



President's Message

If you did not make the Spring Pot Luck at the Eaton's lovely home in March, you missed a good time. We had about forty people in attendance and it was good to see hosta friends again after a long winter. We also had at least forty attend the Sponsor Plant pickup meeting in April at which Ken Harris gave an excellent and educational presentation on the uses of the digital camera. If you missed Ken's presentation, you can catch another version of it at the Winter Scientific Meeting next January 22nd at event which Ken will present in one of the breakout sessions.

Our next NIHS event on the horizon is the Cut Leaf Show and plant sale at the Chicago Botanic Garden in early June. I encourage as many members as possible to exhibit some leaves. If you can't do that, hopefully you can attend, view the informal leaf show, and vote for your favorite. Nancy Bodinet tells me that she can still use some help on Sunday afternoon when the display ends and needs to be taken down. These events are only possible because of the active participation of our membership. If you can see your way clear to spend a few hours with us on the weekend of June 5-6, please join us.

Before I forget again, I need to ask for your help with something. Last fall at our annual meeting, I spoke about Floyd Rogers' desire to begin working with someone on the newsletter with the goal of eventually turning the job over to them. Someone stepped up and even chatted with Floyd a little about the job but Floyd misplaced the person's name and contact information before he left for South Africa. If that lady would be so kind as to reestablish contact with Floyd while he is back at home, he would be very appreciative.

I am certain that with so many activities scheduled for the next three months, the summer will fly by for me just as it did last year. Hosta Walks, a great bus trip, and hopefully a trip to at least one convention and the summer will be coming to an end before we know it. It is up to each and every one of us to savor such times. Enjoy!

Lou Horton

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2009/2010 ACTIVITIES

June 5 – 6	Hosta Leaf Show & Plant Sale, Chicago Botanic Garden,
June 13	Hostatality Walk-About Garden Visit, Tom Micheletti, Deer Park, 2:00 – 5:00
June 19	Bus Tour, Indianapolis,
June 22 – 26	American Hosta Society Convention , Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN,
July 8 – 11	Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention, Des Moines, IA,
July 18	Hostatality Walk-About Garden Visit, Jim Frankenberger & Carol Lappin, Downers Grove, 2:00 – 5:00
August 1	Hostatality Walk-About Garden Visit, Katie Adams, Glen Ellyn, 2:00 – 5:00
August 15	Plant Auction – (Public Invited) , Hinsdale Community House , 1:00 – 5:00
September 12	Hosta Pot Luck and Plant Swap & Annual Meeting of Membership, Jeanne & Rudy Boehm, Downers Grove, 1:00 – 4:00
December 12	Holiday Get-Together, Rosalie & Frank Gamauf, Orland Park, 1:00 – 4:00

Hostatality Walk-About Garden Visits June 13th, July 18th, & August 1st

June 13th at Tom Micheletti's garden in Deer Park, 2:00 – 5:00pm. As many NIHS members know, Tom is responsible for founding the club in 1992, and currently serves as the President of the American Hosta Society.

Tom's 'Hosta Patch' is a one-acre garden that began 24 years ago on a blank slate. After building his home, there was nothing on the property, so he began "landscaping". He educated himself by attending landscaping seminars, visiting nurseries, and reading books, magazines, and catalogs. He developed a special fondness (some would say addiction) for hostas. Because his property was treeless, he had to become creative in order to provide suitable growing conditions for hostas. Consequently his garden incorporates many interesting woodies and companion plants. A sizable portion of his garden is devoted to sun-loving plants, where he has incorporated a wide variety of unusual perennials.

A retired teacher, Tom now operates a mail order business selling over 500 varieties of hostas. His website (www.hostapatch.com), in addition to providing a venue for selling hosta plants, includes many articles to help the hosta gardener succeed. Tom is also a frequent speaker at local garden clubs, promoting hostas.

Driving Directions: The destination is 23720 Hearthside Dr. in Deer Park

From the intersection of Lake Cook Road and Rand Road (Route 12) in Palatine, proceed north on Rand Road 2.4 mi. to Cuba Road and turn left (west). Proceed .9 mi. on Cuba Road to Inglenook Lane and turn right. Proceed .3 mi. on Inglenook to Hearthside Drive and turn left. Proceed to 23720. Please park in the driveway or on the same side of the street as Tom's house.

July 13th This is a "two-fer" opportunity to see the two wonderful gardens of back yard neighbors located in Downers Grove.

Jim Frankenberger's garden 2:00 – 5:00. Jim and his wife Gerrie built their house in 1963. There was a single willow tree on the property (now gone), so Jim and Gerrie started building their garden. Jim has always been interested in gardening, but when he retired twenty years ago, he had the time to do it seriously. The garden

has both sun and shade areas. In the sunny portion, there are approximately 300 daylilies, split about equally between named cultivars and seedlings resulting from Jim's hybridizing efforts.

In the shady areas, there are numerous native shade plants, along with about 150 hosta cultivars, some dating back 40 years. The majority of the hostas were collected over the past twenty years, including very well-grown specimens of Stitch In Time, Lakeside Hoola Hoop, Beckoning, Gunther's Prize, Hanky Panky, Regalia, and a large clump of Embroidery in the front garden. Additionally there is a very impressive display of true lilies (liliums), some as much as eight feet tall, which will be in bloom.

Jim has posted photos from his garden on his Facebook page for anyone wishing to check them out.

Carol & Paul Lappin's garden 2:00 – 5:00. The Lappin's garden backs up to Jim Frankenberger's garden, so it is easy to simply walk from one to the other. Carol and Paul moved here in 1987 and there were no gardens around the house. There were lots of mature spruce all around the property border, creating shady conditions, so hostas became the obvious (and now favorite) choice.

From a single bed the first year, the gardens have been expanded around the edges of the yard, and the gentleman-gardener has even been cajoled into building some mounded areas under the trees. He pruned up some spruce trees on the north side of the property this past summer, and he hasn't yet realized that he has created some space for a new planting area.

With relatives in the Princeton, IL area, Carol and Paul visit there often and Hornbaker Gardens is too convenient. Since Carol can't come home from that garden center empty handed, the plants have just kept increasing over the years. There are now about 70 hosta varieties and their natural companion plants, as well as various other perennials.

Driving Directions: The destination is 6316 Walnut Ave. in Downers Grove.

From the Hobson Road exit on I-355, proceed west on Hobson Road .5 mi. to Walnut Avenue and turn right. Proceed to 6316.

August 1st at Katie and Baine Adams' garden in Glen Ellyn. The Adams' home is a brick bungalow located in downtown Glen Ellyn that was built in 1927. When they moved in (in 1991) there were many mature trees, but the only landscaping consisted of four yews and a privet hedge. Over the years Katie has worked to build a natural style garden, with a wide variety of interesting perennials and understory trees and shrubs. Hostas are used throughout the garden to take advantage of the varied colors and texture. Massive rocks were installed with heavy equipment to anchor a front hillside garden that is a traffic stopper.

Katie's garden also features some very large tropical plants in large containers. To winter them over, Katie (with Baine's help) has developed a procedure whereby the plants are removed from their containers and placed in plastic garbage cans to facilitate moving them inside.

Katie was somewhat limited in her gardening effort because the house was situated on a lot that is 50 feet wide, which is typical of homes built in the 1920s. But when the house next door (a tear-down candidate) came up for sale, the Adams and the neighbor on the other side of the house purchased the property, tore the house down, and each increased the size of their property by 25 feet. The Adams then tore down their old garage, built a new one on the extra 25 feet, and moved the driveway, increasing Katie's garden area by 50%.

The result is so seamless that only by looking at before and after photos can one get a true appreciation of the transformation.

Driving Directions: The destination is 219 N. Main Street in Glen Ellyn.

From the Roosevelt Road (Route 38) exit on I-355, proceed west 1.3 mi. on Roosevelt Road and turn right (north) onto Main Street. Proceed .5 mi. to 219 (look for the house number on the green sign attached to the utility pole in front of the house). There is no parking on Main Street, so continue to the next intersection, which is High Street. Turn right and park.

ATTRACTING BIRDS WITH FEEDERS AND HOUSES

(If you have cats that are routinely let outdoors, you should not feed the birds. Feeder birds are easy prey for cats and it is very difficult to protect them from sneak attacks.)

Start your feeders in the fall, and be patient. It sometimes takes a while to get birds coming. Scatter some seeds on the ground under the feeders as an attractant. It's a myth that you have to keep feeding all the time, so don't worry if you have to stop feeding, the birds will move elsewhere. But regular feeding is the key to attracting a variety of birds.

Locate the feeder at least 8-10 feet from trees, and use a stove pipe baffle on the pole to prevent climbing predators. Cheaper still, use PVC pipe, and cut it to fit the pole. Cover the PVC with a plastic baffle to prevent birds from getting trapped down inside the pipe. If you hang a feeder from the tree, use a long S shaped hanging hook, and a large deep dome baffle. Trim any branches the squirrels can use to jump on the feeder. While the birds need some nearby shrubs or trees to dart to safety from a hawk attack, it's important to make sure cats can't hide under them within pouncing distance. If necessary, use 12-14 inch high chicken wire under evergreen boughs or shrubs. With bamboo stakes, circle the problem area with the chicken wire. A hiding cat will have to jump over this barrier, usually alerting the birds to their presence and making escape easier.

Some seeds can be a nuisance—sunflower seeds for example, with their hulls. If you clean them up regularly, they won't kill the grass, but an easier way is to clear a circular area under the feeder, and mulch so it looks more attractive. You will still need to clean the debris periodically, but the area will stay much neater and easier to clean if you mulch it.

Black Oil sunflower

Cardinals, Blue Jays, Chickadees, Goldfinches, and Woodpeckers love it. Use special tube feeders, or tube feeders with a wire mesh surround that allows the smaller birds to enter, but restricts the larger birds.

Nyger (thistle, but not the thistle that is a garden problem)

Expensive. Use special tube feeders or mesh bags. Buy small quantities at first until you get birds coming. Shake the feeder every day, as the small slits in the plastic tube can get clogged with the debris in the seed.

Attracts American Goldfinches, House Finches and (when they invade from up north about every other year), Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls.

Mixed seed, corn

Use in hopper feeders or spread on the ground for Mourning Doves and sparrows. If you put these feeders off to the sides of your yard, you can put other feeders closer to your viewing area and hopefully keep sparrows and blackbirds off to the sides.

Suet

Suet cakes placed in special baskets will attract woodpeckers, Chickadees, and nuthatches. We've found that buying animal lard (available in the cooking oil section) and spreading it on the sides of a tree in the cracks in the bark really works well as it's more natural for these birds to cling when they eat. A small log with 1 inch holes drilled in it and hung from a screw eye is good also.

Water

Birdbaths are a must as birds like to drink and bathe frequently in the summer. In the winter water is very important for drinking; you can use a heated bird bath or a small, thermostatically controlled heater you just lay in your present birdbath.

Peanuts

Expensive. Woodpeckers and Blue Jays love them but cages are necessary to keep the squirrels out.

Clean feeders !

Cleaning your feeders at least once a month is essential if there is heavy use. Outbreaks of avian illnesses can occur if you allow dirty conditions at your feeders. Ground areas should be swept up and the dropped seed and waste thrown out. Feeders should be scrubbed out, perches and all, once a month with a bleach and water solution. Be sure and rinse thoroughly and let dry completely before using again. I buy two of each feeder so one is in use while I clean the other ones.

Bird houses

The easiest birds to attract with houses are House Wrens. They require an entrance hole no larger than 1 inch. If larger than this, you will just get house sparrows! Chickadees also will use wren houses.

Feed the birds as often as you like, winter and summer. They don't really need it as much in the summer, but it's a thrill when the parents bring their baby birds to teach them how to use feeders. Feeders and seed are available at many different stores. If you use a large amount of seed for feeding, you may find it cheaper to purchase your seed from local feed stores or garden centers.





**Announcing the New Acorn Hollow Hostas
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acornhollowhostas.com

It contains a complete list of over 100 hosta cultivars for sale as well as articles, upcoming events, and sale dates for 2009. Speaking of those, they are May 23rd and June 20th.

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Editor's Note: -

Thanks to all for the articles for our newsletter. I eagerly accept input for newsletters and encourage all to contribute. The cutoff date for the next issue of *Hosta Happenings* is July 3, 2010. Please contact me by any of the following methods:

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 Phone (630) 858-3538
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	Per issue	Per year
Full page	60	150
½ page	35	90
¼ page	20	55
1/6 page	15	40

Send electronic copy to my email, and your paper check, made payable to NIHS, to Floyd Rogers, 22W213 Glen Valley Drive, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.

AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY

If you are not a member of the American Hosta Society, have always wanted to get your copy of The Hosta Journal (published three times each year with many color pictures of Hostas), and you are interested in joining, please write Sandie Markland, P O Box 7539, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948. Dues are: Individual, \$25 for one year, \$47 for two years, \$65 for three years, Life \$500 single payment; Family, \$29 per year; \$52 for two years, \$75 for three years. Joining AHS will enable you to attend the national convention in Minneapolis, MN (2010), 2011 hosted by the New England Hosta Society, 2012 hosted by the Middle Tennessee Hosta Society.

MIDWEST REGIONAL HOSTA SOCIETY

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society publishes a twice-a-year newsletter, sponsors the Winter Scientific Meeting and holds an annual convention. To join, send a check for \$10 to Barb Schroeder, 1819 Coventry Dr, Champaign, IL 61822-5239. The 2010 convention will be held in Des Moines, IA., 2011 in Madison, WI, 2012 Rochester, MN.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS HOSTA SOCIETY

www.NorthernIllinoisHostaSociety.org

If you are interested in joining NIHS, please write to Membership, Pete Postlewaite, 21172 Andover Rd, Kildeer, IL 60047 (847) 438-7790. Membership dues are \$20 for two years. Please send membership renewals to Pete at the above address. **Check the expiration date on your label.**

Northern Illinois Hosta Happenings
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May 2010 Newsletter

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