



Hosta Happenings

November 2009

Vol. 13, Iss. 11

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday, December 4, 2009

Social Hour – 6:00 PM

Dinner – 7:00 PM

The Outing Club
2109 Brady Street
Davenport, Iowa

Beef Tenderloin w/ Bernaise Sauce – \$25

Mango Crusted Salmon – \$25

Chicken Oscar – \$20

(served with asparagus spear, crab meat and Bernaise sauce)

**For reservations, please call
Teri Simmering, 332-4957
by Monday, November 30, 2009**

Fall Slug Control

by Mary Bardens, Michigan Hosta Happenings

Did you know that fall is still egg-laying time for slugs?

We tend to forget about them as the hosta leaves change color and head into dormancy. The slugs will be active until the soil temperatures reach freezing when they will go into hibernation until the spring thaw. So, until that happens, they will lay eggs. Mating will occur from August until mid-October with eggs laid about 30-40 days after that. Look for 1/8 to 1/4 inch sized gelatinous clusters of about 20-30 spheres. Older slugs will lay larger quantities. The eggs may be hard to see as they can reflect their surroundings. When the eggs are near hatching, the spheres may become cloudy. Slugs love those piles of leaves, damp from heavy dew and fall rains. Look for them under anything that will keep them cool and moist. Other favorite places will be flower pots, boards, cooled compost piles, at the edge of large rocks or under mulch.

1. Eliminate their favorite spots. Clean up the old hosta leaves and other debris. Turn the compost pile to make it too hot to be attractive for them. Check under those flower pots before you store them.

2. Set a slug trap. They are attracted to any fermenting food: beer or a mixture of sugar, yeast and water. Sink a tuna can to 1" of ground level so they will crawl in and drown. If you put it flush to the ground you run the risk of drowning ground beetles which are a slug predator. Colorado State U Entomology Professor Whitney determined that their favorite types of beer were Kingsbury Malt, Michelob & Budweiser. Check often to empty. Replace beer weekly. Commercial slug baiting stations are available. If you leave a flat board on the damp ground, you can scrape them off in the morning.

3. Go on a slug hunt. Late at night or very early morning, grab a flash light and bucket of soapy water to drop them into after hand picking. Slugs are nocturnal and love to hit the all night hosta diner. Watch for the little ones. Like teenagers, they are voracious eaters. You can even use a handled vacuum to suck up the little pests, but you may want to warn the next person to use it.

4. Encourage a predator to hang out in your garden. Toads, turtles, owls, Mourning Doves, and Robins love slugs. And then there are some predators that we may not be too thrilled coming upon in the hosta bed that also feast on slugs: black ground beetles, opossums, shrews, wild turkeys, chipmunks, skunks, moles and Northern Ringneck snakes.

5. Iron Phosphate. Slug bait pellets made from this can stop slugs without poisoning birds, small pets, humans or earthworms. Though they are not sure exactly why, iron phosphate inhibits the slugs from feeding. And, it is actually good for the soil. This is sold under the names of Sluggo, Escargo, and Safer's Slug & Snail Bait.

6. Metaldehyde. This is a molluscicide which means it is a poison that kills slugs and can be purchased in a form to spray on the hostas. It is very effective for killing slugs, but also earthworms and other things with which it comes in contact. Great care in handling, application and storage must be observed.

7. Ammonia Solution. A solution of household ammonia (1 part ammonia to 5 parts water) in a spray bottle with the nozzle set on a direct stream and sprayed directly on the slug will kill it in a few seconds. This solution will not harm the plants.

8. Barriers. Copper tape placed around the hostas repels slugs because as they slime across it, it causes a toxic reaction like an electrical shock. But if they find a leaf lying over the barrier, they get in. A product called Slug de-Fence is composed of a low density polyethylene plastic and vacuum grade table salt. It repels the slugs unless they try to get over it, and then the salt gets them. Although, I'm imagining it may also look like you tried to wrap your plants with little trash bagfences.

9. Abrasive Materials. Eggshells, coffee grounds, sand, cedar shaving, hair or ash may be placed around plants which scratches the slugs bodies causing them to dehydrate. Diatomaceous earth can also be used, but it is a very fine powder and you must wear a mask to keep from inhaling it. But, these products must all be kept dry to work, so they must be reapplied after a rain.

10. Biologic Control. In Europe you may purchase the parasitic nematode *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* which is naturally occurring in their soil. This is a microscopic worm that enters the slug's body through natural openings and releases bacteria that multiplies and kills the slug in 4-16 days. It does not bother earthworms. It also has the ability to recycle and become part of the ecosystem in the absence of a host which would make it good for long term management. It is marketed under the name Nemaslug. But, don't try to add it to your Thompson & Morgan order just yet, it's still illegal here. Agricultural scientists collaborating from Ohio State U. and Purdue U. are doing parasitic nematode research to help protect crops in no-till fields which are most susceptible to slug damage. They are also evaluating the American parasitic nematode cousin, but so far none is as effective as the European relative. They are compiling data showing the safety of importing nematode *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* into our soil.



Fall Reminders

from Michigan Hosta Happenings

A gentle reminder of some fall "things to do".

- Check and replace any missing labels. Hand written plastic labels often fade away and are susceptible to being blown away. Some gardeners bury labels to ensure plant identity will not be lost. Garden maps and pictures are useful if labels are missing.
- Plant your summer purchases.
- If you have any grass left after planting all the plants you bought in the summer, applying winter fertilizer will get the lawn off to a good start in the spring.
- Speaking of planting, a 4" layer of mulch around (not over) the crown will help new transplants from heaving over the winter.
- Didn't get everything into the ground? Potted plants can be wintered over. Once they have frozen, tip them so water cannot stand over the roots and put them in a protected place. If you have an unheated garage or out building, they can be stored there. Smaller pots stored in the garage may dry out so a few ice cubes put on the surface of the pot in January and March will help them through the winter.

- Gather hosta seeds that might have interesting characteristics, dispose of the rest.
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- Either cut back or rake up the hosta leaves. Do not leave them on the beds as they provide good hiding places for slugs and slug eggs.
- Trim back and compost dormant perennials, only leaving those that add winter interest to your garden.
- Protect your rhododendrons with "Wilt Proof" or other desiccation protection.
- Protect young trees from hungry winter mice by wrapping the trunk. Remember to keep the mulch away from the bark.
- Stop watering unless you have had a VERY dry fall. Hostas winter best without an excess of ground moisture.
- Remember ceramic and pottery containers may craze or break if left outside or unprotected.
- It's not too late to put in a few more spring bulbs.
- Clean all your garden tools. A light coating of oil will help keep them in good shape until they are needed in the spring.

2010 DUES ARE DUE!!!

A list of members with their dues dates was included in the October newsletter. If yours is due, please send your renewal check of \$7 a year to Dean Piatt, 2910 Telegraph Road, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

If you have a computer and have email capability and are presently receiving your newsletter by mail, please consider having it sent by email. We are trying to keep the cost of dues as low as possible and it is getting expensive to send a letter by U. S. Mail (printing and postage keep increasing in price). Please send your email address to Carolyn Hamilton at cbhamilton@pobox.com.

Carolyn

Winter Scientific Meeting of the Midwest Regional Hosta Society

Sponsored by the Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society is once again sponsoring the Winter Scientific Meeting. This popular winter event will be held Saturday, January 23, 2010 at the Marriott Hotel, 50 North Martingale Rd., Schaumburg, IL (800-228-9290). The hotel has given us a \$79.00 room rate. Please make your own reservations, and mention the "Winter Scientific Meeting" to guarantee the rate.

We have an outstanding program of speakers with interesting and timely topics:

Bob Solberg - Evolution of the Mini Hosta

Mark Zilis - Hostas of Distinction

Dave Wanninger - The Best Hosta Companion Plants & Shrubs

Roy Klehm - When Hostas Needed Help - A Historical Perspective

Again this year, the program will include a series of three concurrent breakout sessions. The topics covered in these sessions will be:

Session A: What You Need to Know about Nematodes and Hosta Virus X (by Mark Zilis)

Session B: Botanical Classification and Nomenclature - Part II (by Glenn Herold)

Session C: Hybridizer's Perspective (by Don Dean)

These breakout sessions will be presented twice, so attendees will be able to attend two out of the three sessions.

Again this year, there will be a hosta seed silent auction, proceeds of which will be used to underwrite a portion of the cost of the meeting.

The cost of this winter extravaganza is only \$50 per person for MRHS members and \$60 for non-members, and includes a continental breakfast and a deli buffet lunch. At their option, non-members can apply the \$10 difference in the registration fee to a one-year membership in the MRHS.

Registrations postmarked after January 11 require a \$10 late registration fee per person.

Registration at the hotel will begin on Friday, January 22, from 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM, and Saturday, January 23 from 7:00 am - 8:00 am. The program will run from 8:00 am - 5:00 PM on Saturday. Dinner Friday and Saturday nights will be on your own at one of the many fine area restaurants. The Hospitality Suite will be open from 7:00 PM -10:00 PM, both Friday and Saturday nights, for all that good hosta fellowship.

Questions? Contact Lou Horton (630-293-7735) or email: lehorton85@ameritech.net

Please make checks payable to MRHS, and mail before January 11, 2010, with the registration form to:

Kristine James, 523 E. Calhoun Street, Woodstock Ill. 60098

Registration questions?: dankrisj@mc.net or (815)337-4621

Registrations postmarked after January 11 require a \$10 late registration fee per person.

Make a copy of this registration form for your records. If you would like confirmation of your registration, list a valid email address or enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. No refunds after Jan. 11th. Please PRINT.

ATTENDEE 1:

Name: _____ Member of MRHS ___ Non-member _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ email: _____

Number of Members _____ x \$50 = _____ Total enclosed: _____

Number of Non-Members _____ x \$60 = _____

Number of Late Registrations _____ x \$10 = _____

ATTENDEE 2:

Name: _____ Member of MRHS ___ Non-member _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____ email: _____

AHS DUES: The American Hosta Society offers participation in all national activities, including a convention, 3 issues of "The Hosta Journal", and a directory. They also have a web page - www.hosta.org. Dues are \$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 AHS and send to the 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: Barbara Schroeder, 1819 Coventry Dr., Champaign, IL 61822-5239.

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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 a year, reduced prices on hosta offerings, garden walks, first opportunity to buy plants at our annual hosta and plant sale and many other good opportunities.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Dec 4 - Annual Holiday Party, Outing Club
Jan 23 - Winter Scientific Mtg, Schaumberg, IL

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.](http://www.midwesthostasociety.org)

[midwesthostasociety.org](http://www.midwesthostasociety.org)

Hosta Library - <http://www.hostalibrary.org>

Hosta Forum - questions/answers - [http://](http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/hosta)

forums.gardenweb.com/forums/hosta

Mini Hosta Forum - [http://](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/minihosta)

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