



DELAWARE VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

INSIDE Art in the Garden
Five Who Built the Hosta World
Slugology

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www.delvalhosta.org

Spring, 2021

“BOTANICAL CLOSE ENCOUNTERS”

ART IN THE GARDEN

Conny and Jim Parsons

1206 HOLLY LANE
GLEN MILLS, PA 19342

Saturday, June 5, 2021

12:00 p.m.: Set-Up

12:30 p.m.: Plant Sale, Garden Walk and Art Stroll

2:30 p.m.: Meeting and Auction

3:30 p.m.: Clean-Up

Eat before you arrive or bring a brown bag lunch.

Please wear masks and observe social distancing.

Don't forget to bring a chair.

DIRECTIONS

From Philadelphia/NJ via I-95 south, or from south Jersey via Commodore Barry/ I-95 north: Take I-95 to I-476 (“Blue Route”) north. Take Exit 5 for Route 1 South (going west to Lima). Follow Rt 1 about 4 miles; just after the highway ends, exit right for Route 352 North. Follow Rt 352 (Middletown Rd) for about 3 miles, then turn left on Sycamore Mills Rd. Holly Lane is a cul-de-sac about 0.7 miles on the right. About 20–25 minutes from I-95.

From PA Turnpike or points NE: Take turnpike or other routes to I-476 (“Blue Route”) south. Take Exit 5 for Route 1 South (going west to Lima). Follow directions from Rt 1 above.

From Wilmington/points S and W via Rt 202 N/Rt 1: Take Rt 202 North (from I-95 in Wilmington, as needed) to Route 1 North, about 7.4 miles from I-95. Turn right on Rt 1. Follow Rt 1 about 6.5 miles to Route 452 North; turn left. Turn left from Rt 452 to Rt 352 in less than 1/2 mile. Follow Rt 352 about 2 miles as above. About 30 minutes from I-95.

From West Chester/points N and W via Rt 202 S: Take Route 202/322 South to Route 3 East at West Chester. Stay on Rt 3 (West Chester Pike) about 4.5 miles. Just past the intersection for Dutton Mill Rd (north), turn right on Dutton Mill Rd (south), which becomes Valley Rd when it crosses Rt 926. Take Dutton Mill/Valley Rd about 2.5 miles to Sycamore Mills Rd; turn left. Holly Lane is a cul-de-sac about 0.2 miles on the left. About 15 minutes from West Chester.



DVHS Officers

President

David Teager
1411 Deer Meadow Ln.
Garnet Valley, PA
(610) 485-4149
dsteager@earthlink.net

Vice President, Program

Marilyn Romenesko
106 Hoiland Dr.
Wilmington, DE 19803
(302) 750-4525
mromen9@gmail.com

Vice President, Membership

Rebecca Boylan
1200 Farmington Ave.
Pottstown, PA 19464
raboylan@comcast.net

Treasurer

Stephen Fugate
1411 Deer Meadow Ln.
Garnet Valley, PA
(610) 485-4149
skfugate@earthlink.net

Secretary

Missy Kashey
460 Halteman Rd.
Pottstown, PA 19465
(610)-310-0096
mjkashey@gmail.com

Committee Chairs:

Publications

Kathy Miller
Kennett Square, PA
kwmille@mtco.com

Display Gardens

Marilyn Romenesko &
Conny Parsons
Glen Mills, PA
connyparsons1@aol.com

Plant Sales & Auctions

Position open

Hostatality

Irene Cassidy
Clayton, NJ
latte_datte@yahoo.com

Advisory Board

Conny Parsons, Glen Mills, PA
Michael Flagg, Schwenksville, PA
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DVHS President's Column, May 2021

"You're gonna need a bigger boat."

This line from "Jaws" comes to mind as we take our daily walks around the garden this year. We had wanted our garden to look "finished" for the 2018 convention, and held off on placing smaller plants in the garden after 2016. But then we suddenly found ourselves with new hostas (how did that happen?) and a little room to expand. Hostas planted later in 2018 and 2019 have now reached their "leap" year (in the "sleep, creep, leap" launch cycle), and the combination of weather factors means that many are, indeed, leaping. I'm looking at you, 'Gabriel's Wing'!

As well, hostas we had left full and undivided for the convention are now calling for undivided attention. In reality, they are calling for attention in being divided! With so many spring projects to tackle, though, most will remain unattended this year and continue to crowd their neighbors. We really should do a massive dig, divide, and pot, and set up an unlicensed sales table at the local farmer's market. (Hey, this is a hosta farm, isn't it?)

Sometimes I feel like a hosta "pusher," and that's not a bad thing. (*Hosta* 'Undulata' may be the menthol cigarette of the hosta world; look at this stronger "stuff" you can buy!) Even though I expect you are already hooked on the strong stuff, we hope you'll come ready on June 5 to shop the hostas we bought for last year's cancelled hosta sale, and to leap at the chance to bid for interesting auction plants. Rebecca is potting up those purchased hostas, which puts them already into their "creep" year (and I expect some are already leaping).

It's always a treat to visit Holly Lane (the garden of Conny and Jim Parsons), and Conny promises extra goodness this year with some of her recent artwork on display. Read about that on the next page. Do note that, due to a family conflict, we've moved the meeting up to June 5.

That change in date means Kathy had to work a bit quicker to get this Newsletter into your hands. In turn, that means we haven't yet made final decisions on categories for the Hosta Photo Contest we're running this year in place of a Hosta Show (leaf competition). The point I can make now is (as Karl Gercens reminded us): just take lots of pictures! Digital photographs are completely free, as long as you have digital storage capacity. So take pictures of hostas alone, close-ups of leaves, hostas with friends (companion plants, garden art, insects or animals), and I'm sure there will be a category that fits your best pictures. I will send an email once the categories are chosen, posting the information on our website, and continue to update that as we define entry rules, submission deadlines, and voting/judging procedures. Let's make this a year of hosta art!

David

Art in the Parsons Garden

Almost all of us have had the pleasure of seeing this beautiful expanse of hostas and companion plants. But many have not yet had opportunity to see Conny's artwork. This year her show at the cooperative, Third Street Gallery, runs April 23 through May 24. Many of the paintings from "Botanical Close Encounters" will be available for us to see in her garden on June 5.

From Conny we learn about her artistic style:

"Almost all my work has its roots in nature. The images are about organizing what I perceive and feel. They are not about creating a totally literal landscape. Many of my paintings and prints depict a close-up perspective, a portrait of an element in my environment. This closeness creates a sense of intimacy within the landscape and allows the viewer to be a part of nature rather than apart from it."



Above is one of the paintings from the recent exhibit, "Botanical Close Encounters". To see the entire exhibit and to check out some of Conny's other work, visit her website www.connyparsonartist.com

Once an Empty Canvas.....

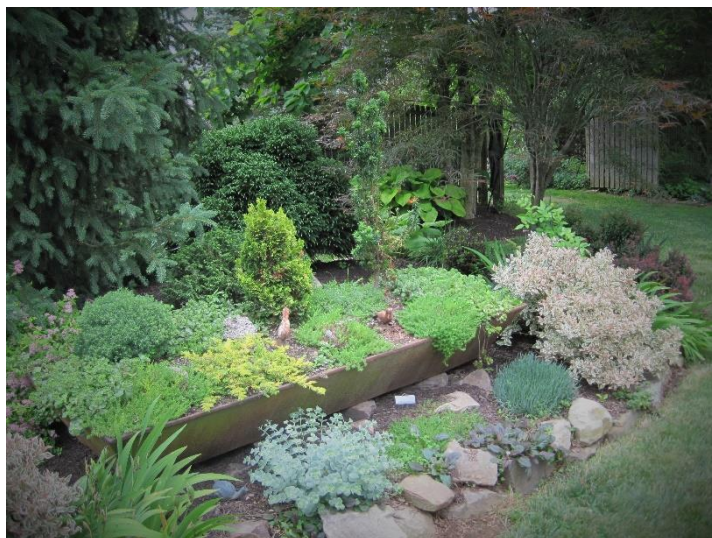
Twenty one years ago we moved to our property after a builder had just completed a "spec" home. Jim and I have lived here longer than in any house or location. We had been looking for flat acreage for about a year when I stumbled onto this property. I thought the house was too big (still is) however location and two and half flat acres with a flat driveway won out.

We had both grown up and lived mostly in the midwest (Hardiness Zone four). This property has provided us with an empty canvas to learn from. On the property was a large number of black walnuts, maples, a few ash and many crabapples. There were no conifers or flowering shrubs. Today I am really glad we put in lots of azaleas, magnolias, redbuds, Japanese maples and conifers.

We brought in a small gazebo for a location quite a distance from the house to act as a shelter from rain. We had to clear some prickly brush to extend the yard to this location. Along the way we bordered the property with conifer, flowering trees and shrubs. Stones border most beds which are filled with ground covers and perennials. Large clumps of ferns and grasses are repeated throughout the property.

A couple of years ago someone from PHS came through the garden and she made a comment that I was not sure I understood – "You have made a rain garden!" One of the biggest changes in our property has occurred in the last five to eight years. This area has really grown and more houses have gone in around us and acreage has been cleared. The last four years have been record breaking rain falls. We have had rivers going through our yard so we are very thankful we spent so much time putting trees, shrubs, and ground covers in to slow the wash down. Some of our paths have also been converted to rocks versus mulch. We are also very grateful the township required the builder put in a run-off gulley behind the house 21 years ago.

(By the way, I should mention we have about 800 labeled hosta cultivars. Enjoy!)



4 Five Who Built the Hosta World

Bill Meyer

A glance through the Hosta Library gives an idea of the expanse of the hosta world as it is today in 2020. The links page there also shows the extent of other sources of hosta information. Almost all of this was created in my lifetime and I found myself thinking about who laid the foundation for it all. Who were the people who laid the cornerstones that it was all built upon? Five people stood out as the ones who changed the world of hostas from a few old garden staples to the vast and rich empire that it is today. As each worked in different areas they can't be ranked for importance, so I list them in chronological order.

Each of the below listed people looked at the world they found themselves in and saw room to build. They rolled up their sleeves and got to work. Over their lifetimes, each through thousands of hours of work, changed that world in a way that would last.

Alex Summers



Starting with a small nursery on Long Island, Alex gathered to him the leading lights of hostas in the 1960s and formed the American Hosta Society. He shepherded it through its infancy as president and editor for its first ten years. It was the first hosta society and it was the center of hosta development through the later 1900s.

Florence Shaw



Working in obscurity in Massachusetts during the 1960s into the early 1970s, Florence's hybridizing vastly expanded the range of hosta cultivars. Many of her plants are still very popular today and sports of them are even more so. No one had nearly the impact on hosta development that she did, but her importance was obscured by Paul Aden, who got away with claiming credit for her work for decades before being exposed.

George Schmid



George dug deeply into the mysteries of the origins of hostas, traveling the world to research his book *The Genus Hosta*, and his thorough internet publication *Hosta Species Update* at the Hosta Library. He delineated and described the species in great detail and his body of work is considered worldwide as the definitive work on the genus.

Mark Zilis



Zilis Mark first impacted the hosta world with the development of tissue culture for hostas, changing the scene dramatically as new hostas soon became widely and cheaply available. He went on to run Q&Z Nursery, putting hundreds of hostas, many his own introductions, into the marketplace. In addition, his deeply researched books rank among the very top works on the genus, specially the massive *Hostapedia*.

Bob Axmear



In the late 1990s, there was essentially no hosta presence on the internet. Bob set out to change that. He not only created the HostaLibrary but the first hosta nursery websites as well. Before Facebook became a big part of the hosta internet, the HostaLibrary and the many nursery sites were where most of the hosta activity on the net was.

Without these five giants the hosta world would be so much less today.

A big "Thank You" to Bill Meyer for his insightful writing. We retrieved this article from *Georgia Hosta Notes*, March 2020, but do not have any other publication details.

Alex Summers Photo: Ali Pollock.

Florence Shaw Photo: Maureen Cameron

George Schmid Photo: Mikky Lockwood.

Mark Zillis Photo: Carol Brashear.

Bob Axmear Photo: Mary Axmear.

GET READY FOR THE PLANT SALE

See the plants. Spring 2020 *Newsletter*.
Issue 29.1

On our website: www.delvalhosta.org

Collect the price tags and pay as you leave
the meeting.

SPRINGTIME IN THE BRYAN-PURBRICK GARDEN

Thank you Debby and Andy for a nice glass of wine and a tour of the garden. Kathy Miller



'Flemish Sky' already perky in the foreground, while 'Empress Wu' flops out of bed in background.



After its shower, 'Winfield Blue' cozies up to *Athyrium niponicum*



A garish 'Ben Vernooij' is ready to steal any show with its bright springtime color.



Heee's back! 'Andrew' appears for another season of frustration for Debby and Andy. Can anybody really grow this one?



'Bridal Falls' just waking up. Unfurling her pleated skirt.



A trio of trilliums. Left to right: *Trillium luteum*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Trillium erectum*.

Slugology

Diatomaceous earth. Copper wire. Beer. Eggshells. Salt. Metaldehyde. Sluggo®. Wearing your miner's hat and creeping out after dark. Getting rid of slugs is the hosta gardener's dream, but is it possible to do this safely?

The following is an excerpt from an article by Bill Meyer. The entire article as well as additional information on the topic can be found on the Hosta Library www.hostalibrary.com.

The dangers of metaldehyde slug baits are well understood and fairly well documented. No one anywhere puts forth the idea that they are safe for people or animals to eat. The dangers of eating iron phosphate EDTA slug baits on the other hand are not even mentioned, certainly not by those who are trying to sell or promote those products. Virtually no research has been done on the consequences of a child or dog consuming the product, and the first dog poisoning cases, including deaths, have been confirmed. Its toxicity to pets and humans, especially children, seems to be on a par with the metaldehyde baits, as the reported dog poisonings makes clear.

Although it is highly irresponsible, many sources of gardening information continue to tout iron phosphate baits as completely safe for children, pets, and wildlife despite having no real proof that such claims are true and can point to no studies that show that. The Swiss FiBL study said that EDTA is more poisonous than metaldehyde and that they didn't think the iron phosphate slug bait products would be much safer than metaldehyde baits. As poisoning reports come in, it appears they are right. If Ohio State University and Australia's Veterinary Journal are to be believed, dogs are being poisoned by these baits, and the potential is there for children to be as well. Why does all U.S. advertising of these products hide the fact that EDTA is in these products and that iron poisoning is what kills slugs and that it is a hazard to any mammal that eats them? I don't know, but that does seem to be what is going on.

If you have these products or are planning to use them, I strongly recommend that you treat them the same way as you would the metaldehyde baits, and consider them equally dangerous until we know more about them. Be extremely careful to keep children and pets out of the containers. Use only sparingly as directed, don't put big bands or piles anywhere, and clean up spills. Do not allow children or pets to play unsupervised in treated areas, and watch for neighbor's dogs or kids when the product is down. There is nothing wrong with these products - they work very well as a slug and snail bait. The problem is the deceptive advertising that hides the true nature of these products, and disarms the caution users should have with a dangerous poison.



photo: missouribotanicalgarden.org

It is ultimately our responsibility to keep kids, pets, and wildlife safe from poisoning when we use or store poisons. Both metaldehyde and iron phosphate baits are pretty safe if used properly, but they are both dangerous poisons if consumed in enough quantity. Remember too that the iron phosphate baits as far as I know do not contain Bitrex [a harmless bitter chemical added to discourage ingestion of toxic materials] so they are much easier to eat in large quantities, and that iron builds up in the system so eating smaller amounts over time will increase the amount of poison until symptoms appear.

Ed. Note: Curiosity killed the cat. I tasted Sluggo. It has no taste whatsoever. A small child could easily eat quite a bit of it. If you are reading this publication, I survived.

!!SLUG SUPREMECY!!

A single, small slug has been blamed for a massive power failure that brought part of Japan's high-speed rail network to a standstill.

Japanese rail company JR Kitakyushu says that one small slug was responsible for a power outage and subsequent delays for an estimated 12,000 commuters on a high-speed rail line in Kyushu.

Some 26 separate trains were canceled at around 9:40 a.m. local time due to the power outages, which company engineers now say was caused by a 0.7 to 1.1 inch (two to three centimeter) slug which made the ill-fated decision to crawl across a power cable in electrical equipment connected to the network. It then fried, taking out part of the electrical grid with it.

BBC News

DVHS HOSTA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Karl Gercens' wonderful lecture on Tuesday April 20 left us all enthusiastic about taking pictures in the garden. Big take-aways included the importance of HDR, the rule of thirds, layering and the concept of using straight-on shots for complex images. And that's just a few of his suggestions. I also liked to hear that complex camera settings are not usually necessary because so many photo processing programs are available to clean-up and enhance shots. Nowadays a good smartphone can be used as well as a camera.

David has placed the video of Karl's talk (96 minutes) on our website for all to enjoy. Be sure to check it out.

We hope that you will use some of Karl's tips to take some pictures of your own. We are hoping not just for classic pictures, but also for some new ideas and artistic photo techniques – even zany stuff. Any photo program has access to filters and special effects. Try some of them and see how they can enhance your photos. We are anxiously looking forward to whatever you shoot.

Details are being worked out, but the hostas are not waiting for us to put the final touches on. NOW is the time to begin shooting. So dust off those lenses! Stay away from the sun and treasure the cloudy days! Get down on the ground and get up on the roof! Start shooting and have fun!

DVHS MEMBERSHIP DUES. Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 21, you owe DVHS dues for 2021. 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 2021 www.delvalhosta.org

Please watch our website for more!

Saturday, February 27, 2021. Zoom Meeting.
June Colley. "Hostas in Japan".

Tuesday, April 20, 2021. Zoom Meeting.
Karl Gercens. "Photography in the
Garden".

Saturday, June 5, 2021. Spring Meeting.
Garden walk, Plant Sale, Auction.
Parsons Garden.

July 15 – 17, 2021. AHS National Convention.
On-Line. See AHS website for
information www.hosta.org.

Sunday July 18, 2021. Summer Meeting.
Garden Party. Miller Garden. Hosta
Hopscotch.

Saturday. TBA. Fall Meeting. Election of
officers.

June 2022. AHS National Convention.
Minneapolis, MN.

The American Hosta Society

www.americanhostasociety.org

Check out the benefits of membership.
Join other hosta lovers from around the world.