



Saturday, October 10, 2020

Zoom Meeting

"Hosta Tissue Culture for Dummies... Like Me"

Rob Mortko

Made In The Shade Gardens, Olathe, Kansas

1:30 p.m.

DIRECTIONS

While some of our generation may still remember the Saturday morning "Zoom" TV series (seven seasons on PBS starting in 1999), Zoom has a different sense today. Many of you may already be "fluent" in Zoom, from even before the pandemic, but for those of you who aren't, don't worry. Here's what you need:

- **Email address:** I will send out the Zoom link, with instructions, a few days before the meeting. For security reasons, we won't include this in the newsletter, our website, or on Facebook. *If you haven't been receiving emails from us already, use the Contact form on the website to send us an update or call Rebecca Boylan (p. 2) to update.*
- **A computer, tablet, or smart phone** that will let you see the presentation. You *do not need a camera* for this, as we won't need to see you, you just need internet/WiFi.
- **An app that lets you use Zoom:** you can download the "Zoom desktop client" from whatever app (application) store works on your system, or go to www.zoom.us to download the app. You do not need to create an account, just installation of the app.

If you have not used Zoom on this device previously, you should either do the download in advance at your convenience, or simply "join" the meeting via the link early enough to let your computer/tablet/phone do the set-up in time. If you have questions about using Zoom, go to support.zoom.us, where there are guides and videos to help you.

During the meeting, you may want to ask questions. Zoom has a button you can click for "Chat," which lets you type in a comment that the moderator can then ask the presenter. (The button may be in different places depending on your system, but will always look like the cartoon "word bubble.") We will keep everyone but the host, moderator, and presenter on "mute" during the presentation. Chat is the *only* way you will be able to communicate. We know that this will limit discussion, but it's the only way to manage.

Let's bring the DVHS into the 21st century! Zoom along with us!



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Documentation has been a big part of our summer. While I had kept decent records of the inventory of hostas in the garden, we had been slightly less consistent with other plants. However, in bins on the shelf above the washing machine, Stephen had dutifully gathered plant tags as the plants were acquired. Making use of this quarantine time, we set about creating a better inventory. Stephen wanted to be able to document, by generalized location, each plant that we had put into our landscape, from the smallest bulb to the now-dominant willow oak we had planted over twenty years ago. I was in charge of data set-up by refining the Excel workbook that had kept track of hostas, Japanese maples, and epimediums. It had already gotten a bit confusing. We delimited the garden into about 35 areas, and I took rough pictures of each so we could match tags to plants while sitting on the sofa—with Google at hand.

While the work was a little fun, it wasn't that easy! Far too many heuchera tags got tossed into the waste as lost plants; I'm far too tempted by their pretty colors to remember that most don't perform well for us. Astilbes and daylilies had to wait until they bloomed. Ferns... ugh. In the end, we succeeded, and vow to keep the inventory up to date as we make new acquisitions and remove or relocate existing plants. All told, it's around 1,200 plants.

Now, before you gasp in amazement, think of the collection of plants at Mill Fleurs, which is easily four times that! I also spent some time there, in advance of our July meeting, helping sort out some of the more challenging spaces where hostas needed to be realigned with their tags. Funny how those tags can disappear or move around on their own, isn't it? Having an iPad with WiFi right in the garden, with access to the amazing Hosta Library, was a big help, even as our brains turned to mush by the end of the day trying to solve some puzzles.

So if you feel the need to document, you can always just start with pictures. Digital "film" is nearly limitless, and photo-editing tools make it easy enough to type the name of each plant right on top of it. Do it every year, and you'll also have a sort of visual journal to show the evolution of your garden.

And for pictures, how wonderful it is that Kathy Miller has filled this issue with pictures from our three garden visits this year. Other than my documentary photos of garden sections, I was remiss in taking "glamour shot" hosta portraits this year. I hope you enjoy these, either as a way of taking in what you couldn't see in person this year, or as a remembrance of your own visit. Let us all hope that we, and the world, are all healthy enough next year to celebrate hostas together.

David

"Hosta Tissue Culture for Dummies... Like Me"

Rob Mortko



Many gardeners have heard of tissue culture and may even appreciate that most new plant cultivars are commercially propagated using this method. But what is tissue culture and how does it work?

While not a do-it-yourself project for most backyard gardeners, Rob's background in chemistry and engineering coupled with an interest in hosta kindled his curiosity about this topic. His recent retirement from an engineering career afforded him the opportunity to start up his own tissue culture lab

where he has had to address many of these same questions.

The presentation will include a behind-the-scenes look at what goes on in a hosta tissue culture lab and a sneak preview of a few soon to be new hot hosta introductions from the lab. Don't be scared of a little science - Rob makes it surprisingly easy to understand.

Ed. Note: Two of Rob's most popular cultivars. Above right H. 'Heart and Soul' (2000), lower right H. 'Stitch in Time' (2004). Both photos by Rob Mortko via The Hosta Library



Ali Pollock, Remembered



Alma (Ali) Pollock, age 92, passed away in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, on June 28. Ali was a long-time member of the American Hosta Society and a founding member of the Delaware Valley Hosta Society, along with her husband of 49 years, Warren. In their Wilmington, Delaware, garden, Warren excelled at growing hostas in containers while Ali moved them into their wooded landscape, along with an elegant selection of shade loving perennials and shrubs.

They generously opened their garden to many local plant societies and AHS members. Ali registered and introduced H. 'Grand Tiara' and was a master Hosta Show judge for many years.

She and Warren were regulars at AHS conventions, attending together for decades (since 1979!). She was largely content to let her husband stand in the limelight, but loved maintaining the personal connections she had with hosta people through the years. Perhaps as testament to her personality, she and Warren are the only actual people featured in a color plate in George Schmid's *The Genus Hosta*. [Plate 147, misattributed] She instilled in their children and grandchildren a love of travel and cultural diversity, and a deep appreciation for the arts.

Ten years ago Ali and Warren moved into Maris Grove, a retirement community, in Glen Mills, PA. She loved sitting on their balcony, among the containers of hostas that thrived there, with a glass of wine. At her last AHS convention, the 50th Anniversary celebration in Philadelphia in 2018, she was her usual charming self, and took a memorable turn on the dance floor at the closing banquet. Ali had a wonderful smile and a song in her heart. *DVHS Board*

2020 Hosta Show Rescheduled to Summer 2021



Clockwise from top: White water on Tohickon Creek. Soft and comfy outdoor garden bench with fountain and *H. 'Monument Circle'*. *H. 'First Mate'*. Mill Fleurs lawn with garden displaying the classic Tiffany Spirit Song® garden bench. *H. 'Navajo'* with unusual purple flower bracts. Our hostess Barbara Tiffany chatting with Warren Pollock and Roberta Chopko. A big thanks to Tiff (not pictured) as well. Center: *H. 'Erotica'*. Thank you, Susan Yeager for the photo of Barbara and Warren. Other photos Kathy Miller



Clockwise from top: *H.* 'Apple Candy' with *H.* 'Olive Branch'. *H.* 'Sharp Dressed Man'. *H.* 'Sagae' with *H.* 'June' (sort of like Beyonce and Taylor Swift sharing the stage). *H.* 'Little Miss Sunshine'. *H.* 'Cascades' in a pot. Two sharpened dressed men, our hosts, David Teager and Stephen Fugate. Center: *H.* 'Kryptonite' among the planets. Photos: Kathy Miller



Clockwise from top: lovely assortment in the shade. *H.* 'Warwick Comet'. *H.* 'Spartacus' *H.* 'X-Ray' among other minis. *H.* 'Tidewater'. *H.* 'Bridal Falls'. Our hosts, Dan and Marilyn Romensko. Photo: Kathy Miller

July 11 Meeting at Mill Fleurs

Our meeting at Mill Fleurs occurred on a cloudy day in July, but we knew it didn't dare rain on our parade! Tohickon creek was high, and whitewater rafters and kayakers rushed by the garden beds.

There was a good crowd. Everyone, except our host and hostess was masked. Barbara and Tiff had already experienced COVID-19 and were no longer contagious. It was nice to see their faces.

We hiked around the garden – so many beautiful trees and plants. Tiff's padded garden bench was so artistic and surprisingly comfortable. We stopped for shopping at Tiffany Perennials plant nursery, and then sat down to wait for the meeting and auction.

It began to rain. David assured us after checking with radar, that the rain would stop in six minutes. So we waited. Some in the house, some in the ice house, some in their cars and some in their seats under umbrellas. This is the part of social distancing that caught us off guard. After 30 minutes, Steve and I climbed the hill to our car. Of course, as soon as we got there, the rain finally stopped. Down to the meeting we went, and people started appearing from their hideaways. A good portion of members had stayed.

The auction was quite successful. The premier plant was *H. 'Myland'*, a gorgeous cultivar donated by Dave Chopko. It initiated a spirited auction, won by our hostess, Barbara. We gathered our plants, chairs and umbrellas, then said our "Good-Byes". Thank you Barbara and Tiff.

June 13 Garden at Teagate

The garden - walk at Teagate was our first foray out of the house after closeting ourselves against COVID-19. Standing in the driveway were the semi-faces of Steven Fugate and Connie Parsons both greeting us with a smile (at least I presumed). It was so nice to see some good friends and the weather was perfect. Everyone was masked and kept a respectful distance, yet we were able to communicate and enjoy the experience.

(*Teagate Continued*) Exploring this beautiful garden early in the morning was a real treat. The sun shone on the dew and the brook gurgled. But, unfortunately, the bright sun was a detriment to my amateur photography. On page four are photos of 'Apple Candy', which was entirely new to me, the crisp 'Sharp Dressed Man', and 'Cascades', which has always given me a problem until I too put it into a pot.

In addition to a multitude of both rare and popular hostas, David displayed his breeding plants and a variety of interesting new seedlings.

Just being with other folk who love gardens and hostas was extremely uplifting. Thank you David and Stephen.

June 13 Garden at Talley Crest

From there we drove to the Romenesko garden Talley-Crest. More friends, more presumed smiling semi-faces. Everyone was enjoying the beautifully manicured garden. Although hostas appear to be Marilyn's favorite, a wide variety of rare and interesting shade plants and trees shared the stage. Each was meticulously labeled, which was educational and an important aid when you're attempting to social distance and don't want to ask.

Many of the hostas appeared to be growing in the ground, but were actually growing in pots, sunk into the ground. We noticed this technique at 2019 national convention in Green Bay. The purpose is to avoid tree roots. Some even used double pots so that the inner pot could be turned breaking off any fibrous invaders that had worked their way inside the outer pot.

On page five, note 'Warwick Comet', which is a long-time favorite but rarely see, 'Spartacus' and the ever graceful 'Bridal Falls'.

Thank you Marilyn and Dan for your warm hospitality.

Kathy Miller, Newsletter Editor

DVHS MEMBERSHIP DUES. Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 20, you owe DVHS dues for 2020. The dues pay for the publication of this newsletter and maintenance of the website, as well as for other activities.

Cut off and mail in.

Delaware Valley Hosta Society Membership and Renewal Form

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

Mail to: Rebecca 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 2020- 2021 www.delvalhosta.org

Saturday, June 13, 2020. Pop-Up Garden
Tours. Check DVHS Website for
information.

Saturday, July 11, 2020. Summer Meeting.
Tour of the Tiffany garden, Mill Fleurs.
Point Pleasant, PA.

Saturday, October 10, 2020. Fall Meeting.
Zoom Speaker: Rob Mortko "Hosta
Tissue Culture for Dummies...Like
Me".

June 2021. AHS National Convention,
Kalamazoo, MI.

June 2022. AHS National Convention.
Minneapolis, MN.

The Delaware Valley Hosta Society has been growing and would like to welcome the latest new members:

Laura Berenson, Pipersville, PA Bill Halberstadt & Tammy Suyematsu, Hatfield, PA

Karen Hartung, Mt. Freedom, NJ

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