



DELAWARE VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Bartram's Garden
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Volume 31, No. 1

www.delvalhosta.org

Spring, 2022

SPRING MEETING

“Ferns in the Shade Garden”

Speaker: Mary Tipping

Curator and Plant Recorder, Scott Arboretum

and

DVHS Plant Sale

April 23, 2022

Scott Arboretum

Wister Education Center & Greenhouse

500 E. College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081

12:00 Set-Up

1:00 Announcements, Brown Bag Lunch

1:30 Speaker

2:30 Plant Sale

3:30 Clean-Up

Directions for April 23

Swarthmore is best accessed from I-476. From I-476 take exit 3 for Media/Swarthmore and follow signs to Swarthmore on Baltimore Pike. In about 0.3 miles, turn right on Rte. 320 South (South Chester Road). Then follow Rte. 320 as it turns right at the first light. Turn right at the next light onto College Ave. Follow the Scott Arboretum Event signs to parking and the Wister Center.

Drivers from the west take Rte. 1 North, but stay on Baltimore Pike after you pass the remains of Granite Run Mall. Do not take the Rte. 1 by-pass. Come through Media and under I- 476 to Rte. 320. If you mistakenly take the Rte. 1 by-pass, proceed about 3.5 miles and exit to I-476 South. Then take the next exit for Rte. 320.

COVID Restrictions:

Everyone must be masked. There will be no traditional ‘Hostatality’ time;
however we will provide beverages and simple snacks.
Watch the our web page for any changes to these restrictions.

Plant Sale

You must be a current member to buy plants. Check your newsletter label. Please mail in your dues or pay the Membership Chair at the meeting. Please bring a plastic bag or box to contain your purchases.
Sale plants will be pictured on the web page prior to the meeting.



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Warren Pollock, Glen Mills, PA
Barbara Tiffany, Point Pleasant, PA

President's Letter

What a roller-coaster the first few months of 2022 have been! The weather is up and down in wild, sometimes violent, swings. We awoke yesterday to a crust of ice covering everything, which the trees shed in noisy chunks as the sun came out to warm them. The *Betula nigra* (River Birch) by our garage shed its own cartful of small branches, such that I had to do a bit of clearing before running errands. (Hint: don't plant one of these near your house!)

Speaking of violent swings, the rise in COVID cases in September, which caused us to hold our fall meeting by Zoom, paled in comparison to the truly frightening rise in cases in December. But in welcome news, rapidly plunging numbers now indicate to me that the worst of COVID should truly be past us. I hope all of you have remained well, although I know some members who are still suffering some consequences of the disease. As with so much in our lives, we adapt, and move on.

The executive board held a casual planning session to make some shape of this year, which we will celebrate as the fortieth anniversary of the organization. We're still firming up some plans. We will remain cautious, pandemic-wise, with our first indoor meeting in two years, but plan a full summer of activity including a hosta show, a bus/driving trip, and a celebratory fall banquet. After the last two years, I think we all deserve something special!

As a heads-up for something not on the calendar, we do plan one or more work days at the Barnes Arboretum National Display Garden following our meeting there this spring. If you heard Bill Rein, Associate Director for the Arboretum, in his presentation last fall, their new director is keen on maintaining our display as one of the prime features of the facility. Having seasoned hosta growers helping their own staff, students, and volunteers negotiate a hosta garden will ensure the garden receives the best care. Please consider volunteering for this or for other ongoing work of the organization, so that we can continue for another forty years.

As to our own work at Teagate, the famous last words are "no more new beds!" Indeed, with addition/revision of a bed on the east side of our house, we seem to have reached maximum capacity of hosta-suitable terrain. This new bed is a bit of a hybridizer's folly, and got planted out last fall with a few dozen seedlings I want to grow on. Recognizing that some of these will end up in the "not worthy" compost pile, though, I have another batch of seedlings just sprouted in the basement. Thus is the cycle of years for the gardener!

David

The American Hosta Society

www.americanhostasociety.org

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

June 4 Event: Cairnsgrove Gardens and Apiary

Another visit to the garden of Rebecca and Dan Boylan will be a real treat. This garden has everything! Shade gardens, Water features, Blueberries, Bees, and Rebecca's beautiful trough gardens filled with lots of cute mini hostas and companion plants. A little something for everyone, with the Cairn terriers keeping it all shipshape.



Highlights from Cairnsgrove.

Top: *H. 'Dark Shadows'* and companions.

Middle: *Sarracenia* at the pond.

Bottom: *Selaginella uncinata* and friends in a trough garden.

Photos: Kathy Miller

Hosta Color Changes

(see article p. 7)

H. 'Zebra Stripes'

Viridescent

Emerges white
with green veins

Later, becomes
greener.



H. 'Old Cardboard Boxes'

Azurescent

Emerges blue-
green.

Later, becomes
deeper blue.

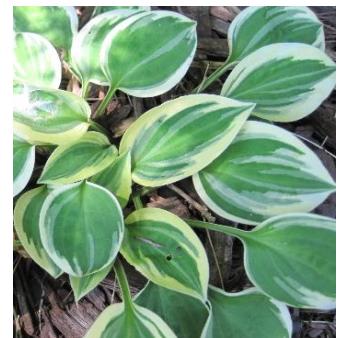


H. 'Cameo'

Albescence

Emerges with
yellow margin.

Later, margin
fades to white



H. 'Ian Winslow'

Lutescent

Emerges all green

Late in season,
center fades to
olive green



H. 'Hanky Panky'

Flip-Flop

Emerges with dark
center and light
margin.

Later, margin
becomes darker
than center.





Searching For Hostas in Bartram's Garden

Kathy Miller

When Covid first struck, Steve and I did a lot of walking and hiking to keep ourselves busy. Bartram's Garden was one place we had never explored, so one Sunday afternoon off we went. Using GPS, we made many mistakes, but finally arrived in a small corner of Philly on the Schuylkill. On the left was a neighborhood of single story bungalows and on the right an apartment complex. We were confused about the entrance to the garden and turned into the apartment complex. A kind resident, apparently familiar with this situation, motioned us along and we arrived at the entrance to the garden.

The first summer of Covid, many people were masked, but many were not. The visitor center of the garden was closed – no tours, no pamphlets, no nothing. Just signs asking for social distancing. It was hot. We had no map. But we explored the area and had a wonderful time.



From the Bartram's Garden Website we learn that in 1648, a 1,000 acre tract of land that includes Bartram's Garden was settled as an outpost of a New Sweden colony on the Schuylkill River. The land, known as "Aronameck," was eventually divided along natural boundaries, including a piece which became the site of John Bartram's farm and garden.

John Bartram (1699-1777) was a third-generation Pennsylvania Quaker, born in nearby Darby and imbued with a curiosity and reverence for nature, as well as a passion for scientific inquiry. Bartram purchased 102 acres from Swedish settlers in 1728, and systematically began gathering the most varied collection of North American plants in the world.

At home, Bartram co-founded the American Philosophical Society with his friend Benjamin Franklin. His garden was a source of inquiry and pleasure for luminaries like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. His seed and plant business thrived, with catalog lists appearing in London publications as early as the 1750's. His international plant trade and nursery business survived him and continued to thrive under the care of three generations of Bartrams.



Above: the shady arbor where Bartram and Franklin had their tea. An original horse trough in the foreground.

Eventually Andrew Eastwick (1811-1879), a wealthy railroad industrialist, purchased the historic gardens and preserved them as a private park on his estate. Upon his death, the expansion of the city and its industries threatened the gardens. A campaign to preserve Bartram's Garden was organized by nurseryman and writer Thomas Meehan (1826-1901) in Philadelphia and Charles Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. The City of Philadelphia took possession in 1891.

Today it remains a city park, with plenty of open space for a wide variety of community activities. In addition to original plants, it contains a large collection of additional annuals and perennials. Many come from around the world, but recently there has been an emphasis on native plants. The historic collection includes possibly the oldest ginkgo tree in the United States (planted in 1785) and a yellowwood tree planted by Bartram's sons in 1790.



Above: The face of the Bartrum home high above the river. Primitive roads forced most guests to arrive by boat at the dock below.

Right: only the base remains of a massive 1730's cider press on the banks of the Schuylkill.



On the Sunday we visited, the only hostas we could find were the two species *Hosta ventricosa* (see title page) and *Hosta plantaginea* (see above).

H. ventricosa was planted in great swaths in the lawn in the shadier parts of the garden. It had been allowed to go to seed and the seed heads hovered in menacing quantities over the foliage. From George Schmid's "Genus *Hosta*" we learn that *H. ventricosa* is native to China and Korea. It was first imported to England as live plants in the 1790's by George Hibbert, a botanist and merchant. Hibbert originally considered it to be rare and fragile and grew it in a greenhouse. However, it was not long before he realized it was a very sturdy, hardy plant. It was soon marketed to the rest of Europe and to the fledgling United States.

H. plantaginea, also known as the "August Lily", was planted in various lightly shaded flower beds. Again from Schmid, we learn that it is native to China. Its seeds were imported from Macao to Europe around 1784 by the French consul Charles de Guignes. It was the first hosta grown from seed in Europe. *H. plantaginea* was seen in German gardens in 1800 and in Danish gardens around 1802. It became so popular in France that it was often referred to as the "Parisian Funkia".

From the dates above, we can surmise that John Bartram himself did not grow any hostas and that they did not appear in his original catalogs. But the Bartram family that followed in the business, probably grew plenty of them.



6 Results of the American Hosta Society On-Line Auction

The AHS On-Line Auction was held January 16 – 29, 2022. Anyone interested in bidding was encouraged to register. Over 63 hosta plants as well as another 27 items were donated. When the bidding was completed, \$10,453 had been raised.

Here are some of the highlights. It was nice to see some brand new cultivars as well as some truly beautiful and distinguished older ones. Photos from the auction itself are no longer available. These photos came from the Hosta Library. www.hostalibrary.org



H. 'Lachman Legacy'. \$360. Original Stock. Donated by Steve Greene.
Registered by Bill and Eleanor Lachman in 2014.
Probably the last plant created by the Lachman hybridizing program.
Parentage unreported.
Photo: Steve Greene



H. 'Crazy Hazy'. \$334. Donated by Mason Hollow.
NR. Introduced by Marco and Joyce Fransen.
Sport of *H. 'Purple Haze'*.
Photo: Gail Russo.



H. 'Bloodline'. \$320. Original Stock. Donated by Doug Ruff.
Registered by Doug Ruff in 2019.
Hybrid of *H. 'First Blush'*.
Photo: Doug Ruff.



H. 'Sterling Medalion'. \$280. Original Stock. Donated by Don Dean.
Registered by Dean in 2014.
Pod parent was hybrid of *H. 'Frosted Dimples'* x
H. 'Sea Frolic'. Pollen from *H. 'Purple Verticillata Elf'*.
Photo: Don Dean



H. 'Pirouette'. \$190. Original Stock. Donated by David Teager.
NR. Introduced by David Teager.
Parentage unreported.
Photo: David Teager.

Hosta Color Changes

Portions of this article originated at the Walters Gardens, Inc. web site and are reprinted from other local hosta society newsletters. See color photos p. 3

Hostas go through three main types of color changes:

Viridescent color change — The root word of viridescent means green, so a viridescent hosta becomes greener as the season progresses. It may start off yellow, chartreuse, whitish-green, and then darkens to green.

Lutescent color change — Hostas that are lutescent lighten as the season progresses. This may mean a shift from chartreuse to yellow or a shift from dark to light green.

Albescence color change — The word alba means white, and hostas that whiten from yellow or chartreuse to white are called albescence.

Also at the Hosta Library site are the Rawson's Lists, a number of lists compiled by Don Rawson of hostas with particular characteristics, including seasonal color changes. Mr. Rawson expands the color-change categories to include:

Azurescent hostas, which become bluer during the growing season.

Flip-Flop hostas, such as 'Yellow Polka Dot Bikini' in which the variegated colors reverse during the growing season.

To help you understand how hostas experience color changes, let's look at some examples of a few popular varieties. *H. montana 'Aureomarginata'* is an older variety that uses Latin in its name to describe its variegation. "Aureo" comes from the Latin word aureus meaning golden while "marginata" means margin. This would lead one to believe that this is a green hosta with a gold margin. Though it does exhibit a yellowish margin for a couple weeks in

early spring, it quickly turns creamy white when the leaves completely unfurl. Often the margin lightens even further to white in summer. Thus, you can see how the name 'Aureomarginata' could be deceiving.

Another springtime favorite is *Hosta 'Sea Fire'*. As its name implies, this hosta is ablaze with color in the springtime. Just when the daffodils are blooming, 'Sea Fire' has emerged with nearly the same light yellow coloring. Few plants can rival its excitement as it emerges from a long winter sleep. However, as the warmer weather of summer approaches, its leaves turn from yellow to tropical green.

People familiar with the classic *H. 'Gold Standard'* recognize the characteristic parchment gold center of its leaves. Amazingly though, its early spring color would not remind you of a plant named 'Gold Standard', for there is no gold to it at all when the leaves first emerge. Rather, the young leaves are green or chartreuse with a deep green margin. The golden color is not achieved until later in the season.

Another classic, *H. 'Undulata Mediopicta'*, is described as having attractive green leaves with white centers. However, the heat of summer often causes the white center to darken, initially producing a green frosting or fogging and eventually darkening to all-green.

H. 'Remember Me' really requires two photographs to tell its whole story. When the plant emerges in spring, its leaves are bright gold surrounded by blue-green borders. By midsummer, however, the center of the leaves brighten to ivory or near white. The change is so drastic that many people would not even recognize the plant if they were familiar with it only in one season.

Though not all hostas are chameleons, changing their leaf colors during the season, most are. Perhaps the only hostas that do not exhibit any kind of color change are those that are solid green.

VHS MEMBERSHIP DUES. Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 22, you owe DVHS dues for 2022. 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 2022 www.delvalhosta.org

Please watch our website for more!

Saturday April 23, 2022. Spring Meeting and Plant Sale.

Speaker: Mary Tipping, Curator and Plant Recorder, Scott Arboretum.
Swarthmore, PA

Saturday, June 4, 2022. Summer Meeting.
Garden Walk and Auction.
Boylan Garden. Pottstown, PA.

June 8 – 11, 2022. AHS National Convention.
Minneapolis, MN.

Saturday, June 25, 2022. Summer Meeting.

Tour of the Barnes Arboretum.
Hosta Show.
Barnes Arboretum. Merion Station, PA

Saturday, late summer, 2022. Bus Trip. TBA.

Saturday, TBA. Fall Meeting. 40th Anniversary Banquet.

The Delaware Valley Hosta Society has been growing and would like to welcome our new member:

Robin Ferrari, Doylestown, PA
