



# Andy's Garden

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## ANDY'S GUIDE TO HOSTAS

Hostas are among the most reliable perennials, performing well year after year with a minimum of care. They are also one of the best perennials for shade. A valuable addition to the garden and landscape, they remain attractive from spring until frost with beautiful foliage as well as flowers. Some varieties have fragrant flowers and all hosta flowers are frequently visited by hummingbirds. Hosta also come in many sizes from dwarfs, just 10 inches or less in height, to large growing varieties over 2 feet, to as much as 4 feet tall. Small varieties grow 10 - 15 inches tall and medium sized



### HOW TO PLANT

All hostas grow well in shade, but some varieties can tolerate sun up to 3/4 of the day, especially if the soil is moist. Generally, gold and green varieties can stand more sun and blue varieties need more shade. A hosta that gets too much sun may look like it will die, but will recover if moved to a shadier location. Too much sun can also bleach out the colors. Avoid planting slow growing hostas in or near maple tree roots - the root competition may be too much for them. Hostas will grow near walnut trees.

Hostas can be planted any time during the growing season. It is best to work plenty of organic matter such as compost, peat moss, or aged manure into the soil to improve its structure and moisture and nutrient retention. Be sure to allow large growing varieties (i.e. *Sum and Substance* and *Sieboldiana elegans*) at least 4 feet of room in which to spread, keeping in mind that some varieties are slow growing and may take 4 years to reach their mature size. Likewise mature leaf color and texture may not be readily apparent in young plants. Your patience will be rewarded.

Water plants well after planting and keep the soil moist the first week. After that, gradually reduce how often you water, but water deeply each time to encourage deep root growth. Its best to avoid getting the leaves wet as they may scorch if in the sun and the powdery surface on blue varieties may be washed off. Watering in the mornings is preferable because watering late in the day may encourage slugs.

### CARE OF HOSTA

Once your hostas are established, they can get by with little supplemental water and fertilizer but will reward you with larger leaves, brighter colors, and faster growth if given some care. They will do best if watered deeply when it hasn't rained for 10 to 14 days. Slow release fertilizers are

best, such as Osmocote or organic fertilizers. Liquid fertilizers can be used but should be diluted to 1/2 strength and applied every 2 weeks during spring and summer. A light layer of mulch can be used to reduce weeds and maintain soil temperature and moisture level. Clip off flower spikes as blooms fade to keep plants tidy. If you want to increase your hosta, they can be divided, ideally in spring or fall.

While hostas are nearly pest free, they can be attacked by slugs, especially in wet weather. Symptoms of slug attack are irregular holes in the leaves and along the edges as well as slime trails in and around the plants. Hostas with thick leaves (this is called heavy substance) tend to be more slug resistant. A permanent solution to a slug problem is to surround your hostas with copper barrier. This product gives the slugs an electrical shock (but is safe for humans and pets) and they will not crawl over it. Other means of defense include diatomaceous earth, slug bait and setting traps. Beer in shallow pans set in the ground is said to attract and drown slugs. If using these methods it is best to start early, putting out the bait/traps as soon as the hosta start to emerge and look like bullets in the ground. If the slug problem is severe, mulch may have to be eliminated. Slugs can be attracted to the moisture it holds.

### **SLUG RESISTANT HOSTA**

BIG DADDY  
BLUE CADET  
H. FORTUNEI AUREOMARGINATA  
FRANCES WILLIAMS  
HALCYON  
JUNE  
KROSSA REGAL  
LOVE PAT  
OLIVE BAILEY LANGDON  
H. SIEBOLDIANA  
TARDIANA GROUP  
H. TOKUDAMA types  
TWILIGHT

### **HOSTAS FOR SUN (up to 3/4 day)**

AUGUST MOON  
BLUE ANGEL  
FRANCEE  
GINKO CRAIG  
GOLD STANDARD  
GOLDEN TIARA  
GREAT EXPECTATIONS  
JEWEL OF THE NILE  
PATRIOT  
ROYAL STANDARD  
SUN POWER

### **FRAGRANT HOSTAS**

DIANA REMEMBERED  
FRAGRANT BOUQUET  
FRAGRANT DREAM  
GUACAMOLE  
ROYAL STANDARD

### **HOSTAS FOR GROUNDCOVERS**

H. FORTUNEI (most)  
ANTIOCH  
FRANCEE  
HALCYON  
HONEYBELLS  
PINEAPPLE UPSIDE CAKE

### **HOSTAS FOR CONTAINERS**

BLUE MOUSE EARS  
CHERISH  
FRANCEE  
JUNE

GOLD STANDARD  
H. FORTUNEI (most)  
HALCYON  
WIDE BRIM

H. UNDULATA  
GOLDEN TIARA  
REVOLUTION



***Making the world beautiful  
one flower at a time.***