

# THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY

## THE HOSTA CONNECTION

MARCH 3, 2012  
1 O'CLOCK  
BACHMAN COMMUNITY CENTER  
PROGRAM  
'A TASTE OF ENGLISH GARDENS'



### *Notes from the Editor*

*Ruth Bumgardener will conduct our program, she is the owner of Mouse Creek Nursery in Riceville TN. Ruth has presented programs for us in the past, I'm looking forward to seeing Ruth again.*

*The February meeting at the Barn Nursery was fantastic. Craig Walker was very informative, he even made naked plants look good. We had 34 people to attend. The Barn had 16 chairs set up for us, boy did they scramble - they brought in more chairs, when the folding chairs were full and still more people arrived they started getting benches, and patio furniture that were for sale. I have arranged for us to have the September meeting at the Barn Nursery, Craig will be our speaker, hopefully the Barn will have started marking down prices.*

*The weather is such a big factor in gardening, and this year it is exceptional, it is almost impossible not to make reference to the extraordinarily mild fall that we have experienced and, at least at the time of this writing, not much winter either. I'm holding my breath waiting for the shoe to drop. The last 'little' cold snap killed all my 'spring' hydrangea blooms, I found nips of several hostas already emerging from the ground, I spent all of one day covering them with compost.*

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Dennis Schafluetzel is our new Web Master – Dennis had to go the extra mile to become Web Master. Since the death of Ed Chapin our Hosta Site has been down.

Dennis had to contact Ed's family to get a release of Ed's domain where our Hosta Site was located. Dennis now has us 'up and running'; he has done a great job – Thank you Dennis

Johnny McMasters is our new Treasurer, Gordon Bailey has been busy remodeling his and Arlene's home.

We have two new members - Welcome --- Sharon Hutsell and Jim Keown.

Have you made reservations to attend the National Hosta Convention in Nashville? You can go to the web site: [www.hosta2012.com](http://www.hosta2012.com). There is a schedule of events for the 3 days (June 13-16) , a registration form, a list of vendors. Some of you might not know, we are sponsoring Bob Solberg he is one of the leading hosta hybridizers in the United States.

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## OFFICERS

President.....Carol Bullard  
Vice President...Shirley McMasters  
Recording Secretary...Chuck Dodson  
Treasurer.....Johnny McMasters  
Historian.....Shirley McMasters  
Hospitality.....Arlene Bailey  
Publicity.....Roseanne Kaylor  
Year Book.....Betty Fassnacht  
Webmaster.....Dennis Schafluetzel

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR

April 7 - Meeting 1 pm  
East Ridge Community  
Program: Jimmy Wooten or  
Round table discussion  
April 21- Hosta Sale 9 am to 2 pm  
Bachman Garden & Art Expo

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## DRY SHADE

By Ray Radgers

Dry shade can be the result of several different situations. The first scenarios that came to my mind were areas that couldn't be reached by a water hose, gardens that rely on the limited availability of water, and areas directly under wide roof overhangs. I was reminded that hosta gardeners regularly experienced dry shade conditions due to plantings under trees, most notably shallow rooted trees like maples.

Without amending the soil prior to planting and receiving average amounts of moisture, there may not be any hosta that will grow well year after year in dry shade. This article focuses on hostas that when grown in well prepared amended soil will tolerate dry locations, but not actually prefer this condition. A top dressing of organic mulch (garden compost, mushroom compost or well rotted

wood chips to name a few) will keep the soil cooler, retain moisture longer and reduce evaporation.

When hostas are grown under trees, possibly the most important factor is the type of tree itself. Oak and hickory trees (deep roots) are reasonable to grow hostas under, silver maples are not (shallow roots), at least not without daily care. The most difficult area to grow hostas in is anywhere in the vicinity of the outer edge of a tree's drip line, no matter what type of tree, as their roots are most competitive in this area.

As far as hosta that will tolerate dry shade, by using the following criteria:

They were growing in an area that either, is not watered or experiences periods of hotter sun conditions, causing the soil to dry out, even if they do get the occasional water. They maintain or increase in size from one year to the next. They are not typically susceptible to crown rot. They look good from August until first frost.

The majority are large hostas. Possibly their tolerance to dry shade is due to a larger root system being more capable of extracting moisture from the soil.

Recapping, I think it is safe to say there are hostas that will tolerate dry shade, but to improve the likelihood of success, keep the following tips in mind:

Improving the composition of the soil, adding significant amounts of moisture retentive well rotted composts is critical.

Use an organic Mulch (not Fresh) to retain moisture. It is important to pull the compost a few inches away from the base of each hosta to lesson the possibility of crown and/or petiole rot.

A consistent season long watering program will also improve your chances for success.

There are a couple pluses to gardening in dry shade. Slugs do not live in dry locations and the likelihood of crown rot and/or petiole rot is significantly less. Of course, most people would agree there are more severe negatives than positives. These include:

Hostas without sufficient amounts of water through the growing season are more likely to develop dry rot of the crown over the winter, resulting in much smaller hostas the following season and possibly the complete loss of others.

Competition for moisture and nutrients from shallow rooted trees is a constant challenge. Hostas grown under shallow rooted trees typically require more watering for optimum size increase. Keep in mind that tree canopies often prevent light rains from reaching the ground. In years of average or more amounts of rainfall, mature clumps of hostas can survive with no supplemental watering. Remember the advice of Bob Solberg: if you are not going to water – DON'T START,- if you are going to water – DON'T STOP.

*Reprinted from: Great Expectations Newsletter  
Illinois Hosta Society*

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