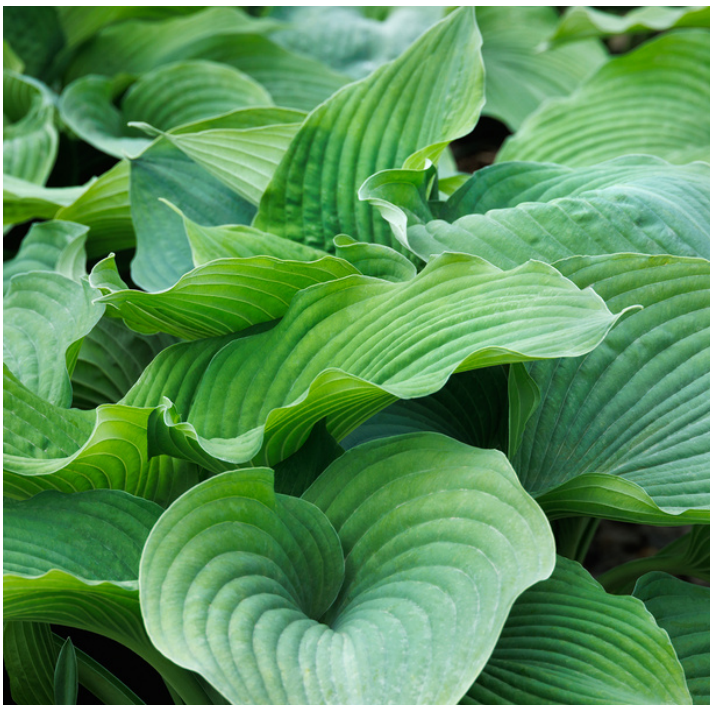
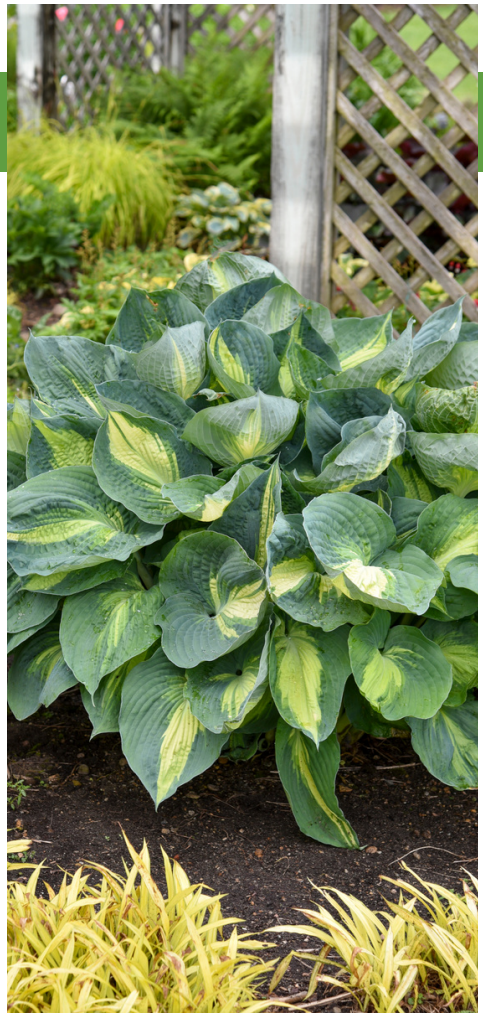
2024
YEAR OF THE
HOSTA

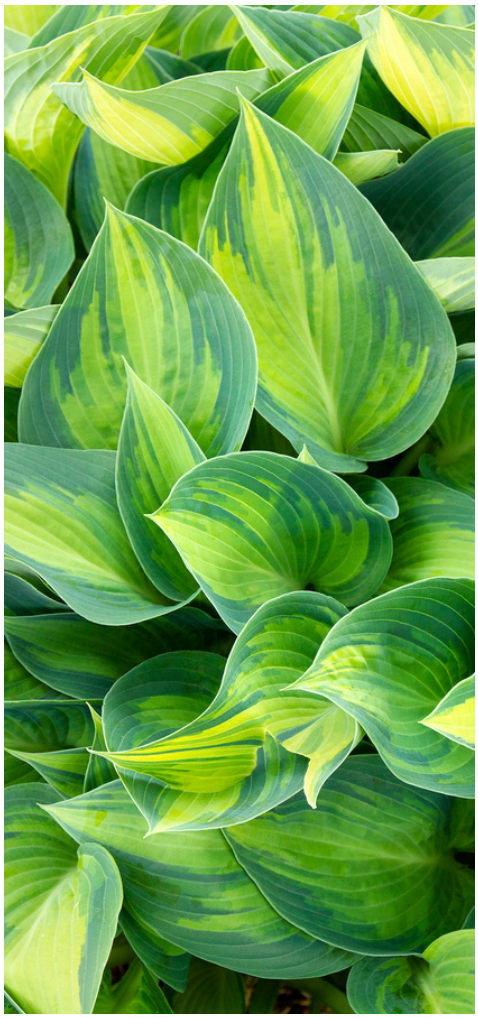
Hosta are the most popular and well recognized perennial in North America. They have gained their popularity from fantastic foliage that provides interest throughout the growing season. Hosta are adaptable, tough-as-nails plants capable of surviving in the toughest soils and shadiest locations.

One of the ways Hosta ascended in popularity is they can be easily split and shared. They can be dug up, divided, and replanted at almost any time during the year. A term for this type of plant is a “friendship plant” – perennials that are easy to divide and give a piece to your friend or neighbor.

There is also great variety in the genus, with large variation in color, size, variegation, and texture. Today, there are tens of thousands of registered Hosta varieties, with some collectors and nurseries amassing collections of several hundred or even a few thousand.







Types of Hosta:

The American Hosta Society identifies five major color categories, including Green, Blue, Gold, Medio-variegated (light center, dark margin), and Marginal Variegated (dark center, light margin). Hostas are also classified in five defined sizes, Mini (less than 6" tall), Small (7-10" tall), Medium (11-18" tall), Large (19-28" tall), and Giant (More than 28" tall).

- Hosta 'Diamond Lake' – This large blue Hosta has a thick waxy coating and excellent slug resistance. It is among the best for holding its blue coloration late into summer.
- Hosta 'Miss America' – A large variety of multiple shades of green. Medium green margins jet into cream centers with light green streaking. Near white flowers are held high above the foliage on five foot flower scapes.
- Hosta 'Empress Wu' – This giant green variety is among the largest Hostas currently available. Leaves are individually giant to match the size of the plant. Use this variety as a space filler in the landscape.
- Hosta 'Blue Mouse Ears' – This mini blue variety is one of the best known mini Hostas. Vigorous despite its small size, this variety is perfect for use along the front of the border. Lavender flowers are proportionate to the size of the plant.
- Hosta 'Brother Stefan' – A nicely variegated large hosta known for its crinkled leaf texture. Heavily puckered leaves have apple green margins and chartreuse centers.
- Hosta 'Touch of Class' – The first tetraploid elevation of a Hosta, with added vigor compared to diploid varieties. 'Touch of Class' impresses with intense blue leaves and chartreuse centers.
- Hosta 'Dancing Queen' – One of the most popular large gold varieties, emerging yellow from the start in spring.

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GARDENING TIPS

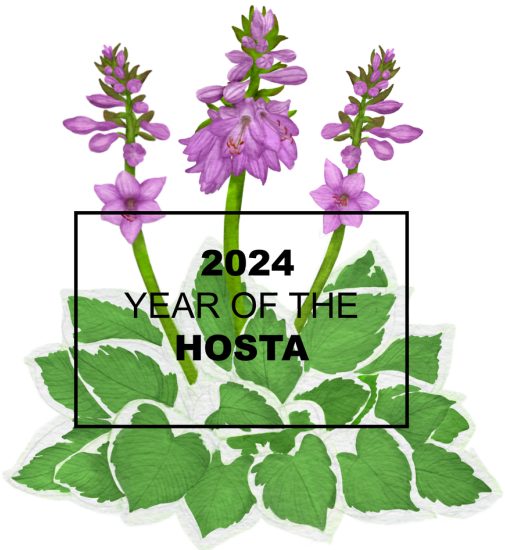
- Hosta are among the easiest perennials to put in your garden. They are durable, long-lived, and generally maintenance free.

- Hosta can be sited in most shady spaces in the garden. Placing in morning sun or dappled shade will usually bring out the most intense foliage colors without causing leaf burn. Gardeners in southern zones will want to make sure they are placing their hosta in full shade. Growers in northern zones may find that some hosta, such as ‘Guacamole’, ‘Paradigm’, or ‘Guardian Angel’ are capable of being grown in full sun with adequate moisture.

- High soil fertility certainly helps Hosta grow bigger, faster, but is not ultimately necessary to having beautiful specimens. Hosta are able to grow in a variety of soils, from loose sand to heavy clay. In sandier soils Hosta will need more frequent watering. Poor and sandy soils can be amended with compost or organic matter to increase fertility.

- Hosta have traditionally been selected as a foliage plant first, with flowers as an afterthought. Flowers can be trimmed from the plant at any time without harming it. Some Hosta varieties have been selected for unique, floriferous, or fragrant flower scapes. A few examples are ‘Silly String’, ‘Royal Standard’, ‘Royal Wedding’, ‘Time in a Bottle’, and ‘Wrinkle in Time’.

- The primary detractor for Hosta is they tend to be a highly desired food source for deer, particularly when they are emerging in spring. If deer are an issue in your neighborhood, siting them near entryways to the house, within a fenced or obstructed enclosure, or behind deer tape may be necessary for them to thrive.



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