



Saturday October 21

Fall Meeting

Speaker: David Teager

DVHS Past President

TITANS AND GODS: THE OLYMPIANS OF THE HOSTA WORLD.

Tredyffrin Public Library, 582 Upper Gulph Road, Strafford, PA 19087-2052

12:00 Set Up

12:30 Lunch

1:00 Business Meeting,

1:30 Speaker

2:30 Clean-up

Directions for October 21

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 Rte. 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 Rte. 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.



Bring your own brown bag lunch if desired.
Please bring finger food to share.





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Barbara Tiffany, Point Pleasant, PA
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Rebecca Boylan, Pottstown, PA

President's Letter

In early August, our third and final tour of the season at the **Look Again Garden** of nurseryman, Andy Schenck brought out a large group of around 50 members and friends. Andy was a gracious host, taking 2 groups of visitors on tour through his amazing garden. His garden offered an incredible variety of woody and herbaceous plants seldom seen on a single property. Thanks to Andy and his partner, Carol Verhake (whose fabulous garden we visited in early June), there was a table full of rare plants offered for sale near his garage. I was excited to find a Variegated Redbud Hazel, *Disanthus cercidifolius* 'Ena Nishiki' which we planted here, so I hope it does well in the partially shaded location I chose for it.

September offered a mixed bag for gardening events. Here in Wilmington, we had a very hot (mid 90s) and dry week for the beginning of the month, but much more fall-like weather with over 6" of rain for the next few weeks. What a relief to get the rain after that heat wave. I found it hard to keep up with the watering during that first week and had some loss of leaves on a few of my younger woody plants.

On September 11 we had a very successful work party at the Barnes Arboretum in our National Hosta Display Garden. There is a large and declining Princess Tree, *Paulownia tomentosa* in need of special care and likely removal. A collection of small and miniature hostas were located close to this tree. Since the tree is roped off around its drip line to protect visitors from falling branches, the hosta collection was difficult for visitors to view. We were able to salvage quite a few plants and move them to the new bed close to the Pollock bench. The plaque for this bed, which honors our founder, Warren Pollock is now mounted on a rock near the bench.

Thanks to Rebecca Boylan, past president, past membership vice president, and self-proclaimed facilitator, for this attractive bronze plaque. For the dedication of this new bed, bench and plaque, we are planning for Warren to visit the site with us. If you've been involved with this garden and would like to join us, please RSVP to me at mromen9@gmail.com within a week of getting this newsletter. This is a rain or shine event, barring thunderstorms and/or high winds.

The new head gardener at the Barnes Arboretum is Katie Jacoby. She is a horticulturist who trained at the Barnes School of Horticulture, and also worked at Bartram's Garden. Katie and her new husband Matt were extremely helpful with supplying materials and direction at the work party. We are grateful for their efforts and attention to this garden.

Looking forward, our October 21st meeting will feature David Teager's acclaimed presentation on **Hosta Gods and Titans**. This is a presentation he did for a Hosta College event last year. We are fortunate to have him do it once again for our group at the Tredyffrin Library near Wayne, PA. Election of officers also occurs at this meeting. New officers will serve a 2-year term. Up for election are: Debby Bryan as V. P. for Membership, Ed MacFarland as V.P. for Programs, and myself as President. If you would like to serve in any capacity, please let us know. Your participation will keep our group strong, and we can use help in many areas.

I look forward to seeing you at our fall meeting.

Marilyn

Titans and Gods: The Olympians of the Hosta World

David Teager



How the proto-god species of hostas created families that fill our gardens with power, poetry, and sometimes mischief. Who knew Greek mythology could be relevant and fun? Story telling suitable for hosta newbies and sages alike.



David welcomes DVHS members s to Teagate during a 2020 Pop-Up garden tour.

David has served as newsletter editor, webmaster, and president of the Delaware Valley Hosta Society, and as editor of The Online Journal of the American Hosta Society.

David Teager and his husband Stephen Fugate were infected with the hosta bug by close contact with Longwood Gardens over thirty years ago. Then further afflicted by a chance encounter with Warren Pollock. David was completing his doctorate in organic chemistry at the time, and found in hostas a worthy and beautiful research subject to fulfill his gardening interests -- first, in a small city garden and now at Teagate, their home for 25 years in Pennsylvania near Wilmington, Delaware.

Hosta kikutii. A Harbinger of Fall

Kathy Miller



DVHS Newsletter, Fall, 2023

When the garden begins to become a brown and crispy mess and most hosta leaves are riddled with holes, there is one hosta that can cheer you up - *H. kikutii* . (Yes. It’s not just your garden that looks a mess in the fall. That’s why we only visit gardens in early summer!!) *H. kikutii*’s neat and tidy look is a relief compared to the general sprawl.

According to George Schmid, *H. kikutii* was originally native to southern Kyushu. It was named for the Japanese botanist Akio Kikuchi. The flowers are contained within white bracts. At one time it was referred to as the Crane-Beaked Plantain Lily because the upper part of the scape resembles a Japanese crane.

There are many sports and progeny in the nursery trade today, including: *H. kikutii* var. *polyneuron*, ‘Hirao Splendor’, ‘Hirao Majesty’, ‘Fatal Attraction’ and ‘Valley’s Dancing Water’.

Big Leaf 2023

Our previous **Big Leaf** contest was held in July of 2019. There was a total of 18 entries - at that time it was pleasant to see “so many”. However, this year’s contest received an unbelievable number – 44 entries, grown by 15 different gardeners. And, wouldn’t you know it, the chairperson of the contest forgot her measuring tape. Luckily, Andy Schenck, our host, was able to supply a yardstick.

The most popular leaf was, again, ‘Sum and Substance’, with nine entries (Table. 1). For many years ‘Sum and Substance’ “ruled”. Then came ‘Empress Wu’, captivating us all with those unbelievably long green leaves.

cont’d p. 4

The American Hosta Society
www.americanhostasociety.org
 Check out the benefits of AHS membership.
 Join other hosta lovers from around the world.



Big Leaf Prize Winners

| Category | Cultivar | Grower | L x W |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Green | 'Empress Wu' | Cheryl Wardle | 351.7 |
| Blue | 'Elegans' | Victor Risch | 285.0 |
| Yellow/Gold | 'Sum and Substance' | Debby Bryan-Purbrick | 332.5 |
| Variegated | 'Winter Snow' | Victor Risch | 248.6 |
| Streaked | 'Gunther's Pride' | Ed MacFarland | Fabulous |

Table 2. Prize winning Leaves.

Of course L x W only approximates the true surface area of the leaves. We are working at coming a little closer to actual leaf size by tracing the leaves on to tracing paper and then weighing the tracings on an analytical balance.



Table 1. 2023 Big Leaf Entries

| Cultivar | # |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 'Sum and Substance' | 9 |
| 'Empress Wu' | 7 |
| 'Wu-La-La' | 3 |
| 'Humpback Whale' | 2 |
| 'Winter Snow' | 2 |
| 'Elegans' | 2 |
| 'Azure Snow' | 1 |
| 'Made You Look' | 1 |
| 'Sun Power' | 1 |
| 'Warwick Comet' | 1 |
| 'Blue Angel' | 1 |
| 'Leading Lady' | 1 |
| 'Gunther's Pride' | 1 |
| 'T. Rex' | 1 |
| 'Pie Ala Mode' | 1 |
| 'Frances Williams' | 1 |
| Unknown | 9 |
| Total | 44 |

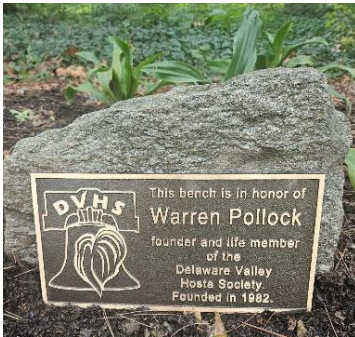


Andy Schenck leads a tour of his Look Again Garden.

Update on the Barnes Hosta Display Garden

Debby Bryan-Purbrick

As Marilyn has remarked in her President's letter, quite a lot of activity has been going on at the National Hosta Display Garden located in the Barnes Arboretum. Besides general clean-up and weeding, we have been moving hostas and designing a bed surrounding the bench which will be dedicated to Warren Pollock.



The mini hostas, which seem to be a favorite for visitors, were moved around the bench, where those seated could easily see them. Also adjacent to the bench we moved other plantings to accent the plaque which is to be mounted on a large stone.

We are indebted to those who came out this year to help at various stages in the spring, summer and fall. My many thanks to Conny (garden designer) and Jim Parsons, Marilyn and Dan Romenesko, Anastasia and Clint Cleaver, Irene Cassidy, Victoria Buckley, Ed MacFarland, Bill Halberstadt and Sharee Solow, Carol Dutil and my husband Andy Purbrick.

Lastly, we really appreciate the collaboration with Katie Jacoby, the new head gardener at Barnes. We have built a great rapport with her during monthly Zoom meetings. She has been a pleasure to work with and been instrumental in keeping the garden in shape.



A misty morning at the Barnes Arboretum.

6 Hosta Virus X Test Kit

Debby Bryan Purbrick

Recently in my hosta garden I came across a suspicious looking hosta leaf. It's rather mottled appearance led me to question whether it had been infected by a virus. I began to research Virus X and Virus X test kits.

According to Wikipedia:

Hosta virus X is a virus that infects hostas. The disease was first identified in 1996 by Dr. Benham Lockhart at the University of Minnesota, and grouped with the Potato X viruses. The virus has reached epidemic proportions and can be found in many garden centers and nurseries around the globe.

The hosta virus test kit is available for purchase online and sold by Agdia, Inc., a leading company in plant pathogen diagnostics. Their test kit contains:

- ImmunoStrips®
- Sample bags containing SEB1 buffer
- User Guide

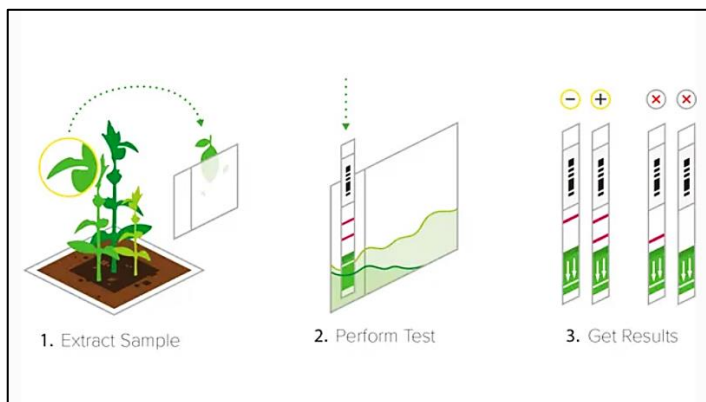
Sixty-four distinct samples of HVX have been experimentally proven to be detected by the Agdia ImmunoStrip assay. They have used 35 different hosta cultivars to test their assay. Have you used a Covid test kit? This assay is similar to the Covid test.

One simply collects a suspected leaf or root, places a homogenized sample (approximately 1 square inch) in the buffer and inserts the test strip. See diagram at right. Positive results can be seen in as little as 5 minutes, but they advise to wait 30 minutes. Just as in the Covid test, a positive result needs the presence of two lines: the test line and the control line.

The cost of these tests kits has risen with time. Now they are significantly more expensive. One can purchase a kit with 5 tests for \$65 (\$13/test) or a kit with 25 tests for \$155. This is a much more reasonable price per test (\$6.20), but a significant outlay for a single individual. Neither of these prices reflect the total with taxes and shipping which for overnight priority is about \$50.00.

I have contacted Agdia, and they recommend storing the kits in a refrigerator. They will be good for 1 full year. Having tests on hand so a gardener would know when to remove an infected hosta would be beneficial. The DVHS board is looking into purchasing the kit containing 25 tests with the objective of selling individual tests at cost to active members when needed.

Editor's note: After perusing newsletters from other societies, I've noticed this has become a common practice and tests are being sold to members for about \$6.00 each.

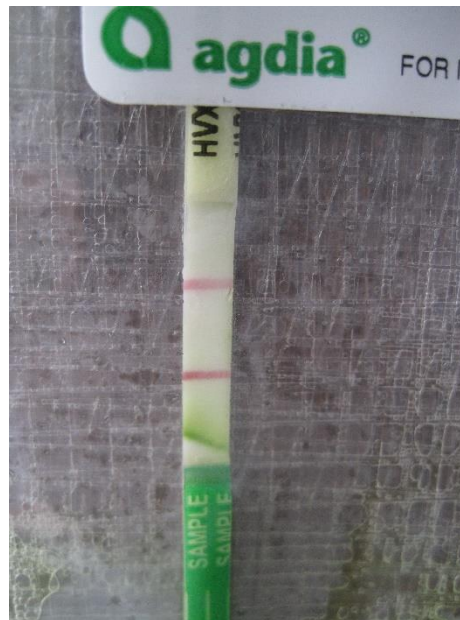


Diagram, from the Agdia website.

1. Note the removal of the tissue sample
2. Preparation and testing the sample
3. Negative and Positive test results, as well as two failed tests, which are missing the control line



Above: Virus overtakes beautiful large hosta. Right: This test is positive for Hosta Virus X. Photos: DVHS Newsletter Vol 20:2.



Fall Gardening Tips

These are excerpts taken from articles written by Rob Mortko, which appeared in the Central Illinois Hosta Society newsletters of August and September 2015. These tips are apropos at this time of year.

Many of you will recall that Rob spoke about hosta tissue culture at our October 10, 2020 Zoom meeting

August is traditionally the hottest month of the year. With all that heat our hostas will really benefit from regular watering. Our goal at this point in the season is to grow the rhizome so that we can reap the benefits next spring.



During the growing season the hosta rhizome (or crown) is building reserves that will be used the following spring. Large amounts of water are also required to replace the natural transpiration of the plant while supporting all the foliage. When we encounter a prolonged spell of hot dry weather, the rhizome will

spend its own reserves to support the plant. It's rare that a hosta will wilt, even when the soil is very dry - so we don't get any early warning sign like we do with many plants. Ever wonder why a hosta appears OK at the end of the year, but reappears much smaller and/or less vigorous the following spring, or (even worse) fails to reappear altogether the following spring? This is often the result of a decline in the crown mass the previous summer due to lack of adequate water.

Many folks might conclude that hostas can only be planted in the spring because they seem to "disappear" in local nurseries and garden centers by the first of June. Fact is, container grown hostas can be planted any time during the growing season. What's more, by planting now you can gain nearly a full growing season as compared to waiting until next spring. This will be readily apparent next spring as you will most likely have multiple eyes or pips emerge as a result of planting now.

Fall is considered the "optimum" time for hosta division as roots can continue to grow and establish themselves until our first killing frost. Remember hostas never need to be divided as opposed to most perennials that will become less vigorous after 3-5 years if not divided. With hostas it's a choice you make.

To divide hostas it is usually easiest to dig and lift the entire clump. Then use a spade or knife to divide into smaller sections. The key is to retain an adequate root structure (*editor's note*. particularly rhizome structure) for each division. If needed, use a hose to wash away the soil to get a closer look at where you should be making your divisions. When replanting, use a root starter/stimulator solution, but avoid any high nitrogen fertilizer this late in the season. Don't forget the value of good soil prep.

editor's note. An excellent "how to" for dividing hostas is David Teager's "Dividing a Streaker" article which appeared in of the *DVHS Newsletter Vol 28:2*. This article includes many helpful pictures. Check the Archives on our website.

Board Members, please check too!

DVHS MEMBERSHIP DUES. Please check your mailing label. If you see a number less than 23, you owe DVHS dues for 2023. The dues pay for the publication of this newsletter and maintenance of the website, as well as for other activities. Note that the return address is not the same as in the past. Stephen, who is our Treasurer, will forward your form to Debby, who is our Membership Chair.

Cut off and mail in.

Delaware Valley Hosta Society Membership and Renewal Form

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

Mail to: Stephen Fugate, DVHS Treasurer
1411 Dear Meadow Lane
Garnet Valley, PA 19060

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 2024 www.delvalhosta.org

Please watch our website for more!

Saturday, October 21, 2023. DVHS Fall Meeting.
Tredyffrin Library.

Saturday, February 2024. TBA. Hosta Soup
Meeting.

Saturday, May 2024. TBA. Bus Trip to Hosta
Hideaway.

Saturday, June 2024. TBA. Bryan-Purbrick
Garden.

June 19-22, 2024. AHS National Convention.
Marlborough, MA
