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A selection prized for its robust foliage which remains attractive straight through to the first frost. Rich blue-green leaves have a creamy yellow border that gradually fades to white.

Hosta la vista

Hostas are pretty, adaptable winter-hardy perennials that can spice up your yard

Question: Hostas are such pretty plants. Are they difficult to grow?

Answer: Hostas are popular with gardeners because they are reliable, hardy and have countless combinations of leaf color, shape and textures.

Leaves come in colors from bright green to gold and blue tones. They can have edging or a center of white, cream or gold or splashes of color. Leaf texture can be smooth, veined or puckered and can be heart-shaped, lance-like or cupped. The flower stalks, called racemes, hold bell-like blossoms of white, lavender or blue and some are fragrant and attractive to hummingbirds and bees.

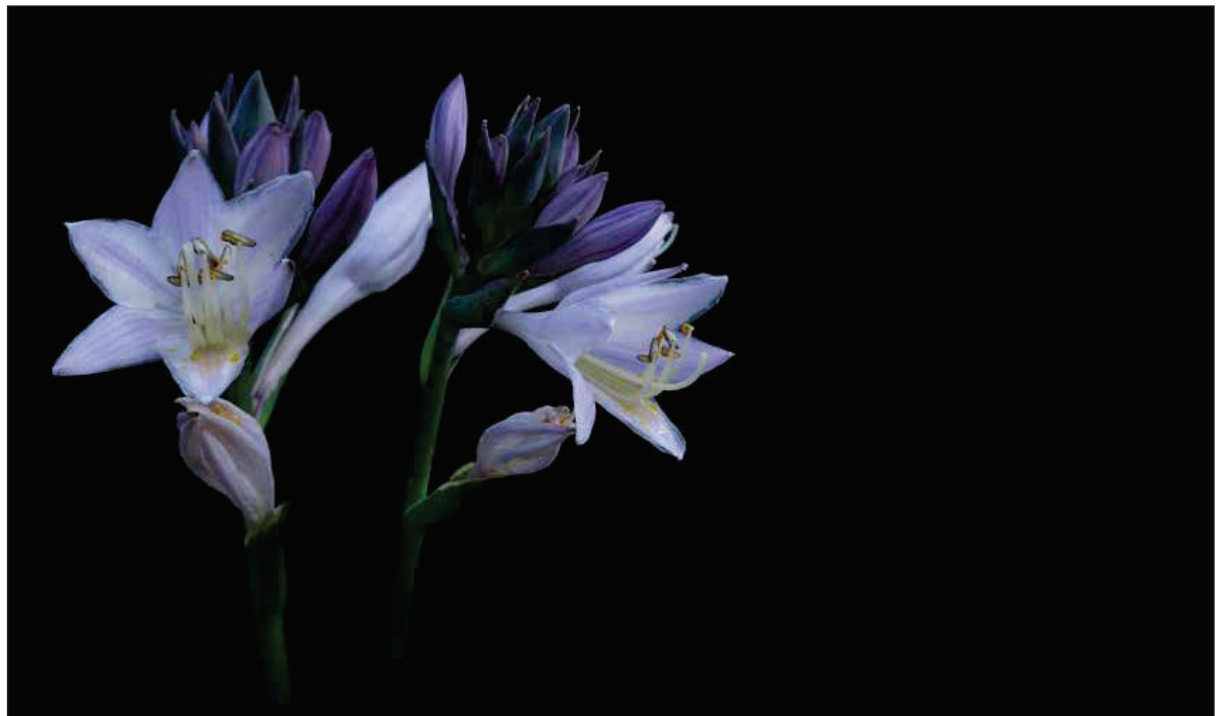
With fleshy roots and short spreading rhizomes, hostas are highly tolerant of shade and are



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adaptable to many sites in the garden. Hostas are herbaceous perennials that are winter hardy in USDA Zones 3 to 8. Hostas, also called plantain lilies, are in the family Asparagaceae and are native to northeast Asia, including China, Japan, Korea and the Russian Far East. The genus was named by Austrian botanist Leopold Trattinnick in 1812 in honor of the Austrian botanist Nicholas Thomas Host.

All hostas need some shade and few will do well in strong direct sunlight. Hostas thrive



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in areas where filtered shade is available for much of the day. They can survive in deep shade, but it will lead to slower growth rates. Yellow and gold hostas benefit from a few hours of morning sun to develop a richer leaf color.

Brown, scorched leaf surfaces or leaf tips on a hosta is a symptom of sunscald alerting the gardener that the plant should be moved to a shadier location or provide the plant more water. The deeper, darker foliage retains its color best in moderate shade. The variegated varieties need more sunlight to keep their white and gold stripes.

For the best care of hostas,

plant them in rich organic soil with a slightly acidic pH. Drainage is very important because fungal diseases like Anthracnose (large pale brown spots, small black spots and tattered appearance), Fusarium root/crown rot (stems near the soil line often display a dry brown or black decay) and sooty mold are common.

Organic mulches will help to conserve the moisture needed for hostas and a well-balanced, slow-release fertilizer after planting or when spring growth emerges gives them a boost. Holes in hosta leaves may indicate chewing pests like grasshoppers or slugs,

snails and deer.

Due to the presence of the toxins glycoside saponins in hostas plants, ingestion of the plant can cause poisoning in dogs. Dogs are tempted to feed on the appealing plants and to avoid this, planting potted hostas is more suitable in households with dogs. Hostas look great in containers paired with other foliage plants or annuals.

Do you have a gardening question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners via email at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, by phone at 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg.