

Display Garden Update



‘Marion Bachman’



‘Sun Mouse’



‘School Mouse’



‘Crystal Dixie’

September turned out to be a busy work month at the MHS Display Garden at Smith Coffee. We finished some major items on the MHS Display Garden ‘To Do’ list:

- 1) Installing Cyprus mulch and the plastic edging needed to keep mulch in the MHS brick lined garden paths
- 2) Digging up hosta struggling against Maple tree root invasion and replanting all in protective heavy plastic pots
- 3) Planting companion plants to add flowering color throughout the summer

In June, 2020, MHS purchased 11 new Hosta to replace losses at the Display Garden. They were potted in oversized, heavy weight plastic pots and they spent the summer at our home being well watered and protected from critters.

When we brought them to the MHS garden on Sept. 13 to put in the garden, we decided to try a new (to us anyway) planting method. In an attempt to halt the insidious invasion of Maple tree roots from which the MHS Display Garden hosta continue to suffer, we used the Bob Solberg method of hosta planting that he presented at our February, 2020, MHS meeting. The new hostas that we put in that day were planted in the ground while still in their oversized pots with at least an inch of pot lip showing above ground. In the future, we should be able to lift them out of the ground to check if tree roots have found their way up the drain holes in the bottom of the pots. This may not be a problem since most of the previous MHS Maple tree root incursion all seemed to occur in the top 6 to 9 inches of the soil. But if any appear they can easily be detached and discarded.

Also that day, nine of the most desperately struggling, previously large and vibrant Hosta were dug up, potted and brought to Marv Tenclay’s home to try to nurse them back to health in his garden. In all cases, their growth problems were caused by tree root strangulation.

Our first big Sept. work day was on Saturday, the 19th. MHS volunteers arrived in their masks to 1) work on the paths, 2) replant a large number of tree root infested hostas with the Solberg plastic pot technique, and 3) plant companion plants purchased at fall sales.

Our crew that day included Gary Mosiman, Julie Carley, Rod Hilstrom, Tom Wright, Kathy Haram, Pat Schott, Mark Glenn, Pat Kessler and Bob McClure. In preparation for our crew work day, plastic edging, 25 bags of Cypress mulch and a rented kick sod cutter were picked up from Home Depot. Volunteers brought multiple wheelbarrows and tools and a miter saw to cut the plastic edging. It was initially expected it to be a one-day project. We were very wrong!



Display Garden Update continued



'Sum It Up'



'Snow Mouse'



'Alvatine Taylor'



'Wu La La'

What we thought would be the fairly easy first step of installing plastic edging at the ends of all the brick lined paths (to contain the mulch inside the pathways) was actually not so easy. This part of the project turned out to be much more time consuming than expected due to a lot of dirt excavation and chopping out tree roots to be able to get the edging embedded deep enough in the soil to stay in place. We had underestimated how pervasive and thick the roots would be that stood in our way. We ended up needing an axe to cut through the bigger roots so Tom went home for his.

Then the dirt and grass (and tree roots) in the Display Garden's many pathways by the South gardens were dug out. Shovels and a kick sod cutter and the axe were used. Again, it was much harder to excavate than we anticipated. Bags of Cyprus mulch were hauled by hand or in wheelbarrows and emptied into the paths. Tom had to make another Home Depot run for more Cyprus mulch and plastic edging. Meanwhile, many other volunteers were replanting the most unhappy of the tree infested hostas, their roots now shielded by the plastic barrier of a pot.

By the end of the Sept. 19 workday, we had completed the South Display Garden path up to and around the large Maple in the center of the South path. The amount of work expended to get to this point would definitely surprise most people, though maybe not gardeners!

On the following Saturday, Sept. 26, Rod, Kathy, Gary, Julie and both Pats returned to finish our projects. The last of the South path was completed with edging and mulch and looked much more professionally landscaped. We then started the edging on the North garden paths whose soil, luckily, was not crammed with tree roots. So, though still hard work, not as much ax chopping was needed. The edging was completed, the dirt in the paths was excavated and leveled and finally the mulch spread over the last areas. With the finished paths and many hosta now happily ensconced in their new homes with roots protected by plastic pots, our work was done.

After two Saturdays in a row, with generous volunteers expending many hours of heavy labor, the paths were finished. We were fortunate to have no rain or clouds, only sunny skies on both days. The excavation of the paths turned out to be a bigger endeavor than we anticipated but we prevailed and the results are beautiful and well worth the effort.

Hope you all will visit the Display Garden in 2021.
We are happy when people come to enjoy it.



'Alex Summers'

'Yellow Polka
Dot Bikini'



Display Garden Update continued



Now that the Display Garden looks so beautiful, we want people to know who created and maintains the garden by installing the American Hosta Society National Display Garden sign that MHS was awarded by the American Hosta Society.

Since it needs a base, we decided to look at Hedberg's for the perfect stone for mounting the sign. Rod, Gary and Julie toured the lot and found several promising possibilities and pictures were taken of the three best candidates. Others in MHS were consulted on their preference and ultimately, on Nov. 19, Rod, Gary, Julie and Steve Rutz returned to buy what was considered the best of the stones. It was a fairly weighty enterprise to load the stone and bring it to the garden for storage. Luckily, Hedberg's used their front loader to get the stone into Rod's car and,

also luckily, no fingers or toes were lost when we later rolled it out of Rod's trunk to drop behind the shed at Smith Coffee. Placing the stone in the garden, then mounting the brass plaque to it will be a project for this coming Spring. It should be gorgeous.

Thanks again to all the volunteers who watered over the past summer and the work crews who helped with planting, edging, mulching and generally beautifying the MHS Display Garden. The difference your efforts made can really be seen.

Submitted by Julie Carley

