



Notes from

HORNBAKER GARDENS

"The Princeton Perennial People"

RR 4 Princeton, Illinois 61356

NEWSLETTER No. 8

(815) 659-3282

APRIL 1997

Gazebo Added To Hosta Walk

We are very excited about the cedar gazebo which was constructed last fall part way down the stairway in the hosta ravine. We had been talking about putting one up for the last two years, but just had not yet moved it up on the list of priorities. But last September, Kathy recognized and seized a golden opportunity to move the gazebo right to the top of the list. A few days after Rich's knee replacement surgery, Kathy suggested that we go ahead and have the gazebo built before winter. Rich, who was heavily medicated and dozing frequently, came to long enough to say, "Could I please have a drink of water?" Kathy interpreted that as "Do it", and the rest is history. Before Rich threw away his cane, the gazebo was in place.

The gazebo is ten-sided, has a double curved roof, and is fully screened in. It is 16 feet in diameter, and is similar to the 12-footer shown here in the picture. Benches line seven of the sides. We ran an electric line to the gazebo so that we can have a coffee pot going on cool spring mornings and a lamp by which to play a game of bridge on a warm summer night.

The gazebo came in kit form and was made of western red cedar by Leisure Woods, Inc., which manufactures only gazebos. Yes, we are now an authorized distributor for Leisure Woods Gazebos, which come in a variety of sizes, styles, and options. The standard sizes are 10', 12', 10'x14', 12'x16', 14', 16', 18', and 20'. The bench and

screen packages are just some of the options available. The baluster, valance, and roof styles are all interchangeable for style versatility that provides a custom look for each gazebo.

The kits can easily be assembled by the do-it-yourselfer. Wall sections are pre-assembled and pre-drilled. Roof sec-

tion and prices.

OTHER CONSTRUCTION: We have also removed Hoophouse #1 (reconstructing it elsewhere) and replaced it with a flat-topped shade structure, giving us more space for retail display of non-hosta shade plants. This, in turn, frees up all of the retail space on the other side of the drive for just hostas.

We were already running short of space for the hostas, and since we have added around 50 new varieties just this year, we desperately needed more retail display space.



12' Victorian Gazebo with Double-Curved Roof, similar to the 16-footer constructed at Hornbaker Gardens.

tions are pre-assembled and shingled with cedar shingles. The inside roof lathing is also western red cedar and is lined with felt paper to insure a raintight roof. All fasteners are galvanized, and the hardware is solid brass. The quality materials, styles, and designs result in a beautiful gazebo kit that shows no hint of prefabrication. If you are interested in putting up a gazebo, you really should come and check out the one we have put up, and then

Retail Hours

Starting April 14, we will be open seven days a week, Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

We will be closed July 4 and Labor Day, September 1, 1997.

OPEN HOUSE AND HOSTA WALK: We will hold our tenth annual Open House and Hosta Walk on June 6, 7, and 8, when the hostas are looking their best. Refreshments will be served, and drawings for prizes will be held each day.

PEAK BLOOM SEASONS: Just a reminder that the peak of iris bloom is usually the last two weeks of May. Daylilies have an extended bloom season, but the peak season for us seems to be the last three weeks of July. Our "Fall Flower Days" will be the week-ends of September 13-14 and 20-21, when the color and selection in our field of 10,000 mums should be best.

What's New

The *Heucheras* are coming! The *Heucheras* are coming! Last year in our newsletter, we mentioned that you can expect to see several new varieties of *Heucheras* (Coral Bells) become available in the near future. The future is now. We will have around 20 new varieties of Coral Bells this year.

Most of the new varieties come from the breeding program of Dan Heims Of Portland, Oregon. Kathy and Rich attended the annual convention of the American Hosta Society, which was held in Portland last June. While there, they got to see many of these new varieties and got a little carried away in the ordering department for this spring. You will simply have to see them to appreciate the wide range of leaf colors and leaf shapes now available. For example, several new varieties are var-

iegated with a silvery mottling over bronze, purple or chocolate colored leaves. Names such as 'Strawberry Swirl', 'Smokey Rose', 'Cathedral Windows', and 'Amethyst Myst' give you an idea as to what these varieties might look like. *H.* 'Purple Petticoats' flirts with you. Its ruffled and lacy edges reveal the hot pink undersides of its leaves. The rich red-plum color on *H.* 'Plum Pudding' is an absolute knockout. We see this Coral Bell as becoming one of the more popular new perennials to come on the market.

Heims also hybridizes *Pulmonaria*. We'll have a few of his new varieties this year, including a couple of very interesting variegated forms, 'Berries and Cream' and 'David Ward'.

HOSTAS: The craziness continues. We will have around 50 new varieties of hostas

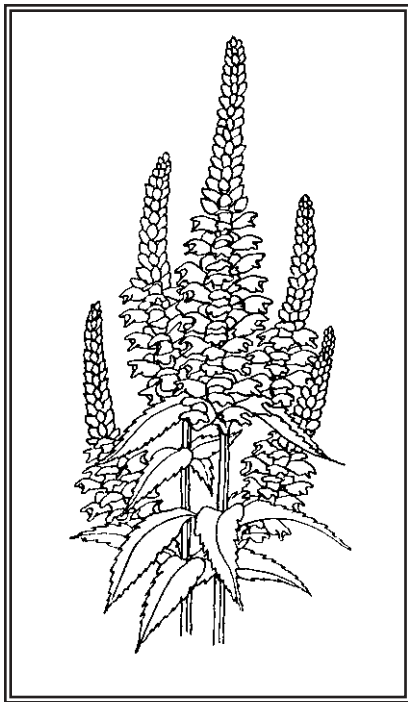
on hand this year. Many customers will be happy to hear that we will have a good supply of 'Whirlwind' this spring. We got some nice-looking plants in last fall, so they will be even nicer this spring. Our only clump of this white-centered hosta has been tempting customers for several years. Another exciting white-centered hosta is 'Sea Thunder' from Mildred Seaver.

Those who especially like 'Love Pat' (and most of us do) will be interested in 'Aspen Gold' and 'Midas Touch'. Both are
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Perennial Plant Of The Year

The Perennial Plant Association is pleased to announce that *Salvia* 'May Night' has been selected as the Perennial Plant of the Year for 1997. *Salvia*, members of the large mint family, are known for their aromatic foliage, attractive leaves and long season of bloom. 'May Night' is one of the most versatile cultivars. Its aromatic leaves are gray-green, finely toothed, and somewhat hairy. *Salvias* love the sun, and 'May Night' is no exception. It will grow in a variety of soils, but does best in moderately rich soils, and even dry ones that occasionally stress the plant during short-term summer droughts. The growth habit of 'May Night' is distinctively stiff and upright, forming a small mound.

It is the gorgeous floral display that sets this gem apart from its plainer cousins. Florets are borne on upright spike-like inflorescence and are deep rich, indigo-black, outlined with delicate purple bracts. When mature, this plant will



be 2-2 1/2 feet tall and 1-2 feet across. The main bloom time is late May through June. 'May Night' goes well with the yellow *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold', with red or pink peonies, or with the pink of *Penstemon* 'Elfin Pink'. We have found it best to mass several plants of 'May Night' together in order to put on a good show. As with many plants of this size, one specimen, by itself, does not make much of a statement, but several planted together can be gorgeous and can be seen from more of a distance.

One way to obtain a larger number of plants for massing is to buy and plant a few this year, and then dig and divide them early next spring when they just start showing signs of life

The plants are somewhat woody, but young plants, once they are dug, tend to come apart easily in pieces that will transplant successfully.

Spring Workshops Scheduled

Dividing Perennials

We will again hold our free workshop on dividing perennials on Saturday, April 19, at 10:00 a.m. We will discuss and demonstrate when and how to dig, divide and replant various perennials, including hostas and daylilies. The workshop is designed to show gardeners that most perennials are hardy and easily divided, and help them overcome their fear of hurting the plant in the process. No reservations are required.

Garden Designing Workshop

A second workshop, also free, will be held on Saturday, May 3, at 10:00 a.m. entitled "Designing with Perennials". This workshop will concentrate on the preparation, creation and design of a new perennial bed. Island beds, borders, and foundation plantings will all be discussed along with soil preparation, fertilization, color, and height selection. Rich Hornbaker will be conducting the workshop, which should last for an hour and a half. No reservations are required.

Both of the workshops will be very informal. Questions are invited as we go along. Coffee and lemonade will be provided.

National Hosta Convention Coming To Central Illinois

In June of 1998, the annual convention of the National Hosta Society will be held in Peoria, Illinois, hosted by the Central Illinois Hosta Society. The national convention is always well attended by hosta enthusiasts, hybridizers, growers and dealers from across the country. It usually lasts for three days, and will consist of tours of gardens in the central Illinois area, a cut-leaf show, a scientific program relating to hostas, and hosta vending by several dealers. The convention

is capped by a spirited auction where successful bidders can come away with some new and unusual hostas that are not yet on the market.

This will be a perfect opportunity for local hosta buffs to discover the fun of a hosta convention without traveling too far. It should also be noted that some of the finest hosta gardens in the country are located right here in central Illinois.

The National Hosta Society publishes The Hosta Journal twice a year, a truly

outstanding publication dealing with the world of hostas and the people who populate that world. The color photographs of new varieties may cause severe salivation in the dead of winter by those of us who have been bitten by the "hosta bug". If you have been considering joining the NHS or a local hosta group, here is the information you need:

National Hosta Society: Robyn

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What's new

Continued from page 1

gold hostas with heavy substance and have cupped and puckered leaves. 'Aspen Gold' has the more rounded leaves of the two, and therefore more resembles a gold 'Love Pat'.

'King Tut' is another outstanding bright gold hosta. It has heart-shaped leaves and white bell-shaped flowers. Yellow hostas have never been as popular as the variegated hostas, nor even as popular as the blue or green hostas. However, their popularity is growing as gardeners discover how to use yellow hostas to separate variegated specimens, to contrast with blues and greens, to brighten up a shady area, and to generally lend a tropical air to a shade garden.

Another new hosta guaranteed to spark interest is 'Striptease', an intriguing sport of 'Gold Standard' with wider dark green margins, and unique white strips between the margins and the lighter centers. The collectors will go for this one!

'Baby Bunting' is a fine dwarf with green, rounded, heart-shaped leaves. We also expect to have a supply of the excellent dwarf, 'Popo', one of Russ O'Harra's introductions.

Two hostas which have been much admired in our gardens are 'Mary Marie Ann' and 'Zager's White Edge'. We finally have enough plants of these varieties to sell some this year. 'Mary Marie Ann' forms a medium-small clump with bluish-green, upright, twisted leaves with streaked white centers. The centers gradually darken during the summer, but the spring show is superb. 'Zager's White Edge' is one of the best white-edged hostas available. The contrast of the frosty, blue-green of the center of the leaf with the pure white of the wide margin is just outstanding.

OTHER PERENNIALS: A couple of new *Salvias* sound interesting. The rose-pink blooms on *S. 'Rose Queen'* should provide a nice contrast when planted with the usual blue color on other *Salvia*, such as *S. 'May Night'*, this year's Perennial of the Year. *Salvia 'Purple Rain'* has long, arching stems of purplish buds opening to a smoky purple throughout the summer. It grows 24" tall and is touted as being very long flowering and attracting hummingbirds.

Another long flowering plant is *Coreopsis 'Flying Saucers'*, which has large, single, glowing golden flowers which begin to open in early June and continue, non-stop, throughout the summer. It is compact, growing to 15", and is reported to be disease resistant. Its size, color, and long bloom time should make it an ideal companion to the blues and purples of the *Salvias* and the *Veronicas*.

We are anxious to see a new *Sedum* that we have ordered. It is imported from Japan and known as *Sedum 'Frosty Morn'*. It grows to 1' and features a wide, white border on each leaf.

CONIFERS AND OTHER TREES AND SHRUBS: One of the highlights of our trip to Portland, Oregon, last summer was a trip to Iseli Nursery, the country's largest grower of dwarf conifers. After oohing and aaahing throughout the tour, we ordered and ordered some more.

There were two bright yellow conifers that really caught our eyes. *Chameacyparis pisifera 'Mops'* has a low,

mounded form with brilliant gold, thread-like foliage. The color is best in full sun, but in this climate, it is generally best to grow any False Cypress in some partial shade and a location where it is somewhat protected from the driving winds and sun of our winters.

The other yellow conifer is *Juniperus horizontalis 'Mother Lode'*, a prostrate juniper that holds its bright, golden yellow color all summer. Fall brings a deep yellow-orange, becoming tinged with plum by winter for all-season interest. Use it as a focal point, draped over stone, or in a mass planting as a golden carpet. This plant was just discovered in 1982, so it has taken several years to increase production enough to get the plant into general circulation.

The attractive, green dwarf Alberta spruces have been popular for many years. Now, there is a blue variety called *Picea glauca 'Sander's Blue'*. It is similar to the usual dwarf Alberta except for its incredible, frosty blue color.

We also could not resist ordering a variegated maple, *Acer negundo 'Flamingo'*. 'Flamingo' is a fast-growing, wide-spreading garden tree. Its leaves are green and white variegated with the addition of pink. The pink is most pronounced in the spring on the new growth, a soft and pretty effect. Plant 'Flamingo' in full sun for best color.

Landscaping And Consulting Services Available

Kris Hahne is back and ready to roll this spring. She is available for consultation, designing and drawing of plans, or complete installations. She has several jobs lined up already, so call early if you are interested in her services.

Hosta Convention

Continued from page 3

Duback, Membership Secretary, 7802 NE 63rd Street, Vancouver, WA 98662 Dues: Individual \$19 per year (\$36 for two years, \$50 for three years) Family \$22 per year

Central Illinois Hosta Society: Dick and Kay Harrison, Treasurer, 6202 N. Suffolk Dr., Peoria, IL 61615 Dues: Individual \$5 per year, Family \$8

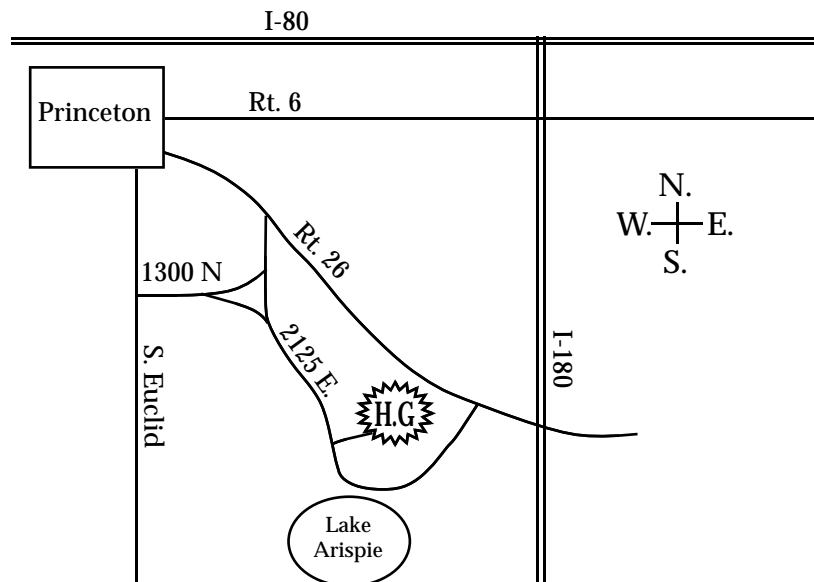
Northern Illinois Hosta Society: Florence Brennan, Membership Secretary, 12601 Timberland, Palos Park, IL 60464 Dues: \$5 annually

Mississippi Valley Hosta Society: Jack Dreesen, Treasurer, 2785 Elk Drive, Bettendorf, IA 52722 Dues: \$5 annually for family

We now accept



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EASIEST DIRECTIONS TO HORNBAKER GARDENS:

From the intersection of I-180 and Rt. 26 (5 miles SE of Princeton), go toward Princeton on Rt. 26 about 1/4 mile and take the first left. Go 2 miles to the top of the steep hill.