H. ‘Bailey’s Cream’
D. & M. Beilstein 2009
(Photo by Danny Lawson)
Table of Contents

President's Message - Andy Marlow................................. 3
Hostas and Associates - Glenn Herold ............................... 4
GO HOSTAS! - Warren Pollock ....................................... 8
Book Notice - Clyde Crockett ....................................... 20
And In Other Hosta News ............................................ 22
Advertising ..................................................................... 23

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Featured Columnists

THE AMERICAN HOSTA SOCIETY
FOUNDED IN 1968 •

AHS eNewsletter
Page 2 of 29
July 2020
This early summer has been one of the best in recent memory for my hostas. Maybe that’s because I have been forced to stay home with more time to tend them. Plus Mother Nature has been very kind. They would have been in prime condition if any AHS convention goers happened to drop by.

But the sad truth is there were no convention goers. The same restrictions that kept me home tending to my gardens forced us to cancel this year’s convention. The good news is that our convention hotel allowed us to reschedule the Minnesota convention to 2022. The AHS Board of Directors also approved, plus they added Des Moines as the site for the 2023 convention.

So we now have a three year convention lineup: Kalamazoo in 2021, Minnesota in 2022 and Des Moines in 2023. 2024 and beyond are open to any society that’s willing to host a bunch of crazy hostaholics (is that redundant?) for four days. Don’t be shy. Volunteer!!!!

One of the Board of Directors stated goals is to increase the AHS presence online and in social media. Expect this to be the theme for some time to come.

And we are making progress on that goal. We have now added an Instagram account thanks to Executive Vice President Tammy Borden. We should be adding a YouTube channel in the near future. And we are looking toward working closely with the unofficial Facebook group called American Hosta Society.

Another milestone will have happened by the time you read this; our first Hosta Talk online via Zoom. Vice President Borden and AHS member Rob James put together this event for June 25. Registration was first open to AHS members exclusively, and you nearly filled the 500-seat capacity. Consequently we increased the seat to 1,000 and as I write this the day before the Talk, over 800 people are registered. Tammy talked about hosta garden design and listener/viewers had an opportunity to ask questions. We plan to do at least one more Hosta Talk this summer, and anticipate a series of them next winter when people need something to buoy their gardening spirits.

We also now have a Social Media Coordinator for AHS. Tara Bentley is a relative newcomer to the hosta world, but has a wealth of experience in the digital world and social media. She responded to my request in the spring issue of The Hosta Journal and volunteered for the job.

Tara is currently Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Home Educators. Previously she was editor of Homeschool Indiana magazine. She also has her own business, Sparrow Design, which specializes in website design and development, graphic design, and blogs. As executive director of a membership organization she is very aware of the challenges to membership organizations in the current climate, and the uses of social media to attract and retain members.

I have also appointed Danny Lawson as Newsletter Coordinator. You should be very familiar with him as editor of both The Online Hosta Journal and this fine publication, the eNewsletter. The new job is a perfect fit, and Danny seeks to build connections with and among local society newsletters and newsletter editors.

**Andy Marlow**
AHS President
Introduction: Hostas of the Year

This series is mainly for hosta neophytes, but for you "pros" it's worth noting that this is the 25th year that the Hosta of the Year has been selected. It began in 1996 when members of the American Hosta Growers Association decided to promote their trade by naming a hosta of the year. Criteria for selection include: 1) It must be readily available in sufficient supply, 2) It must cost no more than $15 in the year selected, and 3) It must be a good performer throughout the hosta growing regions of the country. Association members nominate and vote for their selection.

Starting with this AHS eNewsletter, I will cover those 25 and tell you a little about each selection and their originator. If you already read my postings on the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Facebook page, keep reading, for I've added to and expanded the article. Your comments and experience with the plant are always welcome. You can contact me at Glenn.Herold50@gmail.com

'So Sweet': 1996 Hosta of the Year

The first hosta to be named Hosta of the Year was 'So Sweet,' a 1986 introduction of Dr. Kevin Vaughn. The parentage is registered as a cross between 'Fragrant Bouquet' and 'Aden 462,' although this is now in doubt. In an email to me, Kevin stated that when he was a graduate student at Miami of Ohio, he passed a garden in which a large clump of Hosta plantaginea was growing. He collected pollen from the plants and pollinated all the hostas in the greenhouse with H. plantaginea pollen. Nine months later he had a whole greenhouse full of fragrant hosta seedlings. 'So Sweet' originated from that line. His best guess to the lineage is "splashed variegated sibling to 'Summer Fragrance' X pale-flowered sibling."
A medium-sized hosta, 'So Sweet' usually grows to a height of about 2 feet. Foliage is light green with a golden, changing to creamy white edge. Leaves are glossy and a bit wavy. Flowers are a pale lavender to near white, produced in August on 36 inch scapes, and are very fragrant, thanks to its Hosta plantaginea lineage. 'So Sweet' is a strong grower and will tolerate more sun than most hostas. In fact, best flowering is achieved when it is grown in sun. 'Sweet Green' (Franzen/Van den Top NR) and 'Sweetness' (R Livingston NR) are all-green sports of 'So Sweet.' 'Sweet Thing' (Sebright Gardens 04) is a sport with a narrow white margin. None of the sports come close to the garden appeal of 'So Sweet' however. No garden should be without it.

Dr. Kevin C. Vaughn, the originator of 'So Sweet,' is an internationally known hybridizer who is listed as the originator of 57 hostas between 1973 and 2009 on the myHostas Database. His first was 'Snow Flurry,' a viridescent streaked small plant of 'Snow Flakes' selfed. Many of his introductions, including 'Aqua Velva,' 'Bold Edger,' 'Breeder's Choice,' 'Christmas Tree,' 'Delta Dawn,' 'Formal Attire,' 'Geisha,' and 'Pizzazz,' are still widely planted and acclaimed.

Dr. Vaughn, the first scientific editor of The Hosta Journal and winner of the Alex J. Summers Distinguished Merit Award in 1999, received his Ph.D. from Miami University in Ohio, writing his thesis on the inheritance of variegation in hostas. A summary of this work was published in the Journal of the American Hosta Society, ("The Genetics of Hosta," vol. 13 (1982,) pp. 44-49.) This publication was the predecessor of what is now known as The Hosta Journal. Following his move from his parents' home in Massachusetts to Mississippi, a difficult area in which to grow hostas, he would initially grow his seedlings in a growth chamber, then plant them at his parents' home in MA before finally growing them on at Hatfield Gardens. After buying property in MS, he turned his attention to breeding Louisiana irises, bearded irises, Tradescantia, daffodils and daylilies. Two of his Louisiana
Kevin has bred *Sempervivum* (Hens and Chicks) and bearded irises since he was 9 years old and won awards from his early hybridizing efforts. After working at the USDA for 30 years, he retired in 2010 at age 56 and moved to Salem, Oregon to expand his breeding programs with these two plant groups. There, on a three acre lot, two of which are in cultivation, he annually grows and evaluates over 20,000 seedlings of *Sempervivum*. Since moving to Oregon, 30 to 40 of his *Sempervivum* cultivars are either being marketed or in production, along with 16 to 20 iris cultivars. As he states, "This is just the tip of the iceberg!" His garden has been on tour for American Iris Society national and regional conventions and for the American Daylily Society regional conventions.

Besides his breeding work, Kevin has published two horticultural books, *Sempervivum: A Gardener's Perspective of the Not-so-Humble Hens-and-Chicks*, and *Beardless Irises: A Plant for Every Garden Situation*, both of which have been very well reviewed. He is also the author of over 200 scientific articles. Currently he is working on a book on dwarf and median bearded irises. Before moving to Oregon, he co-authored a book on Louisiana irises.

Will Kevin ever get back to breeding hostas? Well, actually he has. He was given some seed that derived from 'William Lachman,' a streaked, 1981 introduction of his ("Beatrice' x 'Beatrice') x 'Frances Williams"), by Don Dean and has used the splashed variegated seedlings for further breeding. He also has projects on breeding ultra-big hostas and hostas with purple petioles. This year he will be evaluating approximately 500 seedlings.

Kevin also dabbles with breeding *Allium*, *Penstemon*, hardy cyclamen, hardy geraniums, *Pulmonaria*, and...
Dianthus. Last year he even crossed miniature gladioli. Kevin's motto is "Nothing with pollen is safe!" For fun he plays the oboe, English horn, Eb and bass clarinets and performs with 4 local groups.

Even though 'So Sweet' was honored as the 1996 Hosta of the Year, 'Formal Attire' and 'Delta Dawn' have always been his favorite variegated introductions, with 'Tijuana Brass' being one of his favorite non-variegated hostas. As a former USDA Scientist of the Year and winner of the Young Weed Scientist Research Award, and Fellow of the Weed Science Society of America, Dr. Kevin Vaughn will hopefully be dabbling in the pollen for many years to come.
STRANGE SPRING WEATHER CAUSES HOSTA FOLIAGE DAMAGE
by Gail Russo, Cedarville, New Jersey.

I invited Gail Russo to compose this item, which comprises the entire column. Her extensive experience and technical insight are acknowledged with greatest appreciation.

The David and Gail Russo Garden in southern New Jersey, Zone 6B/7a, has 2300+ hosta varieties planted over three acres. It was on special tour at the 2018 AHS National Convention in Philadelphia.

This spring shaped up to be one like few others. Our garden received only about a quarter inch of snow, which lasted only an hour or so before it turned to rain and melted. Our ponds barely froze at all. Spring bulbs began to emerge in January, when it’s normally March before we see them. **The hostas also began to emerge in February, with leaves unfurling in March.** Our normal last frost date is May 15! **In April we had a freeze and experienced extensive foliage damage.**

The strange spring weather pattern spread to most of the hosta growing states. Gardeners throughout the central and northeast states experienced a late spring “tropospheric polar vortex” that sent temperatures plunging drastically in the first week of May.

The Boston area received a trace snowfall that set the record for second latest snow of the season. New York City set a record for the latest snowfall of the season since 1870! Snowflakes were spotted as far southeast as Washington D.C., Tennessee and North Carolina. Frost was scattered as far south as Georgia! Cold temperatures shattered all-time monthly records in Albany and Buffalo, New York.

At the same time that we were experiencing record lows, the Desert Southwest was setting record high temperatures with Arizona recording 100+ degrees F. Immediately following record setting temperatures, a reversal occurred, bringing fierce storms with hail, wind, tornadoes and bucketloads of rain. **By May 18, things pretty much returned to normal, but gardeners were left to salvage the remains of their gardens and clean up the damage.**
This is what we experienced: On April 16, we received frost warnings. Eighty percent of our hostas were fully unfurled. The forecasted low was 36° F., so we decided our best chance of protection would be to run our automatic sprinklers to wash away any frost.

It’s water freezing and expanding inside the cells of the hostas that causes them to swell and burst, causing the damage. Washing away the frost before it causes the cell water to freeze is important. The temperature of the water being sprayed also will warm the leaves to prevent freezing.

We set the alarm to hand water anything out of reach of the sprinklers. It is imperative that the expected low temperature is known before deciding to use this method. If temperatures are expected to fall below 32° F., you must continuously keep the water spraying to prevent damage. If the temperature is expected to fall to 28° F. or below for many hours, this method will not work at all, as you will not be able to stop the ice from freezing solid and you lose the heat transfer that protects the hostas from damage.

At 4:30am, when we went outside, everything was coated in ice. The temperature had fallen to 28° F. for many hours, and each watering further encased the plants in ice. We turned around and went back inside, thoroughly dejected.

We had not sprayed continuously, as we were not expecting a freeze. Many hours later, we went outside to inspect the damage, and found that the majority of the hostas that were not sprayed were undamaged. We had actually unintentionally caused more damage to our gardens than if we had not done anything at all.
April 16
Overnight frost forecast turned into a freeze.

April 17
Next morning.
April 17
Morning after freeze and thaw. (Note tulips are frozen, wilted, drooped down to the ground, encased in ice.)
April 18
Affected leaves beginning to wilt.
April 20
Damage becoming evident. (Note tulips are standing tall and blooming proud with no apparent damage.)
April 20
Hostas just out of reach of sprinkler undamaged.
April 22
Leaves beginning to turn white.
April 23
Damaged foliage removed. Garden cleaned of affected leaves.
May 3
New growth emerging.
June 25
Hostas that suffered total meltdown fully recovered.

*H. 'Big Performer' (Danny Van Eechaute - NR)*

After the Freeze                       After the Freeze                                 Two Months Later
By May 15, every damaged hosta had burst forth with a new flush of leaves. We were fortunate that we did not receive any further frost or freeze damage after the night of April 16. By the time everyone else was experiencing their extreme weather, ours had already passed and recovery was under way.

Our catastrophe determined that we would have been better off doing nothing than using the method we chose. We certainly would not do it again if sub-freezing weather is forecasted.

Yes, folks, if your fully leafed-out hostas are completely damaged by frost/freeze, they WILL survive in most cases. They likely will be smaller that year and the following year, but they will be OK.

All healthy, established hostas have dormant nodes under the soil that will emerge in a late summer flush of new growth or for next year’s spring growth. In the common saying “the first year hostas sleep, second year they creep and third year they leap,” it’s this dormant growth that leaps.

Hostas that might not survive are first-year seedlings, recently-divided single-eyes and hostas that have been declining in health for whatever reason. It is important that you immediately address damaged pips: the cone-shaped nodes that emerge in the spring and eventually begin to unfurl into leaves. If the partially unfurled leaves in the pips are frozen, you must cut the node down as far as necessary until you see undamaged wrapped leaves. If you do not cut the node, the damaged outer leaves begin to rot around the fresh unfurled leaves and they cannot emerge.

Undamaged leaves will rot too, because they are trapped within the dried, rotted mess. If the leaves were fully unfurled when frozen, they can be left alone to deteriorate unless they are hindering the emergence of new growth.

Also, always remember to practice clean handling of your cutting tools and the foliage you have removed, because you can spread Hosta Virus X unknowingly at this stage.

There were considerable discussions on AHS Facebook page concerning experiences of other hosta enthusiasts across the country who encountered this strange weather last April-May. I have gathered their experiences on how they protected their hostas and whether their devices for protection worked.

The compiled information and photos are scheduled to comprise the Go Hostas! column in the March 2021 AHS eNewsletter, when—in anticipation of possible sub-freezing weather—it will be relevant and of immediate use to readers. Included will be “tried and true” methods used by others in similar situations. The interesting finding is that cardboard boxes are one of the best choices for protection! So start collecting them unassembled.

GO HOSTAS!
Hostas

_Foliage Plants in Garden Design_

By Sandra Bond (Ward Lock —A Cassel Imprint:1992)

Although not the first to give more than a little attention to the hostas in garden design, our noticed book is the first to devote an entire work to such. One cannot imagine a better person to tackle this subject than the distinguished English plantswoman, horticulturist, nurserywoman and Hosta propagator (the Goldbrook series), Sandra Bond of Suffolk, who gives us her expert advice to answer a rather simple question: How shall I use hostas in creating something beautiful?

Given the great varieties of hosta leaf shapes and color variations, a garden consisting only of hostas is a distinct possibility, Bond’s preference is to incorporate some interesting “companions,” what we hosta aficionados call every other plant on Earth, but going about deciding just what else to include can be challenging. This book is a classic in providing excellent advice to help us in the selection process. In 96 pages covering six rather short chapters, there is nevertheless a lot of information to digest. To be sure, there are some that might well be skipped over. I refer particularly to Chapter 6, “Lists of Hostas,” which could probably be ignored in view of the fact that there were only about a thousand varieties on the market at the time of the publication; however, the detailed descriptions accompanying at least I couple of plants you might fancy shouldn’t be overlooked. Indeed, you might rediscover a forgotten gem, as well.

Chapter 2 “Hostas As Garden Plants” illustrates how to use hostas as prominent plantings in borders, walks, as ground covers. Small hostas are treated in a section entitled “Alpine Plants.” If you are new to alpines, be on notice that they are almost as addictive as hostas. Used here and in the following chapters are maps and pencil drawings of various layouts in different conditions such as
dry or moist shade, or how to create a garden that is color-themed. An example is included below. While numerous suggestions are provided, it would have been helpful to provide more details on the chosen perennials. One should note that these are representative of beds actually created and grown by the author.

Chapter 3 illustrates how you might create a white garden, a green garden, a blue garden or a gold garden. Although hostas play the principal role, suggestions of interesting companions are provided to create vivid unicolorations. I would never have thought using hostas in this way would be effective; however, I have seen proof of how striking this can be in several gardens that have been on convention tours.

Chapter 4 covers all you want to know about growing hostas in containers. This is another aspect of gardening about which I was somewhat reluctant to embrace but reading Bond’s brilliant commentary changed my ways.

Chapter 5 covers miscellaneous areas of cultivation: pests, diseases, and, particularly, propagation. Reading this will prevent doing what I have done too often - cutting the roots off.

Although no longer in print, Hostas is available from a number of sources you can find via the internet. Fortunately, the entire book can also be found in The Complete Guide to Foliage Planting (Ward Lock 1997). There is also a German edition, Hosta Funkie Dekoratives Blattwerk für Gärten und Sträusse (Thalacker 1992).

Happy & Safe Gardening!

Clyde
Benedict Awards Program - Postponement

Because of the COVID-19 crisis and the cancellation of our AHS convention in Minneapolis, the Benedict Awards program has been postponed for this year so that the awards can be presented next year in person at the 2021 convention in Michigan. The ballots from last year's awards have been tabulated, but will be held until next year when the results will be made public. There will be no new ballot for this year and all current entries will be given an additional year to remain in the category they are located in (i.e. Honorable Mention, Award of Merit, Benedict category). We regret that we will not present these awards this year, but feel that having two years of winners receiving their awards at the same time at the convention next year would diminishes the honor that recipients deserve.

Michael Greanya
Benedict Garden Performance Awards Chair

A Notice to all Judges, Master, Senior and Provisional

In 2020 it is unlikely that judges will have the opportunity to perform any activities which would count towards their AHS judging status, so it has been decided that requirement deadlines will all be extended by one year. For example, those Senior judges working towards Master judge status who expected to complete the requirements during the 2020 season will be able to do so during 2021. We will consider further steps as necessary in early 2021.

Please stay safe and healthy. We look forward to seeing you again next hosta season.

Mike Greanya
VP Judging and Exhibitions

Joan Altman
Judges' Training

Sandra Bussell
Judges' Records
future AHS Conventions

2021 - Kalamazoo, Michigan

2022 - Minneapolis, Minnesota

2023 - Des Moines, Iowa

2024 - TBD
From AHS Publications

*The Hosta Adventure, Third Edition,* contains a wealth of information about growing hostas. First published in 2001, the Hosta Adventure was intended as a guide for novices, but it appealed to all levels of hosta gardeners. The first two editions were popular additions to the libraries of new and seasoned gardeners. Now a new Adventure beckons.

This new edition of *The Hosta Adventure* is updated with the latest information including buying, planting, and growing hostas.

There is a chapter on growing hostas in containers. Common problems encountered in hosta culture with solutions to these common problems is included. For those interested in propagation, information on division of plants, bud cutting, and the Ross method is included.

If you are new to hostas, a chapter on hosta favorites gives you an idea of hostas to acquire that are viewed as good plants by other hosta growers. A chapter on new hostas, including sports and seedlings is informative.

A list of popular hosta books that you may want to add to your library is given, as is information on hosta shows, and information on how to link up with fellow hosta growers by joining The American Hosta Society.

This publication should be part of every hosta grower’s library.

Order *The Hosta Adventure—A Grower’s Guide - 3rd Edition*

$4.00 + $2.50 postage for members or $5.50 + $2.50 postage for non-members
The *Hosta Adventure* is filled with stunning photos of hostas and hosta gardens.

**Here is a great way to reward new members of your local club. Give them a copy of this American Hosta Society publication.**

For local societies and nurseries, the best price per copy is in bulk:
- 2-6 books, $4.00 each + $8.00 postage
- 7-30 books, $4.00 each + $15.00 postage
- 31-99 books, $3.75 each + $21.00 postage
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(All prices postpaid in the U.S.) Orders from foreign countries will pay any additional shipping charges.

Make checks payable to *The American Hosta Society* and send to:

**Barry Ankney, AHS VP Publications**
**Hosta Adventure**
**2001 S Meyers Road #300**
**Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-5271**
From AHS Publications

Ben J. M. Zonneveld and Warren I. Pollock have researched and written a booklet about sporting in hostas. Based on nearly ten years of research, this 28-page booklet describes the process of sporting.

Sporting in Hostas: A Primer, was compiled by Dr. Pollock. He gave a presentation at the American Hosta Society (AHS) National Convention held in Philadelphia in 2018, highlighting the major points contained in this publication.

Hosta enthusiasts interested in how and why hostas mutate, or sport, have found this source book of great value. Dr. Pollock, along with the late Gregg Peterson, Past President of the American Hosta Society, and one other donor funded the printing of this booklet and generously donated these booklets to the AHS. All proceeds from the sale of Sporting in Hostas go to the general fund of the AHS, to further its educational goals.

This booklet outlines the basic principles of sporting, explaining the three layers of cells that are contained in the meristem or apical dome in the shoot of the hosta plant. He explains the chromosomal makeup of hostas, and the concept of ploidy, or the number of sets of chromosomes in the cell nucleus. The difference between sports and hybrids in covered.

The eleven (11) sporting rules in hostas are presented, including examples of each. Also, examples of unusual sporting with photos of many of the examples are presented. An appendix contains selective slides from Warren’s presentation at the National Convention.
A second appendix provides some hosta sporting statistics compiled by Hugo Phillips, founder and custodian of the “MyHostas” website. For those inclined to study this process further, a final appendix lists resources for additional reading.

While some elements are rather technical, Warren walks the reader through this fascinating process of change in hostas with plenty of photos and practical examples. The reader will come away with new knowledge of how hostas change to produce new and interesting plants.

This valuable resource is available only from the American Hosta Society.

You may order your copy from AHS Publications by mailing a check payable to *The American Hosta Society* in the amount of $10.00 (postage paid) to:

**Barry Ankney, AHS VP Publications**  
**Sporting in Hostas**  
**2001 S Meyers Road #300**  
**Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-5271**
AHS Membership

The American Hosta Society (AHS) is a society dedicated to the study and improvement of the genus Hosta and the dissemination of general and scientific knowledge about hostas. There are numerous benefits for the members that result from these efforts, both social and in nursery trade. All AHS members receive several publications a year, including two colorful issues of *The Hosta Journal* (mailed), six *eNewsletters* (emailed), along with *The Online Hosta Journal* (posted on the web for members only). These Journals include articles on cultivation tips, propagation techniques, landscape uses, new cultivars and old species, pioneers and personalities, scientific advances, convention awards, gardens, and news about the AHS.

Membership provides an opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions, which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's clinics, and a chance to see the latest and best hostas in the hosta show.

**Other membership benefits:**

- ✓ A Biennial AHS Membership Directory.
- ✓ The privilege of visiting display gardens throughout the country, many of which are only open to AHS members.
- ✓ An invitation to exhibit your favorite hostas and compete for recognition in various AHS national and regional hosta shows.
- ✓ Developing friendships with people who share an interest in growing hostas.
- ✓ Access to Members Only section of the AHS website.

Another benefit of becoming a new member is you receive a voucher from the AHS Membership Secretary good for $15.00 towards any purchase at sponsoring nurseries. For information about this program, go to: [http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/AHSVoucherProgram.htm](http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/AHSVoucherProgram.htm)

Print and mail the Membership Application form on the next page, or to join online, go to: [http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/Membership.htm](http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Membership/Membership.htm)
AHS Membership Application

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