

THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



THE HOSTA CONNECTION



MARCH 5, 2016
MEETING at 1 O'CLOCK
THE BARN NURSERY
SPEAKER: CRAIG WALKER



Notes from the Editor

Spring is just around the corner, but Old Jack Frost will probably still play his tricks on us.

The Barn Nursery has given us permission to use a room for our meetings, we can bring refreshments but we won't be able to do any plant auctions. Tammy and Gary offered to host our picnic – this is when we'll have our plant auction.

Craig will be giving the program, At our last meeting he advised us on compost material we buy, I'll ask him to go over this topic again, it's scary how chemicals can show up in places that we would never think of.

Johnny did a Hosta Club test for membership emails, I'm glad - everyone answered with Yes. I apologise, somehow the February Newsletter was never sent. We'd been having problems with our computer so this could be the reason why. We now have a bright, shiny new computer that works great. (knock wood) I'll send the February Newsletter to you next week after our March Meeting.

At the February meeting we decided we wanted to go to Gibbs Garden in March, we will be going on a weekday, be thinking of dates you can go. Also, be thinking about (the membership) ordering hostas from Bob Solberg, with his garden club plan. Do we want to order hostas in quantities at his discount prices?

Bob is also selling his red hosta, Blush, in quantities of 10 for \$20 each. I really do want to buy this hosta.

At the February meeting, Ruby lead a round table discussion, she was very informative. Her years of experience with hostas is a great asset to our membership, plus she sales hostas.

A GARDENERS GUIDE TO FROST

taken from, Farmers Almanac, web site

Clear or Cloudy Sky?

Frost (also called white or hoarfrost) occurs when air temperatures dip below 32°F and ice crystals form on plant leaves, injuring, and sometimes killing, tender plants. Clear, calm skies and falling afternoon temperatures are usually the perfect conditions for frost. If the temperatures are falling fast under clear, windy skies-especially when the wind is out of the northwest-it may indicate the approach of a mass of polar air and a hard freeze. A hard or killing frost is based on movements of large, cold air masses. The result is below-freezing temperatures that generally kill all the most cold-tolerant plants.

Cloudy Skies: you may be in luck.

If the temperature is cool, but clouds are visible, your plants may be protected. During the day, the sun's radiant heat warms the earth. After the sun sets, the heat radiates upward, which lowers the temperatures at or near the ground. However, if the night sky has clouds, these clouds will trap the heat and keep the warmer temperatures lower, closer to your plants, preventing a frost.

Wind?

Wind also influences frost. If the air is still and windless, the coldest air settles to the ground. The temperature at plant level may be freezing, even though at eye level it isn't. A gentle breeze, however, will prevent the cold air from settling and keep temperatures higher, protecting your plants. If the wind itself is below freezing, frost may be very damaging.

Moisture?

Humidity and moisture are good things when talking frost. When moisture condenses out of humid air, it releases enough heat to sometimes save your plants. When the air is dry, the moisture in the soil will evaporate. Evaporation requires heat, which removes warmth that could save your vegetables.

Location, location, location.

The location of your garden can have a tremendous influence on whether or not an early frost could wipe out your garden, but leave your neighbor's alone. As a general rule, the temperature drops 3°F to 5°F with every 1,000-foot increase in altitude. The higher your garden, the colder the average air temperature and the more likely your plants will be hit by an early freeze. However, lower isn't always better. Cold air is heavier than warm air and tends to sink to the lowest areas, causing frost damage. The best location for an annual garden is on a gentle, south-facing slope that's well heated by late-

afternoon sun and protected from blustery north winds. A garden surrounded by buildings or trees or one near a body of water is also less likely to become frost covered.

Soil.

The type of soil your garden is growing in also affects the amount of moisture it holds. Deep, loose, heavy, fertile soil releases more moisture into the surrounding air than thin, sandy, or nutrient-poor soil. The more humid the air is, the higher the dew point will be, and the less likely that frost will form on those plants. Heavily mulched plants are more likely to become frosted since the mulch prevents moisture and heat from escaping out of the soil and warming the surrounding air.

The plant itself determines its likelihood of frost damage. Immature plants still sporting new growth into the fall are most susceptible-especially the new growth. Frost tolerance tends to be higher in plants with maroon or bronze leaves, because such leaves absorb and retain heat. Downy- or hairy-leaved plants also retain heat. Compact plants expose a smaller proportion of their leaves to cold and drying winds. By the same token, closely spaced plants protect each other. Keep the soil moist by watering your plants the day a frost is predicted. Commercial fruit and vegetable growers leave sprinklers on all night to cover plants with water. As the water freezes, it releases heat, protecting the plants, even though they're covered by ice. To prevent damage, the sprinklers need to run continuously as long as temperatures remain below freezing.

COLD TEMPERATURE EFFECTS ON PLANTS AND VEGETATION

FROST: Damage depends upon length of frost duration.

LIGHT FREEZE: 29 degrees F to 32 degrees F / -2 degrees C to 0 degrees C. Tender plants killed with little destructive effect on other vegetation.

MODERATE FREEZE: 25 degrees F to 28 degrees F / -4 degrees C to -2 degrees C. Wide destruction on most vegetation with heavy damage to fruit blossoms and tender semi-hardy plants.

SEVERE FREEZE: 24 degrees F / -4 degrees C and colder. Heavy damage to most plants.