



Hosta Happenings

East Tennessee Hosta Society

February 2021

Dixie Region Convention Postponed Until Spring 2022

The directors and members of the planning committee met by Zoom to discuss the 2021 year and hosting of the Dixie Region Convention. In light of the national convention going virtual and the current status of the pandemic, vaccination and CDC guidelines, all agreed that hosting the convention this spring should be postponed. So remove it from your June 2021 calendar and plan on participating in 2022. The final dates have not been selected.

Directors also decided to proceed with a Zoom meeting of the membership on Sunday, February 28 at 2:00 P.M. complete with a presentation. Mary Albrecht will be sending meeting information along with a pdf file that explains how to log into the meeting on your computer or tablet. If you have a smart phone, you can also join the meeting. Keep an eye out for the email with more information.



We hope to be able to schedule a Zoom meeting in March and then perhaps outdoor meetings again in April. We will ask all to follow COVID protocols including social distance and masks until the CDC provides

other guidance. Know that we can not use UT facilities at the present time. As soon as we can, we will see about scheduling meetings on campus. One advantage to Zoom, is we should be able to have some speakers who otherwise might not be willing to travel to Knoxville to present on a Sunday afternoon.

We will also keep our Facebook page and website updated as we schedule events. Stay tuned!

2021 Officers

- President Fred Anderson
- Vice President Bob Goeltz
- Treasurer Gina Buffum
- Secretary Wanda Taylor
- Communications Mary Albrecht
- Contact ETHS at easttenhostasociety@gmail.com
- <http://www.easttnhostasociety.net/>

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ETHS Calendar

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we currently do not have any events planned. As things change, we will update the calendar. You can also stay abreast of happenings by checking the Calendar page on our website, <http://www.easttnhostasociety.net/>.

2021 Hosta of the Year

Rainbow's End



Hosta 'Rainbow's End' is glossy, super variegated foliage making it a very unique selection. The thick, bright yellow leaves have very interesting dark green veining. The different variation of veining on each leaf make 'Rainbow's

End' truly something special. As the summer progresses, the center brightens to a creamy white. This hosta is medium sized with the foliage reaching 11 inches and red scapes reaching 16 inches with lavender flowers in late summer. Hostas add great color and brightness to the dark areas of your shade to part shade locations. Hostas are an easy to grow perennial and are great used as border plants, unique specimens, and in woodland gardens.

Each year the American Hosta Growers Association selects "the best of the best", and honors one variety as **Hosta of the Year**.

Credits:

From <https://www.northernillinoisshostasociety.org/hosta-of-the-year.html>

Photo from <https://www.waltersgardens.com/variety.php?ID=HSREN>

Winter Whiplash: Some Gardening Impacts and How to Soften Them

By Dr. C Elizabeth Hamilton; tree doctor and owner of Better Nature Plant Health Care, LLC

Hydrologists, climatologists, and biogeochemists report in a recent Scientific American article on the impacts of "Winter-Whiplash." This is a new phenomenon resulting from worsening Climate Crisis impacts to ecosystems at the local and global levels. Though much remains unknown about what the future holds, there are ways to help protect your gardens from winter-whiplash.

What is winter-whiplash? It is the swing back and forth between very low and relatively high winter temperatures. This winter we had days in the low 60s followed by 30s with lows at night in the 20s (all Fahrenheit). In more temperate climates (e.g., Southwestern US) the extremes between drought and rainfall deluge happening within the winter season are increasing plant stress and the numbers of plants lost to disease.

Here are a few remediation approaches to protect your garden plants. Hopefully you find these useful, can add to them, and as a collective we can help each other retain the beauty, diversity, and ecosystem services of our yards and gardens.

If **bulbs** are attempting to come up due to a comparatively warm winter, full protection to ensure healthy plants and blossoms in the Spring may not be possible. But why not try. As always, make sure you've a selection of hardiness types in the bulb varieties you are planting to increase the probability of winter-weirdness survival. With **perennials**, consider including those from a zone farther south than the one you've been gardening in for the past few decades. We are moving south as the climate crisis continues; so, to speak. What was a zone 7 is more similar to a zone 8, for example. Perennials adapted a zone south maybe be better equipped to endure extreme cold snaps in an otherwise, warmer-than-average winter. (*Editor's Note:* Go to <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/Default.aspx> and plug in your Zip Code to determine your hardiness zone.)

For non-dormant plants (and dormant trees), water when the ground is not frozen and outside temps are above freezing. How often to water? There are several ways to determine the answer to this. You could look up precipitation data for your area from the 60s and 70s, install a rain gauge and use that to determine how much watering is needed. I recommend for trees, greater than 14 days without a good rain or snow fall, water them for 5 to 10 min (depending on the size of your tree and percentage of clay in of your soils). Or approach number 3, your tree and shrubs soils should dry-out down to a 3-inch depth before watering. Have a stick or pencil or thumb press you can insert in the ground for moisture assessment. Mark it at a depth of 3 inches for ease of repeated use.

Mulch with green stuff! Rather than mulching with shredded bark or pine (or just shredded bark or pine) incorporate some green compost. This could be the green cuttings from the previous summer. If you grow borage or comfrey, for example, cut up the plant or just lay them down on top of the soil where you're expecting next year's bulbs and annuals. I used the tops of my cardamom and Hosta plants as the first thick layer. The second layer being a thinner layer of pine needle mulch OR I topped that first layer with branchlets from hemlock and magnolia pruning. Why green mulch? Because the Carbon:Nitrogen ratio of these green mulches are more amenable to microbial activity throughout the winter that will do several great things.

1. Increased microbial activity in atypical warmer winter-soils will help modulate soil temps from winter-whiplash.
2. Increased winter soil microbial activity can lead to increase microbial diversity and a better community to attack soil pathogens.
3. Both 1 and 2 lead to a better nutrient and plant-root-health environment making plants that are more resilient to abiotic and biological stressors.

A way to increase the stability of the environment against winter-whiplash is to bring those precious bulbs and annuals inside for the winter. Growing up in the desert, we had to bring our iris and gladiolus bulbs in for refrigeration every winter. This is an option for avoiding early emergence and the killing of plants by a late (or several late) hard frost. Gardening Knowhow website has a great tutorial for this <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/bgen/preparing-bulbs-for-winter->

[how-to-store-bulbs-for-winter.htm](https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/bgen/preparing-bulbs-for-winter-how-to-store-bulbs-for-winter.htm).

Editor's Note: Most iris are winter hardy in Tennessee gardens; the exception is Louisiana Iris (*Iris* series *Hexagonae* composed of five species of iris found in the southeastern US). Gladiolus tends not to be winter hardy in Tennessee, especially at the higher elevations and would need to be dug in the fall and overwintered. See these extension publications on handling bulbs:

Flowering Bulbs for Tennessee Gardens (University of Tennessee Extension): <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/pb1610.pdf>

Flowering Bulbs for Georgia Gardens (University of Georgia Extension): <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B918&title=Flowering%20Bulbs%20for%20Georgia%20Gardens>

Hints for Fall-Planted Spring and Early Summer Flowering Bulbs (North Carolina State Extension): <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/hints-for-fall-planted-spring-and-early-summer-flowering-bulbs>

From Members' Gardens: Looking forward to Spring

From Nancy Robinson's garden.



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From Members' Gardens

(continued)

These three are from Faye Beck's garden



And, these from Mary Albrecht's garden (hellebores are from March 2020)

