

10 IDEAS FOR USING HOSTAS IN YOUR GARDEN

by: SWMOgardens.com

AS EYE-STOPPING FOCAL POINTS. A giant Sun and Substance in a field of variegated Liriope will grab your eye from across the yard. I use Touch of Class, Gold Standard, Regal Splendor, and Sagae at transition areas in my garden; where two paths meet or at the entrance to a garden room, for example. A good focal point will slow people down and let them know something special is happening here.

IN CONTAINERS. A large, vase shaped Hosta, like Krossa Regal, makes the perfect “thriller” plant in a half barrel. Use Palace Purple Coral Bells or Japanese Painted Ferns as “fillers”, and Vinca Major as a “spiller”. I put Hostas in brass, copper, wood, plastic, and concrete containers, then use them to decorate garden rooms. Try Dark Star, Fatal Attraction, Ice Cream, Praying Hands, or Fire Island. (Tip them on their sides on the north side of your house for the winter.)

TO COMPLIMENT OTHER PLANTS. When the chartreuse, lacy leaves of a Seiryu Japanese Maple lay on the big leaves of an Old Glory Hosta, it is just gorgeous. A gold Sun Power or August Moon will make the color of a Royal Purple Smokebush or Bloodgood Japanese Maple look richer. Plant a June next to a dwarf Blue Spruce to enhance the blue. A circle of Blue Moon around a Crimson Queen Japanese Maple puts the maple on a pedestal.

TO PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT. I have three large Ventricosa Aureomarginata planted in front of a rocker. When they are in bloom, I enjoy watching the bumblebees buzz from flower to flower. A big container, with a bunch of mini-hostas becomes a crowd pleaser when you add a family of small gnomes and their house.

TO BRIGHTEN A DARK SPOT. My gazebo is surrounded by Holly and Yews. As they matured, I trimmed the lower limbs off and planted about 20 Gold Standards all among their trunks and around the gazebo. The bright Hostas lit up what had become a dark spot.

HAVE A FAMILY REUNION. Sports, seedlings, and their parents are a winning combination because their colors naturally match so well. The cream and blue edge of June look fabulous with all blue Halcyon. Add three Regal Splendor in a group of Krossa Regal around a large tree. Scatter Guacamole, Stained Glass, and Plantaginea in a long shrub border to tie the border together in eye-pleasing harmony.

AS GROUNDCOVER. Large quantities of So Sweet make a lovely groundcover. And, they keep weeds to a minimum. A mid-size all blue, or a green with a slight white variegation looks the best. Plain green Lancifolia is a classic groundcover.

TO HIDE THE UGLIES. I planted a Blue Angel to cover the entrance to my crawlspace. Hostas work well to hide the legs of Clematis vines, too. A striking specimen, like Liberty, will draw the eye away from the wheelbarrow stored across the path. Plant Hostas over Daffodil bulbs to hide the Daffodil foliage after the flowers are gone.

FOR EDGING. A row of Patriots on each side of a shady path is absolutely beautiful. I use Golden Tiara as a small, subtle edger. Matching trios of Halcyon line the entrance to my backyard. Try defining the edge of a garden room by using Hostas. One combination I particularly like is Halcyon, Hadspen Samphire, and Devon Green. It makes a striking blue, yellow, and green wall. Lancifolia lining a path looks beautiful when in bloom.

A THEME GARDEN. Biblical, sports, love, animal, regional – you name it – there are Hostas for it. My favorite is a collection featuring the winning Hosta of the year. Theme garden Hostas do need labels, so visitors can appreciate the concept.

THE BEST IDEA for using Hostas is to make new friends. I keep several Hostas in one gallon pots to give to guests and friends as they visit our garden. Hostas are the friendship plant!