

# Hosta Horizons

newsletter of the  
*Russ O'Harra Hosta Society*

June 2014

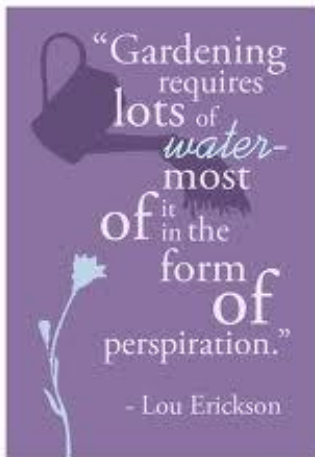
## President's Message

MAY 2014

So it's finally May! Normally, my hellebores have green leaves throughout the winter right on into April and May, but this spring there wasn't one plant sporting last year's green. Brown and its varying shades were the 'in' color. Luckily, they are in full bloom today and all the leaves have renewed. It was definitely a long winter and one for the record books. So how do you know when spring has finally arrived? For me, it is the first sight of dandelions, the smell of fresh cut grass, the distinct call of the Baltimore oriole, morel mushrooms, the graduation invitations in my mailbox, and of course, the bees bringing pollen into the hives. Fall used to be my favorite season but a few years ago I exchanged fall for spring and haven't looked back. Spring represents a renaissance in the garden, and I love the feeling of a clean slate and thinking about what I am going to do differently, or better, in the new gardening season. Then I come back to reality and sigh just thinking about all the work ahead of me and how little time I have to accomplish the ever-growing "To-Do" list.

As I opened my designated garden cupboard for the first time this April, I was glad I had taken the time to clean and organize it last fall; however, I quickly discovered that all three pairs of my Atlas gardening gloves have a hole at the tip of the thumb on the left hand? Guess who will have dirt under her nail until new gloves are purchased? Rather than toss out the old ones (I'm always looking for a way to repurpose things), I like to fill the fingers with pieces of wood mulch and then put each glove on an old metal plant marker and place them in the garden. Sometimes they are used to help hold up a pepper plant or overgrown dill. A bit of whimsy at no cost.

(Continued on page 3)



# ROHS Officers

## Eve Vanden Broek, President

134 Holland Drive, Pella, IA 50219  
[mrstheo@iowatelecom.net](mailto:mrstheo@iowatelecom.net); 641-627-5316

## Barry Laws, Ex-officio

1895 E. Army Post Rd, Des Moines, IA 50320  
[info@quiltedgardens.com](mailto:info@quiltedgardens.com); 515-720-3089

## David Dettmann, Treasurer

122 Blue Gill Court, Pella, IA 50219  
[bdd5097@yahoo.com](mailto:bdd5097@yahoo.com); 641-627-5097

## Ellen Glasgow, Secretary

1104 N. Buxton, Indianola, IA 50125  
[eglasgow08@q.com](mailto:eglasgow08@q.com); 515-961-5237

## Reldon Ramsey, Newsletter Editor

1560 State Highway 148, Corning, IA 50841  
[rohseditor@gmail.com](mailto:rohseditor@gmail.com); 641-780-9031

## Linda Baer, Hospitality Chair

505 S. Water St., Madrid, IA 50156  
[kdmkddaj@yahoo.com](mailto:kdmkddaj@yahoo.com); 515-230-8600

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Russ O'Harra 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 and the cultivation and development of new cultivars. The goals of the Society shall be in keeping with those of the American Hosta Society.



*Hosta* 'El Nino' in the garden of Marlys Anderson in May 2011

# In This Edition:



**BADITC Update – p. 7 & 13**

**Čzech It Out! – p. 4**

**Dates to Remember – p. 2**

**Hostas on the Bay – p. 4**

**President's Message – p. 1 & 3**

**ROHS Summer Tour**

**Checklist – p. 14**

**Directions – p. 11 & 12**

**Gardens – p. 6**

**Garden #1 (Renes) - p. 8**

**Garden #2 (Drost) – p. 8**

**Garden #3 (Glassgow) – p. 9**

**Garden #4 (Small/Mettler) – p. 10**

**Garden #5 (Spence) – p. 10**

**Lunch – p. 14**

**The Book Collector – p. 5 & 6**

**The Periodical Cicadas Are Coming! – p. 4**

## **Dates to Remember**

**June 11 - 14**

**[AHS National Convention](#)**

**Cedar Rapids, IA**

**Sunday, June 22 – 8 AM to 4 PM**

**ROHS Summer Tour and Auction**

**Indianola area**

**June 26 – 28**

**Midwest Regional Hosta Convention**

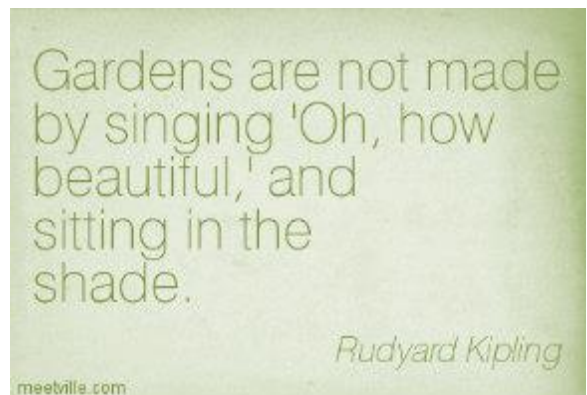
**Green Bay, WI**

**Sunday, October 12 – Noon to 4 PM**

**ROHS Fall Meeting**

**TBA**

**Speaker: Eve Vanden Broek ~ "Eve's Bees"**



**Access the ROHS website at**

**[www.rohs.org](http://www.rohs.org)**

## President's Message:

(Continued from page 1)

Further on in this newsletter, you'll read about the gardens featured on this year's ROHS Summer Tour. Our gracious hosts have spent a lot of time preparing their gardens for our visit so please remember to look in all corners for their special touches; pay attention to their design style, and by all means, take photos of what you like as surely you'll want to incorporate the same plant or idea into your own garden. Gaining new ideas is half the fun of a garden tour. Also, if you have the opportunity, make a point to visit with the garden hosts; let them know how much you appreciate their willingness to open their garden; mention some aspect you like about their garden; or enquire about something which got your attention. I'm certain you'll like what you see for every garden is different and a wonderful reflection of the gardener.

Club member Frank Glasgow thought it would be a good idea to make a tribute to Marlys Anderson during the summer tour and came up with the idea for the group to vote for their favorite garden on tour. An excellent idea and one that takes little effort to organize. Thank you, Frank! It was decided to ask Potter Bob Anderson for a clay hosta leaf, a design of his choice, with only one request, that he incorporate *MM (Marvelous Marlys)* and a heart, further to the photo design club member Josh Spece designed for the ROHS Facebook page just before Marlys passed. Voting will be simple. At the Spence's garden, where the luncheon and auction will take place, we'll have jars set up on a table, one jar for each garden. To vote, each participant will place a button into the jar of their favorite garden; only one vote per participant. Yes, there will be plenty of buttons on hand. Before the auction begins we'll count the buttons and announce the favorite garden.

If you missed the spring meeting, we discussed advertising our tour in a few locations - on the Indianola Chamber of Commerce website, The *Des Moines Register Datebook* website and the Community Page of [www.whotv.com](http://www.whotv.com). Like many clubs, our membership base ebbs and flows and because we are not getting any younger, I am concerned that a dwindling membership will impact what we can do in the future. It's no secret that in order to attract new members we need more than a website, a Facebook presence, a new member program and a great newsletter. We have to consistently get our name out into the public arena and spread the word about our

club, its mission, and the great projects we have been involved with and those on the horizon. Ask yourself what you done for your club lately. How can you help? I must be brutally honest, if only a handful of people are willing to help, those who do all the heavy lifting will burn out quickly and never come back. It's that simple.

At our last several meetings, we have mentioned that our friends at the Harshbarger Hosta Society will be hosting the 2014 American Hosta Society National Convention June 11-14. Luckily for us, it will take place right in our own back yard in Cedar Rapids. During our spring meeting, many of you mentioned that you were planning to attend; thank you to those who are able to support the Harshbarger club and the AHS. ROHS hosted the Midwest Convention in 2010, and as many of us know firsthand, the amount of work and attention to detail that goes into such an event is phenomenal. The Harshbarger club is counting down the days to their major event, and we wish them much success!

**If you are like me, you probably don't spend enough time appreciating your own garden. Yes, you may spend a lot of time in it. Working. But how many of you can admit that you have to go to someone else's garden to really enjoy a garden? If so, put on your "To-Do" list to visit as many gardens as possible this summer. In June alone, you have the opportunity to visit well over a dozen unique gardens if you participate in the American Hosta Society National Convention, the Russ O'Harra Hosta Society Summer Tour, and the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Come July you might just succumb to hosta withdrawal.**

Keep calm and hosta on!

**Eve Vanden Broek**



For more repurposed garden art ideas, go to:

<http://www.thehouseface.com/whimsical-garden-ideas-create-uniqueness-to-your-home/>

# The Periodical Cicadas Are Coming! (THEY'RE HERE!)

By Eve Vanden Broek

If you haven't heard, the summer of 2014 will end the wait for the return of the 17-year cicadas (known as locusts to the older generation). If you call the southeastern half of Iowa



home, west to about Cass County, you're in prime periodical cicada country. Thinking back to the summer of 1997, by chance were you in a wooded area or near a river valley? If you were, chances are you remember well the incessant, overbearing buzzing sound the males make. At my house in rural Marion County, I could hear them in the distance and each day the sound got louder and louder until finally, thousands and thousands of nymphs emerged from their 17 years of feeding on tree root sap and made their way to the surface and raced up into the trees. Suddenly, I found myself in the middle of an all-male concert, no speakers required. The sound was deafening. It was pure cicada mania!

The first weekend in May, I was removing leaf litter from around the hosta under the trees and noted several small, hard, bumpy clumps of soil. It turns out, they are cicada chimneys or turrets; structures the cicada builds above where it will eventually emerge. I also noticed several holes at the base of the trees, something I had never noticed before and simply thought they were signs of a very active worm community. It turns out that these holes are a sure sign that my garden is setting the stage for another cicada concert. So just when will they be here? According to Donald Lewis, ISU Extension Entomologist and Charter Member of ROHS, we can expect to see them late May into June. Fortunately, these periodical cicadas sing only during the day from about 10 a.m. to mid-afternoon and won't keep you up at night.

These red-eyed insects are not particularly attractive but even if you're not an entomologist, they, like many other insects, are quite fascinating. As adults, they only live five to six weeks, so once they are gone you'll have to wait until 2031 for their return. I'll be 67 years old and of full retirement age by then. I can't wait!

## Čzech it Out!

The 2014 American Hosta Society National Convention is being hosted by our friends the Harshbarger Hosta Society in Cedar Rapids, June 11-14. It promises to be a fun week with nine gardens to tour and other optional activities including a Wednesday outing to the Amana Colonies and a Thursday visit and dinner at the National Czech and Slovak Museum. Speakers are all Iowans: Josh Spece, Kathleen Ziemer, Gary Whittenbaugh, and Keynote Speaker, Kelly Norris. Noelridge Park & Greenhouse, across Collins Road from the Marriott Hotel, has free admission and is hosting a free city band concert Wednesday evening at 7:30 PM. AND, if that's not enough, Bruce more Mansion is offering free guided tours daily, Tuesday through Sunday, for Iowa's Museum Week.

Another attraction during the convention is a Hosta Seedling Competition hosted by the Hosta Seed Growers. Be sure to Čzech it all out!

At the ROHS Spring meeting, quite a few club members raised their hands when asked if they would be attending the AHS convention. So we can all catch up when we see each other there. Hostatality will be each evening after the day's activities have concluded.

It promises to be a wonderful week with great hosta gardens, hosta friends, and plenty of new hosta memories being made!!



The Green and Gold Hosta Society of Northeast Wisconsin is hosting the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention, "Hostas by the Bay", in Green Bay from June 26-28, 2014.

For more information contact:

Pat Gwidt at [pathen33@yahoo.com](mailto:pathen33@yahoo.com)

or

Judy Sytsma at [judysgarden.43@gmail.com](mailto:judysgarden.43@gmail.com)

Visit the Green & Gold's website:

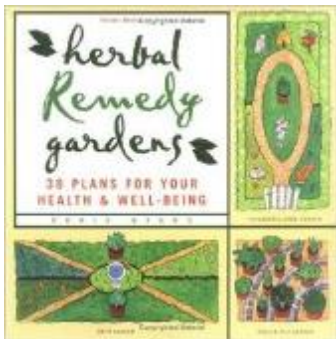
<http://greenandgoldhosta.org/2014-convention.html>

**Note: The early registration fee deadline has ended and the cost of full registration is now \$160. Act quickly if you haven't yet sent in your registration!**

# The Book Collector

By Eve Vanden Broek

Of all the adjectives I could use to describe myself, one nearest to the top would be 'collector'. For as long as I can remember I have loved collecting things. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I started a stamp collection with a friend who lived up the street, but when the boys started calling on her and not me, it wasn't long, and the collection was all mine. Silver charms, key chains, coffee mugs, match books, sand, post cards, vintage whisk brooms, hosta, and the list of collections goes on. Stacking up on the floor and overflowing on shelves in the front room of my house are books and more books. There are, of course, definite themes making up my collection and garden-related books take up one full shelf and then some. Here are a few of my favorites that may interest you.



Before growing herbs was all the rage, my interest was sparked through cook books. In further reading, I quickly learned that herbs not only improve the flavor of a dish, but they also have medicinal properties. **Herbal Remedy Gardens** by Dorie Byers is a

wonderful, easy to read, 218-page practical guide to growing these multi-purpose plants. Do you know what an infusion is? How about a decoction or a tincture? These simple herbal remedy methods are explained in plain English, no degree in chemistry required. Chapter 2 provides descriptions of 22 herbs most often used for their healthful benefits such as calendula, fennel, lavender, thyme and valerian. By the way, did you know the essential oil from thyme is strongly antiseptic and that an infusion of thyme can help soothe a sore throat?

Later chapters detail how to plant and grow different herbs to make your own natural medicine chest. Whether in pots, plots or containers, each design is simple, requires a minimal amount of plants (less work) and benefits the gardener on many fronts. Who wouldn't want to grow a rejuvenation garden? As gardeners, shouldn't we all have a first-aid garden out the back door? And for those annual spring muscle aches from too many winter months on the couch, doesn't a sore muscle care garden sound like the cat's meow? Like to travel? A traveler's herb garden complete with ginger, aloe and Echinacea is one of the easiest to put together and watch grow (between getaways).

Herbs are fairly low maintenance but Dorie does cover those pests that can occasionally bother them. She also does an excellent job explaining how to harvest and store herbs. If you're interested in the medicinal uses for all those dandelions dotting your yard, there's a paragraph dedicated to them, and other wild herbs in the book, too. If anything else, grow a few herbs and toss them into your salad, your next pasta dish or in your bread dough and enjoy the flavor.



**Bug Off** by Jerry Baker is a book I found in a thrift store and I'm so glad I did! I can't think of any gardener who wouldn't want to have this book as their go-to reference guide in their library, especially in today's world where toxic pesticides and other chemical destroyers are

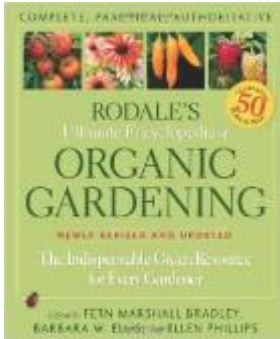
quickly becoming taboo.

First off, if you're over 40, the font size of this book is large enough that you won't need reading glasses. Written with a humorous flair and in short paragraphs which get straight to the point, this book covers not only all those late night critters invading your garden, like raccoons and deer, but also the no-see-um's such as codling moths and black vine weevils to the invisible nematodes. Eight categorized chapters focus on pests of the lawn, trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials, root and leaf crops and vegetables. Concise descriptions of each pest's *modus operandi* and the destruction they leave in their wake, the very reason you are consulting this book, are the pages' main focus. You'll learn about the pest's lifecycle and of course how to eradicate or limit them in your garden. Not sure how to recognize that bug you just found on your lawn or coveted irises? A quick consult of **Bug Off** and you'll find at the top of each pest covered, a clear drawing with dimensions, and if the pest begins its life as a larva, you'll find a drawing of it too.

While the first 324 pages cover the pesky pests, Chapter 8 covers the "good guys," those who you WANT to see in your garden. He champions nine garden heroes who will work tirelessly for free. They include the assassin bug, lacewings, ladybugs, birds, bats, and toads.

If you are at all a friend of the environment but have a foe in the garden, there's no need to spend money on chemicals, try a folk remedy using products already found in your cupboard and get the same results. Oodles of recipes make up the chapter entitled "Thug Busters". And if your first method of extermination doesn't work, troubleshooting is Jerry's middle name; there's always a

plan B. Thank you to Jerry for such an informative tome and thanks also to the unknown person who donated the book so I could add it to my library.



You simply cannot go wrong with any of the Rodale books including this one. The Rodale family is an absolute gardening dynasty with roots that go back to 1942. The revised and updated *Ultimate Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* is just as the title describes it to be: **The Indispensable Green Resources**

for Every Gardener. It's an encyclopedia, for sure, with a wide range of topics and extensive practical research. From the "Green Gardening" concept for the novice gardener to the whip-and-tongue grafting technique for the more experienced gardener, you can't get any more complete without being overbearing and never consulted.

"Green Gardening" is Chapter 1 which spells out what green gardening is all about. It's about making tough decisions and getting on board with a new way of thinking; having respect for the environment and all living creatures; it's about habitat, native plants, pollinators and climate change. If you don't read anything beyond the first chapter, you will at least gain a new appreciation for life around you and the importance of asking questions.

Topics are arranged in alphabetical order so you'll find permaculture following the detailed section on perennials: perennials for the north and south, perennials for dry and moist soil, how to shop mail order nurseries, and starting from seed. Other entries include: birds, bulbs, evergreens, gourds, manure, raised bed gardening, and weeds.

Editors, Fern Marshall Bradley, Barbara W. Ellis and Ellen Phillips have done an excellent job of making sure each entry is clear and concise without being too wordy or too technical for the average gardener. Once you start researching a topic, you will find yourself reading other entries and who knows, you may just find the answer to something you didn't even think to question. That's a good thing; learning is the key.

## ROHS Summer Tour and Auction

**Sunday, June 22 – 8 AM to 4 PM  
Indianola area**

### Garden #1

**Rob & Amy Renes  
425 E. Sheridan Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50313**

### Garden #2

**Jo & John Drost  
8668 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #3

**Ellen & Frank Glasgow  
1104 N. Buxton  
Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #4

**Donna Small & Mike Mettler  
710 S. N Street  
Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #5

**Patty & Harry "Skip" Spence  
17805 Highway 92  
Ackworth, IA 50001**

## **RUSS O'HARRA HOSTA SOCIETY 2014 SUMMER TOUR**



*If you enjoy hosta, you won't want to miss this tour.*

- ◆ FIVE MARVELOUS GARDENS TO TOUR
- ◆ LUNCHEON @ NOON  
**ADVANCE ORDER & PAYMENT REQUIRED BY 6/16/14\***
- ◆ AUCTION OF HOSTA & OTHER SPECIALTY PLANTS FOLLOWS LUNCH
- ◆ MIX AND MINGLE WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE HOSTAHEADS.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 22 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM**

1. 425 E. Sheridan Ave., Des Moines: **START**
2. 8668 143<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Indianola
3. 1104 N. Buxton, Indianola
4. 710 S. N Street, Indianola
5. 17805 Hwy 92, Ackworth: **LUNCHEON/AUCTION**

For detailed directions and to find out what's for lunch, as well where to make your payment, please visit our website: [www.ohsusa.org](http://www.ohsusa.org)

\*ONLY checks accepted

ROHS Summer Tour flyer created by Eve Vanden Broek and distributed by Kat's Garden and Flying Frog Farm at the Des Moines Farmer's Market.



**May 8 The Spece family has moved into their new home!**

It's official! Sue and the kids are staying in their new home for the first time tonight! That means if the weather gets bad they will have a safe place to go for the first time in many years!

Thank you, thank you, thank you, to everyone who has helped us get this far in this amazing, life-changing project!

**May 12** Now that we have Sue and the kids moved into their new home (where the boys are loving their own space after sharing a bedroom all their lives!), on to the next step. The ceiling mounted lift system that will save Sue's back and make transferring the kids safer for everyone! We're working with Jason Pilcher from JVA Mobility. Jason contacted us quite some time ago with an offer to donate his labor to install the system. Thank you, Jason! We can't wait to share pictures when it's complete!



**May 14 Sue Johnston Spece > Building a Dream in the Country**

*"Ahhhh.....feels so good to crawl into my new comfortable bed after a long day! Thank you, Thank you"*

**May 19** Linda Cunningham, Linda Port, and their friends have started a Facebook page for their fundraising. This is the group of very dedicated and generous women who made and sold snowmen last year in Illinois and donated \$12,000 to Building a Dream in the Country. They plan to continue and donate to people who have sudden, unexpected need. What a wonderful idea!

**May 21** A message Sue posted on our wall last night makes us smile! Our goal was to make life easier for Sue and her kids!

**Sue Johnston Spece > Building a Dream in the Country**

*"After a long day, I so Love not having to go up and down the steps to do laundry!! I think I have been without an oven for a couple years, so I am excited to be able to bake in my new house! THANK YOU ALL"*



**May 28** Uh oh, looks like Jacob's dog Gus has laid claim to his camo recliner!

**May 30** Thank you Mary Welch, Rose Sweeney, Sherry Nix, and Peggy Garnes! What a wonderful gift! This group of friends hosted a plant sale on May 23 and 24th in La Crosse, Wisconsin. They donated the \$1000 in sales to Building a Dream!!!



Their donation has given a huge boost to our goal of having a garage added onto Sue's house before winter. Most of us take having a garage for granted. For Sue and the kids, it will be a luxury after years of

shoveling and tracking through the snow to enter and exit their home!

Mary, Rose, Sherry and Peggy's fundraiser is the **42nd one hosted by others to benefit Building a Dream!** What an incredible amount of support from so many wonderful people!

Thanks go to Marlys Anderson's fundraising efforts and all Russ O'Harra Hosta Society members who helped to make BADITC become a reality.

## ROHS Summer Tour - Garden #1

**Rob & Amy Renes**  
**425 E. Sheridan Avenue**  
**Des Moines, IA 50313**

Rob and Amy Renes have lived in their East Sheridan Avenue home in Des Moines for over 10 years. Rob has been a model railroad enthusiast for many years and six years ago he established his railroad line with over 130 feet of track.

The gardens in the backyard are all on a miniature scale. Rob says, "It's a bonsai-kind-of-thing going on back there."

He estimates that he has 60-65 miniature hostas in the gardens. He loves mini cultivars with bright colors and especially the ones with three or four colors on the same leaf.

Like many of us, he often buys a hosta just because of its name. All of his miniature hosta collection is labelled for those who spy a wee one they can't live without.

Rob also has 30-40 larger hostas that he rescued from his grandpa's yard after his grandpa went to the nursing home. All are older varieties and he doesn't know the names.

He is rightly proud of his garden and is very excited to have ROHS members visit to experience the unique railroad garden and landscape that he's created.

**Editor's Note: No photos of this garden are available.**

## ROHS Summer Tour - Garden #2

**Jo & John Drost**  
**8668 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**  
**Indianola, IA 50125**

The Drosts have lived on their 3-acre property north of Indianola for the past 15 years. Jo began collecting hostas five years ago and has about two dozen varieties so far.

"I had never had a passion for hostas until I visited Flying Frog Farm about three miles from where we live. And then, instantly, I became a huge hosta fan!"



Jo's Dad grew up in a very large family. He had a passion for gardening, as well as, a green thumb. "Every year he would have beautiful vegetables to share with the neighbors. My sister and I would spend long hours in the kitchen helping my mother can tomato juice, green

beans, beets and corn. We had tall hollyhocks at the back of our garden and peonies. Four O'clocks and moss rose laced the edges of our childhood home. John grew up on a large farm in Wisconsin. So I suppose that growing things was in our blood. When I acquired my own property as an adult, I experimented to see if I could grow my own garden. I've learned by trial and error."



**An attractive grouping of hosta in the Drost garden**

The distinguishing feature of the Drost garden is its two ponds. "The smaller one, which is the home to small goldfish, feeds into the larger one when we turn the pump on. The larger one is filled with blue gills and some bass that our grandchildren love to fish and the water lilies give it color." She notes that their 'Beach House' overlooking the campfire site by the pond is unique, also.

One of Jo's favorite hostas is *Hosta 'Risky Business'* because of the bold color contrast in its leaves. She also loves the blues and the lime green hostas and "my 'Gentle Giant' hosta!"



**An inviting view of the 'Beach House'**  
Photos courtesy of Jo Drost

Clay soil, weeding, and watering, along with bunnies and deer are some of the Drosts' gardening challenges. "We wish we had an underground watering system in more of the gardens."

Future garden plans include improving the layout of some of the beds and adding more perennials. Jo would also like to establish a nice stand of hollyhocks, but she hasn't been successful yet.



## ROHS Summer Tour - Garden #3

### Ellen & Frank Glasgow 1104 N. Buxton Indianola, IA 50125

Frank & Ellen have lived at their house with its 75' x 150' lot in north Indianola for 27 years. Ellen noted that there were a few rose bushes on the property when they moved there. The rose 'Queen Elizabeth' was given to Ellen by a co-worker. It had survived until this year, but after the hard winter she hasn't seen any new growth yet.

"Frank's mom started purchasing hostas, and as hers grew, we managed to get one of each. They were the traditional green and white and yellow and green."



*Hosta 'Heavenly Tiara'* (left) and '*Rainbow's End*' (right) in the Glasgow garden in late May

They tried wild flowers by the garage and hostas around a "really pretty lilac tree," until one late spring, "wild-mannered Winter came back in and flattened it to the ground." That caused the Glasgows to relocate their hostas to the front of the house with its two large maple trees. "That lasted a few years until one maple decided to drop its branches. By this time our wildflowers were not staying put like the hostas, so we dug all that up and started planting hostas, daylilies and heucheras, which became our best friends."

Frank and Ellen began collecting hostas in about 1990. "At first, we were satisfied with the few we received from Frank's mom until we ran into Doyle and Cloretta Woods who happened to live a few blocks away. Once we visited their little plant sale and were WOWED by their back yard, that was probably our turning point to start collecting them, plus the fact they stayed where we planted them without roaming around." Today their collection numbers over 200 cultivars.

**Ellen's Picks:** *Hosta montana 'Aureomarginata'* - "It was the tallest and the yellow stood out where we had it planted."; "The Mice and the knock-offs. Love the leaf, name and everything about the little guys/gals."; 'Tea and Crumpets' - "makes me wish I was in London having a spot of tea, plus the leaf shape."; and 'Olive Branch' - "for its color."

**Frank's Picks:** "He tends to lean toward the darker side of names that have character. 'Fallen Angel', 'Devil's Advocate', 'Risky Business', 'Purgatory' - we lost it ... wonder why? Then he started redeeming himself, liking 'Foxfire Palm Sunday', 'Foxfire Good Friday', and 'Praying Hands'.

"Our list of likes is endless, and a lot of it has to do with where they are planted and what is surrounding them. Frank's favorite is really 'St. Paul' for the size and the dark green!"

Ellen commented that Dan and Kathy Ripperger played a large role in their hosta journey. "We would see them at our local farmer's market and managed to tour their yard many times during the summer. They were very helpful and introduced us to the Society. The Summer Tour is our favorite! We love to stroll through and see how other people have created colorful masterpieces in their yards. Also, the knowledge of experienced gardeners to help with problems is great." In addition to ROHS, Ellen and Frank are also members of the American Hosta Society.

Gardening challenges have been slugs and rabbits the past few years with "those little rascals" (rabbits) being particularly bothersome this spring. "Some of our really big hostas are not coming up as well which could be from the drought we had last year."



View of the patio and lawn behind Ellen & Frank's house  
Photos courtesy of Ellen Glasgow

The Glasgows have incorporated statuary in their backyard gardens and the colors burgundy, yellow, blue, and green throughout the gardens. They hope to continue maintaining the gardens they've established. "We have enough flower beds to keep us happily occupied."

Last year the couple was introduced to several gardens with conifers. "Our member Bob Pool has a very good collection. So we have started collecting a few of them." A few different types of trees may be added in the future.

The bright pink leaves of their tri-colored beech offers sharp contrast to the greens of hostas below.



Asked if there is anything else they would like to grow, Ellen remarked, "Frank would like to grow a tail, Ellen doesn't know why, but sometimes you just never know with him."

## ROHS Summer Tour - Garden #4

**Donna Small & Mike Mettler**  
**710 S. N Street**  
**Indianola, IA 50125**

Donna Small has lived at her home in southwest Indianola for seven years, and coincidentally, that's how long she has been collecting hostas. But she has known the Friendship Plant for much of her life.

"I spent many hours, as a child, helping my grandmother and mother in the garden. My grandmother had hostas in her garden. I have always enjoyed this plant." Donna went on to say, "My grandmother shared many thoughts on the beauty of hostas."

Her gardening constraints are related – a chain link fence and the family's Jack Russell Terriers. Of the terriers, Donna said, "They are part of the family."

Unsure of how many hostas are in her collection, Donna is very sure of her favorite. "*Hosta 'Blue Mouse Ears'* – so tiny, but so special."

She hopes to replace or repair their shed, and would like to add more water features. "I would love to have a small pond."

Asked if there is anything else she would like to grow, Donna responded, "Hen and chicks. Anyone I know can grow them but me!"

**Editor's Note: No photos of this garden are available.**

## ROHS Summer Tour - Garden #5

**Patty & Harry "Skip" Spence**  
**17805 Highway 92**  
**Ackworth, IA 50001**

The Spences have lived in their Ackworth home with its surrounding 15 acres on Highway 92 since 1974. Patty has always enjoyed flowers. "When we were working and raising kids, I had mostly house plants. I had a few outdoor flowers."

Skip has planted hundreds of trees on their property since they've owned it. "Unfortunately, there are a lot of ash trees and we may lose them in the next year or so."



**A grouping of hostas in the Spence garden**

As the years progressed, Patty began adding more flower beds "here and there". Her mother shared her favorites, iris and peonies, along with ferns.

Patty bought her first hosta at a plant sale at the Des Moines Botanical Center. Next-door neighbors, Audra and Fred Wilson,

started growing hostas and lilies and shared some with the Spences. "I got to know Lucille Henry through Audra, and she gave me several lilies." Patty joined the Grow & Glow garden club in Indianola, though it is no longer active.

**"When Skip retired about 12 years ago, he started enjoying gardening as much as he enjoyed working on cars. After a while, he kind of gave up working on cars and started gardening."**



Many rocks from an old barn foundation they helped tear down were used as garden borders and around trees. As her iris and lilies grew larger and larger, Patty would dig them up and give some away. Skip started planting the ones she couldn't give away along the north edge of the main yard as a border separating the yard and the timber.

Several years after Skip retired, the couple acquired bricks from the St. Joseph Academy in Des Moines which was being torn down. "He used them to make long pathways between my flower beds and his flower bed. Between the two of us, we have added flower beds and walkways and sitting areas." They have hosted two weddings, family reunions, and car club picnics in their backyard.

**Over five years ago, Patty's mother gave her a greenhouse that she didn't want to maintain any longer. Patty uses it to overwinter plants and for seed starting in spring. She joined the Ackworth Garden Club when she retired five years ago. "The club is an active club and everyone is so friendly and helpful."**



**A beautifully grown specimen of ever-popular *Hosta 'Sagae'***

Photos courtesy of Patty Spence

Skip is the true hosta fan in the family. There are no clear favorites and the number of hostas in the gardens is unknown. "He likes all the shapes, colors, and sizes, and how easy they are to care for. He does like the small ones." Asked about a mentor in hosta gardening, Patty responded, "I would have to say Audra Wilson. She is the one who really got Skip interested in hostas and has given him several. She knows the names, sizes, and colors."

The Spences don't plan to add any new garden beds, but Patty notes that could change. "We have said that before. We continue to change things around to make it less work and easier to care for."

## ROHS Summer Tour - Directions

### Garden #1

**Rob & Amy Renes**  
**425 E. Sheridan Avenue**  
**Des Moines, IA 50313**

### Garden #2

**Jo & John Drost**  
**8668 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**  
**Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #3

**Ellen & Frank Glasgow**  
**1104 N. Buxton**  
**Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #4

**Donna Small & Mike Mettler**  
**710 S. N Street**  
**Indianola, IA 50125**

### Garden #5

**Patty & Harry "Skip" Spence**  
**17805 Highway 92**  
**Ackworth, IA 50001**

Just when you thought winter would never end, here we are well into June, and there's not a moment to spare. If you are joining us for the Russ O'Harra Hosta Society Summer Tour, we are delighted to have you on board. Before you head out the door Sunday morning, take one last look at the checklist for the day's outing. Do you have everything? David and I have driven the route to ensure you make it to each garden so all you need to do is enjoy the day. Please plan to arrive at the first garden between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. The garden is small and parking may be tight so let's try not to overwhelm our hosts. The distance you travel today is less than one hour so you should have time to visit all gardens thoroughly and arrive at garden #5 by 11:30 - 11:45 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon. **Thank you for participating!**

As in years past, how you get to the first garden depends on from where you begin your day. Rob and Amy Renes live on the east side of Des Moines on E. Sheridan Avenue. Note that Boudin Street runs north/south and ends at E. Sheridan, right at the Renes' driveway. There is off street parking on the south side of E. Sheridan and on the west side of Boudin Street. The Renes' have a light gray colored home with a wooden fenced-in front yard; the garden is at the back of the house. Enter via the driveway and head to the right/back side of the house.

Directions to gardens #2 - #5 are in order **from Des Moines to Indianola and on to Ackworth, our final destination**. The mileage noted in parenthesis is the APPROXIMATE distance you will travel to the next turn or the garden destination; SD = Short Distance. If you need to

make a pit stop along the way, there are plenty of locations in Des Moines and Indianola and a very nice portable toilet will be available at Patty and Skip Spence's where the luncheon and auction will take place. All garden hosts will have a sign stating ROHS Garden Tour in their front yards.

### From Renes (#1) to Drost (#2):

*Approximately 18 miles; 32 minute drive.*

1. Head east on E. Sheridan to E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street (.5 mi)
2. Turn right (south) onto E. 14<sup>th</sup>/US 69 and head south towards Indianola (13.8 mi)

**\*\* Yes, it will be stop and go but it is a direct/straight drive\*\***

**~~~ WHEN ON US69, BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SIGNS TO SUMMERSSET WINERY ~~~**

3. Turn left (east) onto Summersset Road  
**Note: You will have just crossed a bridge and are heading slightly uphill when you need to turn left. (1.3 mi)**
4. Turn right (south) onto 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue – gravel road and a few hills (2.1 mi)

**Destination: 8668 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue;** on right; park on road or a few in drive; gardens in back.

### From Drost (#2) to Glasgow (#3):

*Approximately 3.5 miles; 7 minute drive.*

1. Head south on 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to county road G36 (1.3 mi)
2. Turn right (west) onto county road G36 which becomes E. Hillcrest Avenue (1.2 mi)
3. Turn left (south) onto US 65/N / Jefferson Way (0.6 mi) (Unity Point Clinic on corner)
4. Turn right (west) on to E. Kentucky Avenue (SD) (66 Gas station on right corner)
5. Turn left (south) onto N. Buxton Street (SD)

**Destination: 1104 N. Buxton Street;** on left, park along east side of N. Buxton

### From Glasgow (#3) to Small (#4):

*Approximately 2.3 miles; 5 minute drive.*

1. Head south on N. Buxton Street; pass Buxton Park (1.1 mi)
2. Turn right (west) onto Hwy 92/E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (1.2 mi) Look for the Fareway Store
3. Turn left (south) onto S. N Street (SD)

**Destination: 710 S. N Street;** on left; short iron fence in front and around the sides of yard; park along street which is a cul-de-sac

## From Small (#4) to Spence (#5):

*Approximately 6.3 miles; 10 minute drive.*

### **LUNCH & AUCTION**

#### **WILL TAKE PLACE AT THIS LOCATION**

1. Head north on S. N Street to Hwy 92 (SD)
2. Turn right (east) onto Hwy 92 / E/W 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (6.2 mi)

**Destination:** **17805 Highway 92, Ackworth;** on your left. Parking is available on the property – drive in and follow driveway, past the camper and portable toilet, past garages to the back of property; parking is under a canopy of trees. You can also park along the road. If it rains, parking along the road may be best. Shoulders are wide with few drop-offs. Please do take care crossing Hwy 92. If you need help with auction plants, please ask for assistance.

**Note:** The Spences live on the property immediately west, or just before, you get to Audra & Fred Wilson's.

### AUCTION PLANTS & CHECK-IN

Those bringing auction plants, please bring them to the middle building area. When you arrive at the Spence's, it is important to visit the check-in table for your auction paddle and lunch bracelet (if you paid for lunch). You can also renew your membership here. Look for Kris Jurik at this table.

### EXTRA GARDEN & BUSINESSES WORTH A VISIT

If five marvelous gardens are not enough for one day, members **Bob and Jackie Pool** have offered to open their gardens to you until 6 p.m. Their home is located at **7246 78<sup>th</sup> Avenue in rural Indianola**. From the Spence's you'll need to head west on Hwy 92. Go 9.5 miles; turn north (right) on County Road R57 and continue 5.2 miles; turn left onto Fulton; and then left onto 78<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Should you be interested in a bit of shopping to round out your day of touring, **Flying Frog Farm** and **Bedwell Gardens** are two businesses located within 20 minutes of the Spence's home. Both businesses graciously support the ROHS through the New Member Program AND **are open on Sunday until 5 p.m.**

**Flying Frog Farm** is located at **5148 155<sup>th</sup> Avenue in rural Indianola**. From the Spence's you'll need to head west on Hwy 92. Go 5 miles; turn north (right) onto US65/69 and go another 5 miles to Summerset Road (you were here earlier today); turn right and go 2 miles to 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue; turn left and continue onto Fairfax Street (about .5 mile); turn left on to 155<sup>th</sup> Avenue and continue another mile. Total miles from the Spence's = 13.8.

**Bedwell Gardens** is located at **8044 G14 Hwy in Norwalk**. From the Spence's you'll need to head west on Hwy 92. Go 7.5 miles; turn north (right) onto County Road R63 and continue 8.6 miles (this county road also is known as 103<sup>rd</sup> Ave., 100<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 98<sup>th</sup> Ave. depending on where you are in that 8.6 miles); turn west (left) onto County Road G14 and continue 1.5 miles. Total miles from the Spence's = 17.3. You can print off a coupon for \$1.00 off your \$5.00 or more purchase by visiting their website at [www.bedwellgardens.com](http://www.bedwellgardens.com).



**April 3 Jackie and Jacob got to go into their new home for the first time last weekend! Standing behind them is Ron Humeston, Marlys Anderson's best friend and partner.**

**You may ask why Josh was not included in this picture. The ramp to enter the house is temporary and a bit steeper than normal. There was also quite a bit of rough rock and mud. Wheelchairs don't navigate well in mud. Pictures and video of two stuck wheelchairs do exist and will be shared soon. Josh decided not to tackle the mud after seeing the video of Jacob spinning his wheels!**

**Josh did get into his new home the next day after we figured out that the leftover shingles from the roof provide great traction when laid over the mud!**

All photos of the Spece family's new home courtesy of  
Building A Dream In The Country



The house is lifted onto the foundation in mid-January 2014



Sue and volunteer Kathy Holt check out the painted walls in Josh's room



Sue, Josh, Kathy Finholt, and Jacob check out their new home while under construction at All-American Homes in Dyersville, IA



Jacob pushes the television blocking the way to his room with his wheelchair



Sue checking out Jacob's new chair to make sure it's comfortable!



Sue receives a gift photo of herself and Josh, Jackie, and Jacob



View from Josh's window of In the Country Garden & Gifts

For more information and updates about BADITC, visit the webpage and the Facebook page.

<http://www.buildingadreaminthecountry.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BuildingaDreamintheCountry?sk=wall&filter=1>



**Facebook – April 10**

The infamous 'Tongue Selfie' by Josh Spece and his buddy Jake Falck Freeman

Josh: 🤪

Reldon: Stick those tongues back in your mouths!!

Josh: He made me do it!

Reldon: Yea. Right!

Josh: Right!

Reldon: OK Stick with that story!

Jake Falck Freeman:

This guy [Josh Spece](#) he is just indescribable! He and I just have this amazing relationship! He's a brother, a friend, an amazing person. I love him to death! He always makes me smile!



## ROHS Summer Tour Checklist

- \*June 2014 *Hosta Horizons*  
(with tour directions)
- \*Lawn chair
- \*Hosta/plant donation(s)\*
- \*Sunglasses
- \*Hat
- \*Sunscreen
- \*Bottled water
- \*Mosquito repellent
- \*Umbrella/rain jacket  
(if rain is predicted)
- \*Checkbook/Cash  
(for hosta purchases)
- \*Notebook & pen
- \*Hand sanitizer
- \*Cell phone

\*Auction plants will be checked in at the Spence's garden. Remember plants **MUST** be labeled.



More views of the Skip & Patty Spence gardens

## ROHS Summer Tour Lunch

This year's ROHS Summer Tour lunch will be catered by Kathryn Wright, a local Indianolan. We are pleased to offer your choice of a smoked chicken salad, ham and cheese or roast beef and cheese sandwich accompanied by an orzo salad, fruit salad, and chips, with lemon or raspberry bars for dessert. If you would prefer a vegetarian wrap, please specify "**Vegetarian**" in the memo field of your check. Water and an assortment of sodas will also be provided. The cost for lunch is **\$12.00 per person**. Please make your check payable to **ROHS** and mail to the address below. Your payment **MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY, JUNE 16**. ABSOLUTELY NO PHONE ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. As a reminder, we cannot guarantee a lunch without advance payment and no refunds will be given if you are unable to attend. Should these options not suit your pallet, Indianola has a multitude of take-away options or you are welcome to bring your own.

David Dettmann

122 Blue Gill Court

Pella, IA 50219



Josh, Sue and friends in the kitchen/dining room of their new home (above) and work being done on the basement (below)

