

# HSGC

## Hosta Society of Greater Cincinnati

*promoting Hosta culture in the greater Cincinnati area*

2012 Winter/Spring

Dear HSGC members,

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to provide a forum for sharing information and building a sense of community in the Hosta Society of Greater Cincinnati. The plan is to have three newsletters each year: Spring, Summer and Fall. We also hope to have several regular columns and will begin that tradition with this issue. Each newsletter will have profiles of member's and their garden. They will share their gardening story in the Column My Garden Story.

The feature Overcoming Obstacles in the Garden will discuss a variety of issues from physical limitations to problems with topography, soil or pests. Finally Hosta and their Companions will talk about our favorite plant (Hosta of course) and plants we like to partner with them. We are open to contributions from all and there is flexibility for members to share pictures, stories about garden visits or whatever you think members may be interested in. Finally we are inviting all members to send in garden or Hosta questions. We will publish them in the newsletter and print responses in the follow newsletter. We hope everyone will get involved. Don't be bashful. This newsletter is about fun and fellowship. Send questions or ideas to Darlene Contadino at [d.contadino@gmail.com](mailto:d.contadino@gmail.com). Don't feel like writing, but have great ideas or wondering about someone's garden story? Just drop me a line and I'd be happy to get a volunteer reporter or interview the person myself.

*Darlene Contadino*

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## Overcoming Obstacles In The Garden Physical Challenges

*Darlene Contadino*

Sooner or later every gardener will have to deal with some kind of physical challenge. Perhaps you are getting a little older and stiffer like me. Maybe it is a surgery or injury that makes it difficult to garden. You might even have a chronic medical problem such as arthritis. You can learn to overcome many of these issues by gardening smarter. Today there are many ergonomic tools available to help gardeners stay active. Gardeners are also known for their generosity in sharing tips that make gardening easier.

Judy Case shares several ways she discovered to safely spray herbicides. She removes both ends of a pot or can, and duck tapes a bamboo stick to the pot/can. You can make several different sizes if you wish. Place the can over the weed so you can spray without the chemical drifting to other plants. A tip she has for flower beds full of weeds is to place flower pots over plants; then you can spray the bed without harming the plants. The added bonus to these techniques...no bending.

A little trick Judy uses when she brings home bags of topsoil or mulch is to have the garden center load the bags on her back seat. At home she simply slides the bags onto a two wheel hand dolly and transports them wherever she needs them. If you have a station wagon like me, rather than a trunk you can simply roll your wheel barrel to the back and slide them into the wheel barrel.

Larry Johnson discovered a great wheelbarrow at Sam's last summer. He alerted several members who quickly took advantage of this well balanced wheelbarrow that required little effort to move. "You can practically move it with your finger," said Judy. There is no stress on your back. For information on gardening with specific issues see the web page <http://www.carryongardening.org.uk/>. The list below is strategies our garden members use.

Grow some plants in containers, or used raised beds because they are easier to reach. When moving containers, use a trolley or wheelbarrow.

A coiled hose which is much lighter than a traditional hose. It is easier to work with when the water is on.

Use quick connects on your hoses to make it easier to connect and disconnect hoses and attachments.

Use soaker hoses, drip irrigation and timers to eliminate the daily task of unwinding and rewinding heavy hoses.

Try a two wheeled hand dolly to move pots and bags. You can place a milk crate on it to move multiple small items at once.

Take advantage of smaller sized sprayers or sprayers on wheels.

Long handled tools are less stress for the back. You can also pad the handles for easier use.

Weed after a rain or watering to make it easier to pull weeds.

Create paths of a durable surface to make moving things back and forth in those wagons much easier. Avoid surfaces that can create a fall risk.

Over plant your garden. Weeds don't grow where the sun doesn't shine.

Tips for staying healthy:

- ❑ Avoid repetitive garden work. Change your position as you work, take frequent breaks and drink plenty of liquids.
- ❑ Do a little warm up activity before you begin gardening and give yourself a nice stretch after as well. I bet a soak in a hot tub would be nice too!
- ❑ Know your limits. Be aware of just how much physical activity you can manage and ask for help when needed.
- ❑ Don't forget the sunscreen and hats to protect your skin.

Keep a sense of humor...we may not be the most graceful gardeners but we get the job done!

## Plant Auction 2012

The annual plant auction is a lot of fun and a great generator of funds for the club. Now is the time to think about which plants to divide and pot up. This year's auction and pot-luck is Saturday, May 19 at 12 PM in Judy Case's garden.



## HAIL THE HELLEBORES

Clara Berger



Many years ago, when I was first smitten with gardening, I planted my first hellebore. I remember that I was quite pleased to have it, when shortly afterward one of my garden mentors told me how impressed she had been when she attended a garden club meeting where a local garden expert had brought in several "Lenten Roses". Since it was still late winter, these early flowers created quite a stir.

In 1983, when we planted our "Winter Garden, I planted a *Helleborus niger* (Christmas Rose) in a very protected niche near a stone wall. It has flourished ever since then and though garden visitors never see it in bloom, it is one of the most eagerly awaited stars in our garden. I should add, however, that I seldom encourage anyone to plant the *H. niger* in our area. While its beautiful blooms are so welcome (usually in early February), few of us are spending much time in our gardens that early in the gardening year. Unless one has the perfect spot to view the *H. niger* from inside a warm house I think one can get more bang for your buck with *Helleborus x hybridus*.

When I first knew the Lenten Rose, it was always called *Helleborus orientalis*. Later, when the experts realized that like so many other plant species, there was abundant sexual promiscuity going on, it was reclassified as *H. x hybridus* since each plant can be completely different from its parents.

In our area three species of Hellebores do well: *H. niger*, *H. x hybridus* and *H. foetidus* (a short lived perennial which often reseeds. You can see large clumps of *foetidus* at the Cincinnati Zoo in a little garden at the top of the hill near the bears. *H. sternii* has recently become available it is worth a try. Avoid *H. lividus*, as it will not be hardy in our zone.

Hellebores come from Europe ranging from Great Britain (though not Ireland) to Romania and into Russia. While they are considered shade plants, they appreciate light in the beginning of the season when they are in bloom (which is probably why they grow happily for us under deciduous trees).

All hellebores flower in winter or spring from buds formed the previous summer. Pollinators include honeybees, bumble bees and other solitary bees, which are attracted to the flower primarily by the color. Ants, attracted to the seeds, which contain sugars and fats, help increase their distribution by transporting the seeds for some distance. The seeds are tiny, round and black and are poisonous, as are all parts of the plant.

Seeds need to be planted "fresh" when they ripen in the early summer. Seedlings will bloom 2-4 years after they germinate if given good care. Established clumps are best divided in late summer or early fall.





Hellebores are most often found on alkaline soils and while happiest on limey soils, they can still produce good plants and blooms in acid soils. Most of our hellebores are in an area that receives a yearly mulch

of chipped oak leaves To compensate for any acidity, we try to add Epsom salts and wood ashes from our fireplace each spring.

Hellebores are tough plants, and so if given good conditions when planted (that magical place - moist, well-drained, compost rich soil) they require little care throughout the year. In late February or early March, weather permitting, we find it best to cut off all old foliage. While hellebores are attractive and evergreen almost all year, the signs of winter take their toll by the end of February. By cutting back the old foliage, the new foliage emerges and continues photosynthesis.

Last winter, in a discussion with Dan Hinkley from Heronswood, he said that seedlings, after a few generations, "run out" (do not come true). In order to get the best new and improved selections, hand-crosses need to be made. In the future, just like hostas, these hand-pollinated plants will be the celebrity plants in our gardens. Even so, I think the common garden variety seedlings are not to be despised - especially when planted en masse.

It may be obvious that I have seldom seen a hellebore I didn't like. Two years ago, while attending a hellebore open house in Pennsylvania, I experienced a revelation about these wonderful plants. At this location the hellebores were liberally sprinkled along a long running hillside. One viewed them from a path along the base of the ridge. It was such a delight to look up into their open faces (not at the tops of their nodding heads). I realized that hellebores are made for hillsides. I can only imagine what a sight it would be to see them growing on hillsides in their countries of origin as understory ground covers.

Best of all, they are great companions to our hostas.



*Clara wrote this article a number of years ago. Since then, the popularity of hellebores has increased tremendously. Hellebores were named Perennial Plant of the Year in 2005. Today, gorgeous new hybrids, including many double flowers and an ever increasing array of colors, are introduced every season.*

## Featured Sites

### Perfect Perennials Hosta Glossary

<http://perfectperennials.tripod.com/id3.html>



### Garden Watchdog

It's hard to believe that Dave's Garden has been around for 12 years. There are a lot of resources on the site but one of the most useful is the collection of 7,388 user rated mail-order gardening companies worldwide. Go to <http://davesgarden.com/>, click on the Products & Sources tab and you'll find Garden Watchdog.

Garden Watchdog has roots that extend back to 1994. That year Peter Leppik consolidated diverse mail-order plant sources online as Plants By Mail FAQ with an invitation for readers to e-mail him with comments on their plant purchases. Joe Robinson took over maintenance duties a few years later and In 2003 Dave's Garden assumed the administration. The Watchdog contains over 40,000 comments, and continues to grow every day. If you order plants by mail or online you owe it to yourself to check it out.

<http://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/#b>



### 2012 HSGC Bus Trip

**Our bus trip for 2012 will be to the Lexington area. We'll be visiting gardens both private and commercial with a chance to purchase plants and garden ornaments at every stop. Check the website for the latest details.**

[gchostas.info](http://gchostas.info)

## Coming Up

**February 25** 11:30 AM Civic Garden Center

Jane Kozlowitz speaking on Hardy Ivies in the Garden  
Second Annual Soup Competition

**March 16 & 17** Hosta College–Piqua OH

**March 31** Saturday 11 AM Natorp's Wholesale Nursery

Jennifer Radcliffe will speak on older varieties compared to newer hybrids

**April 28** Saturday 11 AM Marvin's Organic Gardens

**May 19** Saturday 12 PM in the garden of Judy Case  
annual auction and pot-luck

# My Garden Story

Dorothea Otte

I grew up in Detroit in a normal Midwestern family. My father was a hybridizer of German Iris and my Grandfather grew gladiolus for the florist trade. As kids we were expected to spend our summer vacations at the farm picking raspberries and strawberries. We sold the produce and golf balls (there was a golf course across the road) from a roadside stand. My Grandma always had a garden full of all kind of plants but also Hostas. Of course, I was too young to appreciate the different kinds. At that time there were only green Hostas not the streaky ones like we have today.

In 1974 I moved to Atlanta. Hosta does grow in Atlanta but they really can't stand the summer heat. I had several green Hosta (I remember one that was very big.) Then in 1986 I moved to Florida. No Hosta in Florida. But I had a big garden of ginger and tropical plants. In 2000 I moved back to the Midwest where tulips, lilacs and Hosta like the weather. I couldn't have been happier. At first I lived in a planned community where everything had to be part of the master landscaping plan. I had a few Hosta in the garden mostly green and some gold. The association didn't like it and fined me for having too big a garden. So in 2004 I bought a 100 year old house with a big backyard and plenty of room for plants. This time I wanted the garden to be "English formal" with statutes and large trees and to look as if it is 1910. The garden has several 100 year old trees, so I've got plenty of shade. The soil is "Mill Creek" flood silt: no Ohio blue clay. I started buying blue Hosta to go into my chosen color scheme yellow, green, lavender and white. Then I met Sue Gillespie and she invited me to the Hosta club meeting. Well, the rest is history.

At the meeting I met Carlon Addison and Judy Case and we became good friends. We've traveled to many Hosta nurseries and I have many of Carlon's "babies". I currently have 546 Hosta in the garden, but several more have indicated that they will be setting up residence here sometime in April.

## Dorothea's Garden Sayings:

- ✂ During the dark winter days, a brief moment out in the garden is great for chasing away the winter blues.
- ✂ The tannin in tea makes the soil a little more acidic, which some plants prefer.
- ✂ Your garden is your refuge from the world and should be a personal source of pleasure.
- ✂ A plant without a scent is a like beautiful person who has no personality.
- ✂ When you feel downcast, get out there with your hoe, and you'll feel better.
- ✂ Flowers are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul.



# My Garden Story

Demeteriou's

Brenda's garden story began 15 years ago. At the time she was managing a shop in the Tower Place Mall. She recalls each Saturday she would get the paper. One week she noticed an article about a garden tour in Lebanon. Don and Gillia Hawk's garden was a featured garden, and the article mentioned the use of ivy in the garden. "I always liked Ivy, said Brenda, so I talked John into going on the garden tour." To entice him they planned to eat at the Golden Lamb before the tour. During the dinner it started to rain and John asked, "Does this mean we don't have to go on the garden tour?" Ever prepared Brenda assured him they could still go as she had umbrellas for both of them. Brenda says during that tour they were both bitten by the gardening bug. "We realized what people were doing in small gardens, where introduced to island beds, and realized we could go home and dig holes in the middle of the yard with wonderful results. Before then we thought only of plants as foundation plants," she said.



Once they starting going on tours they realized that local gardeners were having tours. They heard through friends that Clara Berger was opening her garden. They started visiting, buying plants, became obsessed with gardening and Hosta.

John and Brenda say they attended Hosta College for 12 years. Each year they looked forward to it and always came home with new ideas. This is how they got their knowledge and started selling Hosta. Brenda says she loves learning new things. This desire to be a continuous learner also prompted Brenda to become a Master Garden.

In 2000 Brenda and John received the Horticulture Garden award. They started doing tours and sharing the garden with others. Lots of people have been through their garden over the years. They joined the Hosta Society and became very active members in the club.

Brenda recalls that visitors often asked how she kept deer out of the garden and says for years she never had problems with deer. That started to change about 3 years ago.

It began with occasional visits. Last year the visits became daily as Brenda and John watched their garden be decimated by deer. The deer feasted in the garden, seeming to think it was their personal buffet. Brenda says they wondered if they should stop gardening. Thankfully they aren't ready to give it up! They called Eads Fencing and had deer fencing installed. To provide access to the garden John and Brenda included a four foot gate, a 3 foot gate and a shower gate. Brenda is hopeful the garden will recover. "Gardening is more than flowers in the ground," said Brenda. "Gardening is about learning how to work with nature and making friends. Hosta is truly the friendship plant".

You recall how John was initially reluctant to go to his first garden tour? Well Hostas can change people. John has been a full fledged Hosta Maniac for some time. A few years ago a friend did several

you tube segments of John Demetriou in the Garden. One has had 16,000 hits. If you have not seen it you can go to you tube and type John Demetriou, scrolled down and see the one that has 16,000 hits.

Brenda is still an optimist about the garden. "Ice and snow may cover the ground. Still there is hope that the garden will emerge in spring and we can once again, share our gardens, learn new things and meet new garden friends," she said.

I could not agree more.



## HSGC Officers

<b>President</b>	Judy Case
<b>Vice President</b>	Jeanne Gourley
<b>Treasurer</b>	Carol Kilberg
<b>Secretary</b>	Jane Kozlowicz
<b>Website &amp; Newsletter</b>	Tom McMannon

## Executive Committee

<b>Members at Large</b>	Marvin Collins, Dean Colville, Brenda Demetriou
<b>Membership</b>	Pat Ellsworth
<b>Education</b>	John Demetriou
<b>Projects</b>	Connie Morris
<b>Sunshine</b>	Roberta Janesch
<b>Hospitality</b>	Bev Vonderhaar

## Transitions

### Michelle Morgan Avent

Oct. 31, 1956 – Feb. 11, 2012

Published in The News & Observer on February 13, 2012

Raleigh NC

Michelle Morgan Avent of Raleigh, 55, passed away after a four year battle with an aggressive form of breast cancer. A Raleigh native, Michelle was a graduate of Broughton High School, and later NC State University. Michelle's career included Mission Valley Theatres, NCSU, The Instrument Society of America, and finally Plant Delights Nursery, which she and her husband Tony founded in 1988.

The family will receive friends and relatives from 6:00 – 8:00 PM Tuesday Feb. 14, 2012 at Bryan-Lee Funeral Home, Garner.

Michelle is survived by her husband of 34 years, Tony; four brothers, W. Chris Morgan and wife Kay of Raleigh, J.P. (Jay) Morgan of Garner, twin brother Mike E. Morgan of Missouri and Roger N. Morgan of Elizabeth City, NC, nieces Amanda English and husband Matthew of Wallace, NC, Laura Morgan of Garner, Carly and Kelly Morgan of Scottsdale, AZ, Hilary Morgan of Elizabeth City, NC, nephews, Daniel Morgan and wife Tina and daughter Mary Beth of Willow Spring, and Gregory and wife Angela of Wichita Falls, TX, and Kyle Morgan of Scottsdale, AZ, cousin Karen Clevenger of Holly Springs, and four cats, Ruby, Pearl, Zirconia and Henry all of the home. Our thanks to Dr. Mark Graham and the wonderful staff of Waverly Hematology/Oncology for their great work.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to The V- Foundation for Cancer Research, The Susan B. Komen Foundation, Hospice of Wake County or the J.C Raulston Arboretum.

Condolences to [bryan-leefuneralhome.com](http://bryan-leefuneralhome.com)

### Roy J. Chastain

Age 90, of Ooltewah, TN went home to be with his Lord on February 7th, 2012.

After thirty years of teaching in Hamilton County, Roy retired from Ooltewah High. As a member of Ooltewah Baptist Church, he served for several years as a Sunday School Supernatant and a Deacon.

Roy, a veteran of World War II, was the son of Elijah and Esther Chastain. His death was preceded by his sisters Ruth Moore, Reba Chastain, Sue Lyons and his brothers Sam and Charles.

He is survived by his wife Mary Henson Chastain, son Roy Jeffrey Chastain, grandchildren Alexandra and Logan and sister Jesse Chastain.

Funeral services will be held at 3:00 p.m., Friday in the Valley View Chapel of Chattanooga Funeral Home with Rev. Larry Williams and Rev. Chris Gaither officiating. Interment will follow in Ooltewah Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m., Friday at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Ooltewah Baptist Church building fund.

Please share your thoughts and memories online at [www.ChattanoogaValleyViewChapel.com](http://www.ChattanoogaValleyViewChapel.com)

Arrangements by Chattanooga Funeral Home, Valley View Chapel, 7414 Old Lee Highway.