



# Hosta Happenings

August 2008

Vol. 12, Iss. 6

## **M.V.H.S. ANNUAL PICNIC**

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 21, 2008  
3:30 PM**

(please note date change, because of scheduling conflicts)

**VANDERVEER BOTANICAL PARK  
(by the Hosta Glade)  
215 W. Central Park  
Davenport, Iowa**

(we will use the stone house in case of rain)

**PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE,  
A CHAIR AND YOUR OWN TABLE SERVICE!  
OUR CLUB WILL FURNISH ENTREE AND DRINK!**

**THERE WILL BE A DEMONSTRATION ON VIRUS X TESTING!**

## COMPOSTING - Part 2

Written by Mary Bardens, reprinted from the Northwest Indiana Hosta Society newsletter

### **The Accessories**

Now that you have all those piles of green stuff and brown stuff sitting there, either already in a pile or ready to be mixed, here are some things that you may find useful in your quest for the perfect compost. Keep in mind though, that if you have mixed the pile in the right ratios, eventually you will still get compost. That's why these are "the accessories."

One thing I do think is essential is a good pitch fork. Look for one called a 'compost' or 'manure' fork. It will grab more material either for turning or tossing into the pile.

There are many compost containers on the market. Some are round, rectangular or trapezoidal boxes. These will have a lid on top to add material. Look for a large opening and a hinged lid so it doesn't blow away in the wind. They often have a door on the bottom to remove finished compost that they claim will fall to the bottom. This will work better if you are going to fill it up and let it set for a year or if you use a compost turning tool. This tool consists of a long rod with a T-bar handle on top and hinged wings on the bottom. The wings collapse as you push it into the compost and extend as you pull back.

This will take some effort whether pushing or pulling, but it helps to mix and aerate the pile. If you want compost this year, you may want an easier way to remix the contents. A cylindrical compost tumbler will do this just by rotating the drum. Some of these are on stands making it easier to turn, some you can roll around the yard like a big ball. Most of these containers are quite pricey.

A more economical way is to form a round or rectangular enclosure out of small holed, galvanized hardware cloth. Chicken wire is too weak. I have also found these to be good for holding leaves in the fall to use in the spring with the fresh green grass clippings. When you are ready to use the material, just pick the bin up to empty it and move it to a new location. Or, if you really want to be a recycler, get used wooden pallets. These are often found free for the taking. Nail or wire three together,

smooth side in, to form a box. You can attach a fourth one to the bottom to elevate and help air circulation or put hardware cloth on the bottom to keep burrowing rodents out. Loosely attach another pallet to the front with some wire. That way it can be removed to add or turn the compost. Three sided boxes can also be made out of concrete or cinder blocks. You can build on additional boxes as needed.

A classic composting system consists of three attached boxes made with removable wooden slates in the front and either wooden slats or galvanized hardware cloth for aeration on the back and ends. Do not use pressure treated lumber, it may contain arsenic. Cedar works well as it is slow to decay. A lid across the top that can be propped open is a plus. Make each bin at least 3 ft square. Start in the first bin with raw materials. Once the bin is filled, turn it into the second bin. Now you can start to refill the first bin with raw material. Turn bin two frequently until finished. Then it goes into bin three to cure. Just keep moving and turning. color to a chart to see if it is finished. Unfinished compost can be phototoxic, suppressing plant growth by oxygen deprivation at the root zone and may, as a by-product, produce volatile organic acids.

One of the simpler and faster devices for distributing finished compost around your yard is a perforated metal compost spreader. A diamond pattern grid (.5" x 1.25") completely encloses the drum unit, breaking up clumpy materials as it tumbles. It has a dual vinyl handle making it easy to grip. The spreader can be pushed and rotated with human power, or pulled by a lawn tractor. Anything that does not get through the grid can be put back into the active compost pile.

Here is an item to make for screening compost to use around your other plants. Make a square frame of 2" x 4" lumber slightly larger than your wheelbarrow or large tub. Cut a piece of small holed hardware cloth that will extend over the edges of the frame enough to nail or staple down. Cut the corners of the hardware cloth at a diagonal in from the corners about 4" so you can bend them down and overlap. Place the screen over the wheelbarrow or tub like a cap. Use a scoop shovel with a straight bottom edge to place a small pile of compost on top of the screen and use the straight edge to scrap across the screen. Whatever doesn't make it through the screen, throw back into the compost bin.

## Composting-Part 2 (Continued from page 3)

One of the more interesting things I found was a bench made of recycled plastic wood built over a compost bin. Although it looked might aesthetically pleasing in the garden, it did not meet the minimum requirements of being 3 ft deep.

It may be useful though, for storing finished compost in a convenient place. Compost should always be covered until ready to use so that rainfall does not leach out everything for which you and the microorganisms worked so hard.

## Salmon Log

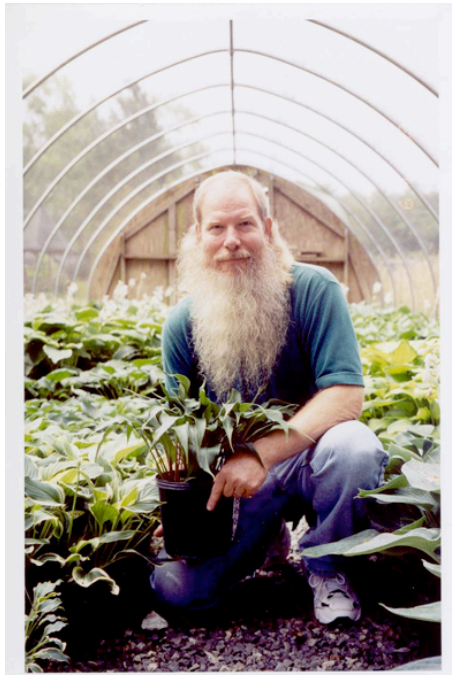
1 1lb. can red or pink salmon (drain, flake, and remove bones) or 1 lb. fresh steamed salmon  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1 tsp lemon juice  
2 tsp. finely chopped onion  
1 tsp. horseradish  
1/4 salt  
1/2 tsp liquid smoke  
Roll in either chopped chives or chopped pecans and serve with crackers.

Donna Piatt brought this to the garden walk and she said the recipe came from DeEtta Montgomery's recipe box! It sure was good!



Sally Stewart's miniature garden in some old hollow tree trunks, taken by Don Musak at the MVHS Garden Walk on June 27th.

# **Bob Solberg, Green Hill Farms, N.C.**



**Speaking on:**

## **Selecting Better Hostas**

**Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 pm**

**at the: Scott County Extension Office**

**875 Tanglefoot Ln, Bettendorf, IA**

(take Utica Ridge Rd and turn west on Tanglefoot, go one block)

Bob is one of the country's most noted hybridizers and authorities on hosta. Among his introductions are First Frost and Guacamole (both designated as Hostas of the Year), Fried Green Tomatoes, Fantasy Island, Toy Soldier, Orange Marmalade, Rascal, Twist of Lime, to name some of the approximate four dozen he's developed.

He's served in many capacities with the American Hosta Society and has been recipient of their Distinguished Merit Award. Bob's been published many times in the Hosta Journal in addition to numerous other gardening publications.

## **NOTES FROM A LECTURE ON GROWING MINI HOSTAS**

by Mary Mardens, Northwest Indiana Hosta Society

At the 2008 AHS National Convention in St. Louis, Mo, Warren Pollock presented a lecture titled "Mini Hostas 101". Here are some of his recommendations made for good mini hosta growth:

1. Minis need sharp, rapid drainage. This can be accomplished by adding up to 50% chicken grit to the growing medium. Chicken grit, a crushed granite stone, is inexpensive and can be purchased at the county coop or feed store.
2. Minis need moisture. Altho this sounds like a contradiction to sharp, rapid drainage, it actually refers to watering often. They do not like to dry out and will not recover well from a drought. A light mulch is advised. Keep the leaves dry and do not let them touch damp soil.
3. Minis need lots of light. That does not mean direct sunlight. Using small white stones as a mulch will reflect indirect light to the plant.
4. Minis need good air circulation. This is easier to do when they are in pots or troughs and can be elevated. If planting in the ground, don't try to tuck under a larger hosta or grouped too tightly.
5. Minis only need about 3" of soil when planted in containers. Many of them have very short root systems to go with their small stature.
6. Minis do not like to have their roots disturbed. This is why they do well in pots and the pots can be moved instead of disturbing the hostas.
7. Minis like a light application of nitrogen in the spring.
8. Minis like to be mulched over the winter. It keeps the soil temperature even and helps prevent heaving of the entire plant out of the ground.
9. Minis may be put into the soil, a large pot or large trough by burying the entire small planting pot in which it came. To give the mini good drainage, place a few inches of pea gravel under the mini's pot and fill the soil in around it to the top of the pot. If you lift the pot out of the soil and the roots are trying to emerge from the bottom of the pot, you may repot it in a slightly larger pot and return to its slight larger space.

## **FUTURE HOSTAS OF THE YEAR**

From Illinois Prairie Hosta Society's newsletter

For 2009, the Hosta Growers Association has chosen H. 'Earth Angel' to be the Hosta of the Year. Looking ahead, they have chosen H. 'First Frost' as Hosta of the Year for 2010.

## **EMERALD ASH BORER**

from the Central Illinois Hosta Society newsletter

Editor's Note: *These insects were sited and eradicated at an I-80 interchange near LaSalle, IL. If you have ashes, you should consider one of the preventative applications.*

The Emerald Ash Borer is a destructive insect believed to have arrived in packing material made of ash wood from Asia. It was first identified in 2002, but probably has been here for 10-12 years. Infestations have now been documented in Michigan, Ohio, Ontario, Indiana, Illinois, Maryland and Virginia. On its own, it would only spread about 1/2 mile a year, but the massive spread has been attributed to the moving of firewood for camping and logs in the timber industry, where it can easily travel under the bark of infested wood. The entire state of Indiana is under quarantine for ash products leaving the state.

**Symptoms** to look for include a "D" shaped 1/8" hole in the tree bark, vertical splits in the tree bark, dieback of leaves that occur in the upper 1/3 of the tree and progresses downward, "S" shaped channels under the bark, heavy woodpecker feeding, and water sprouts appearing at the base of the tree. There is no cure, but there are a couple of preventative insecticides that should only be used on healthy ash trees and must be done yearly. *Bayer Advanced Garden Tree and Shrub Control* is a soil drench and *Bayer Advanced Garden Multi-Insect Killer* is a spray.

**What do Emerald Ash Borers Look Like?** Adult beetles are bright metallic green in color. Adults are 1/3" long and one-sixteenth inch wide. They have rounded abdomens and flat backs and are present from mid-May thru late July. While larva (immature) are creamy white and have flattened segmented bodies, older larvae grow to 1" long. They feed under ash tree bark from mid-summer thru spring, damaging the ash tree's vascular tissue.

**What Kinds of Ash Trees Do Emerald Ash Borers (EAB) Attack?** Emerald ash borers attack all kinds of North American ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) including white, green and black ash and all horticultural varieties of these trees. All North American ash trees, from the smallest saplings to giant trees are vulnerable to attack. Mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*) is not a true ash tree and is not attacked by the EAB.

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One of the vendors at the MRHS convention was **Agdia INC.**, an agriculture diagnostics firm in Elkhart, IN. They offer rapid response HVX virus testing kits for use at home. They are easy to use and offer quick results on questionable plants. We will be giving a demonstration at the Sept 21 picnic. Cost is about \$27.50 for 5 test kits. Check out their web site: <http://www.agdia.com>. or contact them at 1-5574-264-2615.

**Dues for the Mississippi Valley Hosta Society are \$7 per year. Please make your check payable to MVHS and send to DEAN PIATT, 2910 Telegraph Rd., Davenport, IA 52804.**

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**AHS DUES.** The American Hosta Society offers participation in all national activities, including a national convention, three issues of "The Hosta Journal", and a directory. They also have a web page - [www.hosta.org](http://www.hosta.org). Dues are now \$30/yr, \$57/2 yrs and \$600 life for an individual. Family memberships are also available at \$34/yr and \$62/2 yrs. Make your check to American Hosta Society and send to the AHS Membership Secretary, Sandie Markland, 8702 Pinnacle Rock Ct., Lorton, VA 22079.

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Dues for **Midwest Regional Hosta Society** are \$10/yr. Send your check to: Pete Postlewaite, Treasurer, 21172 Andover Rd., Kildeer, IL 60047-8604.

Mississippi Valley Hosta Society  
909 Mississippi Blvd.  
Bettendorf, Iowa 52722

**WHAT'S HAPPENING!**

**SEPT 21** - Annual Picnic, VV Hosta Glade

**SEPT 28** - Plant Sale, Riverside Park  
Greenhouse, Moline, 12N-3PM

**OCT 3** – **Bob Solberg free lecture,**  
**Scott County Ext Ofc, 7 PM**

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**Visit our MVHS WEB SITE**  
**[mvhosta.org](http://mvhosta.org)**

Other hosta and garden web sites:  
American Hosta Society - <http://www.hosta.org>  
Midwest Hosta Society - <http://www.midwesthostasociety.org>  
Hosta Library - <http://www.hostalibrary.org>  
Hosta Forum - questions/answers - <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/hosta>  
Mini Hosta Forum - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/minihosta>

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**LET US KNOW!!! IF YOU HAVE MOVED?**  
**HAS YOUR EMAIL CHANGED?**

Send your corrected info to DEAN PIATT, 2910  
TELEGRAPH RD., DAVENPORT, IA 52804,

His email is: [dpiatt@mvhosta.org](mailto:dpiatt@mvhosta.org)