

# Dixie Doin's

The Newsletter of the Dixie Regional Hosta Society

January 2011



It's been a cold and snowy winter here in Dixie, but plans are being made for a great summer-time get together in Birmingham, Al on June 9, 10 and 11.

The Alabama Hosta Society will host our annual event, **Hostas in the Heart of Dixie**. The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites- Hoover in Birmingham, Alabama.

[http://embassysuites1.hilton.com/en\\_US/es/hotel/BHMHOES-Embassy-Suites-Birmingham-Hoover-Alabama/index.do](http://embassysuites1.hilton.com/en_US/es/hotel/BHMHOES-Embassy-Suites-Birmingham-Hoover-Alabama/index.do) The room rate will be \$124 per night single or double and \$134 for triple or quad occupancy. All rooms are suites with mini fridge, microwave, coffee maker, etc. There are lots of amenities including full hot breakfast and evening Manager's Reception. The event will have its own website, which we will provide to you later in the spring, when we mail the information packets.

Cut-off date for reservations is 12 noon on May 19, 2011. Be sure to mention the Alabama Hosta Society when you make your reservations to get this special rate. . Please make your reservations early.

Planned events begin on Friday morning, so you'll want to arrive on Thursday evening so you'll 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, (variety TBA), garden tours, and our ever-popular Fabulous Auction, which is always the highlight of any DRHS event. For our "non-hosta loving" companions, there will be a golf outing and shopping at the near-by Galleria shopping district. In short, there will be something for everyone. We're hoping for a record attendance and know we will have a wonderful gathering. Thanks so much to Judy Feltman and her team for jumping in and putting together such a great meeting for us.

More details will be available later on in the spring, so watch your mail boxes. But mark your calendar right now, so you won't miss out! Hope to see you in Birmingham!



**Hostas in the Heart of Dixie**  
June 10-11, 2011  
Hosted by The Alabama Hosta Society

Embassy Suites  
2960 John Hawkins Parkway  
Birmingham, AL 35244  
205-985-9994

We try to send all correspondence via email to save money. Please send changes in your email address to: [dixiehosta@bellsouth.net](mailto:dixiehosta@bellsouth.net).

## Highlights from 2010 DRHS meeting in Waynesville, NC

Thanks to the efforts of our gracious hosts, the North Carolina Hosta Society, ramrodded by Trish Rux, Bob and Nancy Solberg and their helpers, the members of DRHS were treated to a wonderful summertime retreat to the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina in mid July, 2010. The weather was perfect, (except for the thunderstorm during dinner and the Auction on Friday evening) especially if you came from some place where the heat was dreadful! The venue was the historic Waynesville Inn Resort and Spa. On Friday morning, the group was treated to a very special visit to the local Haywood Community College, where we received a guided tour and demonstration of their tissue culture laboratory. Dr. John Sherman showed us the complete process of propagating hosta from this mysterious and mystifying process. Later on, we enjoyed driving through the mountains to view several lovely gardens in the Asheville area. On Saturday, after the morning's speakers, we toured several more gardens in the Waynesville area. Many thanks to these folks who opened their gardens to us:

**Nancy Ackermann Cole Garden**

**Hunziker Garden**

**Peter Loewer Garden**

**Wall Garden**

**Harrington Garden,**

**Cogdill Garden and Donahue Garden**

The auction on Friday evening was held under a gigantic tent overlooking the golf course. Unfortunately, the skies opened up and threatened to wash us away, but some quick scrambling allowed everything to be moved to high ground. Thanks to the generous donations of our attendees and vendors, the auction netted \$1400 for the society. Thanks to our auctioneers, Bob Solberg, Don Dean and Tom Micheletti who did a great job, keeping spirits and prices high!

On Saturday morning, Don Dean, noted hybridizer and driving force behind the American Hosta Society Online Auction, took us along as he recalled his journey down the path to becoming a hybridizer. We saw photos of his garden, which had recently been featured on the 2010 AHS National Convention Tour, in Minnesota. The slides were taken during all seasons of the year starting with the beauty of the garden under at least a foot of snow. As spring arrived, we saw the first shoots popping up through the remnants of the snow, and finally we were treated to the full beauty of the garden in summer. He talked of his introduction to hosta and to hybridizing, culminating with his receiving the Alex J. Summers Distinguished Merit award in 2008.

Our next speaker was Asheville-based garden guru Peter Loewer, aka, the Wild Gardener. We had the privilege of visiting Peter's personal garden the previous day, so seeing his slide presentation was the icing on the cake. Peter's unique perspective on container gardening, including using cast-off industrial containers, gave many of us new ideas to bring home and try in our own gardens.

Our "Ask the Experts" session found Bob Solberg, Tom Micheletti and Don Dean fielding questions about voles, hosta diseases and other topic of interest to all of us. This is always a popular feature at DRHS.

Saturday evening wrapped up with a keynote address by Bob Solberg about the importance of regional hosta societies as a link between the American Hosta Society and the local clubs. Bob feels that the DRHS has an important role to play and expressed a belief that the group will continue to prosper in the

future. As our membership ages, and costs become more of an issue with many of us, regional hosta meetings should draw more members as we improve the quality of our programs and events. With the help of our vendors and the local clubs, the DRHS stands ready to educate, entertain and spread the joy of hosta throughout the southeast.

Our attendance included folks from states outside of our region. AHS President Tom Michieetti and his wife, Becki, came from Illinois, AHS VP for Member Services, Jim Weidman and his wife Phyllis came from St. Louis, MO, and Don Dean and his wife, Gail came from Minnesota. We also had attendees from Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Mississippi, Tennessee and Virginia. In all we had eighty people from 13 states!

We are proud to have such a large attendance and look forward to surpassing this level in 2011. Thanks to all who helped to make the event such a grand success.

### **Mary Chastain elevated to Director Emeritus Status by DRHS Board**

At the annual board meeting in Waynesville, Mary Chastain, former owner of Lakeside Acres, and hybridizer of many fabulous hostas, was elevated to Director Emeritus status. Mary has been a guiding presence in the DRHS since it was organized in 1996. She and Roy came and supported the region during the early years by selling hostas and participating on the board. During the past few years, declining health has forced them to cut back on their attendance, but we always felt their support. Below is Mary's response to the board's actions:

*You as a group have always been dear to my heart. Over the past years, I have felt pride in your growth and achievement as you continue to succeed in gaining strength after strength. It seems that a small company with a great future has grown into a large corporation.*

*The fact that you have taken time to remember and bestow upon me this recognition is a great honor. Your generous action adds another lovely treasure to the chest of memories that I have stored of wonderful times spent with you. It is my wish that you shall continue to love and enjoy your work together. In the end, it is the relations that develop that continue to be important.*

*Thank you for remembering me. I am now placing your letter in my scrapbook of hosta memories.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mary Chastain*

## DRHS Board Supports AHS Hosta Virus X Research with Matching Donations

Another action of the board was to positively respond to the AHS request for support of Phase II of the Hosta Virus X investigation. A challenge was issued, not only to the individual members of the DRHS, but to the local clubs to support this important research. AHS VP for the Genus Hosta, Rob Mortko issued an informational brochure early in 2010 outlining both the results of Phase I of the study and the objectives of Phase II.

The DRHS Board voted to match, dollar for dollar, the donations of individual members, up to a total of \$500, and to match at 25%, the donations of member societies. I am proud to state that the individual match has been completely achieved and the club match is within \$100 of the goal amount of \$2000.

Donations have been forwarded to AHS and will be applied toward the \$40,000 needed to proceed with the project. If your club was not aware of this program and would like to put us over the top with a donation of \$100, please send your donation to: Judy Burns, Regional Director, 3070 Hudson Way, Decatur, GA 30033. We will match your donation at the 25% and forward it to AHS.

Thanks to our donors, a grand total of \$3375 was sent to AHS!

### Individual Donors

Judy Beeler (GA)  
Judy Burns (GA)  
Dexter Henry (GA)  
Cornelia Holland (TN)  
Lynn B Jackson (AL)  
George & Julia Lyons (GA)  
Harold McDonell (GA)  
Audrey M Sanford (AL)  
Hugh and Claudia Walker (GA)  
Ginny Wolf (GA)  
Toni Wright (GA)  
Virginia Gregory-Kocaj (TN)  
Chuck Zdeb (GA)

### Local Society Donors

Alabama Hosta Society  
Georgia Hosta Society  
The Hosta Connection (OK)  
Middle Tennessee Hosta Society  
MidSouth Hosta Society  
Oklahoma Hosta Society

If you would like to find more information about the Hosta Virus X Research Program, go to:  
<http://www.americanhostasociety.org/HostaVirusX.html>

## Nashville to Host AHS AND DRHS in 2012

We are proud that the Middle Tennessee Hosta Society will be hosting the American Hosta Society in Nashville in 2012. **Hostas, Friends & Music** will be held **June 13-16, 2012**. So that 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 mark your calendars now so you don't forget!

If your group would like to plan to host the DRHS in 2013, please contact  
Judy Burns, [dixiehosta@bellsouth.net](mailto:dixiehosta@bellsouth.net).