

HOSTA WEEKEND IN THE MOUNTAINS

Rux Gardens in Waynesville, NC, with help from Green Hill Farm and the North Carolina Hosta Society, will host a "Hosta Weekend in the Mountains" June 21 and 22 in the Waynesville-Asheville area. It will feature plant sales, including hostas, all day Saturday at Rux Gardens with lectures by Bob Solberg and Trish and Greg Rux Saturday afternoon. A free hotdog lunch with all the fixin's will be served.

Stay overnight and visit the open local gardens as well as many of the public gardens and sights in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the immediate area you will find the Asheville Arboretum, NC Botanical Gardens, Biltmore House and Gardens, Lake Junaluska Rose Walk and the Corneille Bryan Native Garden, Great Smoky National Park, Blue Ridge Parkway (an entrance is 2 miles from the nursery) and the Haywood Community College Arboretum. There is no registration fee. Lunch Saturday is free! You can plan your stay from the list of area hotels and Bed and Breakfasts that we can provide for you. We will include a registration form in the next Dixie Doin's in April.

Mark your calendars now for the weekend of June 21 and 22, then come enjoy the hostas, gardens and fellowship in the cool mountain air.

NEXT EDITION

We plan to publish another edition of Dixie Doin's in early April 2008. It will contain all the information and registration materials for the Dixie meeting in Nashville on May 30 and 31. Anyone wanting to share information with the Dixie membership should send it to Dixie Director Mike Chambers. E-mail: mschambers@fedex.com.

Dixie Doin's Page 4



Dixie Regional Hosta Society
Mike Chambers, Director
3596 Gailyn Drive
Memphis, TN 38135

See you in Nashville on May 30-31, 2008 for the next Dixie Regional

HOSTA OF THE YEAR

Most of you know that *Hosta* 'Blue Mouse Ears' has been selected by the American Hosta Growers Association as the Hosta of the Year for 2008. They have also announced that *Hosta* 'Earth Angel' has been proclaimed the 2009 selection.

NEW AHS OFFICERS

Congratulations to Chuck Zdeb and Mike Chambers for stepping forward to be elected to key roles on the AHS Executive Board during this year's annual convention. Chuck is the new Vice President for Awards and Honors and Mike is the new Vice President for Member Services. Dixie continues to be well represented on the AHS Board. Many thanks go out to Harold McDonnell for his long service as VP for Judging and Exhibitions and to Larry Tucker for serving as VP for Publications. Both Harold and Larry completed their terms and were replaced at this year's AHS convention in Indianapolis.

The AHS and Dixie is also indebted to Claudia Walker's long service working in the judging world. She is the go-to person for teaching clinics for judges, serving as a judge at the national convention hosta show and especially helping us in Dixie find judges for our shows. She and Harold have given many hours to development of the hosta show and judging project. Thanks, Claudia, and good luck, Chuck and Mike.



DRHS-Dixie Regional Hosta Society Newsletter November 2007

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Where have all the hostas gone? Well in most of the southern hosta world we have had very high summer temperatures and no rain and many of my hostas have gone dormant or the leaves are just burned off. I am sure you have the same in your garden. I am so happy to see fall weather. Try not to worry because most of the hostas will come back in the spring. After 10 years of hosta growing, the voles finally found me this past June. I came home from a business trip and found several large hostas just lying on their side. I picked them up to find . . . you guessed it . . . no roots. I potted them up and expect they will come back, but probably not as large. I tried rat poison with no luck. Then I put out mousetraps baited with peanut butter and, as of October, I have eliminated 22 voles and none have been spotted in three weeks. It is always something, but we hostaholics keep coming back for more punishment.

It was great to see so many Dixie folks at the American Hosta Society convention in Indianapolis last June. We had a wonderful time, saw some unbelievable gardens and even the rain did not slow us down much. Hope to see more Dixie folks at the next convention, which is much closer in St Louis.

I want to extend a hearty thank you to the Alabama Hosta Society for hosting the 2007 meeting in Birmingham. Norma Chandler, Marilyn Isaming, Audrey Menniefield and all the others who worked so very hard to pull it all together gave us a wonderful weekend at a wonderful price. Thanks also to the Birmingham Botanical Gardens for providing their wonderful facilities at no cost. The Hosta Walk was recently redesigned and was really nice with over 100 cultivars. It shows promise for a future AHS Display Garden. See Chuck Zdeb's article on the meeting.

-Mike Chambers

GEORGIA WINS AHS NEWSLETTER AWARD

The Georgia Hosta Society has long had one of the best newsletters in the hosta world. The club was recognized at the 2007 AHS Convention in Indianapolis for **AHS Best Newsletter Award 2007** for their October 2006 issue. Their newsletter is always full of great information and lots of color photographs of hostas and members in action. GHS publishes four newsletters a year and has done so for the past 24 years. The *Georgia Hosta Notes* is now published in full color and is filled with wonderful photos of hostas and other plants. It is primarily distributed by e-mail, but some are still mailed to members without computers.

DIXIE DOIN'S

IT'S AN ANNIVERSARY PARTY IN NASHVILLE!!!

Just a few weeks after the Dixie Board met in Birmingham and accepted an offer to have the next meeting in Atlanta, the Middle Tennessee Hosta Society asked if they could host the meeting. Georgia Hosta Society said OK. So we are set for the next meeting in Nashville on May 30 and 31, 2008. Details and registration information will be in the next newsletter in April, but here is a preview.

The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn in Brentwood. Friday afternoon will find our always fun and exciting Friday night auction and a Q&A forum and entry of leaves for the Hosta Show. Saturday morning will be filled with garden tours, and the afternoon will be vendor sales, guest speaker seminars and visiting the Hosta Show. Saturday evening, we will have dinner and listen to Bob Solberg speak on "The Past Ten Years of Hosta Growing." His subject is perfect since the Middle Tennessee, East Tennessee and Mid-South Hosta Societies will be celebrating their 10th anniversary in 2008. Each registrant will also receive a new hosta named *Hosta* 'Tennessee Waltz'.

This is going to be a fun party, so put May 30 and 31 on your calendars now.

DIXIE SUPPORTS HOSTA VIRUS X RESEARCH

The AHS has undertaken a two-year research project with Dr. Ben Lockhart at the University of Minnesota to study the causes, effects, transmittal and possible solutions to Hosta Virus X (HVX). Dr. Lockhart has long been recognized as the leader in research on hosta and other plant problems and has worked on other projects, such as nematodes, for the AHS and other plant organizations. The project will cost a total of \$40,000. The AHS requested donations to help make the first half of the payment when the project started. That first payment has been made. We are proud to tell you that Dixie has been a significant contributor to the research fund. With the Dixie board approving a \$1,000 up-front donation and future pledge and several of our local societies and private individual contributions, the Dixie family has contributed and pledged more than \$5,400. We will pass on the results of the research as it becomes available. Anyone wanting to contribute can contact Mike Chambers, who will put you in touch with the AHS project chairman.

Congratulations to Georgia Hosta Society editor George Schmid and his team of Sandra and Kelly Bussell, Lola Eddy, and Ann Bentsen for this wonderful honor.

SWEET HOSTA ALABAMA - DIXIE REGION 2007 MEETING RECAP

(by Chuck Zdeb)

If you missed the Dixie Regional meeting, June 1 and 2 in Birmingham you missed a great time!

The faint smell of burning south Georgia swamp was in the air as we arrived Friday afternoon for the beginning of the 2007 meeting. After signing in and grabbing a quick snack (those Alabama folks know how to feed you), I headed off to the Judges Clinic. Judges training chair Claudia Walker conducted Judges Clinic II for nine eager students. At 4:00 Dixie Board Meeting was held. It was decided that Atlanta would host next year's regional meeting with details to be settled later. Later Nashville called in an offer to host the meeting, so Atlanta said OK. The next Dixie meeting will be in Nashville on May 30 and 31, 2008.

Dinner was at 6:00 followed by a plant/garden stuff auction. Auctioneers Mike Chambers and Bob Solberg raised slightly more than \$1,800 for the region and Alabama Hosta Society to share.

Saturday morning found everyone bright and ready for a day's worth of classes. I am going to try to summarize what each of the speakers talked about. My apologies in advance if I missed anything. Mike Chambers welcomed everyone as the Dixie director and also gave a \$500 donation to the Birmingham Botanic Gardens on behalf of Dixie. The BBG did not charge us anything for using their facilities this weekend. After the introductory remarks our keynote speaker W. George Schmid gave his presentation on "Hosta Flowers."

George opened his talk with some slides of hosta flowers, which can help identify the species of hosta. In addition, tube length and color help identify the genus. Some hosta have branched flower scapes such as *H. tibae*. Hosta developed their flower scapes according to their environment. Tall scapes developed on hosta in competition with tall grasses. These hostas have greater distance between the flowers. Some hosta scapes lay close to the ground, so that low-flying or crawling insects could do the pollinating job.

Staging of hosta is very important. White flowers show up better against a background than colored flowers. Some of George's favorite flowers include those on *H. nakaimo*, *H. 'Rocky Road'* and *H. takahashi* (two-color flowers). *Hosta yingerii* is the only one with flowers that grow around the flower stalk. All others grow flowers on only one side of the flower stalk.

George was followed by Dr. Daniel D. Jones. His specialty is ferns. Alabama has 86 native ferns, part of the 10,000 to 12,000 fern species available worldwide. Ferns date back over 200 million years. He said that red light helps fern spores germinate. Some of his favorite ferns are Uulong Island Fern, East Indian Holly Fern, Autumn Fern, and luctulosum (only 4-

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of the latest bank statement, DRHS account balance stands at \$9,212.45. The board approved the donation of \$1,000 to the AHS Hosta Virus X research project with the pledge for another donation at the completion of the project. We also gave a \$500 donation to the Birmingham Botanical Garden (BBG) for hosting the Dixie meeting. The BBG did not charge us for the use of the facilities, which is always a major expenditure for our meetings. The Dixie account received income of \$2,290.29 from profits of the Dixie meeting in Birmingham. This was from vendor sales, the auction and some close budget work by the Alabama Hosta Society. As host society, Alabama also received half the profits in the same amount.

5 inches tall). Among the drought-tolerant ferns are the Marginal Wood Fern and Champion's Wood Fern.

Our next speaker was Jan Midgley, owner of Wildflower Nursery and author of several books on native plants and native plant propagation. She propagates plants using seeds collected from the wild. She divides plant seeds into two categories. *Wet seeds* have an aril or a fleshy covering or just do not tolerate drying out. An *aril* is an appendage on a seed that makes it attractive to ants. The ants pick up the seed, take it back to their nest, eat the aril and then throw away the seed, thus spreading the seeds around. *Wet seeds* need to be planted right away or stored in a plastic bag with peat moss or sand and a small amount of water. *Dry seeds* can be stored for a long period of time in paper envelopes in the refrigerator.

Our last speaker before lunch was William Cureton, a.k.a. "Captain Compost." He spoke at length about the benefits of compost and compost teas. He has web site at www.captaincompostalabama.com.

After lunch, our first speaker was Susan Webb, a landscape designer. She spoke about the woodland garden and landscaping with ferns, hosta and wildflowers. She packed a lot of design information into her talk. The key to using ferns, hosta and wildflowers is to plant them based on their natural habitats, planting from sunlight to shade. A woodland garden is about space. The woodland garden extends vertically to the deciduous canopy above. Plant carefully around pine trees. They can be real consumers of light and water. Establish perimeters for the area you wish to develop. A border makes a room; rooms need to be connected with a path. The path or steps should be smooth and wide and not straight. They should lead to a focal point or destination, and then lead on to the next focal point. In a real woodland garden, ephemerals (plants that come and go) should be about two-thirds of the plant material.

Our last speaker was Bob Solberg, owner of Green Hill Farm, who spoke about growing hosta in pots. The primary reasons to grow hosta in pots is to defeat tree roots and to create more garden space by using decks, patios, driveways and porches, where you could not normally plant hosta. Planting in pots is easier than in the ground. Pots also are easily moved and they create a perfect growing environment to help defeat pests. The drawbacks are the need for additional water, the cost of pots and overwintering plants.

Potting mix can be mixed according to the amount of work you want to put into watering. Larger particles allow water to drain through. More peat moss or compost holds water. For fertilizer, he recommended Miracle Gro tomato food or a slow-release granular.

What kinds of hosta should you grow in pots? Hosta that are difficult to grow under normal growing conditions, baby hosta that need to grow before they can be put in the garden, specimen clumps, mixed pots and miniature hosta are all good candidates for growing in containers.

After the last speaker, the winners of the photo contest were announced. Delona Shockey and Chuck Zdeb won for their entries. Attendees were then free to shop the vendors and take a guided tour of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and their new "Hosta Walk." Thanks to the Alabama Hosta Society for a great weekend of hosta fun.

MARY CHASTAIN RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

Our own Mary Chastain of Ooltewah, TN, has been honored for her years of hosta development, which has resulted in the 137 registered hosta cultivars currently in the Lakeside family of hostas. She received the prestigious AHS Eunice Fisher Distinguished Hybridizer Merit Award at the 2007 AHS Convention. Mary was not able to attend this year's convention but was informed of the award in advance. She sent a wonderful letter of acknowledgement, which Claudia Walker read to the group of over 400 attendees.

Mary's comments were entitled "*I Am Glad I Made the Journey*." She thanked her husband Roy for his support and continual patience. She spoke of her experience in registering her first hosta in 1998, *H. 'Lakeside Symphony'*. Since then, she has developed scores of Lakeside hostas, which continue to grow in number and popularity. As recipient of the award, Mary was asked to pick her favorite hosta. "How can you pick a favorite child?" she said. Then, with some thought, she had the answer. The plant that she worked with for 15 years was her favorite: *H. 'Lakeside Cupcake'*. The beautiful plaque presented to Mary reads: "**Presented to Mary Chastain in recognition of your outstanding accomplishments in the development of cultivars of the genus Hosta. The recipient honors H. 'Lakeside Cupcake' as this year's Eunice Fisher Distinguished Hybridizer Merit Hosta.**"

DIXIE REGION 3 MEMBERSHIP AND LOCAL SOCIETIES

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of the American Hosta Society (AHS) and live in one of the 12 states in the Dixie region or you belong to one of our 13 local hosta societies. Our local societies include:

Alabama Hosta Society

Norma Chandler
205 Cathy Lane
Birmingham, AL 35215
(205) 854-1180
E-mail: nfchandler@earthlink.net

Charlotte Hosta Society

Willie Royal
215 Anthony Circle
Charlotte, NC 28211
(704) 366-7081
E-mail: Royal2227@aol.com

Chattanooga Hosta Society

Steve Atwood
6406 Fox Den Lane
Hixson, TN 37343
(423) 847-0768
E-mail: atwood6406@comcast.net
Website: <http://chattanoogahosta.org>

East Tennessee Hosta Society

Howard Luttrell
120 Shaw Ferry Lane
Lenoir City, TN 37770
(865) 988-3762
Website: www.korrnet.org/etnhosta

Georgia Hosta Society

Claudia Walker
10525 Timberstone Road
Alpharetta, GA 30022
(770) 442-3257
Website: www.gahosta.org

Hosta Connection

Fran Danner
5140 S. New Haven Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74135
(918) 712-2024
E-mail: fdanner@sbcglobal.net

Hosta Society of North Alabama

Dan Watt
3109 Village Creek Road, SE
Decatur, AL 35603
(256) 355-4617
E-mail: dbwatt@charter.net

MEETING YOU IN ST LOUIS

The 2008 AHS National Convention which will be held in St Louis, Missouri, on June 11-14, 2008. After optional events Wednesday, the convention includes three days of garden tours, visits to retail nurseries, lots of hosta vendors, guest speakers, and wonderful food at two nightly banquets and a garden buffet. Hundreds of hosta leaves will be on display at the Hosta Show. This location is much closer for the Dixie family and we hope many from the region will attend.

Details will be available later on the AHS website (www.hosta.org) or you can find the basic information now online at www.stlouishosta.org, which is the St. Louis Hosta Society website. Mark your calendar now.