

Hosta Planting Instructions & Care Sheet

Where to plant: Hostas like a partially shaded spot. They need some sun, but don't like to fry in the sun, especially in the afternoon. Morning sun is much less harsh than afternoon sun. Dappled shade is wonderful. Along the north side of the house, where there is little direct sun, but where the hostas get lots of light from the sky, is a great place. Along the east side of the house works pretty well, where the hostas are shaded all afternoon. Too much sun won't kill the hostas, but the leaves may burn, the leaves won't be as large, and the clump won't be as full.

Soil: Hostas are not overly particular about soil. Best is the usual "moist but well drained" soil with a fair amount of organic matter. If you are establishing a new bed, it is almost always good to till in some compost or other organic matter first, especially if your soil is mostly clay.

Planting: Dig the hole deep enough to accommodate the pot size, but wider, so that the roots have some soft earth into which to expand. Remove the potted hosta by turning it upside down and pulling the pot off. The roots will hold the soil together unless it has been freshly potted. Be sure to not plant the hosta too deeply. The crown of the plant should be just barely below the soil surface. Water in well. We like to use a **root stimulator** in the water for that first watering. It is inexpensive and effective.

Fertilizer: We like to use an **organic fertilizer**, such as North Country Pro-Gro or Dr. Earth. With organic fertilizers, you don't have to worry about burning the roots or over stimulating the plant. They break down slowly and feed the plant over a longer time. Some can actually be sprinkled in the hole as you plant, and then sprinkle some more around the plant after firming it in. Each year thereafter, we broadcast an organic fertilizer into our beds before the hostas have emerged.

Mulch: Mulching around your hostas will hold moisture in the soil, smother weeds, and improve the soil as the organic matter breaks down. Try not to choke the hostas by bringing the mulch up around the base of the hosta too deeply, which could promote crown rot.

Dealing with slugs: Slugs are generally the only garden pests that are a problem for hostas. Slugs come out at night to feed. If you have holes in your hostas, it is probably from slugs. If so, treat with bait that is specifically aimed at slugs, since they are mollusks, not insects. Sluggo is an organic bait, and Bug-Geta by Ortho is a chemical bait, both of which are effective. Shallow containers of beer placed near the hostas will attract slugs into it, where they drown. Dump out the dead ones and change the beer daily. You can monitor your slug problem (and kill a few while you are at it) by placing a brick or piece of board in the garden. Pick up the brick or board during the day to see if there are any slugs stuck to the underside.

Dividing hostas: There is no need to divide your hostas, but after two or three years, you can easily do so. Dividing is best done in the spring when the hostas are just poking their noses out of the ground, or in late summer (August), at which time you should cut off all of the foliage so that the plant can concentrate on making new roots and getting reestablished, rather than supporting wilting foliage. A start can be taken by cutting a pie shaped piece from a plant, using a sharp spade or knife. Or, the whole plant can be dug up and divided into chunks, or even into single eye divisions. We like to divide into good sized chunks which will quickly grow into mature plants.



22937 1140 N. Ave. Princeton, IL 61356
Ph. (815) 659-3282 Fax (815) 659-3159
www.hornbakergardens.com

