

# It's Show Time!

Yes, it is indeed show time and we hope to see all of you at the show. Be sure and pick up a copy of your show schedule. It will provide you the information you need to know about the show.

Now what do we need for you, a loyal Hosta Society member, to do to help make this year's show a huge success?

First, **Bring Leaves.** Yes, that is the most important thing. A show can not be a success unless it has exhibits. We hope each member will bring at least five leaves or other exhibits. Those other exhibits can be educational displays, container grown hostas, and trough or container gardens. We need them all to have a great show. You say you don't know what to do? Don't worry. There will be people at the show to help new exhibitors (and some of us experienced one's also) prepare your treasures properly.

Second, **Bring Yourself.** There is a lot of work to be done to put on a show. It goes much easier if members show up en masse to help

Third, **Volunteer.** We always need more volunteers to assist with classification, placement, clerking, tabulating, hospitality, and many other jobs. Seek out the Show Committee Chairs and offer to help. Don't worry that you do not know what to do. You will get training, even though it may be on-the-job! You will learn a lot and have lots of fun in the process. There are two main purposes to having a Hosta Show. The first is to educate both the public and members. The second is to get to know fellow members better. Both will be accomplished if you come to the show and participate.

Finally, **Have Fun.** If you will just come to the show, this will be easy!!!!

## Entry Tags

It is usually much easier to prepare your tags ahead of time than at the show when everything is so hectic. When you prepare your entry tags, please remember to fill out your name, address, and other information on both the **top and bottom** portions of the entry tags. Be sure to print clearly.

## Preparing Leaves for Entry

When you arrive at the exhibit preparation area, first sign the Exhibitor Registration Form and **secure an exhibitor number.** This number should be placed in the appropriate place on each entry tag. There are different size containers available. Select the container that makes your leaf look its best (no tiny leaf in a big container. etc.). Stage your leaf in the container, cutting the petiole to an appropriate height that makes the leaf look its best. Use cotton balls to position the leaf at the best viewing angle in the vase. Then attach the entry tag as instructed at the show.

## Classifying Your Hosta Leaves Correctly

Hosta leaves must be classified by both **section** (size) and **class** (color and pattern). This information is placed on the entry tag when you enter your hostas in a show. Many people feel intimidated in trying to determine just which section and class their hosta leaves belong in. However, it is easy.

The American Hosta Society provides a **Hosta Show Classification List** which is prepared and maintained by our own George Schmid. The list provides the correct classification data for all **named and registered** hosta cultivars. This list is available on the American Hosta Society Web Site, [www.americanhostasociety.org](http://www.americanhostasociety.org). (After accessing the site, place your cursor on Show Judging.) The list provides not only the show classification data for all named registered hostas, it also provides the registered leaf length and width data for each. This information can help you to determine if your leaf is mature size-wise.

If you do not find your named hosta on the list, it probably means that your hosta is not registered. In that case, you would exhibit it in the non-registered hosta section, Section XII and the class would simply be the first letter of the hosta name.

If you don't have access to the internet, there will be copies of the Hosta Show Classification List available for your use at the show.

## Selecting Leaves for the Show

This is probably the most important step. First, study the Show Schedule and the AHS Point Scales for Judging printed in the schedule for each division. The Point Scales are the attributes that the judges use to evaluate a leaf or any other type of exhibit. By being familiar with the Point Scales, you will be better prepared to select leaves that will score well in the show. The schedule also provides all the specific rules that apply to any given division. If a leaf or other exhibit does not meet the requirements for the division or if the exhibit has significant flaws based on the point scale attributes, then it is best not to select that particular specimen.

All of the above having been said, if you have a leaf that is pretty and that you think will be of interest to the show public, **bring it anyway**, even if you know it might not win a ribbon! A hosta show is primarily for education.

## **Cutting and Grooming Leaves**

Leaves are best cut early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Evaluate your leaves as best you can a few days prior to the show and tentatively select the ones you would like to bring to the show. Leaves may be cut several days prior to the show but the later you cut them, the fresher they will be. The petiole (leaf stem) should be cut as long as possible. You can remove excess length later during preparation of the exhibit for show. A sharp knife should be used to make a clean cut. After cutting, hold the leaf up to the light to further inspect for major holes, damage or other large flaws that you may have missed. If significant flaws are found, you may want to select another leaf.

After cutting the leaves, place them in cool water in a cool place out of strong sunlight and drafts. This will help to keep your leaves fresh for the show.

Specimen cleanliness is the first attribute that a judge notices. Take care to properly clean leaves of all exhibits prior to entering them in the show. An entry should have no dirt or other debris, insects, or spider webs anywhere on the leaf surface or on the petiole. Pay particular attention to the point where the leaf meets the petiole where trash often becomes lodged.

Carefully wash the leaf in cool water but do not scrub. A very mild dish detergent may be used to help dislodge dirt from the leaf surfaces. Often on smooth surfaced leaves, you only have to gently swish the leaf in the water and the dirt falls off. On leaves with quilted surfaces, you may use a moistened Q-Tip, small soft paint brush, or a cotton ball to remove dirt from the valleys and creases. Be very careful not to damage the leaf surface in any way. Be sure to rinse leaves if detergents are used to clean them.

Blue leaves are especially hard to clean and prepare for show because the delicate glaucous coating on the leaves is easily damaged. Be very careful when cleaning those blue leaves. On blue leaves with very rough surfaces, it is almost impossible to remove all the dirt without causing damage. The judges would prefer a little dirt than damaged surfaces in this particular case.

## Identity Crisis

We understand that many of you have hostas growing in your garden that have lost their identification tags. It is easy to understand how it can happen. Squirrels and small children love to move them around, they fade over time, and sometimes they just never get put on in the first place.

**While you may be tempted to bring your nameless leaves to enter in the show, we ask that you refrain from asking the Classification Committee to identify them on the day of the show.**

The point of the show is to display named varieties of hosta that are well-grown, **true to name**, and typical of the characteristics registered for that variety. It is very frustrating to the classification committee when it has to try to puzzle out the identity of many leaves during a time when we need to be making sure that all the other entries get put in the right place for the show. Time is short and there is much work to be done around show time.

Instead, we offer the following suggestions.

First try to get your nameless hostas identified before the show. Take a digital photo of the entire clump and email it to someone who knows hostas. Perhaps he or she can help. Or ask someone over to stroll through your garden and try to get names for them. Often someone can quickly identify a clump by seeing its growth habits.

Another solution is to bring a photo of the clump, along with a couple of mature leaves that are typical of the clump, and come to the show. Don't select leaves that are "odd". Get some that are typical and mature. Juvenile leaves are very prone to instability and are hard to name.

Bring some labels and a pen so you can record the names once you know them. If you have a list of hostas that you have bought, bring that along, too. Often that helps to narrow down the possibilities.

If you still can not find a name for your hosta, look for a nearby person who appears to know their hostas. (Hint: They may be judges!) Tell them that you are trying to identify your hostas and ask if they can help. (Editor's Note: If you haven't been able to find the name of your hosta by show time, you may enter the leaf in Division V – Non-Competitive Exhibits with a card with the question "What is my name?". Someone who sees the exhibit just may know!)

Our goal is to educate you about hostas. Seeing literally hundreds of varieties of hostas side by side is a great way to learn to differentiate between them. Even if it is a common hosta, there is always a need to have well-grown specimens on display.

One important thing to remember is that not every hosta that comes up in your garden even has a name! One of the things that makes hostas so great is the diversity which results from nature at work. Hostas cross pollinate, creating seedlings that literally have no names. They are often beautiful, and many of our greatest hostas are the result of this process of nature. Unless you are a serious hosta collector and just must have each variety tagged and cataloged, then don't worry about it too much. Just enjoy your nameless hostas for their beauty and diversity.