful specimen plants (or “drifts of one” according to Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery in North Carolina), bright spots in shade, and on and on. In 2007 we installed our newest display garden at the Awbury Arboretum. We are looking for additional sites in our region.

The DVHS will design and install the garden without any cost being charged to the site sponsor. The Society provides all plant material, labor, and design work for the display garden. The site should agree to maintain the display garden after it has been installed. The site should be one that is regularly visited by the public.

If you have any ideas about site sponsors, please get in touch with Eli Cohen, DVHS Chair of the Display Gardens Committee (which includes Barbara Tiffany and Inta Krumbolz), through our website, www.delvalhosta.org.

Gardens the Society has installed include:

- Awbury Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
- Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
- Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, MD
- Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore, PA
- Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, PA
- Haverford College, Haverford, PA
- Rutgers University, NJ
- Woodlawn Cemetery, Philadelphia PA

Some hosta facts

Hosta history:

Hostas have come a long way since the days of “the blue one” (*H. sieboldiana* 'Elegans'), “the striped one” ('Undulata'), and “the fragrant one” (*H. plantaginea*). Of course there have always been more than that, with over 40 discovered species, but it took a while for many varieties to become available to home gardeners. Today, there are over 3500 hosta cultivars registered by the American Hosta Society, with perhaps 1500 more known to hosta gardeners around the world! Even a thorough search of local retail nurseries could provide you with 100 different cultivars in a single season, with many hundreds more available through mail-order. One member's garden here in the Delaware Valley holds over 1000 cultivars!



A stunning leaf of 'Liberty.'
D. Teager photo

Hosta hybridizing and selection has really kicked into high gear in the last 30 years, with hostas being bred for leaf substance, texture, shape, flower fragrance, and most of all, spectacular leaf colors! New hostas can now be rapidly increased through tissue culture (TC) propagation, getting exciting plants to you at reasonable prices.

From an obscure collector's plant to one of the most popular perennials in America, in only a few decades. Hostas are happening!

Some hosta webistes

In addition to our website, delvalhosta.org, check out:
www.hostalibrary.org : over 12,000 hosta photos
hostafaq.westside.com : some Frequently Asked Questions
www.hosta.org : the American Hosta Society.