

# THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY



## THE HOSTA CONNECTION



## HOSTA MEETING 1 PM SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2017



*Happy New Year!!! New Year – New You..... new Garden full of Surprises After last season's drought, I have no idea what lived or survived. My best surprise would be everything survived.....I don't think this will happen.*

*We can look at it two ways, we have space for new plants or just sit down and cry. Late summer I went out back in the garden, everything was struggling or looked dead, I actually sat down and cried, I had watered with sprinklers and hand watered, I did everything possible to keep things watered, After a good (bad) cry, I got up and decided I did all I could --- to save everything, if it makes it I'll have a 'nice surprise' but if not, I'll have the opportunity to try something new or plant something with less maintenance.*

*Speaking of gardens, Jimmy Wooten volunteered his home for the picnic, he wants to have it when his rhododendrons and azaleas are blooming, I'm not sure what month that will be. Betty Patterson has also offered her garden for the picnic, she would like to have it in June or July. Betty is quiet and not a bragger, Betty lives close to Judy Hill, Judy has always said, I needed to see Betty's garden - I finally did and it is wonderful. I'd like to have two picnics this year, one at Jimmy's and one at Betty's, we could do the plant auction at either one.*

*Carol, our President has resigned because of health problems. She has not quit our Hosta Society, she will come when she feels well enough to drive the 2 ½ hour trip from her home to Chattanooga.*

*WE HAVE A NEW PRESIDENT-----JUDY NOLIN HAS ACCEPETED THE POSITION. She has a few ideas about speakers and gardens we can tour. I'm excited for the February meeting we will plan the 2017 calendar.*

*Betty Fassnacht scheduled our February meeting at the Barn Nursery. While scheduling for the room she was told that the Barn was having a class at 11 am on terrariums, I've looked on the Barns' website and didn't see any information on it.*

*Johnny will have the Year Book ready for the March meeting, it will have our schedule of events.*

## **FRAGRANT HOSTAS**

Over 58 varieties of fragrant Hostas have evolved from H. plantaginea, which is the only fragrant species Hosta. All fragrant Hostas have some H. plantaginea genes and sported from or were hybridized from Hosta with H. plantaginea in their background. Of the 58 fragrant varieties of Hostas only 28 are available commercially.

H. plantaginea has the largest bloom of all Hostas, occasionally reaching approximately 6 inches. The bloom is a beautiful pure white and the most fragrant of all Hosta flowers. Almost all of H. plantaginea offspring except H. 'Fragrant Blue' have a wonderful fragrance but they all have smaller blooms than plantaginea. No matter where they are grown, they need ample sun to bloom. H. plantaginea flowers bloom around 4 p.m. instead of 7 a.m. like most other Hostas, and H. plantaginea also uniquely has the ability to "reflush" or regrow new foliage during the summer months. (Most Hosta species send up all their foliage in the spring.)

Fragrant varieties are often the most heat tolerant and can do well in the southern USA up to growing zone 8 and sometimes even zone 9 because the H. plantaginea species Hosta originated the second furthest south of all of the species Hosta plants. H. plantaginea originated in eastern China, near Beijing and Shanghai, where temperatures can be very high with high humidity.

Hostas are hardy perennials that grow best in USDA zones 3 through 9. Hostas actually enjoy the winter cold, because this brings on their much-needed dormancy period. Little care is required for Hosta plants during the

winter, but there are some steps of precaution you must take if your Hostas are either container-grown, or are small or dwarf Hostas planted in the ground.

Hostas are toxic to dogs, cats and horses due to saponins in the plant. When digested, saponins can cause vomiting and diarrhea. Other animals are not impacted by the saponins, and deer, rabbits, slugs and snails often eat Hostas.

Hostas are native to northeast Asia and did not become popular as an ornamental plant until the 1970s. Hostas spread quickly and are easily divided to propagate more plants.

### **Winter Care for Outdoor Container-Grown Hostas**

Step 1 Remove all dead leaves. The soil surface can freeze, but don't let the entire container freeze solid. Planter pots that are less than two feet in diameter will likely freeze solid.

Step 2 Cover the soil surface with a three-inch layer of organic mulch or wood chips after the soil surface has frozen. Lay evergreen boughs on top of the mulch for added insulation and to keep the mulch from blowing away.

Step 3 Wrap the container in a blanket or other insulating material if the container is small. Move the Hosta plants to a spot that is protected from the wind.

### **Winter Care for Hostas in the Ground**

Step 1 Rake away all of the previous seasons decayed leaves in late February or early March. Don't disturb the foliage until this time. This is all you'll need to do to care for a large Hosta plant in the winter.

Step 2 Spread a two- to three-inch layer of organic compost, mulch or peat moss around the small or dwarf Hostas, only after the ground freezes. This will help to protect the Hostas' root systems from becoming exposed to the elements when the Hostas heave during a freeze/thaw cycle.

Step 3 Rake away the compost, mulch or peat moss gently in mid- or late March. Wait until the last expected freeze or for when the leaves begin to grow to remove it.