

THE CHATTANOOGA REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY

The Hosta Connection



**MARCH 6, 2010
MEETING 1:00 PM
ACHMAN COMMUNITY CENTER
SIGNAL MOUNTAIN**

PROGRAM: Jo Kellum, landscape architect, writer for garden design in 'Southern Living', author: Southern Shade, Southern Sun

“WE WILL BE MEETING AT A DIFFERENT PLACE”

DIRECTIONS: From US 27, take the Signal Mtn exit (127 N) and stay on 127 N to the top of the mountain. At the first traffic light you go 3 ½ miles, (pass the water tank on the right), turn left on Anderson Pike, go .2 (2 tenths) mile to Bachman Community Center on the left.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

The Hosta Society has been a part of the 'Bachman Garden **and** Art Expo' every April for the past 5 or 6 years, we have had fun meeting people and selling hostas.

This year Saturday April 24th is the 'Bachman Garden and Art Expo'
Time 9 am to 2 pm

Betty Fassnacht will have the 2010 Year Book at the March meeting

notes from the editor

Have you enjoyed the snow? This is the first winter in maybe 20 years that we have had so many snows. The anticipation that spring is around the corner gives me renewed energy, I've been walking around my gardens dreaming of the changes I want to make, I

saw the first signs of spring this morning, lenton roses, crocuses and daffodils have started coming up.

We have a lot of fun stuff coming up for 2010, two of our members have opened up their gardens for us to wonder through, we will also have a picnic at each garden. I love to explore gardens, I get so many new ideas that I want to use in my gardens. The catalogs I received in the mail are ragged and coming apart, my wish list is endless, I now have to rethink what I can't live without or Johnny will put me out. I admit that am a plant and hostaholic.

I found an article on 'taking care of your hostas', what to do if you have an early freeze (this was written for Central Illinois Hosta Club, but I think we can apply it to our temperatures).

Avoiding Spring Frost Damage

by Ray Rodgers

The Hosta Leaf vol 5 issue 1

Freezing temperatures are always a possibility until approx mid-May in Central Illinois. The average last frost date for Peoria is May 8. Every year, I hope spring will come in gracefully, without the major temperature swings we have come to expect. Unfortunately, this rarely has happened. Every spring, I give credit to H. 'On stage' as being the smartest hosta in my garden: as it is the last hosta to emerge from winter dormancy, making it much less susceptible to frost damage.

When Hostas should be protected - It is important to realize that hostas, even completely leafed out, can withstand temperatures below freezing. I have repeatedly read that hostas can handle temperatures down to 28 degrees for short times with minimal or no damage. During winter, if I find exposed hosta buds, I scrape a little mulch or soil mix from the surrounding area over them for protection. In early spring if the shoots are starting to emerge, I often cover them in the same manner, in an attempt to slow their progress and provide additional protection. If shoots are a few inches or taller, yet leaves have not started to unfurl or are still in the early stages, and temperatures below 30 degrees are forecasted, I suggest providing additional protection via a choice of mulch or dried leaves piled around and over the emerging shoots. Alternatively, one of the protective methods described below can be utilized. The more leafed-out hostas are, the more susceptible they are to frost damage. In these cases, covering via one of the methods described below is the best alternative.

One must consider the uniqueness of their gardens and plant placements when determining whether to protect or not, of course, part of the decision process is how much trust one has in the accuracy of the forecast. Isn't that a scary thought!

Plant protection – if one decides to protect, there are many options. Basically almost anything that can cover a hosta will help. It is important not to let the leaves touch the coverlet material as they are more likely to sustain freeze damage at that contact if the temperature gets low enough.

There are many methods for protecting your plants via coverlet. Materials include: plastic pots, newspapers, cardboard boxes, bushel baskets, frost cloth, bed sheets, bath towels, light blankets, burlap, garbage cans, wheelbarrows turned upside down. I have used covered sawhorses over larger hostas.

Polyethylene film or similar materials, including plastic bags, should be avoided as condensation buildup on the inside can increase the likelihood of damage to hosta leaves. These materials are also a danger once the sun comes out.

Another method is to keep a continuous spray of water on plants when the temperature is below 28 degrees, as water is warmer than the air.

The morning after one must address the uncovering task. Keeping the plants covered until the temperature climbs back above freezing is the best option. Keep the plants covered while the forecast calls for temperatures to remain in the danger zone.

How cold is too cold – this somewhat depends on the number of hostas one has to protect. If hostas are completely leafed out and the temperature dips into the low 20's protective measures may reduce the serviette, but it is unlikely that they will prevent freeze damage.

What should be done to frost damaged hostas – if hostas are hit by damaging frosts it is best to cut off and discard the most significantly damaged leaf tissue (sanitizing the cutting tool between plants). Keep as many of the undamaged leaves and petioles as possible to allow the continuation of the plant's food making process. At a point if enough leaves are removed, hostas will force a second flush of leaves from smaller and previously dormant buds. This flush will likely produce smaller leaves.

Hosta leaves turning to mush – is the possibility of the crown being damaged. If not attended to, rot typically sets in. Crown rot can happen in early spring when water stands around the crown or by the plant freezing after it breaks dormancy. The crown of the hosta is the base where the roots and shoots join. Check the crown for soft areas, if hostas sustain significant leaf damage. This tissue should be removed back to solid tissue to prevent further rot and possible the death of the plant.

Which hostas are most frost sensitive- late freezes can be a problem with any variety, especially the ones that break dormancy early. The species *H. plantaginea* and its spots have the reputation of being the most frost sensitive. It is widely believed all fragrant hostas have *H. plantagineo* in their lineage, making them candidates for protection– *H. plantaginea* is one of the only species that will continue to produce new leaves all summer long. This is an advantage when the original spring foliage becomes damaged. Contrarily, I have read that hostas in the *Sieboldiana* group and *Tokudama* group are slow to recover from frost damage, as they tend to push only one good flush of growth in a season, also making hostas with these lineages, good candidates for protection.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
FUN STUFF COMING UP**

March 6 --- Josephine Kellum
April 3----- Round table discussion
April 24 Bachman Garden and
 Art Expo