



Hosta Happenings

East Tennessee Hosta Society

April 2019

President's Message

For those unable to attend the last meeting—you missed a really good presentation by Elin Johnson that was very entertaining, inspirational & educational. Elin's photos really supported her message about container & companion plants for Hostas. I am working with Elin to share this presentation with members.

Brian White generously donated a Hypertufa container potted up with three different Sedums as a lucky door prize. Fran Scheidt was the winner and very happy to take this prize home.

Winter is gone and Spring is in full swing. It seems to spring onto you quite quickly with so many tasks yet to do to prepare for the season. The wet winter has certainly put me behind schedule but it doesn't stop the Hostas from popping up—ready or not.

This weekend kicks off our garden tour part of our program. Two large outstanding gardens in one afternoon. It is more fun if you do it with friends so get a carpool together and make a social afternoon of it. I have a few vacancies in my vehicle if anybody would like to ride along with me.

Hope to see you all on Sunday.

Fred Anderson
2019 President



A Brian White creation that he had for sale at the last meeting called Remember Society. It is a cross between Remember Me & High Society.

April's Activity

This month's meeting is visiting the two featured gardens of the Dogwood Arts Festival. The gardens are open this weekend (13 & 14th April) but we have planned to visit these gardens on Sunday the 14th. The gardens are open from 12.00 to 5.00pm. The plan is to gather some friends and carpool to make a social occasion of it. You are on your own schedule. At the end of the afternoon after you have visited the two gardens, some of us are going to meet at Aubrey's restaurant on Papermill for a drink and a chat. Don't forget to wear comfortable shoes and respect their creation and stay on the paths. There is a suggested \$5 donation to each garden.



Plant Sales

April 13th - Talahi—8am to 12pm

April 13th—UT Arboretum—9am to 2pm

29th April—Blount Garden Clubs—6am to 12pm

4th May—North Hills—9am to 1pm

4th May—KBGA—8am to 2.00pm

5th May—ETHS Tailgate Hosta Sale—11am to 3pm

5th May—UT Plantapalooza

The first garden we are going to is our very own member **Dr. Alan Solomon's 'GATOP'**. There will be a map of the garden to guide you

You will find blooming: Viburnums, Azaleas, Wild Ginger, Solomon Seal, Celandine Poppy, Mayapple, Trillium, Lenten Rose, Hydrangeas, Rhododendron & Camellias.

Garden art includes: Life-sized Copper Frogs, stainless steel, bronze, and iron sculptures; blacksmith-designed and fabricated iron rails; numerous ponds & numerous stone walls (some of which are moss covered).

Make sure you do not miss the great variety of **Conifers** and **Hollies** and the **Wild Flowers**.

Although the **Hosta** plantings are not extensive, Alan does have some beautiful **pockets of Hostas**.

You must see the **"Restored Morrow"** quarry, the two mules pulling a wagon loaded with blocks of marble and driven by **Homer**, as well as **Mr. Ed**, the horse that is a memorial to all of Knoxville's deceased work horses buried at the lower part of the GATOP property are quite special. This takes garden art to a whole new level.

History



Atop a hillside overlooking the Tennessee River and the Great Smoky Mountains exists an estate of great historical and botanical interest named GATOP (God's Answer To Our Prayers) that in 2007 was

listed in the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Gardens. Only 3 miles from downtown Knoxville, this 20-acre, heavily wooded and extensively landscaped property, is located close to land originally settled by the City's forebears, James White and George McNutt. The road used by the stagecoach that carried passengers and their possessions from Norfolk to New Orleans passed through what are now terraces and pathways. Large marble outcroppings (some of which bear inscriptions attributed to prisoners housed in nearby jail) stand witness to the fact this and other surrounding sites were the source of marble used, not only locally, but also to clad many of our nation's capital public buildings. Indeed, evidence at GATOP of quarrying done by the Morrow, Tennessee, and other marble companies in the 19th and early 20th century is readily apparent. Located on the property is a small house ("Little Patches") built over 120 years ago that was the home of Fillmore Morgan, whose job was to collect and dispose in the "Holler" all the dead horses that were used to pull Knox-

ville fire engines and trollies, and his spouse who served as the mid-wife for women who lived in the surrounding area. The neighboring C.B. Howell Nursery- one of the oldest nurseries in the nation, founded in 1786, and now part of the Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum-had been the source of many of the trees, hollies, shrubs, perennials, and ground covers that grace the landscape. Several large millstones, used long ago to grind corn at the nearby Williams Creek, have been used as garden entryways.

GATOP was aptly named by Loyd and Virginia Pease who, before moving to Knoxville from Virginia in 1941, prayed that they would find a home that overlooked both water and mountains. The property was purchased from them by Dr. Alan Solomon in 1971 who, over 40 years has endeavored to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of this unusual property. With the help of devoted and skilled gardeners and craftsmen, and his own efforts as an amateur stone mason, much has been accomplished: Over 800 tons of limestone have been collected and used to build walls, walkways, steps, and other structures; waterfalls, ponds, and meandering streams have been constructed; extensive collections of native wildflowers and ferns have been planted; many unusual and rare plant specimens have been intermixed with large native trees including American elm, walnut, hackberry, persimmon, beech, mulberry, birch, pine, and cedar, many draped with berry vines, as well as various species of oaks, hickories, and magnolias. Of note, membership in the American Conifer Society has resulted in the planting of over 350 varieties of conifers, concentrated in four different locations. Also featured are a collection of hollies that includes the famous "James Swan" and "Emily Bruner" hybrids discovered in 1962 at the Magnolia Avenue site of the former Swan Bakery. These are complimented by prominently sited stainless steel, bronze, and stone sculptures, as well as a series of blacksmith-crafted iron rails.

The three homes located on the GATOP property include the aforementioned - 120-year-old cottage, the Stone House built in 1932 walled with native quarried marble, and the 1998-constructed main dwelling, designed in the "arts and crafts" style by Duane Grieve, who created a structure that is in harmony with the landscape and, in keeping with the name, overlooks the Tennessee River and Great Smoky Mountains.

GATOP has provided its dwellers and many visitors a place to enjoy and appreciate nature and, most importantly, an enduring source of serenity and spiritual renewal.

Hilltop Farm

The second garden we are going to visit on Sunday is called **Hilltop Farm** and is the home of master gardener Caesar Stair. This seven acre property sits on top of a hill and has fantastic views of the Tennessee River & the Smoky Mountains. Although this garden is more of a fall garden there is still plenty to see. This is more of a formal garden but there are some areas that are wild for the pollinators. One of his latest projects is an area for a vegetable garden that is surrounded by a picket fence.

Caesar will be giving personal tours of the garden about every 90 minutes so we will try and catch one of those. The last one is at 3.30pm. None of the plants are labelled but Caesar knows the Latin name of every plant in his garden.

The garden is near lakeshore park and I believe that is where we need to go to catch the shuttle bus to the garden. [REDACTED]



A field full of Jonquils



Virginia Bluebells with Kwanzan Cherry trees in the background



The Viburnums are so fragrant that you can smell them from 20' away



Weeping Cherry Tree

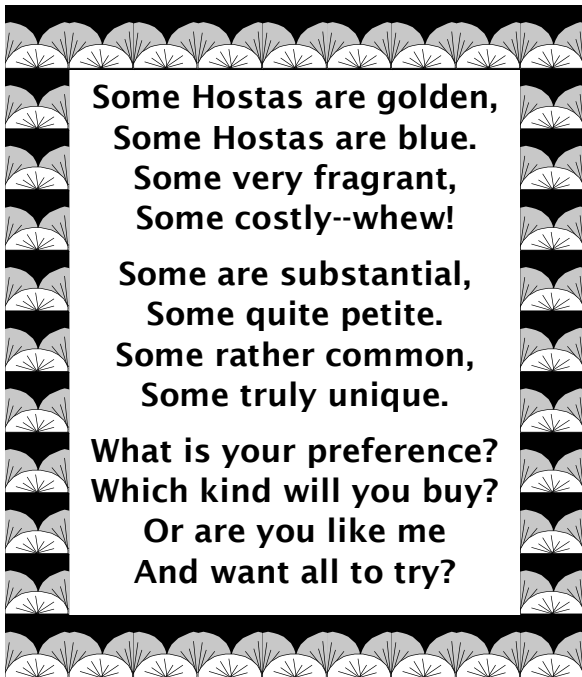


Kwanzan Cherry Trees

Elin's Column



Elin Johnson (Past President and Master Gardener extraordinaire) was the editor of this newsletter for nearly 20 years. Her writings are often found in gardening magazines.



The picture shown was made in my garden in downtown Sweetwater a long time ago. The Hosta in the center bowl is 'Lakeside Dragonfly' and the little wavy one in front is "Little Princess". That's a clump of European ginger on the other side. The container behind 'Dragon Fly' has another Lakeside Hosta, 'Ninita'. To the far left you can see half of a pot of 'Teaspoon'. Brian White brought us tiny starts of two varieties in the early days of the club and the members selected one to try out. 'Teaspoon' was the one I selected. It turned out to be a vigorous variety and one of my favorites. I kept it until I moved last year. I don't remember the names of the little ones in the bowl or the ones growing in the ground.

This area at the back of a perennial garden was the perfect place for Hostas. You can see in the picture the spots of sun that moved across during the day. And you can also see that, early on, I had started growing Hostas in containers. I really have wanted to try all of them over the years. I hope the pots I've kept will grow as well as the Hostas in that beautifully shaded yard!

But the most important result of my obsession are the many friends I have made in the Hosta Society. Hostas are known as the "friendship plant", and that's really true!

Member Profile

Each month we will profile a member to help us get to know other members better. Be ready for your turn.

This Month's Member(s) is Mike & Esther Johnson



In 1995 I took a UT non-credit course on shade gardening with Ruth Pardue. I acquired my first Hosta from that class: H. sieboldiana 'Elegans'. When the ETHS formed in 1998, Mike and I joined.

On annual trips to Minnesota we visited the Hosta Glade in the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to learn about various Hostas to add to our collection. At one time we had about 100 different cultivars, until the local deer herd discovered our smorgasbord. Among our favorite Hostas are Komodo Dragon, Millennium and June.

Both Mike and I are retired from the University of Tennessee faculty; Mike, from the Department of Psychology and I, from the Department of Modern Foreign Languages (Spanish). Both of us enjoy reading and travel. Mike has had a life-long interest in photography, and I have continued my late father's involvement in family history.

Few people know that one summer Mike and I took a ten-day backpacking trip with the Sierra Club in the White Cloud Mountains in Idaho.

Action Checklist

- Gather some friends and take part in the garden tours this weekend
- Encourage your gardening friends to become members