



June 2013

Garden Tour and Auction: Cairnsgrove

Saturday, June 8, 1:30–4:30 p.m.

Rebecca and Dan Boylan, hosts
1200 Farmington Avenue, Pottstown, PA 19464

12:30 Garden tour and potluck lunch

2:30 Auction

See page 2 for details on lunch

Directions to June 8 Meeting

The Boylan garden and home is in Pottstown, about 30 minutes northwest of King of Prussia, or 50–60 minutes from central Philadelphia (by way of King of Prussia). Most people will want to make their way to King of Prussia (the intersection of I-76/PA turnpike, US 202, and US 422). If you need further help with directions, please email dsteager@earthlink.net and I will be glad to assist.

Parking at Cairnsgrove: The driveway at the Boylan house can accommodate 12–14 cars. Please reserve these spaces for those who need to park close, and perhaps to allow for dropping off plants, food, chairs, etc. All others should be able to park along the double-width driveway at the house next door (#1186). Farmington Avenue is too narrow and busy to safely park and walk on the road. Someone will be directing parking as needed.

From King of Prussia: Take U.S. 202 South from the PA Turnpike or from I-76 as needed to get to US-422 West (you can't go east). Continue 21 miles to the Hanover Street exit in Pottstown. Turn right onto Hanover Street. After about 1 mile (just past the cemetery), make the left fork onto Farmington Avenue. Follow Farmington about 1.3 miles to the Boylan house, on the right.

From Wilmington/West Chester (alternative): If you want to avoid the King of Prussia area, take US-202 north to PA-100 north. Continue about 23 miles on PA-100, passing under US 422 and continuing west of downtown Pottstown. Take the sharp right onto State St (Chili's on left), then a left at the next light onto Wilson (shopping center on right). Turn left at the next intersection, Farmington Ave. Your destination is about 0.7 miles on the right. Google says this saves 12 miles but only 6–7 minutes, but that depends on traffic through Exton.

From southern/central New Jersey: Take Delaware Memorial Bridge or Commodore Barry Bridge/U.S. 322 west to I-95 north. Then take I-476 north and follow directions to King of Prussia.

From northern New Jersey (via turnpike): The best option is to take the PA Turnpike connector, and continue to King of Prussia/Rt 202.



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President's Message

We always work hard in our garden, but this year has been extra tough getting the yard ready for the scrutiny of my colleagues. There can't be garlic mustard and onion grass dotting the borders, and all the tree seedlings must be banished to the compost. MULCH. I remember the days when I could spread 30 yards of mulch myself. Now mulching puts me out of commission for a week and I must rely on the family to do the task. But it's getting done and looking good—I just wish we didn't have to repeat this cycle next year.

A new problem in the garden is plant identification, especially in the mini hosta troughs. We were letting the chickens roam the yard until the damage got too great, and one of their favorite places to go was the troughs. Trough mix is a combination of soilless mix and poultry grit, so the chickens would hop into the troughs, dig around and eat the grit. They'd also send the small plant tags flying, so by the end of the season, I had a pile of tags around the troughs. I'm not good at hosta identification, so we'll be playing "match the label to the plant" on June 8th to help me relabel my hostas.

Right after the DVHS meeting, we'll be heading out to Wisconsin for the American Hosta Society national meeting. The hotel room is booked, but that's it. We usually take a few days to drive out, look for arboretums, nurseries, and good food on the way. Dave's Garden has been helpful in finding plant resources, and the comments are invaluable. How did we ever travel before the internet?

So we hope to see you all on June 8th. Dan will be firing up the smoker, there's a special libation in the works, and the weather will be wonderful!

— Rebecca Boylan



Troughs on the patio at Cairns Grove.

Hosta-tality for June 8th potluck

Beverages and plates, etc., will be provided.

For a balanced meal, we suggest you contribute according to the first letter of your last name:

A-F bring dessert

G-O bring a salad or side dish

P-Z bring a main dish.

Come early if you can help set up.

My New Favorite Tool

Rebecca Boylan

I like to have the right tool for everything that I do. Many people know that I'm a baker, so my "baking center" is stocked with a 5-quart professional mixer, loads of measuring utensils, silicone spatulas, and a plethora of baking sheets. I've been using a 10-inch Henkel's chef's knife since I could reach the chopping block, and drawers are filled with gadgets that I truly do use for grating, peeling, and sifting.

The same goes for the garden. Yes, there are the Felco pruners and the Japanese hori-hori knife, but now I have a new favorite toy/tool. I've been madly slicing away at the garden with my Zenport harvest sickle since I ordered a few last fall for a number of our DVHS members to try.



This baby has a curved 6.5-inch blade with light serration that can cut through thick stalks and delicate foliage with ease. [Editor/User's note: mind your fingers!] The blade is stainless steel and the handle is bright orange plastic, so you can easily wash and keep track of it in the garden. I kept a bucket of bleach water with me last fall as I quickly sliced down the hostas, dipping and wiping the blade in between plants to prevent possible cross-contamination. It can even go in the dishwasher!

Am I making you drool with tool envy? Don't worry because we have ordered 60 of these babies and will have them available at the June meeting for the unbelievable price of just \$7 each. But don't go by my word, talk to the other lucky people who have purchased the Zenport K208P Harvest Sickle and you'll find out how much fun they've been having with it (Conny and Jim Parsons). You may need more than one! 🍷

Step right up!

The following is a list of committees/chairs, who are always looking for a few volunteers. EASY and FUN!

Publications: David Teager, 610-485-4149

Membership: Dan Boylan 610-327-8217

Plant Sales and Auctions: Charlie Seaver

Display Gardens: Marilyn Romanesco, Chair,
302-765-3581

Hospitality: Chris Dambro, Chair, 610-388-7743

DVHS Financial Report for 2012

Christel Badey and David Teager

A DVHS board action in 2012 was to provide a brief financial report in the spring issue of the DVHS Newsletter.

Below are the income and expense totals for the year (grouped into categories; figures rounded to nearest dollar). An exceptional item of income was a one-time contribution of \$1000 from the AHS Region One directors to the DVHS in support of the Barnes Arboretum display garden.

Income	
Dues	\$1,250
Plant Sale	\$1,590
Meetings (auction, raffle)	\$2,682
Donations	\$1,000
Miscellaneous	\$75
Total Income	\$6,597

Expenses	
Publications (incl. website)	\$1,412
Meetings	\$1,479
Display garden	\$1,480
Plants (for plant sale)	\$833
Miscellaneous	\$405
Total Expenses	\$5,609
Net	\$988

As you see, leaving aside the \$1,000 donation, the DVHS almost exactly balanced its income and expenses for the year.

see **Financial Report** on p. 7



The intriguing variegation of *H. 'Hyuga Urajiro'*, a form of *H. kikutii*. D. Teager photo

New Members' Corner

We welcome the following new members who have joined our group since our April Newsletter:

Stephen Buckwalter
Landisville, PA

Diane Kendig
York, PA

Sylvia Morelli
Mechanicsburg, PA

Ken Sharp
Landenberg, PA

DVHS Meeting, June 8, 2013

Lunch, Garden Tour, and Auction Cairns Grove, Pottstown, Pennsylvania

We moved onto our property in 1988: a small 1940s house on 1 1/2 neglected acres with few mature trees.

One of the first things that we did was construct a vegetable garden in the literally junky back corner of the property. Lots of work later, we had a 30×120' fruit and vegetable garden that grew too much for us but was a good learning experience. We later moved the veggies into smaller plots and transformed the space, which tended to retain water, into a Metasequoia allée and shade garden. Here plants such as *Ilex verticillata*, *Betula nigra*, hostas, carex, and physocarpus that can take wet, heavy clay grow and thrive. To appease our love of fruit, we've kept the blueberries and added gooseberries and currants to the sunny area.

The first border we worked on, (and "we" is just the two of us as with occasional assistance from our son Jake) is the oak border. The aging pin oak is the only large tree on the property. Being a woody plant nut, I've been adding plants such as zelkovas and big-leaf magnolias to the border to fill in the canopy as the oak thins out. This is also where the hosta collection started.



Cercis 'The Rising Sun' brings light to a shade garden. R. Boylan photo. Another photo on nex page.

Seven different redbuds, over a dozen dogwoods, various Japanese maples, stewartias, styrax, and other species all find room in the borders; judicious pruning keeps it all in check. Many were obtained from plant sales, small nurseries, or plant-buying "road" trips. Hydrangeas are another passion, with the *H. paniculata* and *H. arborescens* being favorites which never disappoint. Anything that spreads without being a thug is treasured; plants that cover the soil are key.

Our pond is a natural low-maintenance system. The adjoining bog catches the overflow, and it's filled with hardy pitcher plants and other wetland ephemerals. Dan started beekeeping three years ago, and this is a favorite place for the bees to come and take a drink or collect minerals. The bees are harmless and allow me to find an excuse to plant one more flowering plant. Plus, the honey is fantastic!

Last year we added chickens to our menagerie. We thought that the chickens would be "roaming garden ornaments" and good insect control but instead they wreaked havoc on the yard, uprooting or covering plants with mulch. Now they spend their time in their ample pen area, pleading with us as we walk by.

As we needed more planting room, we began expanding the plantings in the front yard. This is where the beginning of the epimedium collection can be found. The hostas here are adjusting to extra sunlight after removal of a stand of pawpaws and the neighbor's elms. Now there's a young border (straddling the property line) of plants we've moved from other areas, received from plant exchanges, or bought as bargains.

The very back of the lot is wooded and has been left untouched, providing a convenient spot for all the bulky garden debris we generate and for wildlife seeking a home; the once open space surrounding us has been gobbled up by townhouses.

My favorite spot is right out the back door, the view I see from the kitchen windows. The patio is the staging site for the hypertufa troughs I make and fill with the collections of mini hostas and dwarf conifers. They're constantly changing as I obtain new plants, divide for plant auctions, or move troughs for a new look. There's always a banana tree on the patio for added summertime shade and some bright tubular-flowering annuals so we can watch the hummingbirds from the kitchen.

You may know that a "cairn" is a pile of rocks, and think that is where our garden got its name. But in fact the "cairn" part comes from our cairn terriers; the "grove" is from our township, Pottsgrove.

We hope that you'll enjoy visiting Cairns Grove as much as we do. 🌿

I Have a Ten Dollar Bid... Do I hear Twelve?

Charlie Seaver, DVHS Plant Sales and Auction Chair, Hockessin, Delaware

Ten cultivars and a total of one hundred and four plants in 4 inch retail-ready pots were available for sale at the April 6 spring meeting. The plants (108) were purchased last fall at an average cost of about \$7.80. They were wintered over in my garage; I started forcing them in the basement in late February and placed them under fluorescent lights round the clock in early March. Because of the cold nights in March, I didn't use my outdoor heated cold frame; temperatures in the low forties would cause the plants to go dormant for six weeks. Only four plants were culled, due to crown rot, failure to thrive (2), and not true to form.

The actual sale went well although there was some competition and commotion from sales of hardy cyclamen at the same time. (Note to self: next year I will use the *last* digit of the raffle ticket to group buyers because it separates household partners better and it easier to say and understand.) The plants were in good shape and the number of plants per cultivar seemed about right. Many members asked, "Which cultivar would you recommend?" and I responded, "All of them—but if I had to choose, go with the one with the most contrast at the lowest price." When the dust settled, DVHS coffers were about \$1000 fatter and only 18 plants remained not purchased. These eighteen—"Timothy" (5), 'Celestial' (3), 'Cuyahoga' (4), 'Fat Cat' (3), 'Emerald Ruff Cut' (2), and H. 'Victory' (1)—will be sold at our June 8 meeting and auction. The auction team plans to capture the final price of these plants when sold so that overall return on effort for the spring sale can be calculated.

The proceeds from the plant auctions in June and July are major source of income for the DVHS. All members are encouraged to donate healthy, happy, vigorous, disease-free plants to the auction. Multiple division clumps of newer plants that have strong, bold colors do extremely well at auction. For the June auction, I am donating two hosta cultivars, 'Sea Gulfstream' and 'Liberty'. I will also send the remnants of last year's spring plant sale that I have been growing on for over a year. These include 'Grecian Vase' (3), 'Malabar' (3), 'Gothic Charm' (2), 'Champagne Toast' (3), and 'Regal Splendor' (10).

The Plant Sales and Auction committee is also trying something new at the June meeting auction. One each of seventeen different, newly-available hosta cultivars were purchased last fall and grown on for sale this June. The variety in the plants is quite striking with the gloss of 'Grape Fizz', the strong contrast and density

see **Auction** on p. 7



Hosta 'Hideout', a great-growing white-centered mini, will be available at the June auction. Photo from Green Hill Hostas



Part of the long border at Cairns Grove in spring. R. Boylan photo.

6 Foliar Nematodes, DVHS, and You

David Teager, Ph.D.

Foliar nematodes are tiny eelworms (primarily *Aphelenchoides fragariae*), an infectious pest affecting plants grown both for agricultural and ornamental purposes. However, the treatments for nematode infestations available to commercial agricultural enterprises are frequently not available to home gardeners. Readers of *The DVHS Newsletter* should be no strangers to this problem, as it has been discussed numerous times, most notably in Warren Pollack's Views and Overviews columns (see issues 17.4, 18.1, 19.1, and others archived on the DVHS website). Members of the American Hosta Society (as you should all be) have been presented with even more information.

The popular American Hosta Society booklet, *The Hosta Adventure*, 2008 edition, says this:

These are very small worms that reside in the intercellular spaces in plants, feeding on the leaf tissue. The worms and their eggs overwinter in dead foliage and in the crowns of plants. They move up the petiole into the leaf, where they begin to feed and multiply at a rapid rate. Yellowish to brown streaks occur between the veins of leaves about three months after hostas emerge from dormancy. These microscopic pests are spread to nearby plants by splashing water from rain or irrigation.

A photo of a damaged leaf is below. While this damage is not as devastating to the plant as is infection with crown rot, Hosta Virus X or other plant viruses, no gardener wants unsightly, diseased leaves in his or her garden. For commercial growers of ornamental hostas, the problem can be even worse: no one wants to buy from a seller whose plants (a) look infected and (b) can infect other plants in the garden.

Sadly, the reality is that the foliar nematode problem, both for home and commercial hosta growers, is not going to go away quickly.



This winter, the American Hosta Society submitted a request for a research proposal to Professor Parwinder Grewal at The Ohio State University. (Dr. Grewal had previously conducted brief research studies into treatment of foliar nematodes, research which was funded partly through a contribution by the Delaware Valley Hosta Society.) Dr. Grewal proposed a 2-year study on a budget of \$100,000, with the goal (briefly) of identifying how the life cycle of the nematode is expressed in hosta crowns and leaves, examining transmission from plant to plant, and evaluating various methods (chemical and thermal) for control. He then secured matching grant funds from the university, and so submitted a budget to the AHS requesting \$50,000 in funding. The AHS, in turn, reached out to local societies and to commercial associations like the Perennial Plant Association.



Nematode emerging from torn leaf immersed in water.

The DVHS board, in advance of and at our board meeting in April, considered this request very carefully. There was a great deal of discussion about the merits of the proposal and what alternatives to academic research might be brought to the problem at hand. One clear agreement of the group, even in advance of the meeting, was that the AHS needed the strong direction of a scientific advisory committee to guide the work. By the time of the meeting an advisory committee had, in fact, been formed, including names such as Tony Avent, Bob Solberg, Lynn Bisschop (a Canadian hosta seller), and others including research scientists like this author.

After discussion at the board meeting, and recognizing participation of one of its own members on the advisory committee, the DVHS board voted to provide \$1000 for this research.

With this support and the support of other organizations, the AHS met its funding goal and the sponsored research agreement was established this month (May, 2013). I plan to provide periodic updates in this Newsletter as the research progresses. Contact me if you wish to know more about the project. Let us all hope that the research

see **Nematodes** on p. 7

JOIN THE AHS!

Visit www.hosta.org where you can join on-line.

Members get on-line access to *The Hosta Journal* and more information about nematodes.

Auction, continued from p. 5

of the miniature 'Hideout', and the size of the leaf of 'Zeppelin' particularly catching my attention. The rest of the special hostas are 'Angelique', 'Cup of Grace', 'Emerald Charger', 'Farewell Party', 'Ice Palace', 'Jabulani', 'Lemon Zest', 'Mariachi', 'Master of Ceremonies', 'Night Shift', 'Poseidon', 'Regal Tot', 'Venetian Star', and 'Winter Warrior'. (An eighteenth hosta succumbed to rot.) Check out pictures of many of these at the Hosta Library (some are still too new!) or at Q and Z Nursery.

The Plant Sales and Auction Committee was asked to see if we could provide advanced notification of what might be available for sale at the auction. This article is one way to start it, naming thirty cultivars. In the future we may solicit members to send me a note with what they will donate and we will publish the list in the *Newsletter* or distribute it by email. Let us know if this is what you had in mind. 🍷

Financial Report, continued from p. 5

An interesting point to recognize is that income and expenses balance well between the categories above, which—while not planned this way—is a convenient way to think about how the DVHS operates. The income from member dues balances the cost of publication and website, which are directly in support of members. The income from the spring plant sale largely pays the cost of the meetings for the year (speaker's fees, space rental, and hosta-tality). Finally, the income from the plant auctions and raffles at meetings covers the purchase of plants for display gardens and for the next year's spring plant sale (grouping those two categories). While this is not the case for every budget year, on the whole this is a way of keeping the organization in balance.

Finally, the DVHS is very fortunate to have cash reserves totaling approximately \$18,000 (as of the April board meeting). These board is discussing the use of a portion of this reserve, such as for additional purchases for the Barnes Arboretum (e.g. a garden bench) or for contributions to research on hostas (see the discussion of foliar nematodes in this issue). Please speak to a board member (or consider joining the board) if you would like to be a part of this discussion. 🍷

Nematodes, continued from p. 6

provides valuable information about control of foliar nematodes in the home garden.

At the DVHS board meeting, we also discussed the present reality of the problem with foliar nematodes and other transmissible infections of hostas. As you all know, the DVHS gets significant revenue from its summer auctions of generously donated plants. These auctions are fun, informative, and allow access to plants that are not frequently found in commerce. However, the board recognizes the risk in offering plants for sale that we cannot assure are free from infections. (Note that plants sold at our members-only spring sale are greenhouse-grown and are more surely infection-free.)

I would hope that most of us are familiar with the appearance of hostas infected with HVX (or other, rarer viruses like tobacco mosaic virus). The DVHS will set aside any donated plants that show obvious infection, although this can be no guarantee that the plant is virus-free. Foliar nematodes pose a more difficult problem, as a plant that is infected may show no symptoms at all until later in the season/later in the life-cycle of the eelworm.

The board considered establishing some sort of spot-testing of plants, but this seems impractical given the time-frame of our auctions. (Indeed, spot-testing for foliar nematodes in early June may still result in false negatives; the OSU research work should help establish the effectiveness of such testing.)

And so, dear friends, we can only offer an earnest caveat emptor. Plants that you buy at auction are placed in your garden at your own risk. In order to mitigate this risk, we in turn ask that you be aware of possible infestations in your own garden. You may have problem areas in your garden but problem-free areas elsewhere; the nematodes do move, but not above open ground. Be wary, and be considerate.

The DVHS board recognizes that heightened awareness of this problem may affect its auction revenue, but we want our members to be happy hosta growers. In that vein, we ask you to please be generous in supporting the organization. And we, in turn, will support the efforts needed to continue keeping our gardens healthy and beautiful. 🍷

Cut off and mail in, or bring to the meeting.

Delaware Valley Hosta Society Membership and Renewal Form

Dues (household membership) are \$10 per year.

Mail to: Dan Boylan, DVHS Membership
1200 Farmington Ave.
Pottstown, PA 19464

Please use this form also to update your records for address **and e-mail**, or to offer your garden for a potential meeting or tour. Thanks!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Would you consider opening your garden for a members' tour? _____

Are you in the nursery trade? _____

Calendar of Events 2013

www.delvalhosta.org

Saturday, February 23: DVHS Winter Meeting,
Tredyffrin Public Library, Wayne, PA
Hosta Soup and Hosta Chat

Saturday, April 6: DVHS Spring Meeting,
Tredyffrin Public Library, Wayne, PA
Hosta plant sale and great hospitality
Presentation by John Lonsdale: "Woodland Treasures:
Hardy Cyclamen"

June 7-9: FIRST LOOK 2013. Windsor Locks, CT
Visit <http://www.hostalibrary.org/firstlook/>

Saturday, June 8: DVHS Tour of Rebecca and Dan
Boylan's garden, Pottstown, PA. Potluck and plant
auction.

June 13-15: AHS National Convention in
Milwaukee, Wisconsin. www.hosta.org or
www.2013ahsconvention.com.

Saturday, July 13: DVHS Tour of WynEden (Doris
and Wayne Guymon garden) in Chadds Ford, PA,
with BIG LEAF contest and plant auction

Saturday, November 2: DVHS Fall Meeting
Jenkins Arboretum, Devon, PA. Presentation by
Walter Cullerton: "The Lost Season: Winter in the
Garden." Hosta seed exchange TBD.

HOW'S YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 13, you owe DVHS dues for 2013. Current members' renewal fees are due by the April meeting; any back dues also need to be paid in order to remain current. **You must be a current member to purchase hostas at the special sales, and to receive the Newsletter by mail.** The dues pay for the publication of this newsletter and maintenance of the website, as well as for other society activities. If you want to continue hearing from us, send in your 2013 membership fee today!

Dues (family membership) are \$10 per year.

Mail to: Dan Boylan, DVHS Membership
1200 Farmington Ave.
Pottstown, PA 19464

Please provide your name and any address change.
We would also appreciate an e-mail address so we
can notify you of last-minute program changes.

Use the form on Page 7.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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