

Hosta, Plantain Lily, Giboshi

Hosta Agavaceae

Plantain Lily or Giboshi are common English Names for plants of the genus *Hosta*. The genus is named after Nikolaus Thomas Host, an Austrian botanist who was connected with the history and to directors of the Botanical Garden of University of Vienna (HBV). The HBV is starting a collection of species and varieties of *Hosta* in time to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the famous Botanist Host's birth in 2011. Because of this activity and because *Hosta* is one of the most fine perennials for shaded locations the HBV presented the Plantain Lily and its story at the 52. Kifissia Flower Show (Athen, Greece) in 2006.

Standort im Garten: Gruppen 15, 20, 21.

The genus *Hosta* was named for the Austrian botanist Nikolaus Thomas Host in 1812 by Leopold Trattinnick, curator of the botanical Court Cabinet of Austria.

***Hosta* is a member of the Agava-family (Agavaceae).** Some authors treated it as its own family Hostaceae or as part of the Asparagus family (Asparagaceae). Like grasses or palmes, it belongs to the Monocots – plants which have only one first leaf after germination. The genus is comprised of approximately 40 species. At present there exist c. 3000 cultivars.

***Hosta* is indigenous to temperate regions of Japan, China and Korea.** Many species have their origin in Japan, 23 species are native to island Honshu. Here their natural habitat is in shrub- and grassland, often close to rivers. Some even grow on rocks in the shade.

No other herbaceous perennial shows such tremendous diversity in plant size, habits, leaf shape, surface effects, variegation patterns and shape characteristics as *Hosta*. Hostas are perennials with fleshy rhizomes. The leaf will appear at the very base. Hostas may be only a few centimetres in size, like *Hosta* 'Golden Tiara' (20 cm). But they can also reach a size of 100 cm like *Hosta* 'Big Daddy' and the inflorescences of others might even have a size of up to 180 cm. Although the flowers, which appear in summer, are beautiful white, pink or violet Hostas are cultivated for their attractive leaves. Aesthetic qualities coupled with minimal cultural and maintenance requirements in no small part

account for the widespread use of Hostas in the landscape. **It is the most popular herbaceous perennial in the U.S. for use in shaded landscapes and similarly for English, German and Austrian gardens.** It was the best-selling perennial in 1993 in U.S. At the present it is not only famed for formal and informal garden design, but also proves very suitable for solitaire pots in shady situations.



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