

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).

Hostas do have a few pests (deer and slugs!) and a few diseases to watch for. We'll help you learn about them.



Small hostas grow well in hypertufa troughs.

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. Note that variegated and hybrid hostas do not come true from seed. 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.

To learn more about hostas, visit our website, one of the best online resources for hosta knowledge to be found.

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DELAWARE VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY

Growing together since 1982
www.delvalhosta.org

Who we are

The Delaware Valley Hosta Society is a fun group of gardeners who have discovered the joy of growing hostas. Our region is great for growing hostas, and members' gardens may display from dozens of cultivars up to over two thousand of these shade-tolerant beauties. We are a local society affiliated with the American Hosta Society.

The DVHS holds at least four meetings yearly. Spring and summer meetings generally include tours of member gardens, exciting auctions, and potluck lunches. Our early spring meeting features a guest speaker with video presentation and a sale of exciting hostas. Our fall meeting may feature members' garden photos and a guest speaker.

We also promote and attend hosta events in the wider region, and in 2018, we hosted the 50th anniversary National Convention of the American Hosta Society!

DVHS activities are detailed in seasonal newsletters, with current issues delivered only to members; older issues are available at our website. You can also find us on Facebook.

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

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 hosta sales, but all are free to support our auction and raffle sales. The sales and auctions give you access to new and rare plants (and not just hostas), as well as large divisions of old favorite hostas, well-grown in member gardens.

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, bright spots in shade, and on and on. In 2011 we began installation of a display garden at the Tyler Arboretum, complementing the renowned Wister rhododendron collection there, and in 2012 we started work at the Barnes Foundation Arboretum on what became the area's first National Hosta Display Garden as certified by the American Hosta Society. We also work with staff at the Morris Arboretum and the Scott Arboretum on their displays of hostas.

Another educational event produced by DVHS is the Hosta Show, held generally in even-numbered years. Open to anyone, gardeners enter individual leaves, container-grown hostas, and miniature gardens featuring hostas to be judged by trained judges. These are fun and educational competitions, showing the best-grown hostas around! Watch our website for news of the next show.



This planting at the Tyler Arboretum shows the beauty of hostas in bloom

Some hosta facts

Hosta history

Hostas have come a long way since the days of "the blue one" (Hosta 'Elegans'), "the striped one" (Hosta 'Undulata'), and "the fragrant one" (Hosta plantaginea). Of course there have always been more than that, with about 40 known wild species, but it took a while for many varieties to become available to home gardeners. Today, there are over 6000 hosta cultivars registered by the American Hosta Society, with perhaps 2500 more known to hosta gardeners around the world! 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. Ask us about our favorite sources.



A stunning leaf of 'Liberty.'

Hosta hybridizing and selection has really kicked into high gear in the last 40 years, with hostas being bred for color, size (mini to giant), texture, form, and fragrance. Hostas can be rapidly increased through tissue culture (TC) propagation, getting exciting plants to you at reasonable prices.

Favorite nurseries include Lancaster County sellers like Black Creek and Groff's. DVHS members can shop for hostas at Russell Gardens Wholesale in Bucks County.

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 websites

www.hostalibrary.org : over 27,000 hosta photos

www.hosta.org : the American Hosta Society

www.hostaregistrar.org : over 6000 hosta descriptions.