



# Hosta Happenings

June 2012

Vo. 14, Iss. 6

## MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY

### ANNUAL HOSTA WALK

**SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2012**

**Starts at 2 - 3 PM**

You will be able to walk to all of the gardens in DAVENPORT. You will find Garden Walk signs by each house.

901 Mississippi Ave. - Jim and Susie Foster

935 Mississippi Ave. - Ray and Kathy Wieringa

1008 Mississippi Ave. - Greg and Patti Snakenberg

1017 Mississippi Ave. - Robert Kirk/Kay Murphy

Ending garden: Carolyn Hamilton, 909 Mississippi Blvd., BETTENDORF  
Take River Drive, heading east to Bettendorf, turn left 8th Street (first street after the funeral home), turn right at Mississippi at base of hill, go to 909.

**We will have a Social Hour at Carolyn's house, so please bring a chair, your own libation, and an hors d'ourve to share!! Soft drinks, water, plates and forks will be furnished.**

GROWING MINIS IN THE NORTH  
by Bob Solberg, Green Hill Hostas  
Reprinted from Tri-State Triune, 2011 Spring Issue

Hostas are generally easy plants for Northern gardeners to grow. Even the fragrant flowered hostas, *H. plantaginea* and its children, are usually manageable if given a warm sunny location and lots of water. However, now that the miniature hosta craze is sweeping Hostadom, gardeners everywhere are finding that minis are not always the easiest hostas to grow.

There are really two types of miniature hostas, those that have "small" genes that keep them small and those that are small because they do not grow very well. Many white-centered minis and some yellow ones fall into this latter category. If you have trouble keeping these little guys alive it is probably not your fault, they are just not vigorous plants.

All minis, by virtue of their small size alone, do however, have some disadvantages over their larger hosta cousins. They have shorter, and often much smaller in diameter roots than large hostas. Therefore, they can not send their roots deep into the soil where the moisture hides in the dry season. Thus, they need to be watered more frequently, but also need better drainage, so that the water can get to those little roots easily. Many gardeners add very small gravel to their beds and even use it as a mulch. (You may want to try turkey grit made here in Mt. Airy, NC.) It is like having a scree bed but with much more fine particle organic matter, moist but well drained.

Short roots, coupled with small dormant buds, also present a problem in winter. Newly planted minis may heave out of the ground and have their exposed buds become permanent damaged. Older minis may grow out of the ground, or have the ground compact around them, leading to the same disastrous result. I like to use the small gravel mulch to help with this, (it also keeps the leaves from getting splashed with dirt when it rains), compost or pine bark fines.

Also, if you water your miniature hostas more often, then you must fertilize them more as well. Many sophisticated mini growers do not fertilize their minis at all, starving them into the smallest size possible, and then wonder why they lose one every now and then. Little hostas need fertilizer, too, especially a little bit of liquid fertilizer every few weeks during the growing season. In your good, well drained soil, it should percolate down into the root zone quickly and thoroughly.

Minis would also like a little more light than you probably want to give them. Babying them in deep shade, may be loving them to death. Plus, if you are watering and fertilizing more, they will need more light to photosynthesize more, and grow better. It has been my experience that Northern gardeners generally could grow all their hostas in more sunlight. Just do not cook them, remember minis will dehydrate faster than large hostas because of their shorter roots. All this extra this and extra that is leading me to say that minis grown well need their own special place in the garden. Maybe you need a special bed of specially prepared soil with small rocks scattered about to moderate temperatures and retain moisture, (a rock garden)? Somewhere safe from surface tree roots that can easily strangle them and steal their water and nutrients. Somewhere safe from voles that can devour an entire mini in just one bite. Maybe minis are best grown in containers.

In a container, light, soil, water and fertilizer can all be completely controlled. Voles can be felled and tree roots cut if they dare to penetrate the holes in the bottom of the pot. In the South, we love containers for all these reasons and for almost all of our hostas. We can, however, just leave them outside in the garden all winter without a care in the world, northern gardeners cannot.

There is no need to send your minis south for the winter, however, they are easy to over-winter right in your back yard, or in your garage. If you choose to over winter your containers in a garden shed or in your garage, allow your hostas to freeze below 25 degrees two or three times and then bring them in. They should be moist at that time and there is no need to water them except to keep them from getting totally dry. I would put some snow on them occasionally, (something I would never recommend to Southern gardeners), to keep them from drying out. Make sure the dormant buds are well under ground when you bring them in and add mulch or gravel as necessary.

You can leave your minis outside, if the container can handle the freezing and thawing, by burying them in the ground and giving them a light mulching. If they are in nursery pots you can sink them "pot in pot" and just pop them out again in the spring. You can also put them on their side in a protected place and cover them with pine branches or white plastic and wait for the snow to insulate them. They are better off dry in the winter than wet. (Just make sure you put those pots upright before your hostas emerge, or they will be "goose neck" plants all next season.)

Finally, choose miniature hostas that grow. The smallest and prettiest are not always the most vigorous. Ironically, "Pandora's Box", for years the most popular of minis, is a difficult plant to grow. I have seen fantastic clumps of it but it needs a little extra care and maybe a special spot. Minis that are fast growers can be divided almost annually to keep them small. Most just pull apart, so it is easy and fun to give the extras to a gardening friend.

So good luck, and if you need a little moral support, I am available. Feel free to email or call.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY  
Presents

## **C. H. FALSTAD III**

**Sunday, September 30, 2012**  
**2:00 - 3:30 pm**

**Scott County Extension Office**  
**87 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf**

**“Hosta Production at Walters Gardens -  
from Tube to Truck”**

C.H. will talk about Plant Selection and all of the processes a hosta (or any other plant for that matter) goes through to get out the door to their customers!

**Clarence H. Falstad, III:** C.H. graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Ornamental Horticulture from the University of Illinois. C.H. has worked for over 25 years as Laboratory Director of the tissue culture facility at Walters Gardens Inc, a wholesale perennial nursery in Zeeland, MI. He served as President and Vice President of both the AHS and the Michigan Hosta Society, and also The American Hosta Society Scientific Chair and a frequent author for the Hosta Journal. C.H. has introduced over 50 hostas, among them, 'Regal Splendor' and 'Northern Exposure'.



## Over-run by Mice!

By Bob Leask, From Ontario Hosta Society Newsletter, Spring 2010.

Once upon a time there was a hosta named **Minnie Mouse** from Keith Squires but, upon threat of possible legal implications of a trademark, the name was changed to **Missie Mouse** when registered. But recently we have had one introduced as **Mighty Mouse**, so who knows where this will take us. But is certainly has kindled the interest in small hostas.

We have been inundated by the pesky little creatures over the last couple of years. With the promotion of **Blue Mouse Ears** (BME) as Hosta of the Year, we have been simply overwhelmed with the offspring and variations. It is rumored to be a sport of Blue Cadet.

**Green Mouse Ears** followed shortly but was this just a reversion to its natural color or a sport of Blue Mouse Ears?

**Blue Mouse Ears Supreme** is a streaked sport of BME and is similar to Royal Mouse Ears.

**Cat and Mouse** is a thick-leaved, medio-variegated sport of BME with a chartreuse interior and an uneven blue-green margin. Shades of green overlap.

**Mighty Mouse** is a streaked sport and Pure Heart is the white-centered form to accompany it (for you comic fans).

**Mouse Tracks**, a cute little streaked hosta out of Mighty Mouse, features various yellows and creamy whites that streak throughout its blue/green leaves.

**One Iota** is a variegated sport of BME with a light green/cream edge on dark green. This is a forced sport by Jim Anderson and of course there is a streaked form as well.

**Snow Mouse** is a BME sport from Marco Fransen with a white center surrounded by a blue-green border. Leaves are very thick.

**Royal Mouse Ears** is a variegated sport of BME, which is medium blue-green with cream-colored streaks. It is deeply cupped and is dull on top with a glaucous bloom underneath.



**Hosta Blue Mouse Ears**

**Frosted Mouse Ears** is a tissue culture sport out of Royal Mouse Ears developed at Q & Z featuring a wide, creamy white margin, a blueish green center and thick substance.

**Holy Mouse Ears** is another sport from RME and features thick white leaves with uneven blue-green margins.

Each of the above usually produces a cute little clump of lavender flowers about 3 or 4 inches above the foliage. They make interesting displays in troughs and planters and at the front of beds—hopefully raised so they can be appreciated.



**Hosta Frosted Mouse Ears**

Since this article was written a few years ago, the following “mice” have also been introduced: ‘Mouse Trap’, ‘Mouse Tracks’, ‘Mighty Moe’, ‘Pure Heart’, ‘One Iota Streaked’, ‘Blue Mouse Ears Supreme’- and I’m sure there will be more. (Editor)



## Summertime Blues

*Editor's note...This is a great article because it really spotlights the stalwart blue hosta that people favor...in other words, the best growers or the best performers for your garden.*

*Well, I'm gonna raise a fuss  
I'm gonna raise a holler  
'Bout workin' all summer  
Just to try to earn a dollar  
Well I went to the boss man  
Tried to get a break  
But the boss said 'no dice, son,  
You gotta work late'  
Sometimes I wonder what I'm a gonna do  
'Cause there ain't no cure for  
The Summertime Blues.*

So begins a Rock and Roll Classic I first heard in 1968. There have been many versions, but the one I heard first remains my favorite. In 2002, I discovered hostas and the "Summertime Blues" took on an entirely new meaning. I quickly fell for the smokey blues of the Tardianas before I even learned the name. *H. 'Halcyon'* was a very early purchase.

The first four Tardianas resulted from a chance late season cross made by British plantsman, Eric Smith, between *H. 'Tardiflora'* (pod parent) and a young *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'* (pollen parent) blooming out of season. When I read that in *The Hosta Handbook*, I was both intrigued and smitten. I had to have them all. But finding any Tardiana in the garden centers of Southwest Iowa and Omaha was not easy. They were few and far between. So if I chanced upon one at a convention auction - even the least blue of them all, *H. 'Eric Smith'* - I snatched it up. Better yet - I traded for it. *H. 'Osprey'* flew into my garden via a trade with an online acquaintance.

After the evening picnic at Fred and Audra Wilson's during the 2004 AHS convention in Des Moines, I rode back on the bus sitting next to online friend and

AHS Treasurer, Kim Larsen. We had a wide-ranging conversation on that relatively short ride back to the hotel, and I remember distinctly at one point that she said, "I think Eric Smith was smoking something. The Tardianas all look alike".

I was a little shocked. I didn't agree. (Although I'll admit that several do look very similar.) I found the statement troubling - mainly because I had just discovered that not everyone was as enamored with the Tardianas as Mark Zilis and I. That made me look at blues beyond the Tardiana group, but oftentimes I would discover that they were related in some way. The Classic Blues have for the most part been developed from *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'*, the Tokudamas, and the Tardianas.

Eric Smith developed the Tardianas (*H. 'Halcyon'*, *H. 'Dorset Blue'*, *H. 'Blue Moon'*, et al.) over several generations. Then Dr. Herb Benedict took what he had created and pushed the Tardiana blues even further. *H. 'Amethyst Chip'*, *H. 'Blue Ice'*, *H. 'Blue Jay'*, *H. 'Blue Sliver'*, and *H. 'Purple Verticulated Elf'* are five of his better known results.

At the same time, hybridizers were working with *H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'*, *H. 'Tokudama'*, and related hostas to create the large/giant blues and the puckered/cupped blues. *H. 'Blue Angel'*, *H. 'Blue Mammoth'*, *H. 'Blue Vision'*, *H. 'Love Pat'* and *H. 'True Blue'* are just a few attributed to Paul Aden. Kevin Vaughn developed *H. 'Aqua Velva'*, *H. 'Blue Blazes'*, *H. 'Nancy Gill'*, *H. 'Polly Bishop'* (parent of six of his registered blue seedlings), and *H. 'Twisted Sister'*. *H. 'Azure Snow'* and *H. 'Powder Blue'* came from Peter Ruh while the Queen of Hostas, Mildred Seaver, gave us *H. 'Queen of the Seas'*, *H. 'Sea Blue Monster'*, and *H. 'Sea Grotto'*.

Our fascination with blue hostas continues unabated and today many hybridizers have focused their efforts on the creation of new leaf shapes, forms, and textures with colored petioles and blue coloring that holds late into the growing season.

In researching the New Classic Blues, I found that many have one Tardiana parent or the parent is Tardiana-related. This includes all of the Don Dean and Hans Hansen introductions on this page. A large number have *H. sieboldiana* genes and several are *H. 'Tokudama'*-related. Species contributing to these cultivars are *H. pycnophylla*, *H. yingeri*, *H. hypoleuca*, and forms of *H. longipes* and *H. kikutii*. Some hybrids are the result of complex multi-generational crosses.



However, one of the most popular blue hostas of all time is a sport discovered by Emile Deckert at a nursery where he was working in the late 1980's. It was a chance discovery that has literally changed the hosta world. *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* was named Hosta of the Year in 2008 and continues to lead the way in the popularity of small and mini hosta.

This summer in one AHS convention garden filled with massive hosta specimens, one caught my eye and held it. Naturally it was blue - a mature specimen with deep coloring and a mesmerizing, twisting form. Doug Beilstein's *H. 'Singin' the Blues'* appeared to be swaying to the music. It wasn't on my radar at all and instantly it became a must-have. Blue hostas are like that. And not just for me. I recently posted this request online at the AHS Facebook page and the Hosta Seed Growers Forum: "Name 3 favorite blue hostas and tell why you like them." The response in just over 24 hours was overwhelming. Not surprisingly, *H. 'Halcyon'* and *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* were among the favorites.

- Mike Groothuis: "I like *H. 'Blue Hawaii'* for its upright habit and intensity of the blue. I like *H. 'Fragrant Blue'* for its neat form and terrific seedlings (even though it's finicky). Lastly, I like *H. 'Halcyon'* for long-lasting blue and excellent growth."
- Eve Vanden Broek: "*H. 'Halcyon'* is always beautiful, *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'*, and *H. 'Topaz'* looks so nice by the corner of my house."
- Lori Widman, AHS Facebook: "*H. 'Deep Blue Sea'* - it's got wow factor even though it isn't real big, *H. 'Dorset Blue'* - great for a smaller size blue and I just got *H. 'Silver Bay'* this year and it's already stunning."
- Ross Johnson: "Based on intensity and duration of the plant to hold the color I would say: #1- *H. 'Powderpuff'*, #2- *H. 'Purple Verticulated Elf'*, and #3- *H. 'Silver Bay'*."
- Tony Avent: *H. 'Blueper'*, *H. 'Dixie Cups'*, *H. 'Elvis Lives'*, *H. 'Gemstone'*, *H. 'Hillbilly Blues'*
- Bob 'Indiana Bob' Balitewicz: *H. 'Bluetonium'*, *H. 'Troubled Waters'*, *H. 'Yankee Blue'*
- Doug Beilstein: *H. 'Abraham Lincoln'*, *H. 'Cloud Burst'*, *H. 'Singin' the Blues'*
- Monty Carlson: *H. 'Arctic Blast'*, *H. 'Blue Cascade'*
- Mary Chastain: *H. 'Lakeside Beach Bum'*, *H. 'Lakeside Blue Jeans'*, *H. 'Lakeside Old Smokey'*

- Don Dean: *H. 'Astral Bliss'*, *H. 'Her Eyes Were Blue'*, *H. 'October Sky'*, *H. 'Parisian Silk'*, *H. 'Pewterware'*, *H. 'Silver Bay'*, *H. 'Titanium'*
- Hideko Gowen: *H. 'Blue My Mind'*, *H. 'Cutting Edge'*
- Hans Hansen: *H. 'High Tide'*, *H. 'Neptune'*, *H. 'Prairie Sky'*, *H. 'Restless Sea'*, *H. 'Silver Moon'*
- Greg Johnson: *H. 'Blue Haired Lady'*, *H. 'Moonlight Sonata'*, *H. 'Mystic Star'*, *H. 'Rhythm and Blues'*, *H. 'Topaz'*, *H. 'Twilight Time'*
- Ron Livingston: *H. 'Blue Dogwood'*, *H. 'Childhood Fantasy'*, *H. 'Conquistador'*, *H. 'Cosmic Blue'*, *H. 'Preconceived'*, *H. 'Prescribed'*, *H. 'Ritz'*
- Bill Meyer: *H. 'Blueberry Muffin'*, *H. 'Gay Paree'*
- Frank Nyikos: *H. 'Awakening Angel'*, *H. 'Little Boy'*, *H. 'Little Brother'*, *H. 'Powderpuff'*, *H. 'Pro Tek Tor'*, *H. 'Uncle John'*
- Olga Petryszyn: *H. 'Amos'*, *H. 'Blue Hawaii'*, *H. 'Chesapeake Bay'*, *H. 'Mississippi Delta'*
- Bev & Dave Stegeman: *H. 'Skylight'*, *H. 'Smoke Signals'*
- Danny Van Eechaute: *H. 'Dewed Steel'*, *H. 'Flemish Sky'*, *H. 'Sky Dancer'*
- Mark Zilis: *H. 'Azuretini'*, *H. 'Stormy Seas'*, *H. 'Tidewater'*, *H. 'Ultramarine'*, *H. 'Venetian Blue'*

*Hosta*  
*'Halcyon'*



By Reldon Ramsey,  
reprinted from the  
Michigan Hosta  
Happenings,  
November 2011



Krossa Regal (Osaka U/Krossa/Summers 80)



## Summer Alert... Beware of the Drought

Most reference books on hosta will report that they are quite adaptable to dry shade conditions once they have become established. While this may be true, there is also a practical limit to most generalizations.

During the growing season the hosta rhizome or crown is building reserves that will be used the following spring. Large amounts of water are also required to replace the natural transpiration that occurs with the large leaves. If (as we typically do in the Midwest) encounter a prolonged spell of hot, dry weather, the rhizome will spend reserves to support the plant.

Ever wonder why a hosta appears OK at the end of the year, but appears much smaller and/or less vigorous the following spring, or (even worse) fails to reappear altogether the following spring? This is most likely the result of a decline in the crown mass the previous summer.

So what to do if we do encounter a typical Kansas City summer with day upon day of hot temperatures and extended dry spells? Avoid the stress by watering deeply at least once a week during the summer if we don't receive any help from Mother Nature. Optimum moisture is reported between one and one and a half inches of water per week during the growing season. This is especially important if your hostas receive significant levels of direct sun exposure.

Watering time is also important. Watering in the morning will help discourage both slugs and fungal activity. Use of soaker hoses works well. When watering blue-leafed hosta, avoid overhead watering of the leaves which can slowly destroy the glaucous bloom (i.e. the waxy covering that makes a green hosta appear blue). Residual water droplets on any leaf which is followed by sun exposure can also result in leaf burn.

By Rob Mortko



## Escape to Wisconsin June 13-15, 2013

As announced at last summer's convention, a site has been secured for 2013. It will be held in the Milwaukee, WI area. Since there have been comments that conventions are getting expensive to attend, I had a different vision for a future convention.

The idea is to shorten the convention to Friday and Saturday, and for attendees to drive to gardens on their own timing and schedule with maps and directions provided. Car pooling will be strongly encouraged to alleviate congestion at gardens and to facilitate rides for attendees that do not drive in.

Jack Barta has embraced the concept and is willing to work with me so he and I are co-chairs for the 2013 AHS convention. We are in negotiations with a hotel and are in the planning stages at this time. I wanted to announce this to the membership and make them aware of the fact that we will have a convention and that the concept will be different than past conventions.

Since this is such a radical new concept, I have received concerns from members about the new format. I will address many of these concerns in the upcoming Online Journal where there is more room for discussion. I also welcome concerns and ideas at this time so as to find solutions to some potential problems before they occur. This is by no means meant to change convention formats. It is meant to be an option to host a convention. Since local societies have turned down requests to host future conventions, this will be "2 Cheese Heads Putting on a Convention"!

While it sounds like a cheesy idea, we are confident that we will be able to provide an excellent convention experience at a much reduced cost.

Tom Micheletti, AHS Past President

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED MAKE OUR HOSTA SALE ON JUNE 3rd A BIG SUCCESS --the workers, the people who bought plants to sell, the people who purchased!!! We netted a little under \$3000 and we got rid of everything except a few nice plants to keep until next year! Karen Jacquin and Marcia Atchison won the H. 'Honey Pie' raffle plants. Congrats!

**MVHS DUES** are \$7 a year. Please make your check payable to MVHS (not Jim) and send to Jim Cato, Treasurer, 12915 - 25th St. Ct., Milan, IL 61264. We offer 8 newsletters a year, reduced prices on hosta offerings, garden walks, first opportunity to buy plants at our annual hosta and companion plant sale and many other good opportunities.

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**AHS DUES:** The American Hosta Society offers participation in all national activities, including a convention, 3 issues of "The Hosta Journal". Dues are \$30/yr; \$57/2 yrs. Family memberships are also available at \$34/yr and \$64/2 yrs. Make check to AHS and send to the Membership Secretary, Sandi Markland, POBox 7539, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948.

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**MRHS Dues** are \$10/yr. Send your check to: Barbara Schroeder, 1819 Coventry Dr., Champaign, IL 61822-5239.

**WHAT'S HAPPENING:**

- Jun 13-16** - AHS Convention, Nashville, TN
- Jun 22-24** - GLR Tailgate, West Michigan
- Jun 30** - **MVHS Garden Walk**
- July 12-14** - MRHS Convention, Rochester, Minnesota

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- Visit our MVHS Web Site: **[mvalho.org](http://mvalho.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 or HAS YOUR EMAIL CHANGED?**  
**Send your corrected info to JIM CATO, 12915-25th ST. CT., MILAN, IL 61264.**  
**Jim's email is [pussbug@aol.com](mailto:pussbug@aol.com).**

Mississippi Valley Hosta Society  
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