



Hosta Happenings

March 2009

Vol. 13, Iss. 2

M.V.H.S. MEETING SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2009 2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: ALEC SCHLORG
Reblooming Perennials

**Riverdale Fire Station
Riverdale, Iowa
(across from ALCOA)**



Those attending the Winter Scientific Meeting held in Schaumburg, IL in January:
 First Row (left to right): Howard and Sandy Fedler, Franc Freeman, Sally Stewart
 Second Row: Carolyn Hamilton, Shirley Waters, Sally Freeman, Jackie Kallenberger, Lyn Sours
 Third Row: Don Musak, Rod Kuenster

2009 DUES ARE DUE!!!!

If you have an "08" before your name on your mailing label, your dues for 2009 are due. Email notices were sent to those on email newsletters.

Club dues are still only \$7 a year. Please send your check to Dean Piatt, Treasurer, 2910 Telegraph Road, Davenport, IA 52804.

2009 HOSTA FINDER

Dean Piatt is now taking orders for the 2009 Hosta Finder. It will cost \$13 this year and if you want it mailed, please add \$3.25. The books will be available at the March meeting.

To pre-order, please send a check (made out to MVHS) to Dean at 2910 Telegraph Rd., Davenport, IA 52804. His email is: dpiatt@mhosta.org.

The Hosta Finder is a wonderful reference and is a comparison of prices of hostas offered from approximately 50 growers.



HOSTA OF THE YEAR 2009

'EARTH ANGEL'

Registered by Hans Hansen in 2002

from Michigan Hosta Happenings

Clump Size: (VL) 48" x 36"

Leaf Size: 17"x12" - Vein Pairs: 16

Description: Large, heart-shaped and pointed, blue-gray leaves have an irregular creamy yellow to creamy white margin.

Blooms: Pale lavender to near white flowers in early summer.

Comments: A striking sport of H. 'Blue Angel' and is an excellent grower and a very showy plant that will make a huge clump once mature.

Light: Part shade to full shade.

Soil: Humus-rich, moist, but well-drained soil

Spring Desiccation Burn

by Ray Rodgers

from the Central Illinois Hosta Society newsletter

Spring Desiccation Burn (SDB, spring burn or burning) is the small to large brown areas that develop most notably on the yellow leaf sections of Sieboldiana cultivars*. The non-yellow portions of the leaf are not affected. Spring burning is not to be confused with light frost damage nor the little reddish brown spots that often are visible on yellow leaf hostas in mid-summer. These spots are caused by a fungus most commonly referred to as anthracnose and can be avoided by regular applications of a fungicide prior to the development of the spots. Light frost damage is non-discriminatory, damage can occur to any leaf color and any variety of hosta.

SDB is one form of Necrosis, which is a generic botanical term defined by the American Hosta Society (AHS) as the death or dying of cells, tissues or whole plants.

Probably the most talked about hosta that suffers from burning is 'Frances Williams' (note that Frances is spelled with an "e", not an "i"). Many of the plants thought to be 'Frances Williams' in gardens today are actually 'Aurora Borealis'. It is my understanding that the most recognizable difference is 'Aurora Borealis' has taller bloom scapes. 'Frances Williams' bloom scapes barely extend over the top of the clump and some don't even make it outside the clump. They both will burn.

'Frances Williams' is one of the first variegated hostas, and despite its genetic flaw, remains a perennial favorite as voted by members of the AHS. I'm guessing the majority of the people listing 'Frances Williams' on their top 25 list live in cooler climates. As a general rule, Sieboldianas do not perform as well in hotter climates. For votes cast in 2002 (results published in 2003), 'Frances Williams' rank slipped to number 20 on the AHS Popularity Poll. After so many years of love it or hate it, combined with the continual influx of new introductions, it appears 'Frances Williams' may soon disappear from this poll, but it will remain a Classic for many years to come.

The nicest specimen of 'Frances Williams', which I have personally seen, belongs to past AHS President, and current Editor of The Hosta Journal, Dr. Bob Olson. When viewing this plant at the 2000 AHS Convention, I saw no signs of Spring Desiccation Burn. Grown in Minnesota, Bob has owned this very large and spectacular plant for 15 years. Bob believes placement is the key. This plant is not ex-posed to any direct sunlight. It is in an enclosed back yard, situated in the corner of his lot and protected on two sides by a solid, tall fence.

There are several Sieboldianas that regularly suffer from Spring Desiccation Burn, to varying degrees. Several, but not all, are sports of 'Frances Williams'. The following is a partial list of hostas that suffer from spring burn, which are commonly available today (none appear on the most recent AHS Popularity Poll):

Green to Blue Green w/ Yellow Edge

- H. 'Frances Williams'
- H. 'Aurora Borealis'
- H. 'Wagon Wheels'
- H. 'Samurai'***

Yellow w/ Green to Blue Green Edge

- H. 'DuPage Delight'
- H. 'Super Nova'
- H. 'Borwick Beauty'
- H. 'Color Glory'****
- H. 'Queen of Islip'
- H. 'Carriage Wheels'

In my opinion (an opinion that is shared by many), the absolute worst of all hostas that are susceptible to SDB is the all yellow sport of 'Frances Williams', named 'Golden Sunburst'. Being all yellow, its entire leaf surface is subject to burning. This sport regularly appears in clumps of the parent plant. It most likely also occasionally occurs when tissue culturing 'Frances Williams'. I would guess that these two factors are why some nurseries continue to sell this extremely flawed ugly duckling. I am
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proud to state that I know of no Peoria area nursery that still offers this plant. I am equally disappointed with the nurseries that continue to sell this plant to buyers who are unaware of its problems.

Some of the nurseries that offer 'Golden Sunburst' are very well respected nurseries and sell a wide range of wonderful plants. Owning this plant, or even selling it to someone that is aware of the severe burning is fine, but advertising it in one's catalog is irresponsible, in my opinion, unless the problem is well documented, i.e. "susceptible to Spring Desiccation Burn" or "Caution, this hosta may make you sick!"

Based on information from a variety of sources, including thoughts on this subject recently provided to me by a well known and respected plantsman from New Jersey (Bill Meyer), I believe the Sieboldianas that are susceptible to burning have a genetic flaw. According to Bill, SDB is believed to be the result of cold temperatures experienced when the leaves are just emerging and are still soft and tender. It might not even require below-freezing temperatures to trigger spring burn, which would indicate that temperature changes rather than ice crystal formation may be the cause. One may notice that frost on hosta leaves in early spring sometimes leaves watery-looking areas in the foliage. Sometimes these areas collapse and die in short order, while other times they seem to recover well, only to go downhill by mid-season. If you look at 'Frances Williams' at this time you may spot some slightly lighter areas in the gold tissue. It appears that these slightly lighter or opaque areas are the first visible signs of Spring Desiccation Burn damage.

Bob Solberg writes in his January 2000 "The Green Hill Gossip", that Spring Desiccation Burn usually occurs in the morning on bright cool days with low humidity and a brisk breeze. Bright morning sun only compounds the problem.

My personal advice is not to purchase any of the above mentioned plants, unless you are willing to accept the inevitable flawed leaf surfaces.

If you really love H. 'Frances Williams', except for the burning, the best alternative may be 'Olive Bailey Langdon'. The yellow edge on this 'Frances Williams' look-alike does not develop as quickly in the spring, most likely the reason why it has less of a problem. This plant will occasionally show minor signs of burning, but it is certainly much better than the previously mentioned hostas and is certainly well worth growing. A smaller substitute is 'Tokudama Flavocircinalis' (not a Sieboldiana), which is an outstanding plant and is not susceptible to Spring Desiccation Burn.

For an alternative for the yellow leaf with green to blue green edge plants, I recommend H. 'Dick Ward' (sport of 'Zounds').

* Sieboldiana describes a particular group of hostas. A cultivar is defined by the AHS as a contraction word for "cultivated variety"; a plant that is clearly distinguished by identical physical characteristics through proper propagation means. In simpler terms, I am referring to plants that were derived from the species sieboldiana or from other hostas in the Sieboldiana group.

** Reportedly the same as 'Frances Williams', any differences are within the realm of normal variability found in this plant.

*** The gold-centered Sieboldiana being sold today under his name is believed to actually be 'Borwick Beauty'.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY - SOLBERG CLUB PLANTS
2009 ORDER FORM

Please remember all plants will be bare root. Pick up date and place will be announced later. DEADLINE FOR ORDERING IS APRIL 1, 2009. Send your form, along with your check (made payable to MVHS) to: Shirley Waters, 3519 - 38th St., Moline, IL 61265. Phone 797-5379

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ AMT. PAID _____

'STRAWBERRY BANANNA SMOOTHIE' (Solberg 2008) (Whiskey Sour x sibling) (M) Bright translucent yellow with bright red, not purple, petioles. Exclusive Club Plant Only.

() x \$31.00 \$ _____

'BABY BLUE EYES' (Solberg 2006) Small. A very cute tight, flat mound of heart-shaped blue leaves. Grows fast.

() x \$9.00 \$ _____

'CORKSCREW' (Solberg 2003) (Tortifrons x One Man's Treasure) (S) Twisted, shiny dark green leaves. Blooms frequently on forked scapes.

() x \$11.00 \$ _____

'DRAGON'S EYE' (Lefever-Solberg 2008) (L) Frosty, undulating gray-green leaves, tall purple petioles, very waxy white leaf backs

() x \$13.00 \$ _____

'FAT CAT' (Ward 1996) (L) Sagae seedling, yellow gold, almost round deep yellow leaves and some nice quilting at maturity. White flowers.

() x \$13.00 \$ _____

'FRIENDS' (Scott-Goodwin 2007) (S) Spritzer seedling, pretty waxy and slightly twisted narrow yellow leaves, fast grower, lavender flowers.

() x \$16.00 \$ _____

'FROST GIANT' (Lefever-Solberg 2008) (L) Galaxy seedling, blue-green, sturdy leaves, bright yellow margin. Straight scapes, white flowers.

() x \$13.00 \$ _____

'LIME SMOOTHIE' (Lefever-Solberg 2008) (L) Galaxy seedling, variegated, waxy green center and broad lime green borders, unique coloration.

() x \$13.00 \$ _____

'MARGIE'S ANGEL' (Solberg 2007) (M) Excellent yellow gold leaf centers with dark green margin. Flat pointed leaf, likes shade. Near white flowers.

() x \$26.00 \$ _____

'OCEAN ISLE' (Chopko 2006) (L) Sport of El Dorado, long, thin pointed, wavy blue-green leaves with wide bright gold margin. High vein count.

() x \$13.00 \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Q & Z Nursery introduces

THE HOSTAPEDIA
by Mark Zilis

Over 7400 hosta descriptions listed A-Z
1900 color photos
Complete index of hosta names 'Factual and Entertaining'
Most definitive work on hostas in print
A must for every collector , nurseryman and gardener
9" x 12", 1200 pages, 1900 color photos
Hardcover

Our club is taking orders.
Retail cost if \$79.95 and the
cost for our club members is \$60.00
and the club is picking up the cost of the shipping.
Your ordered book must be picked up at the
April 18th Fluff and Buff at VanderVeer Park
or

Make special arrangements with Don Musak.

Don's email is: musak5@mchsi.com

Telephone: 309-441-5849

Please send your check to:

Dean Piatt
2910 Telegraph Road
Davenport, IA 52804

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. 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 sent to the AHS Membership Secretary, Sandie Markland, 8702 Pinnacle Rock Ct., Lorton, VA 22079.

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

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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HOSTA SOCIETY DUES are \$7/yr. Please make your check payable to MVHS and send to Dean Piatt, Treasurer, 2910 Telegraph Rd., Davenport, IA 52804. We offer 8 newsletters, reduced prices on hostas offerings, garden walks, first opportunity to buy hostas at our annual plant sale, and many other good opportunities. (Many of our members now receive their newsletter by email which sometimes comes with full color pictures. We would love to send these color pictures to everyone but the cost of reproduction makes it impossible.)

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

MARCH 15 - 2 PM - Meeting, Riverdale Fire Station

APRIL 18 - 1 PM - FLUFF AND BUFF,
VanderVeer Hosta Glade

APRIL 27 - 9 AM - Apply Name Tags to hostas in VanderVeer Hosta Glade

Visit our MVHS WEB SITE
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 or  
HAS YOUR EMAIL CHANGED?

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

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

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