

## Pests and Diseases

The most serious problem of hosta is of course slugs and snails. The amount and destructiveness of these pests are dependent on the specific garden. There are many attempted solutions to these pests from metaldehyde washings and pellets, to a biological control with parasitizing nematodes. However, the best and cheapest prevention at this time is to dispose of them in a bucket of salt water. The prime collection time is after a rain, where you can pick up hundreds. In containers, slugs aren't so frequent but vine weevil may be a problem.



*H. 'Great Expectations'*

**For more information:  
Contact the Master Gardener  
Diagnostic Clinic  
May through September**

*Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.*

WSU Extension Office  
507 N Nanum, Room 2  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

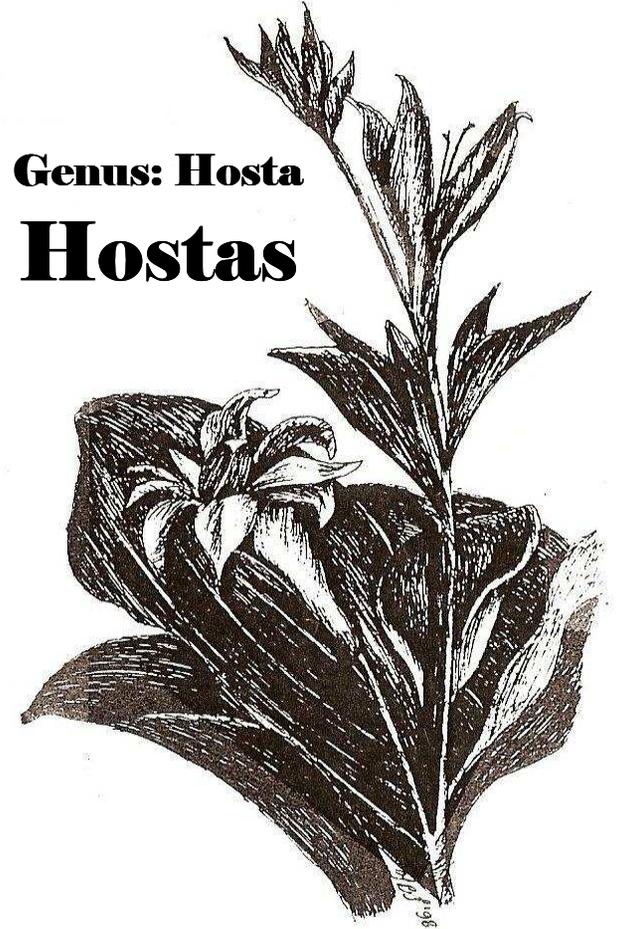
Phone: (509) 962-7507  
Upper County Toll Free: (509) 674-2584  
Ext. 507

<http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/extension/default.asp>

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*Master Gardener Program*

**Genus: Hosta**  
**Hostas**



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*in conjunction with*

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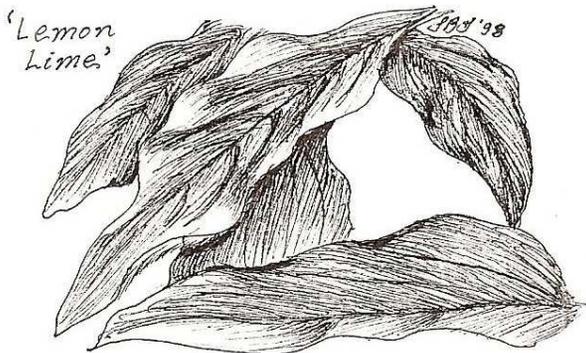
Master Gardener Coordinator

The hosta is one of the most if not the most popular perennial of the American gardener. In China, Korea, Japan and Eastern Russia they grow as native plants along woodland streams, ponds, alpine rocks, or sun baked cliffs.

Known for their diverse collection of leaf shapes, sizes and color, they come in nearly every shade of green - some more to the blue side and some more to the yellow side. The variegated types can have all combinations within one leaf.

They are very hardy (to zone 3) and are very versatile. Because of this, they can be used as the feature plant, as filler among a selection of trees and other woodland plants or as a border in a peat bed. As a container plant, they will thrive at the most for four years. After which the leaf size may become smaller and distorted. In the ground they can survive for many years.

The flowers that appear during the warmer weather, are colored white, pink or lavender. They spire above the foliage in one sided racemes with either bell or trumpet shaped blossoms. Use them and the leaves as a filler in floral arrangements.



## Cultivation

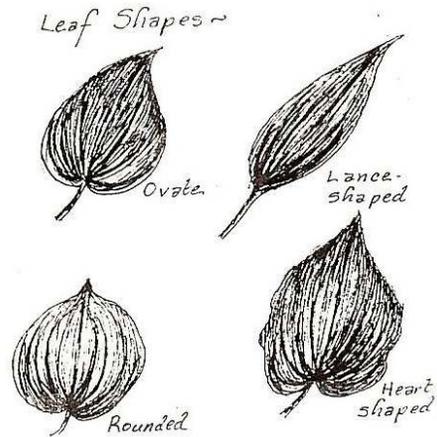
There is a great advantage to having a site where there is a varying degree of shade. Hostas are commonly thought of as shade loving plants, when in fact some perform better in

sun. The cultivar 'On Stage' prefers some direct sun if given the adequate moisture to maintain its yellow-green leaves. The cultivar 'Gold Standard' will scorch in too much sun, but will lose its variegation in too much shade. Plus, they will flower better in sun, but their leaves look better in shade. Once you have found the correct site, your hosta will become lush and sumptuous.

Hostas should be protected from wind which causes bruising and desiccation and in severe cases, scorching. A living hedge is a good choice but may take years to grow. In the meantime, use a low fence.

Water them thoroughly as early as possible in the morning. That way they are not at risk of drying out when the heat of the day is upon them. Watering during the evening can attract slugs and snails. Feed with a high nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season regularly

Place a ring of mulch around the crown during the autumn and spring months. Do not place the mulch on the crown since we winters can cause it to rot.



## Hosta Species

There are 70 species and over 1000 cultivars of hosta. The following are some of the more common species and common cultivars of those species.

**H. fortunei:** This species has given rise to many hybrids. The leaves are typically ovate to broad lanceolate and are pointed, pleated and a dull mid-green color. In summer, it bears lavender flowers. Those that are included in this group are 'Albomarginata', 'Albopicta', 'Aurea', and 'Aureomarginata'.

**H. plantaginea:** Hostas in this group are known for their fragrant white flowers in summer and are sun loving. The leaves form a mound of about 3 feet with mid-green color. 'Grandiflora' is one of its true varieties with two of its hybrids being 'Royal Standard' and 'Honeybells'.

**H. sieboldiana:** A strong growing species with heart-shaped, puckered, bluish-gray leaves. 'Elegans' and the popular 'Francies Williams' are among this group.

**H. tokudama:** A slow growing hosta group with cupped leaves and pink flowered in summer. Cultivars include 'Aureonebulosa' and 'Flavocircinalis'.

**H. undulate:** The leaves are variegated with creamy white either in the center or around the edge depending upon the cultivar. The twist or wave of the leaf is dependent upon its variegation. Cultivars in this group are technically the transitional stage of the plant reverting to an all green form. They are 'Erromena' and 'Undulata Albomarginata'.

