

THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



THE HOSTA CONNECTION



**MAY 3, 2014
12 O'CLOCK
PICNIC - GARDEN TOUR
& PLANT AUCTION AT
JUDY & KENNETH HILL'S
HOME**



Notes from the Editor

Time for our annual picnic, this year Judy and Kenneth Hill will be our Hosts. If you've never seen Judy's garden you are in for a treat, I love looking at the way Judy pairs up plants together, it gives me some fresh ideas for my garden. Bring a covered dish, and lots of money --- why lots of money? We're going to have a Plant Auction. I have been digging/potting up some plants from my garden. I hope y'all go dig in your Garden and bring some Plants, this is our biggest fund raiser for our Society.

How did your Gardens fair when 'old man winter' came sneaking in. I covered up everything I could, it looked like it had snowed. In the past I had bought heavy frost cloth to use, when Bob Solberg came several years ago ,he said the thin frost cloth worked just as well as the heavier weight and it was cheaper. I went on line to Gardener Supply and ordered a few. I saw a little damage on the banana plants, and some on the thin leaved hostas that I wasn't able to cover. Everything else seemed fine.

I've started watching my Hosta leaves, I compare each one to another, I've always been delighted to see the Hostas unfurl but since we are going to have a Leaf Show I'm paying more attention to each leaf, I think I have found my worst leaf, it is all crumpled up but the other leaves on the plant are perfect. I'm hoping this same plant will have the perfect leaf and the ugliest leaf.

This winter was hard on my Garden, I lost a lot of plants and severely damaged some of my trees and bushes. My hydranges were hit the hardest, I'm getting new growth at the crown but all the stems are bare, I haven't cut anything back yet, I hoping they will have a little life left in them.

I seached the web to see different view points on what and when to fertilize, here are some of the answers I found.

Fertilizer Types:

Fertilizers come in liquid feed, granular and slow-release. Liquid hosta fertilizer is ordinary garden fertilizer such as Peters, Shultz or Miracle Grow that can be drenched into the soil or sprayed on the leaves as a foliar spray. Drenching the soil is more effective but is harder to do after the hostas unfurl. Standard 10-10-10 inorganic garden fertilizers are quite inexpensive. However, the nitrogen can leach out of the soil fast depending on the amount of water applied and soil type. Do not let granular fertilizers remain on hosta leaves as they can burn small holes in the leaves. It is important not to fertilize hostas past late-July, as the plants should not be over-stimulated to make new growth. Some types of *hosta fertilizer* require a temperature of 70 to 77 F. to start releasing fertilizer into the soil and will release fertilizer for 60, 90 or more days, which releases fertilizer in August. This can be harmful. Fertilizing hostas after July 31 may promote soft, sappy growth that slugs and snails will appreciate. Hostas need to slow down in the fall and harden off for winter. High nitrogen fertilizers that are often used for lawns such as 30-0-5 can produce tremendous growth, but may make the plants more susceptible to various fungal and bacterial rot. Osmocote has many different time release products that are excellent.

Foliar Feeding:

Foliar *hosta fertilizers* are liquid fertilizers which are absorbed through the leaves and roots. Foliar fertilizer needs to be applied every two to three weeks during the growing season if not weekly since it remains in the root zone for shorter periods of time than soil-fed fertilizers.

Hosta expert Bob Solberg recommends leaf fertilizing using Miracle-Gro Tomato Plant Food (contains magnesium) early in the year every two weeks when they are growing most rapidly. Manure is a good source for nutrients and delayed release fertilizers will supply nitrogen for all the summer.

(Bob actually told me the same thing about Miracle-Gro Tomato Plant Food but this is what he says at his web site.

Try fertilizing your hostas at least once this spring with a liquid fertilizer. Even if you use a slow release granular fertilizer, foliar feeding can make a big difference. You can use a 20-20-20 formulation or one with a higher nitrogen amount (the first number) but try to find one that has some added Magnesium. It is best to apply this bonus fertilizer just as the second set of hosta leaves are starting to flush, or 4-6 weeks after the hostas emerge. This little extra boost will help that second set of leaves expand to a size similar to those first big leaves.

Fertilizer

If you feel it is necessary to apply fertilizer, most professional Hosta growers prefer an annual application of 10-10-10. For those who tend toward organic gardening, there are several products that have worked well for Hosta gardeners. Some use Milorganite, others choose animal manure. Another organic fertilizer with 8% nitrogen is soybean meal. Our favorite fertilizer is water, water, and more water.

Once your plant is established, hosta care becomes a matter of simple maintenance. To keep your growing hostas healthy, fertilize them each spring with an all-purpose garden fertilizer. Additional summer fertilizing may be helpful, but not necessary. Granular fertilizers should never sit on the leaves.

Hostas respond best to light fertilization. [Soil testing](#) will help determine lime and fertilizer requirements. Without the benefit of a [soil test](#), apply 1/2 lb. of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. at planting or when growth emerges in the spring. Slow release fertilizers can also be used to meet nutrition needs throughout the growing season.

You may ask, "Will coffee grounds make my hostas grow better?" The answer is a resounding, yes! [Recycling](#) used coffee grounds on your garden is good for your hostas. Coffee grounds are a nitrogen-rich fertilizer and caffeine has been shown to be a natural and effective [repellent for snails and slugs](#). Researchers from the [USDA in Hawaii](#) accidentally discovered that caffeine kills slugs and spraying plants with a caffeine solution keeps the pests from eating them. Coffee grounds sprinkled on the soil create a natural slow-release nitrogen fertilizer. Nitrogen promotes bushy green growth. The coffee grounds also feed the worms. Caring for earth worms is important to the garden as they naturally mix and aerate the soil.

Directions to Judy's:

From Chattanooga take I-24 towards Nashville/Birmingham – take Exit 167 on left to I-59

South towards Birmingham – Take Exit 11 on right to GA-136 towards Trenton – Turn right on GA-136 to top of the Mountain (8.7miles) – Turn right onto Hwy 301 – Judy's house is 1.5 miles on the left. Before you reach Judy's house Hwy 301 turns into Hwy 90

Judy lives in Alabama so the road changes names at the State line.

See you Saturday May 3-----bring plants and something to eat