

# Hosta la Vista

May '07

*Until we meet again*



## President's Message

**T**he one really good thing about living is Western New York is the weather. Imagine how boring it would be to live in Los Angeles and know that every day you will wake up to blue skies and high temperatures. Here we never know what the next day will bring. Who ever would have thought that we would be suffering from a drought before the danger of a last frost had completely past?

Water, as everyone who grows hosta tells us, is the most important aspect of their successful cultivation. Dr Phil Little, who owned that wonderful hosta garden in Ontario, once told me that if I was to grow hostas on a budget I should always remember to invest in water. Watering our emerging plants at this time of year is very important to ensure that they get a good start. If there is no rain then it has to be the hosepipe I'm afraid. This is particularly important if you are growing hostas in pots. A small pot can dry out so very quickly and may even need two waterings a day to keep it moist.

We are only a few days away from the first of our plant sales. Club members will be selling hosta at Clarence Farmers' Market and at Alden Farmers' Market on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June. We will be sharing the sales with BADS members so it will be a good time to come and visit,



enjoy what the markets have to offer and maybe buy a few plants.

As an added attraction your President will be giving a half an hour talk and demonstration at the Clarence Farmers' Market. OK so maybe it's not an added attraction.

On the same day, 9<sup>th</sup> June there will also be a sale at the Alden Farmers' Market. If that was not enough there is even more.

The following day, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June both societies will take part in a new venture, the Holland Farmers' Market where we will again be selling hosta and daylilies.

The hostas that we have in the hoop house are doing well so far and a shipment is expected from Walters' in Michigan before these plant sales take place. Hopefully members might be able to get to one of these markets and show their support.

Those members who did not receive their Open Garden Booklet at the April meeting should find one with this newsletter. We hope that you are impressed. Please try and visit some of those gardens during the season and remember to take your camera.

So that is all for now, except to remind you all to keep Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August free. Mark up your diaries now for it is sure to be the highlight of the year. The annual picnic at Ran and Katie Lydell's.

Several short talks, desserts, auction and quizzes. What a fine time we will have.

See you there. Take care  
**Mike**

### Photo Competition

Remember to take photographs this summer as you walk your yard, visit other gardens and attend flower shows, parks, meetings and conventions.

There will be an informal photographic competition at the November meeting. Please bring along your digital images, your color prints and your slides.

There are no categories but there will be prizes. Lots of prizes. We are not looking for professionally produced images so please don't worry too much about the reproduction of your digital pictures. Any form of print will do.

Please take your camera along when visiting other folks' gardens and take pictures of what you see. Bring your pictures to the November meeting and show everyone what you saw or what you have in your garden. We will have a slide show, a gallery exhibition and maybe a DVD presentation.

We might be looking for the best garden picture, maybe the best plant picture, perhaps the funniest or even a personality picture. One of the winners might be a close-up, but it could be a landscape. It might even be in focus. There will be lots of winning entries.

The pictures will be judged by the American Hosta Society Vice President Publications and, naturally, his decisions will be final.

So, remember to take pictures this summer.





# Judges' Clinic

If you have never attended a Judges' Clinic now might be the time to sign up for one. It has been some while since the WNYHS held a judges' clinic and our Master Judge, Carolyn Schaffner, thinks it is high time we put that right.

## There will be a Hosta Judges Clinic on

Saturday, September 1st  
at 10.30 am  
at  
8399 Zimmerman Road,  
Hamburg, NY 14075

immediately before our annual Presidents' Cross Pollination lunch.

These clinics are designed to show those attending the finer points of presenting cut leaves at hosta shows, explain how the judging and pointing system works, give tips and pointers as to what makes a leaf a blue ribbon winner and give up to the minute advice and information about hosta shows in general. Attendees will get to understand the way that the entries are divided into classes and divisions and how the leaves are assessed once they are presented to the judges.

Attending a judges' clinic will teach you all how to better appreciate your hostas even if you never intend to be a judge at a hosta show. It is a really good way to better understand the many differences between the various species and cultivars that we grow and to realize the wonderful diversity of the genus.

***If you are interested in attending the Judges' Clinic or would like further information please contact Carolyn at***



# The Plant Fairy



My story starts way back in March, when I had a free evening and the Plants Delight catalog. Suddenly I saw it.... The plant of my dreams - an arisaema called BLACK JACK. But I couldn't just order one plant, so a careful perusal of the catalog found 3 hostas I couldn't live without either. The order was placed and a delivery requested for early May. Visions of hosta heaven danced in my head.

Fast forward to May. I receive an e-mail notice that my plants are on their way via Fed Ex. I was twitching with excitement. Then I had the notice that they were delivered! Halleluiah.

But when we finally got home, no parcel could be found. We looked everywhere on our property and then walked across the drive to our neighbor's house. Dan, our only neighbor, was on a one-month vacation in Georgia. He had left just a few days before. We looked all around his house too.... No parcel.

We asked the construction crew that was working on pouring a foundation for a new garage if they had seen a Fed Ex truck. They had not.

The next day I called Fed Ex and they put me in touch with the driver. He described our driveway.... And said that he didn't know which of the two houses to leave it at—so rather than asking, he freelanced and left it at Dan's. We figure that somebody must be watching Dan's house and scooped up the parcel. It's gone.

We hung a note on Dan's door but after two days and no parcel, I called Fed Ex back and they told me I had to call Plants Delight. I did. They were wonderful and said they would reship.

They reshipped. I got the shipping notice ..... Then the delivery notice. I had to work on the East Aurora house, but I anticipated a potting ordeal when I finally got home. There were also some hostas from Naylor Creek that I had not gotten to and left on the deck.

I got home. No parcel. I walked all around. Nothing. I walked over to Dan's.... The note is still on the door, no parcel. I walked back and suddenly realized that not only was there no *new* box there.... But the partial box from Naylor Creek was gone! A little detective work discovered all the plants safely potted!!!! I was astonished. The Plants Delight and the Naylor Creek plants were all in pots.

I e-mailed Mike in London. He said he was VERY impressed with Fed Ex. He said he hoped that if we ordered paint, they would take care of the garage!  
Kathy

(PS—my Plant Fairy is neighbor Barb Sylvester who is helping with watering while Mike is away. ... we love living in Boston!)

## Building an Anti-Vole Device

By John Smead

**T**he number of creatures that seek to ravage a garden amazes me. When I stop to think about it, there are so many herbaceous-plant-ingesting organisms that I wonder, at times, if it's worth trying to maintain a garden. Sometimes it's so exasperating.

*Picture it. You're taking a walk through your garden on a sunny, fresh, spring morning with a cup of coffee in hand. Suddenly, your peaceful trek ends in disgust because you've discovered that an uninvited guest has helped themselves to your backyard pantry of hosta leaves.*

**Aaargh!**

If it's not supra-soil mammals and mollusks such as deer, rabbits, and slugs, it's stealthy underground rodents and insectivores such as chipmunks, mice, voles, and moles. What a lineup. Did you ever notice that they seem to be able to zero in on your most prized plants?

After a long, hard winter it's a blessing to see your hosta finally waking up and poking their noses out from under their soil blanket.

Unfortunately, on a few occasions, in my garden, a waking hosta stops growing. The horns start to grow, but suspiciously stop expanding. Upon closer inspection and a slight pull on the shoots, the whole crown easily dislodges and I'm left with a spiky hosta pancake. The roots and some of the crown material have been gnawed away. Obviously, my hosta has been someone's extended winter meal.

All is not lost though. Hosta never cease to amaze me with their ability to survive. By placing the de-rooted crowns in a moist pot of soil-less potting medium and keeping them in a well lighted spot in the house, they, every time, have re-established themselves and have eventually returned to my garden.

Of course, it would be better to try and stop this subterranean soiree from occurring in the first place. Of late, I'm very interested in trying to stop this from happening. I've started to collect more hosta varieties and want to protect them, especially the more expensive ones, as much as possible.

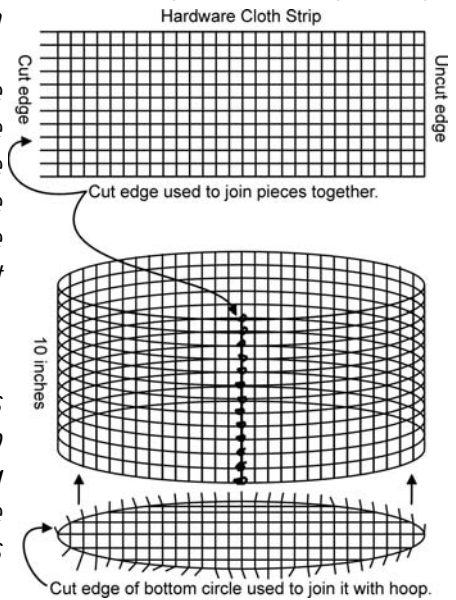
One deterrent that I've tried is a "hosta-root cage". Basically, it's a large basket made out of hardware cloth.

Hardware cloth can usually be found at hardware and home improvement stores. It comes in different lengths, widths, and square-opening sizes. I use the hardware cloth that has ½" square openings.

It's fairly easy to make a basket. You'll need some easy to use wire cutters, needle-nose pliers and leather gloves. So you can cut multiple wires at a time, try using wire cutters that act like a scissors. The needle-nose pliers will be used to join the cut pieces together. *The cut wire of the hardware cloth can be very sharp so wear leather gloves.*

Cut a strip of hardware cloth about 10" wide in a length that will make a hoop with a diameter about 1 and ½ times that of the hosta root ball. I don't think you need to make it any larger since the hosta roots will eventually grow beyond the cage. You may have to join a couple strips to obtain a needed diameter. To join the pieces together, the needle-nosed pliers are used to twist the cut-edge wires around the uncut edge.

*Next, you have to make a bottom for the hoop. Flatten a section of the hardware cloth and place the hoop on top and, using a permanent marker, trace out a circle the diameter of the hoop. You'll use the cut edges of the circle to join it to the hoop. It doesn't have to be perfect.*



*Once the basket is made, you need to excavate a hole big enough to sink the basket so its rim is at ground level.*

*This takes some work. I put the excavated soil in a wheelbarrow.*

Before I put the soil back in the sunken basket, I mix it with compost, fertilizer, and other amendments.

You're now ready to plant your hosta in its new protected home.

## 2007 Calendar

Here's the calendar for marking those important dates...but remember it's a living thing, still evolving....

**June 9th - Spring Plant Sales: Clarence and Alden Farmers Markets**

**June 10th—Clean Up Sale: Holland**

June 21-23 – **American Hosta Society Convention** – Indianapolis, IN

**June 30-July 1—Lewiston Garden Fest**

**August 19 - Picnic Meeting, Dunkirk, NY -** dessert/speaker stations... auction

**August 25 – Annual Sale with Daylily Society** Harvey D. Morin VFW – Center Rd., W. Seneca

**September 1 - Presidents' Potluck - Boston, NY -** Socialize with your Hosta & Daylily brethren

**September 22 – Fall Hosta Forum,** Cambridge Springs, PA – Theme: **The Seven Samauri:** Jon Soucek, Keynote Speaker. Also: Steve & Sara Zolock, Hostas in the Landscape; John Coble/Bob Bauer, Japanese Iris; Al Pfeiffer, Japanese Maples—plus vendors, auction and Friday night dinner/speaker

**November 18– Fall Meeting**  
Speaker: Doug Beilstein



## The Big Dig

A dozen or more happy and knowledgeable folk came to help Kathy and Mike dig up their East Aurora garden a few Sundays ago. It was a wonderful turn out and so much was accomplished.

The weather could not have been more perfect. After heavy rain a few days previously the day dawned clear and bright. By mid morning the sun was warm and everybody began enjoying themselves. Digging conditions could not have been better. Whilst the soil below the surface was still very damp and yielding to a spade the surface was dry and easy to walk on. The damp soil was easy to break from the plants but no so damp that there was mud everywhere

We soon set-up an efficient production line. Kathy decided what was to be dug. Many of the plants had already been marked with little flags although we all knew that all the hostas, all the irises and of course all the daylilies had to be dug. Strong men with stout hearts dug the big clumps and manhandled them into wheel barrows.

Others began to hack off bits of the crowns to reduce them to a size that could be dropped into an enormous pot. Some of these pots were so big and heavy that they could barely be lifted into the back of the truck.

Those bits that were cut from the larger crowns were for the club plant sales so another group of tireless workers cut them into smaller crowns with two or three eyes and potted them ready for sale. Daylilies, hostas and irises were potted with speedy abandon. At the end of the production line these pots were carefully labeled and put to one side.

We broke for donuts and coffee but still plants by the dozen were landing in the driveway. Kathy was now working in the front garden where half of her iris collection and many small companion plants and bulbs were planted out. Now the workers had plants arriving from both directions and soon we had a call a temporary halt to digging so that the production line could catch up and we could try and clean up the driveway.

Time for beers and sodas. Time for a rest? Oh no, once a gardener starts working it seems they never know when to stop. Some of our helpers had to leave and get on with their own chores but others arrived to replace them. The digging never seemed to stop. Most of the front garden was done and the right had side of the rear yard had been dug of the big daylily

### WE NEED YOU!

If you can't help, then please stop to shop...  
and tell your friends  
Hostas and Daylilies galore!

#### Saturday, June 9th

- 8-1 Clarence Farmer's Market—Main Street,  
Clarence (talks by both Mike Shadrack for  
hosta and Pam Hoffman for daylily)
- 8-1 Alden Farmer's Market—Broadway, Alden  
(former Ames Plaza)

#### Sunday, June 10th

- 8-1 Holland Farmer's Market—N. Main Street,  
near Fire Hall

## Western New York Hosta Society

Mike Shadrack, President  
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East Aurora, NY 14052  
h8staman@aol.com

We're on the web

Www.

Wnyhostasociety.com

Next event

# Spring Sales!!!!

and hosta clumps.

It was time to break for lunch. This was served in the none too salubrious surroundings of our home. The house was undergoing a complete paint job prior to its sale and most of the furniture had already been moved out or upstairs. There was room to sit but little else. Cold cuts, salads and chips washed down with sodas and beers seemed to be enough and soon we were at it again.

The first truck and a van laden with potted plants left for Boston while the production line got back into full swing. The second shift of daylily experts arrived so now the attention turned to daylilies and soon these were being split and potted. Half of the garage floor was now covered with potted plants ready to be stored in the hoop house while awaiting the sales.

OK so not all of the plants in the garden were labeled. OK so not all the labels of the plants that were labeled stayed with the plants as they moved along our line. There were several orphans and a pile of odd plant labels left over but the sheer size of the achievement was amazing. There were dug and potted plants everywhere. The truck returned and was again

quickly reloaded.

Spare plants were put in other cars for their journey to Boston. Still more just lined to driveway to be moved another day.

By 4pm most folks were too tired to carry on and we called it a day. Kathy and Mike were overwhelmed by the amount of work that had been achieved.

The fact that so many of our friends came to help us on what proved to be the first good day of spring weather when they could and should have been working in their own yards is an abiding memory. *Thank you.*

The **good news** is that all the sale plants have been safely removed to the hoop house. If anyone is passing that way please stop by and water them.

The **really good** might just have



**news** is that we to it again.