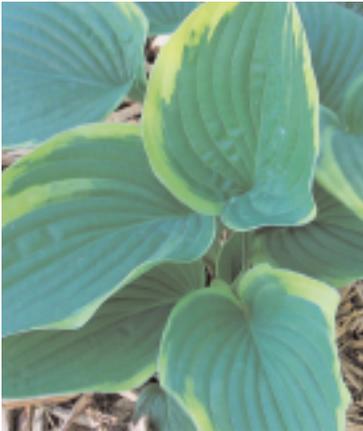


# Garden Center Guides



## *Hostas*

Hostas are the No. 1 shade plant grown in Kansas. With 4,200 hybrid varieties, the selection is tremendous. These varieties include an array of heights and widths ranging from

12 to 48 inches with multiple leaf shapes and many shades of green, blue, gold and variegated. The plants are native to woodland areas in Asia.

By and large, hostas are shade lovers, preferring dappled light or morning sun. They prefer a well-drained soil amended with organic matter. Organic matter will improve soil drainage. Most hosta will do fine with an annual feeding of organic fertilizer in the spring. Composted manure makes an excellent spring top dressing. The blue hosta responds better to more frequent feedings.

Hostas are hardy in zones 3 through 8. The plant will take three to four years to reach mature growth. Hostas can be propagated by root division. Dig the plant when it emerges in the spring, and with a sharp spade, divide the clump into quarters with three to four eyes per clump. This division size and time of year will allow the hosta to reestablish quickly. Water the newly planted hosta frequently during the first two weeks and weekly for the remainder of the first year. Established hosta will require additional watering during the summer months when it is hot or dry. Hosta generally has one flush of foliage each year and spread by rhizomes.

It is important to know the variety characteristics of the hosta planted, so as not to crowd the growth. Hosta should be mulched in the winter after planting to prevent the soil from heaving and to protect plant buds. Mulching the

perennial garden is a good idea every year to prevent drying, freezing and thawing, and to help control weeds.

In the fall, remove spent foliage to deter slugs and voles. The thicker-leaved hosta, such as the blue hosta, is not as susceptible to slugs. Hostas are a favorite of deer and may also be bothered by slugs. Vine weevils damage hosta by chewing along the margins of the leaves. This insect can be controlled by using insecticide.

Hostas may be used as specimen plants and also make beautiful gardens used in combination with harmonious shades of green, gold and blues. Placing hosta next to plants with brightly colored flowers will bring out the hues in the nicely textured hosta and make glowing accents. Dwarf varieties make great borders and mix in well with plants of similar size.

When carefree gardening is the goal, hostas are the perfect plant. Easy to grow and requiring minimal care, this plant is perfect for shade and partial shade gardens.

### ***Varieties***

Popular blue hosta varieties are 'Big Daddy' and 'Blue Boy.' 'Frances Williams' is a favorite bicolor hosta having blue-green leaves with a wide cream margin. 'Francee' has crisp white margins on dark-green leaves and is relatively sun tolerant. 'Gold Standard' has light-green leaves with dark-green margins. There are many varieties of hosts to choose from, all with outstanding variations in size and color.

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