



Hosta Happenings

East Tennessee Hosta Society

March 2020

President's Message

What difficult times we are experiencing at present. It is hard to fathom that everything is on hold until we get past this contagious virus. Between excessive rain and self-quarantining, life can get depressing. Aren't we fortunate that as gardeners we can self-quarantine in the fresh air of our own gardens. Every day I walk my gardens and see new life emerging in fresh color. Looking at the 10 day forecast ahead, it looks promising that winter is waning and spring is in the air. I have lots of Hostas leafing out so I hope we don't get a late frost. Hell, I had to mow the grass yesterday it was that tall.

I was informed that UT gardens has closed our meeting room for the semester due to the virus and with everything cancelled, we regret that we will not be having a meeting this month. We will be monitoring the situation though to see if this will affect our April activities so stay tuned.

Thanks to the members who attended the first work day at the UT Hosta gardens. Since then the rain and the virus has cancelled future ones but coordinator Mary Albrecht will be advising you of updates of any future work days.

At this stage it is still too premature to cancel the Dixie Region Hosta Convention as we are still 10 weeks out and lots of things can change during this time. Hopefully with a concerted effort by health officials and public awareness, the virus will be subdued and everybody will be eager to get out and get back to normal. All we can do is take notice of the advice given to us by health officials and stay healthy and safe.

Get out and smell the flowers - looking forward to seeing you in the garden once again.

Warm Regards
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East Tennessee Hosta Society
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In Case You Missed it...

We received word that Cornelia Holland was discharged from rehabilitation on Friday, February 28. She still has weeks to go with cardiac rehab. Why you ask? Well, she suffered a mild heart attack in early February, had a stent, and went to rehab. We are happy to learn she is back home. (Photo courtesy of



<http://www.williamsonherald.com/>)

Congratulations!

On February 19, the UT Gardens held their Volunteer Celebration and Spring Kick-off with over 100 volunteers in attendance. Our own Michelle Reimert was recognized by the UT Gardens, Knoxville as the Distinguished Volunteer of the Year. Way to go!

Calendar

CANCELLED March 29, Sunday, 2:00 pm,
Classroom meeting: presentation, Gardening
Myths Debunked, Mary Albrecht. (Editor's Note:
Myths will be included in this and future
newsletters!)

March 31, 9:00 am, Volunteer Day in the
Tranquility Hosta Garden, weather permitting.

April 1 through 30: Dogwood Trails & Open
Gardens

April 14, 9:00 am, Volunteer Day in the
Tranquility Hosta Garden, weather permitting.

April 26, Sunday, :2:00 pm: Garden Tour of
Hella Peterson

April 28, 9:00 am, Volunteer Day in the
Tranquility Hosta Garden, weather permitting.

May 3, Sunday, hours TBD: UT Gardens
Plantapalooza & Hosta Tailgate Sale

May 28 – 30: Dixie Region Convention

June 10—13: AHS Convention

June 27, Saturday, 10:30 am: Garden Tour, TBD

July 25, Saturday, 10:30 am: Garden Tour, TBD

August 23, Sunday, 10:30 am:: Presentation by
Bob Solberg at Anderson Estate

September 19, Saturday, time TBD: Plant
Nursery Tour

October 25, Sunday, time TBD: Fall Garden
Tour

November 22, Sunday, 2:00 pm: End of Year
Meeting, annual general meeting and social

Volunteer Days in the Tranquility Hosta Garden

We had our first volunteer day of the season in the
Tranquility Hosta Garden. Alice Kimbrell and several
UT volunteer students were present to help ETHS
members work in the hosta garden.

We made a great dent in removing the *Ophiopogon* that
was taking over the hosta beds devouring everything in
it's path, as you can see in the photo on page 3. A couple
of other folks were on the end of hoes removing weeds!



Next chance to help is **March 31 at 9:00 am**. Meet at the
Volunteer Shed (located near the Kitchen Garden and the
Holly Border).



**American Hosta Society
National Convention
June 10-13th 2020
Minneapolis MN**
For more info go to
<https://hostavision2020.com/>

March/April Gardening

To Do List

Late March and the hostas are emerging from their winter sleep. When April arrives, the dogwoods and azaleas will start blooming. That only means one thing in East Tennessee, the Dogwood Trails in Knoxville are open. Take the time to drive one or two this spring. To find out more about the trails, visit <https://www.dogwoodarts.com/trail-info/>.



Caladium bulbs in bedding plant flats.

Late March to early April is the time to start your caladium bulbs using bedding plant flats or small pots. Just remember to keep them on the warm side. They are tropical and don't like cold nights into the 40's.

Late March to early April is also the time to trim up any ornamental grasses to allow for new growth. If you see any cocoons or chrysalises, try not to disturb them. Butterflies will emerge with warmer days

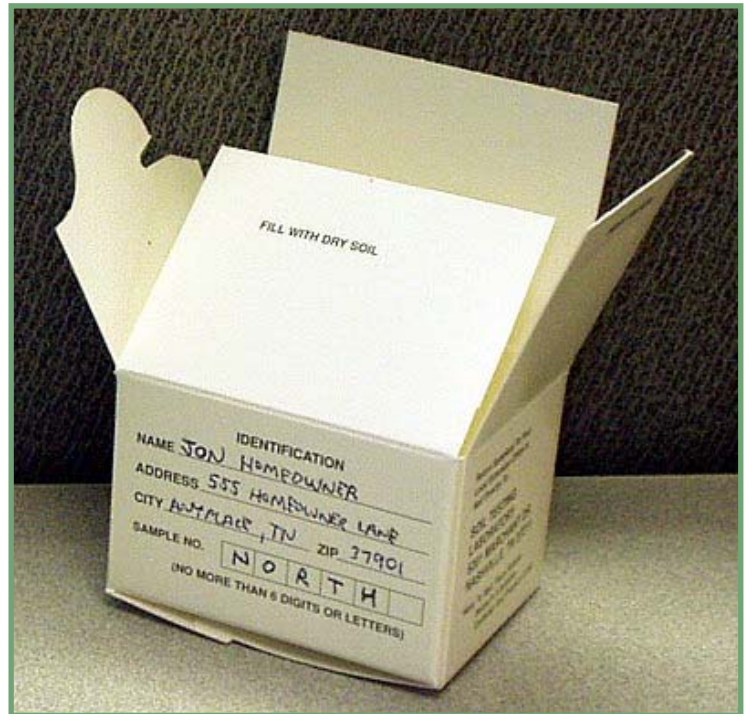


Same caladiums as above, just at the end of August.

Some of your early garden annuals can go into the beds in April. This includes snapdragons (*Antirrhinum* cultivars), dianthus (any of the different species and varieties), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*).

Avoid the itch to plant some of the warmer season annuals such as cape periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*), cockscomb (*Celosia argentea*, the Plumed group, or *Celosia argentea* var. *cristata*, the Crested group), lantana (*Lantana* varieties), pentas (*Pentas lanceolata* varieties), petunias (*Petunia*), or zinnias (*Zinnia angustifolia*, *Z. elegans*, and other hybrids and varieties) or the tropical elephant ears (*Colocasia*) and related species. Let the nights warm up to the 60's before putting them in the gardens and when we are frost free. In East Tennessee, that will be anywhere from April 17 in Chattanooga to May 10 in Crossville up on the Plateau to May 26 up in Mountain City. In Knoxville, it's about April 22.

If you haven't gotten the soil in the garden tested yet, it's not too late. Contact your County Extension Office for the soil test kit and instructions. Once you have the results, go ahead and fertilize per their recommendations. Gardens can be fertilized with a variety of products. Perennials, trees, and shrubs need some fertilizer, too! It's not just lawns and annuals that should be fed.



Spring Gardening:

Start with Tools

Inventory your tools. Some essentials you may want to include: gardening gloves (are they worn out?), wheel barrow (check the inflation of the tire), pruners, trowel, spade, garden knife, rake, hoe, garden fork and loppers.

Sharpen and clean your tools. Clean tools work more effectively and last longer. Sharper blades will make your job easier and plants remain healthier with clean cuts. Also oil pruners and loppers for smoother action. Happy plants = a happy gardener!

Clean your pots for container gardening. A nylon brush, dish soap and one cup of white vinegar works well. Sanitize the pots — one part household bleach to 9 parts water works well. Add fresh potting soil and begin selecting your plants. Be patient! Wait to plant when day and night temperatures no longer fluctuate drastically.

From Bluestone Perennials, *What's Growing On*, March 2020, by Bill and Sarah Boonstra, email received March 10, 2020.



And, Speaking of Tools

There are many different tools out there. One of your editor's favorites has become a gift from her son of a hori hori knife. Looks like something Crocodile Dundee would use, "Now that's a knife!" They can be purchased with or without a scabbard.

And, most come with the blade marked in inches. One edge is a knife blade and the other edge is a sawblade. And, some even come with a bottle opener that doubles as a twine cutter.



Sam Adams Discussion

No, we didn't discuss Sam Adams beer! Sam Adams, Arborist with the University of Tennessee Facilities Services, spoke at our February meeting. He lead a discussion on gardening under trees, the do's and don'ts, and which are the best trees to garden under. Oaks are our friends, maples are our enemies! Leaf mold is good for our perennials, annuals and trees. Keep perennials a few feet away from the trunks of the trees to provide space for the tree flare to develop.

Brian White provided the door prize of primulas. Four members were lucky winners!



President Fred Anderson (left) and speaker Sam Adams (rights)



Member Elin Johnson drawing the name of a lucky winner!

Debunking Gardening Myths

Myth #1: You must prune trees and shrubs since they flower on new growth.

Well, each year trees and shrubs put on new growth and they will flower on this new growth. You don't have to prune to have your plants put on new growth.

Spring-flowering trees and shrubs set flower buds in the late summer into fall. Cold temperatures of the winter help the flowers develop. And when things warm up, they begin to grow and bloom. The best time to prune spring flowering trees and shrubs is after they flower!

Summer and autumn flowering trees and shrubs can be pruned in late winter to very early spring, while they are dormant. You need to allow enough time for new growth where the flowers will form.

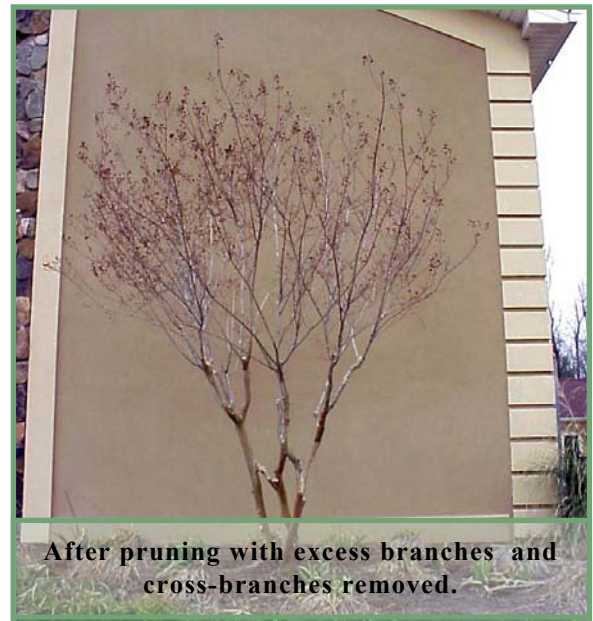
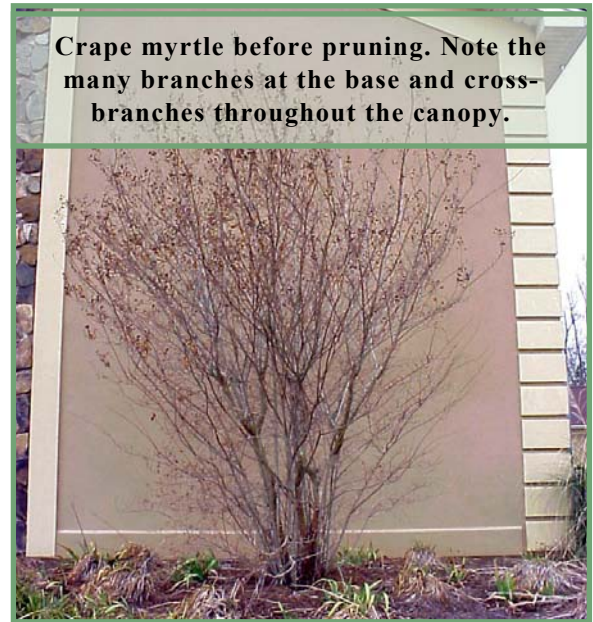


This is an example of an azalea sheared in the winter to keep its hedge shape. Only the deeper buds flowered because everything else was removed when they were winter sheared. Don't shear the spring flowering shrubs in winter. Let them flower and then trim to maintain a hedge.

Probably the other most common mistake in pruning flowering trees and shrubs is what is commonly called crape (or as in the South, crepe) murder by horticulturists. You've all seen it! Don't do it!

The following photos show the before and after of

correct pruning as shared by Paul Thompson with Clemson Extension (source info: Crape Myrtle Pruning, <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/crape-myrtle-pruning/>, photos Paul Thompson, ©2015, Clemson Extension, retrieved Feb 23, 2020).



Note: Per Dr. Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* text, the name of *Lagerstroemia indica* and the hybrids with *L. fauriei* is "Crapemyrtle" – one word with an "a".