



Spring 2015

Hosta Meeting and Plant Sale

Saturday, April 25, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Tredyffrin Public Library
582 Upper Gulph Rd., Wayne, PA, 19087

Marta McDowell, Speaker
“Hostas in the Victorian Garden”

- 11:00 Board Meeting (bring your lunch)**
- 1:00 Gathering for Hosta Hospitality (Dessert/munchies)**
- 1:30 Business Meeting and Feature Presentation**
- 2:30 Plant Sale — over 120 hostas!**
- 3:30 Chat and Clean-up**

Directions to April 26 Meeting

The Tredyffrin Public Library is off the Main Line (Route 30), not far from the Devon Horse Show grounds.

From Philadelphia: Take I-76 or the PA Turnpike West to King of Prussia/Valley Forge. Take Route 202 South to the Swedesford Rd exit just after King of Prussia mall. Take the first left onto Swedesford Rd, then the next left onto Old Eagle School Road. Follow Old Eagle School Road 2 miles to traffic light at Upper Gulph Road, and turn left. The Library is 0.2 mile on the right.

Or take I-476 South (or North) to Rt. 30 and use the directions “from the South” below.

From the West or Southwest: Take I-76 East to King of Prussia/Valley Forge, then follow directions above. Or, take Route 202 North (e.g. from Rt 1) to West Valley Road. Turn right at the traffic light onto West Valley Road. Follow West Valley about 2 miles up a long hill and down to a stop sign. Turn left onto Upper Gulph Road, and proceed through the traffic light about 0.3 mile. The Library is on the right.

From the South: Take I-95 North to I-476 North to Rt. 30 (Villanova/St. Davids) West. Take Rt 30 (E Lancaster Ave.) 2.5 miles to Old Eagle School Rd. Turn Right, and go 0.7 miles to Upper Gulph Rd. Turn Right, and the library will be on your right.



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President's Message

The long hosta hibernation period is finally over, so we can warm up those credit cards and check books and add new shady purchases to our gardens! Our plant sale is always a great opportunity to find new and special cultivars, and we're fortunate to reside in a mecca for specialty nurseries and inexpensive growers. I'll probably visit a few in Lancaster and Berks counties before our meeting as the planting desire is keeping me up at night!

My cell phone holds lists of all the plants I'd like to get as I'm out shopping or at a hosta auction. It's a great place to list plants (and where you're going to plant them) as you're touring gardens or reading a magazine. Noting where the plant will be placed prevents the dreaded "walk around the property holding the pot" dance. As gardens get planted up and fewer spots remain, being selective gets harder and harder!

Another great place for plant shopping is at a hosta convention. You don't have to wait until our convention in 2018, as Bob and Nancy Solberg are hosting the next convention in Raleigh, NC this coming June. A large contingent from DVHS is going, so why not join up and we can show the rest of the country what a fun group DVHS is!

— Rebecca Boylan

JOIN THE AHS!

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

Heading south!

As Rebecca notes above, DVHS folks are convention-bound. And you can be, too! The first registration deadline is May 1; there's a \$50 late fee after that.

The convention will feature the big Hosta Show, a scientific session focusing on hosta hybridizing, bus tours to four local gardens including a nationally renowned moss garden, and eye-popping, wallet-draining visits to both Plant Delights Nursery and Green Hill Farm (host Bob and Nancy Solbergs' hosta nursery). The North Carolina Botanical Garden and the J. C. Raulston Arboretum are worthy stops before the convention starts or on your way home.

Visit www.2015ahsconvention.com for more information.

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)

Programs: Kathy Miller (610-444-3237)

Membership: Dan Boylan (610-327-8217)

Plant Sales and Auctions: Charlie Seaver

Display Gardens: Marilyn Romenesko, (302-765-3581)
and Conny Parsons (610-558-4149)

Hospitality: Chris Dambro (610-388-7743)

And don't forget that 2015 is an election year for DVHS. How can you step up to serve the organization?

April 25, 2015

Hosta Meeting and Plant Sale

Guest Speaker Marta McDowell

Marta McDowell lives, writes and gardens in Chatham, New Jersey. She shares her garden with her husband, Kirke Bent, their crested cockatiel, Sydney, and assorted wildlife. Her garden writing has appeared in popular publications such as *Woman's Day*, *Fine Gardening* and *The New York Times*. Scholars and specialists have read her essays on American authors and their horticultural interests in the journals *Hortus* and *Arnoldia*.



Following the relationship between the pen and the trowel led Marta to children's author/illustrator Beatrix Potter and poet Emily Dickinson. Timber Press published Marta's book, *Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life*, in 2013; it won the Gold Award from the Garden Writers Association in August 2014. *Emily Dickinson's Gardens* was published by McGraw-Hill in 2005. If you visit the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts, you can stroll the grounds with a landscape audio tour that Marta scripted in 2007. Marta was an advisor for the New York Botanical Garden's 2010 exhibit "Emily Dickinson's Gardens: The Poetry of Flowers" and was a featured speaker.

Marta teaches landscape history and horticulture at the New York Botanical Garden. A popular lecturer on topics ranging from design history to plant combinations, you may view her schedule of speaking events on her website,

www.martamcdowell.com. Her topic for the DVHS is "Hostas in the Victorian Garden."

Marta interned at Wave Hill, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, the Royal Horticultural Society's Rosemoor in Devon, England and at the Chelsea Physic Garden. She worked as a horticulturist for five years at Reeves-Reed Arboretum in Summit, NJ. Her current projects include a book about the history of American gardening as seen through the gardens and grounds of the White House due out from Timber Press in 2016. Marta is on the Board of the NJ Historical Garden Foundation at the Cross Estate in Bernardsville, New Jersey. Her garden is included in the Smithsonian's Archive of American Gardens.

Plant Sale

Following the presentation, it's time to shop! Charlie Seaver has been tending them so that they should be well flushed out by the day of the sale. See the centerfold for detailed descriptions.

DVHS Plants a Residential Style Hosta Garden at Tyler Arboretum

Marilyn Romenesko and Conny Parsons

At the request of Tyler Arboretum's Director of Horticulture, Mike Karkowski, DVHS Display Garden co-chairs began preparations for the development of a second notable hosta planting amidst the Wister Rhododendron Collection at the arboretum. Mike's request to develop a Hosta Garden that could be a model for a home Hosta garden came in 2013. After DVHS board approval, preparations began with plant procurement and design preparation the fall of 2013 and summer of 2014. The "planting party" occurred in the morning of September 23, 2014.

Initiating the design phase, we met with the arboretum staff to discuss the garden location and size. We decided there should be a path through the bed for closer views of the plants in the widest sections of the designated site. The bed is approximately 120' long and borders a paved path through the Wister Rhododendron Collection. At the widest the bed is 30' across. The location of a

branched path was agreed upon and Jerry O'Dell, the Tyler gardener for this area, prepared the paths prior to our planting party. Jerry, Austin Deputy, and Stephanie Santucci of the Tyler staff also tilled compost into the bed areas prior to the date of planting. They then assisted with the planting and aftercare. Staff member Alison Dame was helpful in preparing plant labels and also a larger sign noting the contribution of this garden by the DVHS. The Tyler staff was great to work with, as were their volunteers.

Committed volunteers—five from Tyler and seven from DVHS—were important to making the planting party a success. Within three hours they planted 81 hostas and 30 hosta companions. Of the 81 hostas, there were 27 cultivars, nine of which are designated as Hosta of the Year by the American Hosta Grower's Association. Companion plants we put in included shade loving

see *Tyler* on p. 5

DVHS Spring Plant Sale, 2015

Here are the rules for the day (subject to revision):

- Please bring a small plastic lined box, basket or bag to put your purchases in.
- Pick a number from the hosta bucket at the membership table (entrance door).
- Plant sales will run on a lottery rotation (based on your lucky number), giving everyone a chance to pick two plants with each rotation. After a few rotations, remaining hostas left will be up for grabs.
- Check out will be at the membership table at the end of the meeting. Bring your hostas to the table. All hostas are \$10. Cash or check only!

Pictures and descriptions adapted by David Teager from various online sources.



Becky's Choice (Zilis, 2010) Medium

One of the most beautiful powder-blue hostas is 'Venetian Blue', but the breeding line doesn't stop there. This seedling from Mark Zilis is just as blue as its parent but is bigger in all parts, making a 28" clump. Whoever Becky is, she chose well! Flowers in August.

Bridal Falls (van den Top/Walters Gardens, 2012, PPAF) Large-Very Large

Jan van den Top hit the jackpot when he found this sport of 'Niagara Falls'. Retaining the same large fountain form (to 4 feet wide, at least) and graceful ripples as its parent, but with a generous cream edge that turns a foamy white. It is truly hard to imagine a better hosta.



Crazy for You (Dick and Jane Ward, 2009) Large

Screaming crazy yellow, that's what kind of crazy it is. This tokudama-type hosta will make a mound 4 feet wide, crammed with unruly cupped leaves. Think of it somewhere between the classics 'Aspen Gold' and 'Sum and Substance', which holds its gold color well into the season. Limited quantity.

Curly Fries (Solberg, 2008) Very Small

I already said "screaming crazy yellow," didn't I? But this one's a mini, with one of the best

descriptive names in the hosta business. Narrow, wavy leaves under an inch wide form a grass-like mound 20" wide. That means the leaves qualify it as a mini, but it can get pretty good sized in a pot.



Humpback Whale (Mildred Seaver, 2012) Very Large

I'll quote the Land of the Giants website on this one: "The inimitable Mildred Seaver's remarkable 'Humpback Whale' is one of New England's legendary plants. For years and years it was never seen anywhere and was becoming something of a myth. Then Charlie Seaver showed up at the 2006 AHS National Convention with a huge multi-division piece of it." You won't believe the price it brought. And now you can have this MASSIVE blue hosta for your own.

Mariachi (Zilis/Vanous, 2010) Large

It's hard to keep track of the extensive family of sports arising from the classic 'Fragrant Bouquet', but the whole group took off when the fast-growing 'Guacamole' was introduced by Bob Solberg 20 years ago. And now, finally, there seems to be a true reverse-color sport of 'Guacamole' in 'Mariachi'. Deep green leaf centers with a green-gold edge, and the same fragrant flowers. Limited quantity.



Rubies and Ruffles (Randy Goodwin, 2009) Small

One of the goals of today's hybridizers is to take the waviness of some hosta forms to its extreme with edges that are almost serrated. Randy's plant puts this on a small hosta with white edges and rich red petioles. The flowers are a deep, deep purple, too. Growing about 20" wide, it will be great in a pot.

**Smokey Mountains** (Beilstein/Zilis, 2012) Small-Medium

No two ways around it: this plant is not going to be to everyone's taste. The leaves are a smoky blue, giving a foggy effect in the garden by some descriptions. But the form is from another planet, with rough and tough leaves looking like something you're sure would be healthy to eat. So stiff it will only grow to about 2 feet wide.

The Fonz (Zilis/Barta/Micheletti, 2012) Medium

Aaaaay! This gift plant from the recent Milwaukee convention evokes Arthur Fonzarelli's leather jacket, with tough shiny leaves (about 9x6") showing a little ripple around the edges. White T-shirt not included, but it may have some fragrance to its flowers from its breeding heritage.

**Vulcan** (Hansen/Shady Oaks, 2007) Medium

Just as 'Guacamole' established a line of Mexican-themed sport names, and 'Striptease' sent us down racier path, Kirk Brill's 'Captain Kirk' (a sport of 'Gold Standard') has given rise to a line of sports a Trekkie/Trekker can love. (Hint: we'll have 'Enterprise' next year.) With the recent passing of Leonard Nimoy, any hosta grower will want a 'Vulcan' to live long and prosper. For a white-centered hosta, this one really does! It probably won't get as big as its 'Gold Standard' ancestor.

A note about this year's plants (and the next two years' worth)

After hosta curator Charlie Seaver had already procured a set of plants for the 2015 sale (from Walter's Gardens), he returned from vacation to receive news that had shocked the hosta world: Q&Z Nursery, one of our few domestic producers of tissue-culture hostas, was ceasing operations. In doing so, they released their stock, and DVHS took the opportunity to stock up. Charlie and David Teager were able to look over the stock they sent to decide which selections to offer in 2015 and which to hold for later. This will provide plants for the next few years, as Charlie and Rebecca will be able to winter them over and pot them up as needed. Expect some big plants in 2016 and 2017! This year's plants include most of the Walter's Gardens plants and some of the Q&Z plants. And all are offered for only \$10!

This stocking up will also allow us a breather as TC producers fill the void left by Q&Z. If you do a little searching online, you can read some evaluations of what led to the end of that business. Mark Zilis remains in the horticultural business, now working with his son at A to Z Perennials. Mark is an invaluable resource for hosta gardeners, and we wish him success in his new venture. You can still buy *The Hostapedia* and *The Field Guide to Hostas* (if DVHS doesn't have any left) at www.qandznursery.com.

Tyler continued from p. 3

Hakonechloa macra 'All Gold' and 'Aureola', *Liriope muscari* 'Cleopatra', *Stachys minima*, and a few *Heuchera* cultivars donated by the Mt. Cuba Center.

Participation in this hosta garden development included Rebecca and Dan Boylan, Conny and Jim Parsons, and Marilyn Romanesko who procured, assembled, held, and delivered the hostas to the arboretum on the day

of the "planting party." The garden design was based somewhat on hosta availability, and was coordinated by Marilyn and Conny. Planting participants included Chris and Gene Dambro, Rebecca Boylan, Jim and Conny Parsons, and Marilyn Romanesko. We're confident that the new "residential" and "blue wave" hosta gardens at Tyler will be in fabulous form for the 2018 AHS convention tours. 🌿

6 Mottled hostas: are they sick or super?

David Teager, Ph.D.

Sometime in the time of Y2K, hosta-centered internet chat forums and email chains began buzzing with commentary on the first pictures of a new kind of hosta, exemplified by *H. 'Leopard Frog'* (G. R. Goodwin, 2000, a “sport” of ‘Little Aurora’) and ‘Eternal Father’ (J. Willets, 1999, a “sport” of ‘Sun Power’). These hostas weren’t just streaky (like the coveted streaked breeding hostas) or misty (like the delicious ‘Spilt Milk’); they were downright splotchy, like an *aucuba* leaf on a hosta! The hosta world was divided: were these new hostas something we wanted in our gardens? It is difficult to assess the division in hindsight, but it seemed that there were many people at the time who did.



“Variegation” on *H. 'Leopard Frog'*

Soon, of course, more such “sports” appeared, and we know the rest of the sad story. These intriguing leaves were not normal, but were showing the symptoms of a new virus, later labeled as Hosta Virus X (HVX). And while some plant viruses are relatively benign, HVX was virulent, easily transferred to other cultivars by transfer of sap between wounded leaves or roots (as could happen in field harvesting or pruning). *H. 'Sum and Substance'*, at the time taking the gardening world by storm, was sadly one of those most frequently infected.

Still, to some this mottled patterning was desirable (leaving aside those who permit HVX in their gardens because they “like” the look). Hosta people, though, are clever folk. Just as modern breeders of tulips eventually found breeding lines leading to “flame” patterned blooms—where the coveted broken colors of the tulipomania craze were caused by a mosaic virus—perhaps the productive breeders and sport spotters of the hosta world would discover or develop non-virused hostas with the desired coloration.

In the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015, a minor buzz arose with the upload of a picture to the AHS Facebook page of *H. 'Kiwi Forest'* (B. Sligh, 1999). Rick Goodenough’s picture shows a well-grown Tokudama-type plant in springtime; the mottling is said to fade over the season to result in an all-green, somewhat glaucous, plant. From ten feet away in springtime, though, it would be difficult not to see the hosta and think: what’s up with that! Indeed, some commenters



H. 'Kiwi Forest' in spring. R. Goodenough photo

thought “sick,” while others thought “super” and raised the question where they could get it or others like it.

An internet investigation shows that ‘Kiwi Forest’ belongs to a small group of hostas listed on Don Rawson’s “The Hosta Lists” website under “Mottled-leaved Hostas.” (Do note that some on this list are likely infected with HVX.) Rick later uploaded a picture of ‘Wolcott’ (D. Stone/Piedmont Gardens, 1982), also on the Rawson list: a Sieboldiana-type seedling with similar coloration to ‘Kiwi Forest’, again turning all-green by summer. Most, but not all, of the mottled hostas exhibit the same color change. This is a key difference from HVX-infected plants, which will show the same broken coloration all year long, as well as a distinctive “collapsed tissue” effect in affected regions.



H. 'Wolcott' is even more variable.
R. Goodenough photo

Notice that while Barry Sligh’s ‘Kiwi Forest’ was registered in the beginning of the HVX era (and Barry later registered some suspect infected plants with this coloration, such as ‘Kiwi Dreadlocks’), ‘Wolcott’ has been around even longer. Looking deeper into Don Rawson’s list of mottled hostas (see box on page 7), one

see **Mottled Hostas** on p. 7

Mottled Hostas continued from p. 6

sees that quite a number of these plants have been around a long time. These plants remain rare, likely because this variegation pattern is not well-expressed in the tissue culture propagation process. Rare, but not necessarily expensive: the box shows prices for listed cultivars in Steven Greene's *Hosta Finder* (2015).

As well, based on reviewing the immensely helpful www.MyHostas.be database, it would seem that these truly mottled hostas do not readily pass on this trait to their seedlings. Only 'Cynthia' seems to have produced any mottled progeny at all, with Ron Lysne finding 'Alliteration' in a back-cross of 'Cynthia' x ['Cynthia' x 'Piedmont Gold']. This seems to leave the breeder looking for an exceptionally rare mutation, and the buyer desirous of such hostas with few choices, limited to originator's stock divisions.

This (in the author's opinion) is not a bad thing for the hosta world. For fifteen years we have been battling HVX, and educating growers and buyers about the disease is a significant part of that battle. If one of the mottled hostas successfully yielded to tissue culture propagation, these might trickle down from the specialty nursery catalogs to the regional or local garden centers, those same centers where we have worked so hard to purge stock of virus-infected 'Blue Cadet', 'Sum and Substance', *et al.*, which look—one cannot deny—no less interesting than that well-grown 'Wolcott'. Many of us have developed a conditioned response to this mottled look, and it isn't a favorable one. Others, with no less (and perhaps more) concern for the health of their garden plants, can overcome this response and find a place for this variant variegation in their gardens.

And so the mottled hosta remains a curiosity. You may question the sanity of any gardener who chooses to grow a hosta that looks, well, sick (to you). Or you may think this is super, and wish to have such an unusual hosta in your collection, given the questions and opinions that garden visitors are likely to offer. Or else you fall somewhere in-between: informed but neither repulsed nor intrigued. Beauty is, indeed, in the eye of the beholder. 🍷

Mottled-leaved hostas have a blotched (or splotched) spotting of the leaf blade [Don Rawson, www.hostalists.org, accessed March, 2015]. "HF" indicates prices from *Hosta Finder*, 21st Edition, 2015. "HL" indicates pictures at *Hosta Library*, www.hostalibrary.org.

- 'Alliteration' (R. Lysne/Northern Grown Perennials, NR, introduced ca. 2012) pic at <http://mwt.net/~ngp/hostaintros.htm>, \$75
- 'Blue Freckles' (B. Martin, 2004) likely HVX-infected 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'
- 'Cynthia' (C. Thompkins, 1984) mottled/streaked breeder, parentage unknown (montana?) viridescent, great HL pics. Mottled seedling 'Alliteration' and perhaps 'Laella'. HF \$10–15.
- 'Doctor Reath' (D. Reath/Ruh, 1997) Sieboldiana-type sport, probably = 'Filagree' below
- 'Filagree' (2009 registration but older, D. Reath) HF \$35–90.
- 'Filagree Sister' (actually a daughter, 2009 registration but older than that) HF \$60.
- 'Flecked Fantasy' (L. Powell, NR) virus-suspect 'Golden Sunburst' sport
- 'Freckles' (Viette/Summers/AHS, 2009 but older) Fortunei-type? Not seeing "green with yellow blotches" (per registration) on HL pic. HF \$10.
- 'Fury of Flame' (Zilis/T&Z Nursery, 1985) *H. ventricosa* 'Aureomaculata' seedling with "furious" variegation (heavily, but more classically, streaked rather than mottled)
- 'Kiwi Forest' (B. Sligh, 1999) see discussion. HF \$20–22.
- 'Knives Green' (R&M Ford, NR) Unknown origin. Streaked/mottled.
- 'Laella' (C. Thompkins, NR) sibling or daughter of 'Cynthia'
- 'Little Cyn' (R. Duback, 1998) looks like 'Cynthia' but registered as parentage unknown.
- 'Pamela Ann' (Bentley Gardens, NR) likely HVX-infected 'Birchwood Parkys Gold' or similar
- 'Spit and Spat' (NR, no attribution) one HL pic by Vik Serafin, 'Sun Power'-type?
- 'Wolcott' (D. Stone/Piedmont Gardens, 1982) see discussion. HF \$20–25.
- 'Xanadu Paisley' (V&B Skaggs, 2000) 'August Moon' sport that rarely does progress to 'Abiqua Moonbeam'. *Mottling is stable all season*. Numerous HL pics. HF \$70–90.

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 2015

www.delvalhosta.org

Saturday, February 28: DVHS Winter Meeting,
Easttown Public Library, Berwyn, PA
Hosta Soup and Hosta Chat; Presentation on voles,
and discussion of DVHS activities.

Saturday, March 28: Tri-State Hosta Plant Sale
Frelinghuysen, NJ. You must be a member to buy.

Saturday, April 25: DVHS Spring Meeting,
Tredyffrin Public Library, Wayne, PA
Hosta plant sale and great hospitality. Guest: Marta
McDowell, on "Hostas in the Victorian Garden"

Saturday, June 6: DVHS Tour of Parsons' Garden,
Glen Mills, PA. Potluck and plant auction.

Summer date TBA: AHS Judges' Clinic I hosted by
DVHS. Location TBA.

June 18–20: AHS National Convention
in Raleigh, North Carolina, hosted by Nancy and
Bob Solberg. Visit www.hosta.org or
www.2015ahsconvention.com.

Saturday, July 11: DVHS Picnic at Teich and
McColgan nursery in Chalfont, PA, with BIG LEAF
contest, plant auction, and more fun!

Saturday, October 17: DVHS Fall Meeting
At the Montgomery County 4H Center, Collegeville.
Workshop: "Shaping the Shade Garden."
Biennial election of officers.

Saturday, October 26: Tri-State Hosta Meeting
Frelinghuysen, NJ, speaker TBA.

IT'S DUES TIME

Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 15, you owe DVHS dues for 2015. 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 2015 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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