

THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



THE HOSTA CONNECTION



HOSTA PICNIC SATURDAY, JUNE 6 12 O'CLOCK JOHNNY & SHIRLEY'S GARDEN



Time for our Annual Picnic, Johnny and I are looking forward to seeing everyone. Our garden is ready for visitors, so come see what we have growing.

Sunday, June 7: Cornelia Holland's Dedication Ceremony is at UTK, she developed a Hosta Display Garden. Since she worked so hard filling the Garden from her own garden (she gave pieces hostas and hostas from her Garden) plus she received donations from other Hosta lovers, UTK decided to dedicate the garden to her. Johnny and I are planning on going, I'll have directions to the Garden at the Picnic if any of you would like to go, or we can go as a group.

The Garden Expo at Camp Jordan was a success, we didn't make as much money as we had hoped but all of the expenses were covered plus a little profit. There are hostas that we didn't sale, and when these are sold we'll have more profit. Carol will not be at the Picnic, she made several different suggestions on what to do with the left over Hostas. Dennis said, he could keep them at his home – he has a automatic watering system. At the Picnic we can decide what we want to do.

Any ideas are welcome, some ideas are; do we want to keep them til the Auction in October or members buy them at the Picnic, our cost plus \$1 or \$2, or save them to sell next year if we do the Garden Expo or Bachman?

We had a sign up sheet; 24 people signed who were interested in Hostas, and wanted to receive the Newsletter or possibly join the Hosta Society.

'If any of you would like to attend the Picnic/Garden Tour, bring a covered dish and a smile. Reply back to me and I'll send you directions to our home.

We are looking forward to seeing you – hope you can come.

WHY WE LIKE SMALL HOSTAS

Unfortunately, none of us have unlimited space to plant hostas. Even the largest garden finally begins to fill up. Frequently, however, our ability to maintain the garden limits our need for new hostas long before the space runs out. Small hostas solve both these gardening dilemmas.

Large hostas also require more maintenance. Aside from the additional initial bed preparation time and effort, large hostas are just hard to handle. If grown in containers they seem to always be sending new roots out those little holes in the bottom of the pot. Small hostas need not be repotted as often. And thoughts of procrastination begin to creep into our minds when those old giant clumps need dividing.

Small hostas are easy to divide. Many do not even require a knife, they just pull apart with your hands and they do not need a crane to lift them out of the hole. Also, frequently they increase faster than large hostas so there are more surplus divisions to pass on to other hosta friends. Dividing small hostas every two or three years also keeps them small. And it keeps them cute.

In the garden I like to see small hostas grouped in areas by themselves, away from their bigger brothers and sisters. Frequently these beds are raised, bringing these smaller plants closer to eye level. I have seen several of these 'mini beds' mulched with gravel or small river rocks. The effect is both clean and eye-catching. Small hostas make great container plants and used in Fairy Gardens that are so popular now days.

We used to see small hostas used as border plants. Long rows of 'Golden Tiara', 'Gold Edger', and 'Lemon Lime' still fill my mind's eye. As collectors, many hosta growers cannot afford to give so much space to any one cultivar. But for landscape effect, a border of almost any small hosta will define the space as well as carry the eye around the garden.

by, Bob Solberg, Via Gold & Green Hosta Society

HOSTA CARE

In mature hostas, forgetting to feed will not make a huge difference. How much to fertilize your hostas depends on your garden situation, because healthy plants need a balance of light, water, nutrients and the proper soil. Hostas that are constantly moist may require more nitrogen as nitrogen will leech (wash out) of the soil. Sandy soils will leach nutrients faster than more clay or humus soils. If your garden is in deep shade, more fertilizer might not be the solution to increase the plant size or growth rate because the problem is insufficient light. Overall, fertilizing can provide hostas with a boost in nutrient-poor soil.

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 *osta 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.

Soil Feeding:

These fertilizers are absorbed through the soil. Organic fertilizers have lower analysis numbers than inorganic fertilizers and, therefore, tend to burn less. However, you will need to apply them more frequently to get the same amount of nutrients. They may also attract voles.

Manure:

BE CAREFUL! Some manure is full of weed seed that will create extra weeding for you. Make sure the manure is well-rotted so it does not burn the plants, and it is also free of weed seed. This is tough to guarantee. If you do find good manure, it can really make your hostas grow with low maintenance as it breaks down, naturally *fertilizing hostas* for years.

Weeding:

We like Roundup to kill all weeds before planting. Be sure to continue to weed frequently in order to eliminate weeds from ever going to seed. If you do this, you will find your hostas will keep out most weeds because they create so much shade and your garden will be low-maintenance, look beautiful and be much less work grass. Again, do not let weeds go to seed!

Weed Killers:

Some gardeners use Preen in the spring. Preen is a granulized, pre-emergent weed killer, which is compatible with hostas. Some use Round Up, which will kill anything green, so be careful. Some use a combination of both. Hostas are durable, rugged plants, but they still need proper placement and care.

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HOW TO KILL YOUR HOSTAS

1. Spray weeds nearby with herbicide.

Do not spray on calm days or block your hostas from the spray and mist with a cardboard or plastic cover.

2. Use too heavy or dense of a landscape fabric.

It is possible that those very small holes could clog with dirt, minerals, etc. and prevent the moisture from getting down to the roots.

3. Drown them.

If you make a clay “bowl” in the ground and water too much, your hostas will drown and rot.

4. Over-fertilize.

Put too much fertilizer in the hole when planting or too much of the wrong type during the season. Stop fertilizing before July 31 or your hosta might not come up next spring.

5. Water with the wrong technique.

Some large hostas create “umbrellas” for the water to run off the leaves and not water into the roots like you might think make sure your hostas are getting the moisture they need.

6. Let your dogs dig up your hostas.

I love dogs and cats, but this does happen.

7. Plant under maple trees or trees with lots of surface roots.

Your hostas are going to be competing with the tree roots for moisture and nutrients. The tree has often used up the soil’s nutrients before you plant, making the soil poor.

8. Plant in very deep shade.

Hostas do need some sun. The hostas that grow best in shade have lots of chlorophyll in them, like solid greens and blues.

9. Do not let them gradually adjust to sun.

Hostas need to gradually adjust to more sun if you put them out in a lot of sun. You can keep them in pots if you water them, and gradually give them an hour more sun every couple of days.

10. Plant next to concrete walls.

Often times these walls can leach out an alkaline water which makes the soil basic and well over 7.0 on the pH scale – 7.9 being neutral. Hostas prefer an acidic soil of a pH from 5.8 to 6.8.

11. Don’t wait for your hose water to cool down.

It is very easy for the water in your hose to rise to near-scalding temperatures as it sits on your lawn. This hot water can burn the leaves of your hostas, deform the enzymes, and kill your plant. Wait for the hot water to be flushed through before starting to water!