



Newsletter of the

*Russ O'Hara Hosta Society*

August 2019



Summer Hosta Tour  
Not Quite Prime Time, but a Very Worthy Tour Time  
Sunday August 11, 2019, 9:30am - 3:00pm

Lunch RSVP by August 8, 2019

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of meals: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$13.00

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

David Dettmann  
122 Bluegill Ct  
Pella, IA 50219-7513

Access the ROHS website at  
[www.rohs.org](http://www.rohs.org)

The Russ O'Hara Hosta Society is an educational society open to all those interested in the genus Hosta. It's purpose is to promote the growing and enjoyment of Hostas. Including their use in landscape design, the cultivation and development of new cultivars. The goals of the society shell be in keeping with those of the American Hosta Society.

#### Apologies & Details!

First Apology is for the short notice of the ROHS 2019 Garden Tour. I had hoped to get this information to Anne Lynam, our talented Newsletter Editor on Thursday July 18 before she left for a week+ of RAGBRAI involvement. My plans were changed when I suffered a pickle ball injury on that Thursday morning...hospital & ortho surgeon visits resulted in diagnosis of torn gastroc & soleus muscles, a walking boot, cane, & lots of restrictions. Swelling & pain weren't provided as I already had those items. The boot is padded, or better called "insulated." You'll understand significance shortly. Difficult with/restricted from walking on uneven ground; 95% of our lot is uneven ground. I've now lost the boot and cane, and can do a good "Chester" walk. Somehow I managed to acquire something else that started with heat exhaustion. Extreme fatigue, malaise, and nearly constant fever/chills; most of this has cleared after a week, except for perplexing daily fever onset in the evening. I'm certain it is not HVX, crown rot, foliar nematodes, tobacco mosaic virus, or vole bites, but West Nile Virus is in the differential. Time for another medical visit. Sincere apologies and best wishes to those in our hosta community who are dealing with stuff much worse.

Second Apology is for the delay in getting a summer tour arranged. The summer calendar had so much competition for available dates with other events and with conflicts for the principle organizers of a possible tour. And, as you know, ROHS does not have a current Vice President, who would perform this task. We've had summer tours the past 2 years thru good fortune and creativity by substitute ad hoc vice president "volunteers." Very thankful that past president Gary Garles has taken a lead in coordinating the 2019 summer garden tour event, after the initial plan (to tag along with Ames gardens after their national peony convention tour) wasn't able to be developed for this year. Plan B had a starting point of the Gary Garles-Nancy Wells garden (which was on the 2019 American Conifer Society-Iowa tour) but needed at least one more garden in the Des Moines metro area for a tour event. And then the serendipity of a spontaneous contact to Gary occurred! John Schmacker in the Drake University area called Gary to mention he had an extensive hosta collection and garden landscape, a social history with Russ O'Harra, and would welcome our club to visit. Almost like winning the lottery for ROHS!

And now I'll add apologies for not having a lot of time and energy to have helped more with the possible tour developments since Plan A fell thru in May, but... May 30th we had an "internal disaster" at our house. Mysteriously a pvc pipe melted out from the inside (plumber with 40+ yrs. experience has never seen anything like this), and burst, flooding our basement. Clean water at least. I'll spare you the entire saga. Restoration company in, water removal, 4 weeks of content pack out (we were 2 cereal boxes short of getting on tv's Hoarder's show), removal of many damaged items (including 1000+ sq. ft. carpet, pad, & vinyl), and then mold was found. Restoration shifted to mold mitigation, placing basement into plastic sealed confinement, workers in hazmat suits with self-contained breathing, etc. Lower dry wall, base trim, some door casings, insulation, etc. all removed. Sealing included blocking a/c vents & cold air returns. Sealing & temperature changes outside then caused condensation between vapor barrier and insulation, so more stuff was removed. Initial leak flood "burnt" out the electronic board for our geothermal system, which is "obsolete" as the company is out of business. Substitute board was "tweaked" to fit; doesn't work. Likely new geothermal system to follow. We've not had central a/c work for more than 1 day since May 30. Remember the heat & humidity "waves" and the prior references to the padded vs. insulated boot and heat exhaustion? Highest indoor readings we've had in the first floor of the house were 94 degrees with 99% humidity. Should be growing orchids and other tropical plants! Second mold test done; awaiting results. If clean, then rebuilding starts, with optimistic completion by fall. The 739 boxes and other stuff stored in Des Moines warehouse come back, damaged items are replaced, and we "move back in." I expect to find pre-bought Christmas gifts just in time. Thanks for "listening" and I sincerely hope that your summer has been more enjoyable!

## Reminder about changes to Member Dues

\$10.00 yearly

\$25.00 for three years

Year on mailing label or email is year dues are paid through.

# ROHS Officers

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## 2019 SUMMER GARDEN TOUR DETAILS!

DATE & TIME: Sunday August 11, 2019, 9:30am-3:00pm

### LUNCH:

Held at the Altoona Enabling Gardens Shelter (1050 1st St., Altoona, IA 50009, just South from Hy-Vee).

Bathrooms available.

Catered by Altoona Hy-Vee: Tailgate picnic of chicken breast & pulled pork sandwiches (2 per person), potato salad, rainbow rotini salad, mixed cookies, water, ice tea, & lemonade.

Cost is \$13.00/person.

RESERVATIONS please by **Thursday August 8**

To David Dettmann 122 Bluegill Ct. Pella, IA 50219-7513.

I might accept phone (641-627-5097 landline or 641-230-1611 cell)

e-mail (bdd5097@yahoo) reservations if you are absolutely committed to attend & will provide appropriate payment on the tour date.

I may order some extra lunches, but can **NOT** guarantee their availability on tour date as it will be first-come, first-served for non-reserved lunch.

There are several lunch options in the area.

### SPECIAL NOTE:

CURRENT MEMBERS who bring a donated item which yields more than \$13 or buy an auction item which costs more than \$13, the current member will be reimbursed for lunch at auction check-out. Limit of 1 "free" lunch per current member.

### SCHEDULE:

9:30-Noon: Tour Gardens #1 & #2

11:45am-12:45pm: Auction plant delivery, registration, lunch, & auction instructions.

12:45-2:45pm:Auction.

2:45-3:00pm:Clean up.

***\*We must vacate by 3pm and clean up to get the deposit back.***

## GARDEN TOURS

GARDEN #1: John Schmacker's garden at 3724 Hunter Ave., Des Moines, IA 50311-2713.

John would like to welcome everyone to his home in the woods of central Des Moines. The street ends in his driveway, due to a meandering creek that runs through the area. His house is situated at the top of a steep decline to the creek, allowing for multiple decks and paths to provide views of the wildlife haven in the lower yard. One path in the back skirts a running creek and pond. Another path reveals many hosta shaded by oaks. A third path winds around the house into the sun where a tree has fallen. There are hundreds of hosta in the yard, as well as companion plants galore. A probable highlight is a giant clump of 'Russell Lee' planted by Russ O'Harra! You will need to walk slow so you don't miss some nice specimens of uncommon trees and perennials.

DIRECTIONS to Garden #1: From I-235, take the 42nd St. exit north to University Ave. Go East (Turn Right) on University 3 blocks to 39th Street, Go North (Turn Left) on to 39th street for 2 short blocks to Hunter Ave. corner. Look for parking spaces on 39th Street as well as Hunter Ave, as Hunter is a very short street.

GARDEN #2: Nancy Wells & Gary Garles at 2110 4th Ave., SE, Altoona, IA 50009-2128.

DIRECTIONS from Garden #1: Return to I-235 or (stay on University Ave), go East to University Ave. (fairgrounds) Exit. Go east on University Ave. Do not stop at the Iowa State Fair today. Follow University Ave. (becomes Hwy 163) east until NE 70th Street (traffic lights, farm land being converted on right...sigh), Go North (Turn Left) on to NE 70th which becomes 1st Avenue S in Altoona. Go East (Turn Right) on 21st Street, go 4 short blocks, to 4th Ave. SE, Go South (Turn Right). Second house on the right with lots of plants and trees in front, side & back yards. Drooling neighbors in all directions. Estimated travel time from garden 1-2 is about 30 minutes, depending upon State Fair traffic.

Nancy Wells & Gary Garles warmly welcome you to their home and invite you to stroll the gardens. The house is on a small hill on a 60x120 lot in "Country Cove" Altoona. There are a large number of plants per square foot in the abundant beds in the yard, including over 200 varieties of hosta, some of which may be correctly named. Some scarce plants include *Cornus sanguinea* 'Compressa,' *Picea abies* 'Cincinnati,' *Clematis* 'Wyevale,' and *Pinus parviflora* 'ha tsumari goyo.' They hosted a tour site for the June 2019 American Conifer Society-Iowa event. Gary is fond of *Pinus parviflora*, and Nancy takes care of the non-*Pinus* and non-*Picea* edibles. The house was built in late 2007, so you are seeing about 10 years of growth for the first plantings. There is a patio with a water feature, a deck for sunning, and you can still see the remains of a violent May hail storm that occurred when hostas were emerging. Rabbits are the scourge here. Something for everyone.

DIRECTIONS to Lunch/Auction Site

Altoona Enabling Gardens, 1050 1st Ave. S, Altoona, IA 50009:

Return to 1st Ave., S., Go North (Turn Right) and go about 20 blocks towards the Altoona Hy-Vee. The Enabling Gardens are "just before" the Hy-Vee which are both on the west/left side of the street. Travel time is estimated at 2 minutes. The Enabling Gardens are also interesting to view!

## AUCTION:

PLEASE bring auction items to the lunch/auction site at the Altoona Enabling Gardens, with name labels for the item and donor name. PLEASE be patient in the donor, lunch, and attendee registration process as we want to be accurate with records, and will likely have a small "staff."

PLEASE note the special incentive regarding possible "free" (reimbursed) lunch if you are a current member who brings an item or purchase an item that is \$13+! People are able to join or renew membership in ROHS at the event.

We have been provided a very nice selection of special hosta harvested on Mother's Day from President Janann Meyer's former home in Ogden. Janann, Ron Humeston, & I (David Dettmann) slogged thru very wet grounds (remember the very wet spring?) around her home, with spades, bags, pots, planting soil, Sharpies, pop sticks, and Janann's trusty map & memory of her years of hosta and other plant collecting. Focus was to collect for her new home in Cresco and get contributions to the ROHS summer auction. It was a slow process due to the wet soil, but a total of about 20-25 plants were bagged and brought to my house for further work. I have potted her donations and most have survived, if not thrived in this very chaotic summer. Plant sizes range from several to many divisions. Challenges included several minor hail and major wind storms, extended dry spells, huge swings in temperature & humidity, the local deer and rabbit herds, and they've been parked under a hickory tree which has been releasing the early nut drop. As I just surveyed the lot to obtain the current name list, I've discovered that wooden popsicle sticks don't retain Sharpie writing nor last long with frequent watering. Here is the current donation list from Janann, with moderate confidence that names are correct:

Atomic Elvis, Crumb Cakes, Curley Fries, Dandy Lion, Dark Shadows, Deep Pockets, Diva, Eye Catcher, Golden Meadows, Hideout, Lakeside Legal Tender, Lakeside Scamp, O'Harra, Oreo Cream, Peppermint Ice, Pocketful of Sunshine, Stand by Me, Tattle Tails, Tears of Joy, Tequila Sunrise, and Tic Toc. There is one plant as 'Boyz Toy' which I took to the AHS/MWRHS convention in Green Bay and I had the "distinction" of having the only item disqualified from their auction due to mislabeling, and none of the esteemed hosta experts could identify. If I can figure out something by the time of the auction, it may appear there.

WHAT to BRING: Lawn chair for the lunch/auction, sunscreen, insect repellent, hats, bottled water or other beverages (NOTE: no alcohol or tobacco use on premises of Altoona Enabling Gardens), rain gear/clothing as weather appropriate, plant/other item donations, patience, enthusiasm, appetite, cameras, good walking shoes (slopes at Garden #1!), invited family, friends & potential friends, cash or check, and smiles! Oh, advice about geothermal systems and how to manage hoarding is also welcomed, although hoarding advice is likely a very limited resource from hosta collecting friends!

QUESTIONS: Please contact me-David Dettman-at contact information listed above for the lunch reservations! Looking forward to a great participation and garden tour experience.

THANKS to Gary Garles, Nancy Wells, Janann Meyer, Ron Humeston, and our "new" hosta friend, John Schmacker!