

# THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



THE HOSTA CONNECTION

**OCTOBER 4, 2014**  
**MEETING – 1 PM EAST RIDGE**  
**COMMUNITY CENTER**



**PLANT AUCTION**



*Notes from the Editor*

*It's time again for our Auction, go out and dig some plants from your garden, they don't have to be hostas, doesn't matter what they are – everything gets sold. If you bring the same plant, you brought before, don't worry – some one is always in need of having a new plant or replacing one.*

*At our last meeting in May, when we had our Leaf Show, those of you that wasn't there missed a fun time. We were not organized, but we had fun. Roseanne (under pressure from us) tried to judge the leaves. Roseanne is a Hosta Leaf Judge, she is also qualified to Judge numerous other plants and flowers, she explained to us what Judges look for. Next year we'll have another 'fun' leaf show'. Carol will get with Roseanne and make a list of the different categories that the hosta leaves will be placed in. Hopefully we'll be better organized, part of the confusion was the Newsletter Editor, she didn't explain what we were trying to do, (she really didn't know what was needed). We had big blue leaves competing with big variegated leaves, etc etc. I'll publish the different categories and guide lines, in the Newsletter a couple of months before we have the show. Remember this is a 'fun thing', not a serious Leaf Show. I saw a couple of hosta leaves I've never seen before, they are now on my 'hunt list'.*

*Since Fall starts this week, I found some articles that might be interesting. Voles are a dirty word in hosta conversations, lucky I have two out door cats who love to catch voles and chipmunks.*

## **Voles & Mice: How To Have A Vole-Free Garden. An Organic Solution That Works! See The Recipe Below!**

### **Do Voles Ruin Your Garden?**

Here's how New Hampshire Hostas' grower, Richard Merritt, uses an environmentally-friendly organic solution to prevent those pesky critters from destroying his extensive hosta gardens and lawn.

### **The Recipe For Organic Vole Control:**

#### **Large Area Applications Using A Hose-End Sprayer**

- 1 - 2 Oz Castor Oil (DO NOT USE UNSCENTED CASTOR OIL!)
- We buy our Castor Oil from <http://www.shayandcompany.com/castor-oil-1-gallon.html>
- 1 - 2 Oz Dish Detergent

Add the mixture to the jar of the hose end sprayer. Then fill the jar with water. Attach to your hose and thoroughly water every location that you want to deter the pests from. If your hose-end sprayer has a dial, set it to the highest setting.

#### **Small Area Application Using A Watering Can**

- 1 teaspoon Castor Oil (DO NOT USE UNSCENTED CASTOR OIL!)
- We buy our Castor Oil from <http://www.shayandcompany.com/castor-oil-1-gallon.html>
- 1 teaspoon Dish Detergent

Add this mixture to 1 gallon of water and thoroughly water the area to be protected.

#### **How To Apply The Organic Vole Control**

You want to water the ground, not spray it. You should thoroughly wet the soil so that the mixture penetrates a few inches into the soil. It is hard to say how much lawn and garden area the solution will cover. You just want to make sure you get the mixture into the soil.

#### **You Do Not Have To Re-Apply After A Rain**

You may want to re-apply in spring if you have damage during the growing

season. Some people do and some don't. Mostly vole and mole damage is just a winter issue as the pests are desperate for a food source.

#### **When To Apply The Organic Vole Control**

You want to apply the mixture before the ground freezes and after you have cleaned away all the leaves from your garden. This is typically after a few frosts.

**This Castor Oil solution is organic and will not harm wildlife or pets. It just makes those garden pests move out of your gardens!"**

## **POISONS FOR VOLE CONTROL**

Among lots of commercial pest control products poisons hold their own. Poisoning is often the first method that occurs to people, but it isn't, by and large, the best choice. Though poison can be an effective vole killer, it is potentially hazardous to children, pets and other wildlife. Moreover, if left in place, it can be washed off into your water supplies. If you still want to take this course of action, you should do it in late winter or early fall, when food is scarce and the pests are less finicky about what they eat. The best and safest poison baits are Warfarin-based, e.g. Rodex, D-Con, or Kaput Mouse Blocks. These baits can be purchased at most hardware stores. Warfarin is a slow-acting anticoagulant that prevents blood from clotting, thus leading to death. Voles must feed on the bait for about 5 days to show its full effect. Try to broadcast the poison for a week or two every other day. Always read the product label and obey the safety precautions. To reduce the hazard of non-target animals taking the bait, place it directly into burrow openings or use special bait containers. Alternately, you can put the bait in open-ended boxes.

## **Fall Clean-Up**

Cut back the rest of the greenery on hostas after it has died back in the fall -- October or early November in coastal areas and up to a month earlier inland. Although it would not hurt the plant to leave withered foliage on the plant, the foliage gives slugs, weevils and assorted rodents a handy shelter until spring. Dead foliage might also shelter viruses and other pathogens. Cut stalks down to approximately 2 inches tall to hold stalks above the ground -- they will fall away in spring when new growth begins.

## Mulching Hostas

Mulching is always a great way to conserve water and insulate roots from extreme temperatures. Weeds are also kept at a minimum when you use mulch in your garden.

If you choose to mulch your hostas, be sure to keep mulch away from the stem of the plant. Mulch lightly, only using an inch or two, to discourage pests from making a winter home.

Some gardeners mulch over the entire plant once it has been cut back. This can be helpful in areas that have warm days and cold nights because it keeps the soil at a consistent temperature. When the ground continually freezes and thaws in the fall, the hosta roots tend to work their way out of the ground. Exposed roots are unhealthy for hostas because they can dry out or even freeze in the winter.

If you decide to [mulch](#) over your hosta plants, use pine needles to prevent slugs and other pests from taking up residence there.

## Dividing Hostas

Just as fall is a great time to [divide and plant](#) many of your favorite plants, hostas can be divided in the fall before the first frost. Be sure to do it early enough so that newly planted hostas have time to establish themselves before the ground freezes.

The method is easy:

- Dig up the hosta plant and cut it into divisions with a sharp knife. Be sure each section has a crown and roots, and don't forget to disinfect the knife before moving on to the next plant.
- Plant your divisions in a hole that is twice as deep as the as the root section. Add any soil amendments you may need, such as compost, and then mound the soil in the middle of the hole. the hosta roots will grow down over the mound while the crown stays at soil level.
- After replanting your divided hostas, water them well.

You can also divide your hostas in the same manner during early spring just before the new leaves unfold.

## No Fall Fertilization

Fall care for hosta plants does not include fertilizing, unlike many of your other landscape plants that benefit from the extra nourishment for their roots as they prepare to go dormant in the winter. Hostas do need fertilizer; however this chore is most effective in the spring when they need a balanced (10-10-10) fertilizer for that extra boost.