Hosta Happenings

East Tennessee Hosta Society August 2021

President's Message

Our August activity is usually a visit from Bob Solberg (Green Hills Farm & Regional President) where he provides an educational session and brings lots of unique Hostas along for sale. However, with the current situation, that won't be happening. This could be a possibility for next month. I was also planning on hosting a Happy Hour in the garden this month instead but with a resurgence of the pandemic, it is probably not a responsible thing to do with a large group of people.

I seem to be in a rain shadow as up till now I have had very little rain along with hot sunny days. It was so good to get some rain from Tropical Storm "Fred". It had my name on it so it probably didn't have a choice J. I am surprised on how good the Hostas are looking for August after the drought. However, I have been doing a lot of irrigation.

If any members still want to have a private happy hour or to visit the garden – touch base with me to arrange it. We love having visitors who are vaccinated.

The Covid situation now is not looking good but hopefully we will still be able to host the 2022 Dixie Region Hosta Convention. One thing we need to start planning for is gathering outstanding Hostas for the live auction. As I have been working in the Hosta gardens, I have been taking divisions and potting them up for the live auction. So far, I have five potted up and have them professionally labelled. I encourage you to do the same. I can do the labels for the plants if you like.

Take a bow Mary Albrecht who is our communications director. Now only does she do the newsletter and is the administrator for our website & Facebook Page – she just paid for two years hosting of our website out of her own pocket. We would be lost without her. We really appreciate you.

Please stay safe and I will see you in the garden.

Warm Regards,
Fred Anderson
President, 865-607-9240, braker01@att.net
http://www.easttnhostasociety.net

2021 Officers

President Fred Anderson
Vice President Bob Goeltz
Treasurer Gina Buffum
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Naylor Creek Nursery Owner Passes Away

As shared by the Dixie Region Facebook page.

In case you have not heard, Gary Lindheimer, the owner of Naylor Creek Nursery, passed away August 6, 2021 at the age of 78. Gary has been a very important person for the Hosta community by making hundreds of varieties easily available for Hosta people around the world . Maybe even more important to tell is that Gary has been a story teller, motivator and inspirator. The way he was able to combine his experience, knowledge, people skills and foremost his humor made it a joy to read his postings on the Facebook buyers guide and a pleasure to talk to for those who had the chance to meet him in real life.

Since his partner Jack died almost two years ago he was determined to continue the nursery and, with the usual up and downs, he has been able to do that but sadly this has come to an end.

Zephyr and Chris who helped Gary the last two years at the nursery will take care of Gary's so much loved animals and also keep watering the Hostas. It is too early to tell what will happen next. We need a couple of days to see what we can do and make a plan to make sure that those that are expecting their Hostas from Gary will receive them this fall. We will miss Gary dearly but will love him forever.

As posted on the Naylor Creek website, "It there are any questions related to recently placed orders you can contact Marco Fransen at info@naylorcreek.com to see if there is a way to find a solution. "

Photo from left to right: Jack Hirsch, Gary Lindheimer and Marco Fransen

Companion Plant of the Month: Saxifragaceae

Mary L. Albrecht, Professor Emerita, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Tennessee

The what? Saxifragaceae? The saxifrages are things like *Heuchera* (coral bells, alum root), *Tiarella* (foam flower, false mitrewort), *Heucherella* (foamy bells), *Astilbe* (false spirea, false goat's beard), *Bergenia* (winter begonia, pig squeak), and *Rodgersia* (rodgersia). Oh, and there's also *Saxifraga* (rockfoil, saxifrage).

But then, they are also plants like *Hydrangea*, *Itea* (sweet spire), *Deutzia* (deutzia, slender deutzia), and *Philadelphus* (mock orange). And, if you are growing fruit, there's *Ribes* (currents and gooseberries).

According to Bailey's Manual of Cultivated Plants (1975 15th printing of the 1949 revised edition), the saxifrage family is "allied to Rosaceae but differs in having fewer or more definite stamens, pistils mostly fewer than sepals and sometimes combined into a single compound pistil, leaves usually without stipules and sometimes opposite; flowers bisexual or unisexual, usually regular; sepals prevailingly 4 or 5, and petals and stamens of same number of stamens twice as many (or more), the petals and stamens inserted at the edge of a disk; pistils free or united, ovary inferior or superior, placentation axile or parietal, usually 1-5 celled: fruit a capsule or berry with many seeds that contain abundant albumen." Clear as mud! Right?

Britanica.com more simply describes the family as

Events

September 24 and 25, 2021, UT Gardens Fall Plant Sale. James Newburn announced at a UT Gardens Voluneers event that they hope to have the sale in person at the UT Gardens Plaza, as in the past. Stay tuned as more details become available.

Keep an eye out for events at the Greater Knoxville area public gardens:

Knoxville Botanic Gardens

UT Gardens

UT Arboretum

"Members of the family have leaves that characteristically alternate along the stem and are sometimes deeply lobed or form rosettes. The flowers possess both male and female parts and four or five sepals and petals; they are generally borne in branched clusters and range in colour [*sic*]from greenish to white or yellow and from pink or red to purple. The fruit is a capsule with many seeds. " Now we're getting closer to understanding.

It's clear from the descriptions that the flower characteristics hold this plant family together, not necessarily whether or not the plants are woody or herbaceous. That's true for other plant families. Now let's look at some of these plants used for ornamental purposes.

Herbaceous Plants

Astilbe (false spirea, false goat's beard) have been a backbone plant for the perennial garden for decades. They handle the same growing conditions as hosta and benefit from some morning sun and afternoon shade. Flowers are small but presented in very large, showy plume-like inflorescences borne well above the foliage, and come in white and shades of pink and red, even a lavender variety. Sizes vary. The smallest are mounds of foliage about 6 to 8 inches tall to the very large that can reach about 12 inches tall with an equal spread.

Bergenia (winter begonia, pig squeak) is a little used but delightful plant with very deep green foliage. Again, a mound forming plant (about 12 to 18 inches tall and wide) that will spread slowly from a rhizome. Flowers are only pink. A plus is rabbits and deer don't like it! It also can handle moist soils. It gets the name pig squeak from the foliage - if you hold a leaf between you thumb and forefinger and then pull along the leaf, it makes a sound like a pig squeaking! And, it's evergreen so adds to the winter garden. Treat the foliage like hellebores by removing spent foliage in the late winter or early spring before new growth.

Heuchera (coral bells, alum root) is one that we all know and grow. It has gained in popularity over the years and there are numerous cultivars available that range from silver to chartreuse green to deep burgundy and purple that is almost black.. Many come with veins being a contrasting color to the blades. Flowers are borne on tall, wispy inflorescences. Take care not to keep the crowns wet, especially through winter months. And, they benefit from some light clean-up before new growth appears in the spring. Try to give them some morning sun. And, some of the varieties are short lived depending upon environmental conditions. You may not have success with all of them. Mt. Cuba Center (located in Hockessin, DE) trialed 83 varieties and published a report available here.

x *Heucherella* (foamy bells) is an intergeneric hybrid created from *Heuchera* and *Tiarella*, introduced to the bedding plant industry in 2002 with the variety 'Sunspot'. It is generally more compact and delicate in appearance than its *Heuchera* parent. It forms a dense, compact (5 to 8 inches) clump with distinctly veined foliage with deep lobes. Similar to coral bells, the foliage will usually retain some color in winter. Tiny star-shaped pink or white flowers appear in airy to dense inflorescences atop stems rising well above the foliage clump (typically to 15-20" tall) in late spring to mid-summer.

Rodgersia (rodgersia) varies on size depending on species. *Rodgersia podophyllum* ranges from 3 to 6 feet and as wide. *Rodgersia aesculifolia* (*aesculifolia* from *Aesculus*, the genus of horse chestnut, and *folia*, meaning foliage, so horse chestnut-like foliage) is also a large species. Best to grow in moist shade. A good choice for smaller gardens is *Rodgersia* 'Bronze Peacock, from Terra Nova Nurseries, as it is only about 2 feet tall and wide. Missouri Botanic Garden recommends deadheading (removing flower stalks) when done flowering.

Saxifraga (rockfoil, saxifrage) common to gardens predominantly come from two species, *S.* x *arendsii* (USDA Zones 5 to 7) and *S. stolonifera* (USDA Zones 6 to 9). These are good groundcovers. Growing conditions for both align well with hosta.

Tiarella (foam flower, false mitrewort) perfoms better in deeper shade than *Heuchera*, so a dappled shade works well. They are a low maintenance plant and don't needed dividing for years. Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Prefers soils high in organic matter for moisture retention. Soil should not be allowed to dry out; yet, avoid wet soils which can be fatal particularly in winter. Removal of flower spikes after bloom will improve the appearance of the foliage mound. If they appear a little tattered from the old foliage, they can easily be trimmed back to allow new growth. Another plus is it appears that deer and rabbits leave them alone.

Shrubs

Deutzia (deutzia, slender deutzia) is an underused deciduous shrub for the sunny to partly sunny landscape. There are several cultivars of *Deutzia* available, and most produce a profusion of pure white, fragrant flowers during late April and early May. Deutzia will grow well in USDA Zones 5 to 8, which covers most all of South Carolina. In the warmer parts of the state, they will perform best with partial shade.

The sizes of cultivars range from the dwarf selection 'Nikko', which grows to 2 or 3 feet tall, to the species that has a mounding limb habit and reaches 3 to 5 feet tall. However, there are a few with pink flower buds, such as 'Nikko Blush'. (from https://hgic.clemson.edu/deutzia/)

Hydrangea has become more popular over the past few years as the choices have exploded. Most commonly used in the landscape are *H. microphylla* (hortensis and lacecap groups), *H. anomala* (climbing hydrangea), *H. quercifolia* (oakleaf hydrangea), *H. arborescens* (smooth or snowhill hydrangea), and *H. paniculate* (peegee hydrangea). For good cultural information, see this article from Clemson University Extension - https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/hydrangea/.

Itea (sweet spire) is a native deciduous to semi-evergreen shrub of the southeastern US. Great addition because of the abundant fragrant flowers that attract pollinators. And, reportedly deer

resistant! Keys to good growth and flowering are moist, slightly acidic, humusy soils with 4 hours of sun per day. Good information is available from North Carolina State Extension at https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/itea-virginica/ . May be somewhat difficult to find so look for it at native plant nurseries. Plus, these were offered by the UT Gardens in their last sale.

Philadelphus (mock orange) genus contains approximately 60 species of deciduous shrubs. Typically they have fragrant, white flowers with showy stamens. You will run across different species and varieties at garden centers. A nice edition to the landscape provided you can provide some sunlight; they tend not to do well in full shade. New cultivars provide for more compact, less messy growth. And, the newer cultivars appear to be deer resistant and drought tolerant.

Photo credits:

Astilbe, *Bergenia*, x *Heucherella*, and *Tiarella* courtesy of Mary Lewnes Albrecht.

Deutzia courtesy of Monrovia, https://www.monrovia.com/dwarf-nikko-deutzia.html

Heuchera, Itea, and *Philadelphus* courtesy of Proven Winners, https://www.provenwinners.com/

Hydrangea courtesy of Wayside Gardens, https://www.waysidegardens.com/hydrangea-limelight-prime/p/28132/

Rodgersia photos courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/FullImageDisplay.aspx?documentid=32479 (top) and TERRA NOVA® Nurseries, Inc., www.terranovanurseries.com (bottom)

Saxifraga courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden, http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=286950&isprofile=1&basic=saxifraga

Fun at Our June Meeting!

Thanks to member Mike Blankenship for the photos from the gathering at the home of Chris and Mary Albrecht's garden they named "The Ravine."

ETHS Membership

Name(s) (please print)_____

Address _____

City, State, Zip_____

Area Code & Phone_____

Email Address _____

Are you a Hosta Beginner ☐

Hosta Addict ☐

Somewhere in-between ☐

Approximately how many different Hostas do you have:

Fewer than 10 ☐

10-50 ☐

Over 50 ☐

Would you like your garden to be considered for an open garden tour by ETHS?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Maybe ☐

Would you like to volunteer for an activity in our club?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Maybe ☐

Annual dues for individual membership is $12 and $18 for a family. Membership is based on a calendar year.

Mail application and check payable to **East Tennessee Hosta Society** to:

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