

CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY

THE HOSTA CONNECTION

OCTOBER 1, 2016
MEETING 1 PM

THE BARN NURSERY

BUD HINES PRESIDENT of MASTER GARDENERS
OF HAMILTON COUNTY WILL BE OUR SPEAKER.
PROGRAM: COMPOSTING



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR,

Can you imagine we are over 13 inches shy of water this year. We have watered and watered and watered – city water dose not replenish the plants like rain dose. I'll have plants laying on the ground even after I've water them with the sprinkler for 3 hours, we received 1/2 inch of rain --- the plants have perked up. I've had so many plants to disappear - I don't know if they have died or went into dormancy. Just think of all the surprises (I hope) that the plants are going to give me next spring when they emerge from the soil.

Fall is finally here – at least the calendar says so. I'm so glad.....I can't handle the heat like I could when I was younger. Remember, Saturday, December 3rd, is our Christmas Luncheon, 12 o'clock – bring a favorite dish to share. We're going to start planning on what kind of adventures we can go on, speakers or programs we're interested in learning about.

For the members who do not have an email account, it is with sadness that I have to share the information of the passing of two of our members. Therese and Judy Nolin's husband, Benny

PREPARING PERENNIAL FLOWER BEDS FOR WINTER

from, BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS

As the brilliance of autumn begins to decline, a gardener must think about tucking the flower beds in for a long winter sleep. Even though the plants are not growing and producing the way they were during the summer months, there is still much to do to take care of the flower beds and make sure that the plants survive the winter. Taking the time to prepare flower beds for winter will ensure healthy, robust plants.

Step 1 Continue to water your flower beds throughout the autumn until the ground freezes. For best results, make sure the flower beds receive approximately 1 inch of water every week in the form of one deep watering per week. This will help the plants to grow strong roots. Stop watering when the ground will no longer hold water because it is too cold.

Step 2 Remove all weeds from the flower beds to prepare them for winter. Allowing weeds to stay in flower beds throughout the winter may cause disease or pest damage. When you remove weeds in the autumn, you are preparing the flower beds for a healthy growing season next summer.

Step 3 Cut back perennial plants as they show signs of decline. When plants begin to yellow and wilt, cut them back to the ground. Generally, you can safely cut all perennial plants back to the soil level. If you have ornamental grasses or other plants that add interest to a winter landscape, leave these plants intact until next spring. Cut down any perennial plants left standing in the spring.

Step 4 Lay down mulch to insulate the plants after at least two frosts have occurred. If you mulch too early, the soil will still be warm, and this may lead to plant decay. When the soil has cooled from the frosts, lay down between 2 and 3 inches of mulch around the perennial plants. Do not cover the actual plants with mulch, but scatter the mulch evenly over the soil. This will prevent the plants from decaying due to water accumulating around the roots.

How late is too late to plant Hostas in the fall?

By, Bob Solberg

August is a great time to plant Hostas almost anywhere in the country. You can safely plant them all month in the Midwest and North and the latter half of the month in the South. My standard rule is you want to get them in the ground 4-6 weeks before the first frost. This allows them to make some new roots while the soil is still warm and then have some time to prepare for winter.

Most of us, though, have planted Hostas in the ground later than that with good success. I have planted them as late as the first week of November without any noticeable ill effects. You do run a risk with late planting however. Hostas are completely dormant

during the winter, and they will not produce new roots until after they have made new foliage in the spring. They literally sleep through the winter.

Late planted Hostas may rot over the winter if they are very dry when the ground freezes, the soil stays too wet because of poor winter drainage or heaving occurs during cycles of the soil freezing and thawing. Snow cover or a covering of mulch will help with all these situations. So, with late Hosta planting, first make sure the plants are full of water when the first hard frost hits. Then try a little mulch to protect the Hosta crowns and moderate soil temperatures. (Beware! Deep mulches may entice mice and voles to make their winter homes in your Hosta garden.) With a little luck from the winter weather you can probably extend your planting season another month or so, even after the first frost.

Preparing the garden for winter

It was so hot and dry this year I know it had to be cool and wet somewhere, I fear we will have an early winter. As the Hostas in the garden are already looking forward to their long winter's nap, now is the time for winter cleanup. Here's a checklist:

1. **Label, label, label.** Don't wait until those plastic tags have faded or been scattered by the leaf blower, re-label all your new Hostas now. I like to bury a plastic label with the Hosta name written in pencil at the same position for each Hosta clump in the bed, say 3 o'clock as you view it from the path. They will last for years underground.
2. **Make one last check for pest problems,** especially voles and foliar nematodes. In the latter case, remove badly damaged plants from the garden.
3. **Leaf removal, both tree and Hosta.** If it is not an overwhelming task, try to remove the dry Hosta foliage from the garden, (do not compost), after a couple of nights of hard freezing weather. This will help decrease next year such pest problems as slugs, fungal infections, and foliar nematodes. Also, cutting scapes will prevent unwanted Hosta "weed" seedlings from appearing in the spring. Piling the fallen tree leaves will provide a good winter mulch for the garden but will also make excellent winter housing for voles. It is probably best to remove those leaves from the beds by gently raking or blowing with a leaf blower. Then a thin layer of mulch, (pine bark is my favorite), can be applied to prevent heaving and protect the Hosta crowns.
4. **Stop watering the garden.** Sounds silly but Hostas would rather be dry in the winter than wet. Also the lack of water will encourage newly planted Hostas to go dormant and not keep throwing up new leaves.
5. **Plant early spring bulbs** for early color in the garden. Crocus and tulip foliage will be out of the way by the time the Hostas start to spread.
6. Finally, or maybe this should have come first, **plant all the Hostas you bought this summer** in the ground. Hostas overwinter much better in the ground than they do in pots and if they are not in quite the right spot when they come up next spring, they can be easily moved. This also removes any lingering guilt that you may have next spring when it comes time to buy more Hostas.