

Dixie Doin's

The Newsletter of the Dixie Regional Hosta Society

April 2011

www.dixiehosta.net



Spring is finally here. After that lousy winter, I'm really ready for it.

Soon the hosta season will be in full swing. Our hostas are already unfurling. So, it's time to think hostas! There are lots of interesting events coming up from local societies, including several hosta shows and many plant sales.

On **Sunday, May 1st**, **The East Tennessee Hosta Society** will hold their annual Tailgate Plant Sale at the entrance to the UT Gardens from Noon to 4 pm. Visit: <http://easttnhostasociety.weebly.com/plans-for-2011.html>

The Georgia Hosta Society will be holding their 22nd Annual Hosta Show on **Friday, May 6th and Saturday, May 7th** at the Conference Center of DeKalb Technical College in Clarkston, Georgia. The flyer is included on **page 5**. Visit www.gahosta.org for more details.

Also, **The Mid-South Hosta Society** will be having their 13th Annual Hosta Sale on **Saturday, May 7th** at the garden of Jim and Ann Zaner, 2150 Exeter Place, Cordova, TN. Visit www.mshosta.com for more details. Sale starts at 9:00 am. Also included is a free tour of the Zaner gardens!

The Hosta Society of North Alabama will hold their Second Annual Hosta Show on Thursday, **June 2 and Friday, June 3rd** from 10 am to 5 pm at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens. This is not an accredited show, but considering that the group is only 5 years old, they are doing fine! Visit: [www.americanhostasociety.org/PDF/Hosta Society of North Alabama 2011.pdf](http://www.americanhostasociety.org/PDF/Hosta_Society_of_North_Alabama_2011.pdf) for more details.

The Middle Tennessee Hosta Society will hold their annual Hosta Sale on **Saturday, May 7th** from 8:30 to 2 pm at Maryland Farms YMCA Parking Lot, Brentwood, TN. A listing of hosta prices and varieties can be found on their website: www.mths-hosta.com.

The Middle Tennessee Hosta Society will be holding a Hosta Show on **Saturday, June 4th** at Cheekwood Botanical Gardens, Nashville, TN. Visit www.mths-hosta.com for more details.

And last but certainly not least is the annual **Dixie Regional Hosta Society Meeting on June 9, 10, and 11th** at the Embassy Suites in Hoover (Birmingham), Alabama. Registration information is on pages 2 and 3. There is an exciting line-up of speakers, including Tom Micheletti, who will continue our series on Hosta Species, Bob Solberg will talk to us about "Growing a Hosta Collection into a Shade Garden," and Virginia Gregory-Kocaj will lead a workshop on "Photography in the Garden." The keynote speaker will be Mike Shadrack, author and raconteur, who will lead us on "A Wander through English Gardens". We will also have our Fabulous Auction, Hosta and Companion Plant Vending, Ask the Experts and Judging Clinic I. Be certain to read all the information on pages 2 and 3. There's even golf for those who enjoy such things!

I hope to see many of you at these great events.

Happy Gardening and Happy Spring,

Judy Burns, Regional Director

Guest Speakers

Mike Shadrack

"A Wander through English Gardens"

Tom Micheletti

"Overview of Hosta Species"

Bob Solberg

"Growing a Hosta Collection into a Shade Garden"

Virginia Gregory-Kocaj

"Photography in the Garden"



Embassy Suites Hotel – Hoover

2960 John Hawkins Parkway

www.birminghamhoover.embassysuites.com

800-Embassy

Rate: \$124/night (includes full breakfast and Manager's reception with hors oeuvres and drinks)

Ask for Alabama Hosta Society Group Rate

Planned events begin at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, so you may want to arrive on Thursday evening to be ready to roll on Friday morning. Mike Shadrack, author and raconteur, will lead the lineup of guest speakers. In addition, there will be hosta and companion plant vending, a gift hosta, 'Alabama Sunrise,' garden tours, and our ever-popular Fabulous Auction, which is always the highlight of any DRHS event. We will also be offering Judges Clinic I.

For our "non-hosta loving" companions, there will be a golfing available and/or shopping at the near-by Galleria shopping mall. In short, there will be something for everyone. We're hoping for a record attendance and know we will have a wonderful gathering.

Garden Tours: Max and Betty Pate – Woodland garden with a lot of variety
Dale and Nora O'Connor – Suburban garden with daylilies, iris, and hosta
Birmingham Botanical Gardens – Hosta Walk
Mike Rushing/Weezie Smith – Urban Gardens in Historic Southside of Birmingham
June Mays – Designer's Garden in an urban setting
Plant Odyssey – A mid-town nursery with unique flair

For more information, e-mail judyfeltman@windstream.net, or call Judy at 205-699-9826.

2011 Dixie Regional Hosta Meeting
Hosted by the Alabama Hosta Society
June 10 and 11 – Embassy Suites – Hoover
Birmingham, Alabama
Registration

Please print:

Name: _____
(As you wish it to read on your name badge)

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Additional Attendees: Name _____

Name _____

Full Registration: (includes Friday Lunch, Lectures, Auction, Saturday night Banquet, Garden tours on your own, and Vending): Cost per person \$99.

Number of attendees ____ @ \$99 \$ _____

Meals Only: (includes Friday Lunch, Saturday night Banquet):

Cost per person \$53

Number of Attendees @ \$53 \$ _____

Late Registration Fee: If your form is postmarked after May 15, 2011,

please add \$25 per person late fee.

Late Fee @\$25 per person \$ _____

Total included \$ _____

Please send checks only with this form to:

Audrey Sanford, 3465 Crayrich Drive, Birmingham, AL 35226

Make checks payable to: Alabama Hosta Society

Number interested in golf on Friday morning: _____

Judges Clinic I:

Number to attend

(Circle) 1 2 3 4

Number of Handbooks (\$10 each at Door)

1 2 3 4

(Please bring your handbook if you have one already)

Questions regarding Judges Clinic – E-mail Claudia Walker – cwalker180@aol.com or call 770-442-3257

Hotel Reservations: Embassy Suites – Hoover - Birmingham, AL, 35244 - 1-800-Embassy
Ask for "Alabama Hosta Society" block for the group rate of \$124/night
(Includes hot breakfast and Manager's Reception with free drinks and heavy hors oeuvres)
Rate cutoff date: 5/15/2011

Why Do We Have Regional Hosta Societies, Anyway?

By Judy Burns, Regional Director

When the American Hosta Society set up the various regions, there were several reasons behind their thinking. (See <http://www.americanhostasociety.org/Activities.html>)

First of all, AHS was in a huge growth spurt and conventions were growing in size each year. AHS anticipated that it would get to a point where it would be extremely difficult to accommodate all the attendees at a reasonably-sized convention. Unlike trade shows and other types of events, AHS conventions cannot practically exceed about 500 attendees. The main problem is finding private gardens that can handle the number of buses and visitors. Second of all, rising prices on travel, lodging and meal costs prohibit some people from traveling to AHS conventions. A certain number of “die hard” attendees will go no matter what, but some folks have a price point that they cannot, or will not, exceed.

Another issue relates to growing conditions. It is somewhat painful for some of us to go to conventions and see hostas growing in conditions that we can't possibly hope to mimic. For example, hostas in the far northern reaches do not suffer from the heat-drought that we get here in the south come mid-summer. Their hostas look a lot better in August than ours do. We have the advantage on the front end of the season, because our hostas come up and unfurl well before the snow has melted in Minnesota. We are often lucky enough get a second flush of leaves in September or October, and I have had hostas in leaf and even blooming in December. However, in July and August, our hostas aren't really much to look at. Buy hey, who goes outside much in July and August anyway?

So, the AHS decided that setting up Regional societies would help to accommodate some of those who might be able to drive a shorter distance, or take a somewhat shorter time off from work to attend an abbreviated event, or want to learn about hostas at different times of the year. Some of the regions have taken a specialized approach to their events. This is because there are many fewer constraints on the types of programs that the regions can present. The AHS has guidelines for the conventions that are fairly strict.

Several of the regions hold events during the “off” season. After all, if you live in the Midwest, there's not much to do in January, except maybe shovel show, so **The Midwest Hosta Society** started holding their **Winter Scientific Event** in January each year. They have enough participation to also be able to hold an annual convention in late summer, as well. Their Convention has become a serious rival to the AHS conventions, in both size and in quality.

The Great Lakes Region has been so successful with their **Hosta College** each March that they had to drastically limit the number of folks that can attend. The two-day event is held at Piqua Community College in Piqua, Ohio and offers a wide range of intense classes on hostas and other topics of interest to gardeners. You almost have to wait for someone to die to get a spot in Hosta College.

Region One, which covers the Northeastern states, takes a somewhat different approach to activities with their annual **First Look**, which offers hosta hybridizers a forum for introducing hosta seedlings and sports in a “show-like” atmosphere. The northeast is a hot-bed of hosta hybridization! This year **First Look** will be in Boston and will be a prelude to AHS Convention in later that week.

Most of these groups have a considerably longer history than the Dixie Region, which was only formally organized in 1996, when Toni Wright was asked to get it up and running by AHS President Bob Olson. Our first few meetings were held in the fall, when the growing season was winding down, but due to popular demand, we have gradually moved the events to the late spring and early summer. This year’s event is the second weekend in June in Birmingham, AL.

Because we are a little more relaxed about things here in the south, there are very few constraints on either the time of year, the theme or on the type of event that can be held. Some years we have a show, or garden tours, other years, we have only seminars or classes on various garden related topics. Our only requirements are an Auction and a Board Meeting. The one thing that we do every year is to learn a lot about hostas! Recently, we have been fortunate enough to have some very top-notch speakers from both inside and outside our region.

A very important aspect of regional meetings is to exchange information with other growers within the region. Although the Dixie Region covers the twelve states from Texas to Virginia and from Oklahoma to Florida, the region is surprisingly homogenous in growing conditions, although you might not think it to look at the map.

Remember, the really important factor when growing hostas is not summer temperatures, but with the amount of cold that they get during the winter. Ironically enough, there is not much hard research on exactly how much cold hostas need during the winter, but it’s pretty safe to say that in much of Zone 8, according to the USDA Cold Hardiness Map (below), the hostas just aren’t going to get enough cold to trigger their dormancy cycle.

USDA Cold Hardiness Zones

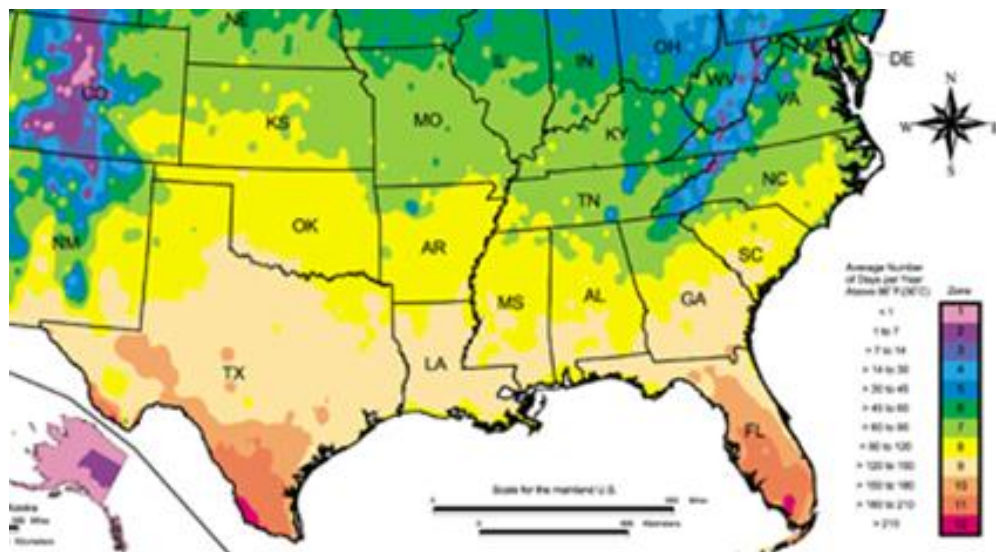


Average Annual Minimum Temperature

ZONE	Zone	Temperature
1	1	Below -50 F
2a	2a	-50 to -45 F
2b	2b	-45 to -40 F
3a	3a	-40 to -35 F
3b	3b	-35 to -30 F
4a	4a	-30 to -25 F
4b	4b	-25 to -20 F
5a	5a	-20 to -15 F
5b	5b	-15 to -10 F
6a	6a	-10 to -5 F
6b	6b	-5 to 0 F
7a	7a	0 to 5 F
7b	7b	5 to 10 F
8a	8a	10 to 15 F
8b	8b	15 to 20 F
9a	9a	20 to 25 F
9b	9b	25 to 30 F
10a	10a	30 to 35 F
10b	10b	35 to 40 F
11	11	Above 40 F

The pink and yellow areas, Zones 6 and 7 pretty much define the areas of Dixie where hostas can actually grow reliably. In Zone 8, the light and dark olive green areas, hostas may not get enough cold during most winters.

So now, let's look at the American Horticultural Society Plant Heat Zone Map, which shows the average number of days of 86°F or higher temperatures.



In the light tan areas, the average number of days above 86°F is 120 to 150. In the yellow areas, the average is 90 to 120 days and in the light green, the average is 60-90. So, it appears that heat is not really the defining factor in growing hostas here in the south. Of course, if you live in the yellow or tan areas, you may have to have to provide a fair amount of supplemental water in the summer, just to keep things looking fairly green through the summer.

Even then, you're going to get some heat dormancy, but that is just a defense mechanism for the plant. It basically goes into sleep mode to help preserve energy in the roots. No point in trying to make leaves when it's just too darned hot! The plant would lose more moisture through transpiration than it could support, so it pulls the plug, so to speak and sacrifices the leaves in order to maintain the health of the entire plant. Ain't nature grand?

So you can see that the wisdom of the American Hosta Society in setting up the regions was pretty much right on the money. Even though our region covers a lot of real estate, our members have a lot of common ground, at least as far as growing hostas goes. Add in the fact that we love to talk, not only about plants and family, we like to learn and eat and have a good time. This is really what the Regions are all about: getting folks to come together. So, if you have never attended a Dixie Region event, please plan to join us June 9, 10, and 11 in Birmingham, AL. You'll be glad you did!

"A WING & A PRAYER"



THE GEORGIA HOSTA SOCIETY 22nd ANNUAL SHOW

Open 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

&

HOSTA & COMPANION PLANT SALE

Open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

SATURDAY, MAY 7th 2011



Dekalb Technical College Conference Center

Directions: Take I-285 to Exit 41 Memorial Drive East

(You will be outside the Perimeter)

Travel about 1 mile and pass the Wells Fargo Bank on left.

Turn at the next light onto DeKalb Tech Drive.

Conference Center is at the top of the hill. Look for the signs!

Featuring a Special Award This Year

"It' all about the Edges: Curled, Ruffled or Frilled"

Including the Hosta of the Year 2011:

H. "Praying Hands"

For more information, please visit our website: www.gahosta.org



Nashville to Host AHS & DRHS in 2012

Mark your calendars now for June 13 -16, 2012 for The American Hosta Society Convention in Nashville, Tn. The Middle Tennessee Hosta Society will be welcoming attendees from around the world for **Hostas, Friends & Music**. Gardens are being prepared and things are moving right along, but since the MTHS is a fairly small group, they would really like to have some help from their friends around the Dixie Region. There are a number of jobs that need to be done that can easily be handled, either at the last minute, or via email and long distance. Some of the needed tasks include helping at the registration desk, show set-up, vendor set-up and hosting the hostality room.

If you can offer your assistance in any way, please contact Cornelia Holland, Convention Chair at 615-794-4153 or plantaginea@comcast.net

Also, so we can offer the most support for our friends in Nashville, the DRHS will not hold a separate meeting in 2012. Instead, we will hold a “mini” event during the AHS convention to comply with our by-laws. More details will be announced at a later date, but be sure to *Save the Date*, so you won’t miss a rousing good time!

Dixie Regional Hosta Society

Meeting, 2013

(Your City Here!)

If you have enjoyed attending the DRHS in the past, would you please consider having your local society host the Dixie Regional in 2013? There are very few requirements, and you can hold it at almost any time of the year that interests your group! If a group does not step up and volunteer, we may have to start holding the meetings only every other year, and I would hate to see us take such a drastic step. We usually have under a hundred attendees, so it’s fairly simple to do, plus you have lots of support from those of us

who are veterans. The Dixie Region needs your help to keep us going, so volunteer and see the Dixie Region come to your town!

Please encourage your group to volunteer to host DRHS in 2013. It’s a lot of fun to do, and folks surely do appreciate it. Contact Judy Burns, dixiehosta@bellsouth.net or 404-636-1119. Several of our groups have hosted the DRHS more than once, so if your group is missing out, it’s time to get busy and host the DRHS in 2013.

Membership in The Dixie Regional Hosta Society is open to any member of the AHS residing in one of our 12 states, or to any member of a local hosta society within the region. We collect no membership dues, but do have a lot of fun. Our preferred method of communication is via email and internet, so if you know someone who is not receiving our newsletter, please send their information to: dixiehosta@bellsouth.net.