

Hosta Horizons

Newsletter of the

Russ O'Hara Hosta Society

Sunday October 11, 2026

Noon – 4:00 pm

Set up at 11:30am and bring a dish to share

Potluck

Iowa Arboretum and Gardens
1875 Peach Avenue, Madrid IA 50516



Access the ROHS website at
www.rohs.org

The Russ O'Hara Hosta Society is an educational society open to all those interested in the genus Hosta. Its 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 shall be in keeping with those of the American Hosta Society.

FALL MEETING

Our Fall ROHS meeting will be held October 11, 2026 at the Iowa Arboretum and Gardens. We will start at noon with our usual deliciously diverse potluck lunch, with special guest speaker to follow.

The Fall Meeting speaker will be Aaron Steil, Iowa State University Statewide Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist, speaking on Ferns for Iowa Gardens. Aaron says "Ferns are fascinating and there are so many that are great garden plants and native to Iowa."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was the best of summers; it was the worst of summers. Adequate rainfall and great growing conditions had our Hostas looking their biggest and best by June. We were lucky to have fewer slugs than usual, but variegated cutworms made up for the lack of slug damage starting in early July.

It seemed “rainy” in June when Ames had 6.24 inches of rain. But July was the whooper this year with 13.46 inches of rain. Of course, that’s smaller than the amount of rainfall in July 1993 when 16.4 inches of rain fell in Ames (and more in other parts of the state). 1993 was the year of The Great Flood; 2026 will be the year of The Other Floods.

The worst of the July rainfall happened from July 3 into the morning of July 4. Ames recorded up to 7 inches of rain in various parts of town, resulting in unprecedented street and basement flooding. Most of our friends in neighborhoods in town had minor to major flooding in their basements. Most was surface water than came in through basement egress window wells. Our flooding was sewer water that back up through the shower drain in the basement. But remediation has happened, the basement is dry, and we are in line for reconstruction when the contractors can get to us.

Our historic wet summer continued into fall with 5.09 inches in August and 6.45 inches in September, causing continuously saturated soils. The late summer rainfall did keep the Hostas looking better than usual, but it’s been too wet to accomplish the late summer planting, dividing, and weeding that needs to be done. Even with a wet fall, the Hosta seasonal decline (aka “summer uglies”) is setting in. Some gardening will still happen, but it feels like the end is near. Let’s hope a dry and lingering fall many hours in the garden, at least until the short-day lengths drive us indoors by 5:00 o’clock!

I hope you and your gardens flourished this summer and that the fall will offer an opportunity to finally plant the Hostas you bought this year.

RENEWALS: Please bring payment to the Fall Meeting or mail to the Treasurer/Membership Chair, David Dettmann 122 Bluegill Ct., Pella, IA 50219-7513. Membership cost is \$10 for one year, or \$25 for three years.

THANK YOU FOR BEING ACTIVE AND CURRENT MEMBERS OF ROHS!

ROHS Officers

Donald Lewis, President

2710 Northwood Court
Ames IA 50010
1-515-460-0542
drlewis9133@gmail.com

Barry Laws, Vice President

19635 130th Ave
Indianola, IA 50125
Info@quiltedgardens.com
515-720-3089

David Dettmann, Treasurer

122 Blue Gill Court
Pella, IA 50219
bdd5097@yahoo.com
641-627-5097

Gary Garles, Secretary

2110 4th Ave S.E.
Altoona, IA 50009
thelandscaperdsm@gmail.com
515-313-6841

Anne Lynam, Newsletter Editor

6589 SE 6th Ave
Des Moines, IA 50327
parkk65@mchsi.com
515-265-0017

Ann Borwick, Hospitality Co-Chair

raborwick@gmail.com
515-276-9777

Minutes of The ROHS Meeting April 12, 2026 Warren County Lodge #53 Indianola, Iowa

A Potluck lunch was served at noon.

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM by President Donald Lewis. The Ackworth Garden Club has joined our Society for the meeting today, so everyone introduced themselves.

The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed and approved. Treasurer David Dettmann gave a membership report. There were 3 new members attending. Tom Jurik gave a brief update on the website. The Facebook page is updated and a link is on the website.

Ann Borwick is the new Hospitality Chair, as is Ron by association.

The Ackworth Garden Club Spokeswoman related information about the club activities and how to participate. They are a Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa-National affiliate. They meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Barry Laws spoke about the upcoming summer tour, and the new improved Hosta leaf show at the state fair. All details are online.

The plant retailers in attendance were invited to contribute information about their plant sales, and anything new and exciting they were stocking for the season. Piney Ridge, Kat's Garden, and Quilted Gardens all related updates. Piney ridge is only open April 1 to June 1, approximately. They grow their Hosta one year before selling. Kat's Garden supplies Busy Bee Nursery in Indianola, and they sell at the downtown Des Moines farmer's market. Quilted Gardens has a new 'blue road sign' to point the way to their facility. They have an extensive selection of conifers, Hosta, and other rare offerings.

Donald Lewis initiated a discussion of big box stores selling plant material. Box stores are somewhat problematic in that they have poor disease control on occasion, and no effective feedback system to address concerns. Let the buyer beware.

The Spring Garden Market at the Botanical Center was discussed, and it was decided we would not get involved.

Reiman Gardens has a plant sale May 9th. The MRHS has their 50th Anniversary Celebration this summer. The AHS meeting is in Ohio. Our next meeting is October 11th at the Iowa Arboretum, and Aaron Steil is scheduled to appear to champion ferns.

Next Spring: Possible meeting site again in Indianola at Scotch Ridge United Methodist Church, the meeting site of the Ackworth Garden Club. Gary Garles possibly speaking on his personal garden.

Dave Dettmann discussed possibly digging Hosta at a home soon to be sold. More on that later.

Meeting adjourned by Donald Lewis 3 PM. Submitted by Secretary Gary Garles.



The Iowa Arboretum
and Gardens

A National Display Garden
of the
American Hosta Society
Designated 2024

ROHS MEMBERSHIP REPORT. October 11, 2026

First, profound THANKS to Andrew Lietzow for his very innovative and successful membership recruitment he did while representing ROHS at the Des Moines Botanical Garden's spring plant vendor and organization event in May 2026! He recruited 20 (yes, that is TWENTY!) new members and got 2 member renewals with use of his donated plants for memberships and prize drawings. Second, we also have given complimentary memberships to two of our 2026 Summer Tour Garden Hosts (and one member garden was given a one-year extension), and had two new members join us at the Spring meeting. Third, we finally have the contact details to provide the 2025 Iowa State Fair Hosta Leaf Show "Best of Show" ROHS membership prize: CONGRATULATIONS with a one-year membership to Jen Firzlaff of Des Moines! Fourth, thanks to Donna Yeast, Sara Davis, & Jill Tobin for their renewals.

So, a very hearty WELCOME to these new members with hope that they will be long time active members of the Russ O'Harra Hosta Society: Shelly Bain, Amber Siever, Jim Birkenholz, Ann Analt, Jenna Ingle, Tyler Gartenbery, Debbie Hargens, Tom McBride, Nancy Freudenberg, Lynn, Ethington, Anne Evans, Jessice Balk, Robyn Morris, Will Johnson, Kim Steele, Joyce Ludlow, Jullie (Vivian) Riegel, Brian Johnson, Joyce Archibald, Sue Cornick (those were the Lietzow recruits); Sally Hardy, Mike Bolden (Spring meeting), Jen Firzlaff (IA State Fair winner), and Joan Ferry, Carol Tripp (Summer Tour comp). I will add apologies for any names not correctly spelled as sometimes it is difficult to translate handwriting. Sorry!

Memberships are presented by the year paid through.

2022 (1): Mary Van Berkum

2023 (6): Joann Barnes, Donna Johnson, Tom Jones, Nola Luebbert, Kathy & Steve Moser, Gwendolyn Miller.

2024 (10): Jean Belzer, Nancy Briggs, Jane Dawson, Jill Henson, Dyke & Cindy Hicks, Tom Kenney, Kim Nizzi, Kassidy Noble, Kathie O'Harra, Cathi Turner.

2025 (10): Larry & Linda Ertel, Dave & Linda Grieve, Helen Kopitzke, Annie & Bob Kroll, Donna Miller, Peggy Moody, Judi Porhosky, Jackie & Bob Pool, John Schmacker, Traci & Kirk Seltz.

2026 (34 if I counted right!): Ann Analt, Joyce Archibald, Shelly Bain, Jessica Balk, Diana Bedwell, Janine Bennett, Jim Birkenholz, Mike Bolden, Michael & Anita Canney, Sara Davis, David & Betsy Dettmann, Anne Evans, Joan Ferry, Tyler Gartenbery, Lois & Jack Girton, Mona Holland, Jenna Ingle, Brian Johnson, Will Johnson, Joyce Ludlow, Robyn Morris, Mary O'Harra, Reldon Ramsey, Julie (Vivian) Riegel, Amber Siever, Roderick Simmons, Katie Stafford, Kim Steele, Lisa Swanson, Sherry Swihart, Jill Tobin, Carol Tripp, Nicki Wiederstein.

2027 (19): Denise Augustine, Julie Dotterer, Don & Dee Draper, Jen Firzlaff, Robert & Heidi Folkestad, Marilyn Gliem, Skip Hitchcock, Gary & Kathy Hoard, Kris & Tom Jurik, Barry Laws & Larry Skellenger, Andrew Lietzow, Anne Lynam, Sheryl Miller, Kenn Outzen & Dean Koob, Cindy Schnoebelen, Curt & Cindy Schultz, Sue Slater, Audra Wilson, Donna Yeast.

2028 (10): Sue Cornick, Connie Dingeman, Lynn Ethington, Nancy Freudenberg, Sally Hardy, Debbie Hargens, Tom Johnson, Donald & Dorothy Lewis, Tom McBride, Ellen O'Harra-Hill.

2029 (1): Ron & Ann Borwick

2030 (1): Ellen & Frank Glasgow.

2031 (1): Gary Garles & Nancy Wells.

Lifetime (1): Joan Burke O'Harra.

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERSHIPS THROUGH 2026 or beyond: 67

ROHS-JIM HARTMAN HOSTA SALVAGE ADVENTURE

Jim Hartman was a long-time Hosta collector, retailer, hybridizer, and expert. He shared a smidgeon of his extensive knowledge of Hosta with the ROHS at a fall meeting in the 2010's in Ogden. This wonderful presentation was during the ROHS Presidential-era of Janann Laree Myers (then Abels), and arranged by her persistent pleading with him to visit us. Jim and his wife Sheila travel to AZ each fall as snowbirds, so finally Janann was able to coordinate their travel with our fall meeting as they passed through Iowa.

Jim's garden in Plymouth, MN (a western Minneapolis suburb) was named Harbor Lane Hosta and was crafted over many years to blanket with his favorite plant on nearly one acre of a corner lot. Several hundred railroad ties were slowly harvested from the nearby abandoned railroad line to be transformed into tiers with Hosta plantings and a six-foot tall version of a split rail fence to help manage deer browsing. The yard, with its terraces, decking, patio, and other sitting areas with many Hostas, martagon lilies, pulmonaria, peonies, and various other perennials have been enjoyed by many over the years, including at weddings (which probably prompted weedings), receptions, parties, and other social gatherings. As with other dedicated Hosta collectors, there was minimal need for a lawnmower.

Sadly, Jim lost his battle with a progressive chronic lung disease in early 2026. Sheila contacted Janann, who has a very special close relationship with them, about the potential sharing of plants with her and with ROHS, if and when the property would be sold to someone who had no appreciation for the landscaping, and especially the Hosta collection. This potential was announced at the ROHS spring meeting, but nothing developed until the real estate sale occurred in summer, and a quick closing date of September 28 prompted a very short window of opportunity to harvest as many plants as possible.

The sad reason for the salvage is at the end of this story. Janann contacted David, who shared the info with ROHS, and then the adventure unfolded. David rented a 5x8 U-Haul trailer to be pulled by his Maverick hybrid pick up (note: gas mileage goes from usual 39 to 22 mpg) on Friday September 25 and returned by Monday September 28. Supplies (lots of bags, pots, bins, shovels, plant marking stuff, gloves) and excitement with anticipation, and sadness, too, were brought along.

With help from Janann and her friend Al Fischer, approximately 30 hostas were dug on Friday afternoon-evening, and 76 more were added to the harvest on Saturday, starting at 8 am & finishing at 4pm, including the last 4 hours in the rain. Surprisingly that area of MN was very dry, so soil (Jim had carefully created a splendid soil mix including sand) was easy and light to work with. David's special hosta fork was the champ as there were many huge mature clumps. Jim had name labels for about 80% of the plants, and we hope that we got the right plant for each label.

On Saturday, THE book with the detailed maps, alphabetical & garden name lists, and drawings was found and was helpful. We searched for Jim's registered Hostas (e.g., "Prince of Peace"), but alas, did not find those, but did collect an unregistered "Damn it, Jim" which goes well with a Star Trek-themed Garden or for a spouse of someone named Jim. We did not find as many martagon lilies as we hoped to get, but at least 12 bulbs were located.

Janann crammed 50-55 plants (and bulbs, rocks, etc.) into her car, and already has those planted at her Cresco, IA home. David filled the U-Haul and his pickup truck bed and interior with plants, and now 106 Hosta (nearly all in bags) are awaiting potting in Pella. Potting mix has been trucked home, and perhaps enough pots are there for this next week's work. Perhaps some of those plants will show up at the Fall Meeting as auction items and/or door prizes!

Continued on page 6:

The future for the lot of plants also includes a plant sale/auction in 2027 (summer tour items?) for ROHS, and perhaps some will be added to David's personal deer food salad bar. I plan to develop a list of known plant names, and there are some interesting (rare?) ones and 2 species Hosta, but the alert is that Jim's favorite color was green.

While Janann and I, along with Jim's widow Sheila and their daughter Suje (adopted from Korea), celebrated the 150+ plants we salvaged in this adventure, and that about 10 other people harvested at least 200 plants (BUT the Shades of Green Hosta Society unfortunately cancelled their 15 people to harvest on Sunday), there was much sadness that SO many other plants were not harvested. And the new owners' plan is to completely demolish the yard, bull dozing and scrapping it clean (good bye to a long row of mature arborvitae, a gorgeous mature redbud, 12 huge white spruce, several other trees, hundreds of railroad ties, house, garage, garden sheds, etc.) and place a \$1.5 million house. And no doubt with a lawn needing a lawn tractor. Sigh. As Sheila and Suje repeatedly said with very, very mixed feelings, "it's a new chapter, it's a transformation."

ROHS is most appreciative that we were honored and invited to give some of Jim's plants their new chapter of enjoyment, and special thanks to Janann, Al, Sheila, and Suje for making this adventure happen and for their gracious and kind hospitality! And apologies to Suje, if the name is misspelled.

Respectfully submitted, David Dettmann

Jack Barta Memorial Scholarship Sponsor

Rob Mortko, President of the Midwest Region Hosta Society, invites the Russ O'Hara Hosta Society to sponsor the Jack Barta Memorial Scholarship for next February's MRHS Winter Symposium, February 27, 2027 in Brookfield-Milwaukee, WI.

The scholarship is named in honor of Jack Barta (1947-2021) founder of the South Eastern Wisconsin Hosta Society, and owner Jack's Hostas, one of the top Hosta dealers in the Midwest, and a regular vendor at AHS conventions.

The scholarship pays the registration cost (approximately \$64) for one attendee selected in a random drawing at the Symposium.

David Moody Memorial Tree Planting

Michael and Peggy Moody planted a Japanese Stewartia tree at the Iowa Arboretum and Gardens in memory of David Moody (1936-2025) on Saturday, June 27, 2026. David and his wife Peggy were active and generous members of ROHS and the American Hosta Society. He died September 27, 2025 at the age of 89 and is survived by Peggy, his wife of 62 years.



ROHS Summer Tour

The ROHS summer tour, cohosted with the Ackworth Garden Club, was held on June 7, 2026 in the Des Moines and Indianola areas. The four, unique and special gardens were enjoyed by approximately 40 participants who dodged a slight drizzle early, and then a brief downpour at about 11:00. Thunder that rumbled during the lunch and plant auction at Lake Ahquabi State Park shelter house caused some anxiety, but the day ended on a high note.

By the numbers:

- 45 plants in the auction donated by ROHS and Ackworth Garden Club members
- Total auction sales \$1,132, proportionally shared with the Ackworth Garden Club
- Price range of \$5 to \$75 per plant

Gratitude. Thanks to:

- Our four splendid garden hosts
- Anne for communications/promo
- Barry and Larry and the Ackworth Garden Club for overall arrangements
- Ellen & Frank for the caterer arrangements & garden tour
- Donors who gave plants for the auction, auction bidders and winners
- Barry, Larry, Gary G, Gary H, and Renee for managing an effective plant auction
- Ann for great hospitality
- All who helped with set up & clean up
- And others we may have missed

Missing from the ROHS summer tour were Dorothy and Donald Lewis, who were hosting their own Hosta tour at the home in Ames. (Bad scheduling!) Were sorry we missed the ROHS tour this year, and as compensation, offer photos from our tour!

MRHS Convention Host Opportunity

From Andrew Lietzow

Rob Mortko and Barry Ankney have approached ROHS about co-hosting the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in 2030 or 2032. The MRHS Convention is held annually at various cities around the Midwest. The convention has been held in five Iowa cities: Iowa City, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, and Des Moines. Des Moines was the convention location in 1997 (gift Hosta H. 'Gypsy's Boa') and 2010 (gift Hosta H. 'American Gothic').

The MRHS Convention is run by the society, The co-host (potentially ROHS) would serve as a local arrangements committee to select and negotiate the convention venue, manage registration, set up garden tours, and provide volunteers throughout the Convention.

The opportunity to co-host the MRHS Convention four to six years into the future will be discussed at the Fall ROHS Meeting.

We hope to see you there!

Speaking of convention plants, how is your H. 'Iowa Dreaming' (conference gift plant at the 2023 AHS Convention held in Ames)? Here is a photo of our 'Iowa Dreaming' taken on June 18, 2026.





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