



ONTARIO HOSTA SOCIETY

JANUARY 2009
NEWSLETTER.

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 1

CONTENTS

Presidential Musings	1
Membership Info	2
January Meeting Info	3
Facts & Myths HVX	4
More Myths	5
Dave's Basement	6
Wanted!	6
New Members	7
2009 Calendar	7
Winter Blues??	8
Executive	8

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## PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

First of all, I would like to wish each and every one of you and yours, a very happy, healthy, prosperous 2009. This has been one of the most up and down winters I can remember. Lots of snow, lots of mild, lots of cold, more mild and more snow! Hopefully this beautiful snow cover will stay now until spring to bring us all fabulous garden openings.

Our exciting first event of the season will be our Winter Meeting at the R.J. Murphy Auditorium in Mississauga on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Since our first Hosta Virus X Bulletin went into our Summer 2005 Newsletter, we have all been trying very hard to get a handle on this virus. Our guest speaker is none other than Chris Wilson, whose partial DVD was shown to us by Cindy Deutekom at our Southwest Picnic at Jack Kent's Potting Shed in 2008. There was so much excitement about what we saw and heard that day that Chris comes to us by popular demand. We are very pleased that research/understanding of this Virus has come a long way and Chris will bring us up to speed.

Our 2009 Bus Tour is scheduled for June 14, 2009. All locations to be confirmed by Bob Leask and I can't wait to see what he has in store for us this year.

On July 5<sup>th</sup> we will have the opportunity to tour through Cindy & Carel Deutekom's for our Eastern Picnic. I can't wait to get back there. I know there have been several changes since my last visit and I can't imagine it any more beautiful than I remember – but I think it will be!

Lynn Bisschop of Shades of Green has confirmed that they will host a picnic this year on August 9<sup>th</sup> at their gardens in the Aylmer area. Will be wonderful! (Don't forget, for our picnics on July 5 & Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>, bring a bagged lunch and a lawn chair please).

*(continued on page 2)*

Our auction this year will be held on Sunday September 13, so please mark your calendars for that outstanding event.

Last but certainly not least – the additions/changes to our Executive team. Cindy Deutekom has agreed to be our new Vice-President and will be taking over the Presidency next year. She reluctantly moves into that position with great respect for Kevin Elchuk who found he was not able to expend the time just now. Kevin has however, agreed to be our “Culinary Purveyor” and we are delighted to still have his expertise (and smile), remaining with our Executive. This will also be a tremendous help for Cindy who is also looking after our Web Site. Thanks so much Kevin. Baking doesn’t get any better than yours!

Lynda Lou Gourlie has joined us as our new Hosta Adoption Program person. Thank you Lynda Lou. This will also help free up Cindy for her upcoming duties as Vice President and we do appreciate you stepping up. Lynda Lou will also be writing some articles for our newsletter and at this time, I would like to encourage all of you to submit any articles/photos/suggestions to us. We always enjoy hearing from you.

I would like to also extend our sincere thanks to Bob Murphy who has been so very generous in finding us a wonderful location for our meetings – the R.J. Murphy Auditorium. Thank you Bob.

From the bottom of our hearts, we extend a huge thanks to Dave Barham who had so generously donated all of the “Margot’s Delight” plants at our 2008 Auction. Thank you Dave.

As always, the members make the Society. On behalf of all of the Executive, we look forward to seeing each and every one of you at our events this year and look forward to your input and camaraderie

Sincerely,

*Sandra*

### Ontario Hosta Society

Ontario Hosta Society Membership can be obtained by writing to (**new address**):

**Ontario Hosta Society  
2301 5th Street Louth,  
St. Catharine's, Ontario,  
Canada L2R 6P7**

**Annual Dues: \$15.00/YR     \$40.00/3 YR**

**American: \$16.00/YR     Foreign: \$17.00/YR**

The membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st. Members joining after October 1st in any year are deemed to be paid-up until December 31st of the following year. **First-time members receive a bonus copy of “The Hosta Adventure –A Grower’s Guide”**

### American Hosta Society

Memberships can be obtained by writing to:

**Sandie Markland  
AHS Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 7539  
Kill Devil Hills,  
NC 27948-7539 U.S.A.**

E-mail:

[ahsmembershipsecretary@earthlink.net](mailto:ahsmembershipsecretary@earthlink.net)

Membership for Canadians  
\$39.00 US per year or \$107.00 US for 3 years.  
Money order or cheque drawn on a US bank.  
Memberships can now also be paid by VISA  
or Master Card online at the AHS website  
**[www.hosta.org](http://www.hosta.org)**

## WINTER MEETING

Date: Sunday, February 22nd, 2009  
Time: 12:30 - 4:00 p.m.  
Location: R.J. Murphy Auditorium,  
6435 Edward Blvd. Mississauga  
Topic: **“Hosta Virus X”**  
Speaker: **Mr. Chris Wilson**

Chris Wilson helped start Hallson Gardens with Brian Hall in 1995, specializing in hostas, and they currently grow and sell over 300 different varieties from their nursery in Cement City, Michigan.

It was in the year 2000 that a friend showed Chris a new hosta she found at a nursery with some very unusual mottling. She thought it was neat, but Chris thought it was diseased. For the next couple of years, Chris started to see more of these unusual hostas popping up in different varieties, so he searched the internet for information on a possible hosta virus that might be causing this strange colouring.

In 2003, Chris found that this was called Hosta Virus X and started an online discussion about the virus to try and learn as much as he could about the virus. Since then Chris has been a major advocate for stopping the spread of HVX and has worked diligently to educate the public about this continuing threat to the hosta world.

He has given talks to several hosta groups and has given a talk on HVX for the past 3 years at Hosta College in Piqua, Ohio.

Join us to hear this informative talk and learn how to identify this virus if, unfortunately, it is in your garden, and how to deal with it.

*Light Refreshments will be served.*

(See Page 4 and 5 for Facts and Myths re HVX)

**Hosta Virus Myths**  
by C. H. Falstad  
(originally posted on the Hosta library site)

**\*NEW\* MYTH** - HVX spreads easily/HVX is difficult to spread.

**FACT** - Which is it? Dr. Lockhart, who is credited with discovering HVX has said it is difficult to spread, while others say it is easy to spread. It depends on the point of view. A virologist considers it difficult compared to other viruses which can spread more easily because they are transmitted by insects or other vectors. Gardeners and nursery owners on the other hand feel that it spreads easily because it is easy to spread it while doing the things they normally do with the plants, like cutting flower scapes, damaged leaves, or dividing. In this case there is no myth because both are true.

**\*NEW\* MYTH** - Some hostas are immune.

**FACT** - The basis for this myth (and it is a dangerous myth at that) is a study done by Dr. Lockhart. In this study several varieties were not infected despite numerous tries. The report on this study in *The Hosta Journal* did unfortunately use the word "immune" to describe these plants. Testing for this "immunity" was not exhaustive, and the use of the word was clearly a case of jumping the gun. Since this study, one of the "immune" cultivars has tested positive (not the actual plant from the study), and this should be taken as evidence that these cultivars are not to be considered truly immune unless further testing proves them so. In a sidelight, articles mentioning this "immune" list have started adding plants that were not in the original study. One included 'Gold Standard', which is one of the most easily and heavily infected in the marketplace. No hostas should be considered immune at this time.

**MYTH** - Plants infected with a virus may recover.

**FACT** - Viruses do not just disappear, nor does a plant "fight off" an infection. The virus is permanent and will be with the plant until it dies. For practical purposes in the garden and nursery, there are no cures for viruses.

**MYTH** - Hostas from Tissue Culture will not have viruses.

**FACT** - If a hosta has a virus before going into tissue culture, the virus will be propagated along with the plant. Many infected hostas in the marketplace were tissue-cultured. Plants that were clean after the tissue culture process may also be infected when being grown on. Labs are beginning to test all propagating material so in the near future tissue cultured hostas from those labs will be clean.

**MYTH** - All hosta cultivars will exhibit the same symptoms if infected with the same virus.

**FACT** - Symptoms can vary considerably with the same virus, and different strains of a virus may cause different symptoms.

**MYTH** - All mottled foliage in hostas is caused by viruses.

**FACT** - Mottling patterns in hostas can have a variety of causes, some of them environmental, and many have causes which we do not yet understand. 'Xanadu Paisley' has been repeatedly tested and despite its similarity to HVX symptoms has yet to be shown to be infected with any diseases. Old plants like 'Cynthia' and 'Filigree' also have no known cause for their mottled appearance and have never been known to pass this trait to other plants.

**MYTH** - Viruses will kill, or at least severely inhibit growth of the host plant.

**FACT** - Eventually, some deterioration in the health of the plant can occur, but a plant may survive for many years when infected with a virus. Different viruses affect the plant's health at different rates, but some effects may go unnoticed.

**MYTH** - If symptoms disappear after showing up in a previous year the plant has either cured itself or didn't have a virus in the earlier year.

**FACT** - The expression of virus symptoms can disappear, but this does not mean the plant is cured. The virus is still present in the plant and still able to infect other plants. Sometimes this can be due to environmental factors that might reduce the rate a virus replicates thus preventing a high enough population, or titer, to effect expression.

**MYTH** - Symptoms of Hosta Virus X look attractive.

**FACT** – Actually, this is not really a myth. The effects of HVX on some hostas can be attractive to many, thus heightening the risk of introducing the virus into the home garden. In addition to the mottling, these symptoms can include making the infected plant more compact and more glaucous. Nursery professionals and home gardeners alike have actually named HVX-infected hostas and offered them as new varieties.

**MYTH** - Virused hostas are worth more money than healthy hostas.

**FACT** – Well, does this really make any sense? If you buy a hosta for \$5 and infect it with a disease as common and widespread as HVX, how could it possibly be worth more? When infected with an incurable disease, it should be thrown away because it is no longer worth anything. Putting a different name on it once it is infected doesn't really change this.

**MYTH** - If we pretend the virus doesn't exist it will go away.

**FACT** – If we ignore the presence of Hosta Virus X in our gardens or nurseries, it will continue to spread until many more plants have it. In time, the number of infected plants will increase beyond any hope of eliminating the virus. It is irresponsible to keep the virus around, because it can infect other plants and spread itself. All plants exhibiting HVX symptoms must be destroyed immediately to prevent further infection, and in nurseries all plants in a batch that had symptomatic individual plants must be also considered infected and likewise destroyed.

**MYTH** - Talking about HVX and other diseases will ruin hosta gardening.

**FACT** – While it may be unpopular in the short term, allowing incurable diseases to run unchecked through nurseries and gardens will certainly cause worse problems down the road. The long-term impact of disease-filled gardens on their owners will surely be a negative one and far outweigh any short-term effects of facing our problems now. A healthy garden is a source of joy to the gardener, but a garden full of diseases and other problems will never provide the same enjoyment, and if it gets worse every year we will lose our enthusiasm.

**MYTH** - People don't want to know about HVX.

**FACT** – It is not a pleasant subject, but as adults we all understand that life isn't perfect. The world contains many harmful organisms, and some of these do affect hostas. We can face the issues of plant health when we need to. We understand that sometimes there are outbreaks of a particular disease that require our special attention. We don't really want to know, but we have to know to keep our plants healthy. We don't want that information kept from us when the time comes that we need it.

**MYTH** - Viruses are a "grower problem" and not a cause for concern among gardeners.

**FACT** – Hostas infected with HVX or other viruses ceased to be simply a "grower problem" when the retailers sold them to gardeners. Thousands of virus-infected plants have already been sold at the retail level, and many gardens now harbor virus-infected hostas. All gardeners should be aware of HVX and other viruses and be careful to avoid spreading them to other plants and to other gardens.

FOR THE BALANCE OF THIS ARTICLE PLEASE VISIT

[www.hostalibrary.org/firstlook/HVXMyths.htm](http://www.hostalibrary.org/firstlook/HVXMyths.htm)

**OR COME TO OUR WINTER MEETING AND HEAR  
FOR YOURSELF FIRST HAND**

## Dave's Basement

While never having seen this place, I try to imagine how it looks at this time of year when it's blustery and cold outside. Dave Barham has a knack of being able to take apart a hosta down to its rudimentary parts (namely bud eyes) and growing them back to presentable size in a short period of time. I have no idea what his lighting bill is. And he does so with such precision that he is able to produce quantities because he repeats the process over and over as the new plantlets mature.

Now you may think that lots of people can do this. However, Dave is responsible for coddling some of our most interesting finds to the point that they are produced in such quantity that they can become our club plants or can be sent for micro propagation.

Being of scientific mind, he has been very keen to promote this process and has done so through many articles and demonstrations/lectures at our meetings. He currently has taken some possibilities for our special finds and is working on providing enough for distribution and purchase by our members in the near future. He has also had multiple copies of Margot's Delight produced at his own expense for sale to our society members.

We thank him for his efforts and contributions. Maybe we should all have a basement like Dave's.

Contributed by

Bob Leask



One of our members is looking for  
H. High Fat Cream

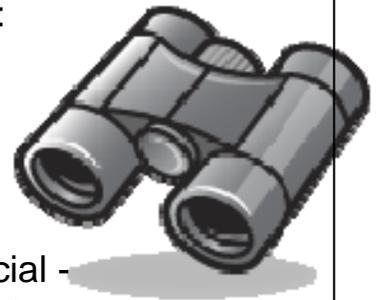
If you can help, please e-mail  
[hostaed@rogers.com](mailto:hostaed@rogers.com)

We are **always** on the look-out for the following:

Gardens to visit  
Articles  
Interesting Pictures

Please help us to make your club and newsletter special -  
please e-mail your ideas, suggestions and thoughts to:

[hostaed@rogers.com](mailto:hostaed@rogers.com)



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

|                 |           |                    |             |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| Margaret Dudley | Tecumseth | Carmelie Mainville | Etobicoke   |
| Anne Gooch      | Chatham   | Suzanne Zacharczy  | Mississauga |
| Franklin Kains  | Kitchener |                    |             |



# Upcoming Events - 2009

## Winter Meeting

**Speaker:** Chris Wilson on Hosta Virus X  
**When:** Sunday, February 22nd  
**Where:** R.J. Murphy Auditorium, 6435 Edward Blvd, Mississauga  
**Time:** 12:30 - 4:00 p.m.

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## Bus Tour

**When:** Sunday, 14th June  
**Where:** More details to follow

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## Garden Tour

**When:** Sunday, 5th July  
**Where:** Garden of Cindy and Karel Deutekom, Blackstock  
**Time:** 11:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
**Addr:** More details to follow

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## Summer Picnic

**When:** Sunday, 9th August  
**Where:** Garden of Lynn Bisshop, Shades of Green, Aylmer  
**Time:** 11:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
**Addr:** More details to follow

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## Auction

**When:** Sunday, 13th September  
**Where:** R.J. Murphy Auditorium, 6435 Edward Blvd, Mississauga  
**Time:** 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

## **BORED!! GOT THE WINTER BLUES??** **READY FOR SPRING??**

Take a peek at the American and Canadian Hosta Auction site  
[www.hostalibrary.org](http://www.hostalibrary.org)

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Perk yourself up with a visit to the  
Niagara College Horticultural Open House - March 21/22  
[www.inyourbackyard.wordpress.com](http://www.inyourbackyard.wordpress.com)

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Fancy a trip down South!  
Great Lakes Region Hosta Society  
Hosta College—In Ohio  
March 20/21  
<http://ihostohio.org/Portal/glhc/college.asp>  
Registration closes February 28th  
(if you plan on going and would like to carpool, please contact  
[cindydeutekom@netscape.ca](mailto:cindydeutekom@netscape.ca))

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Take a trip to  
Peterborough Garden Show—April 9/11  
[www.peterboroughgardens.ca](http://www.peterboroughgardens.ca)

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Or go further North  
Scugog Spring Garden Show April 18/19  
[www.township.scugog.on.ca/whats-happening.27.php](http://www.township.scugog.on.ca/whats-happening.27.php)

### **EXECUTIVE**

President - Sandra Shrieve-Mahoney  
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