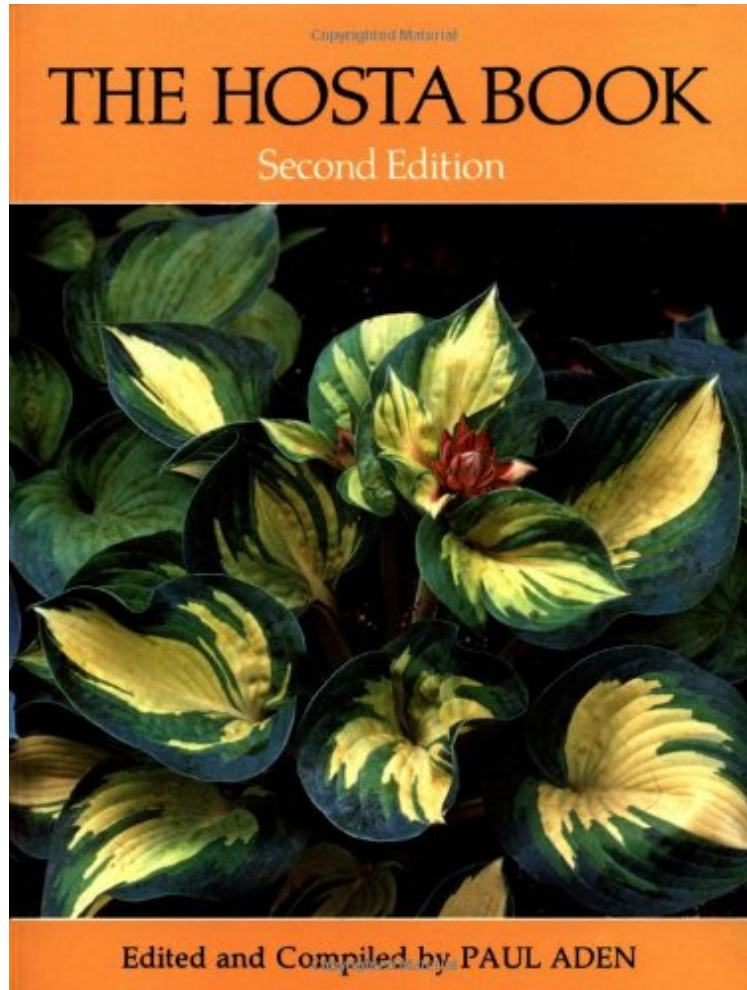


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## The Hosta Book

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Paul Aden, who has introduced dozens of new hostas into cultivation, wrote six chapters and contributed many photographs to this classic. Other contributors include John Elsley, Yoshimichi Hirose, Graham Stuart Thomas, and

Andr Viette. This was the first contemporary book on hostas and played a role in helping to bring these versatile shade-lovers to their current level of popularity.

"A thorough reference." ack Ruttle, National Gardener, February 1995 "Serious collectors and hosta breeders, along with homeowners who just want it made in the shade, will devour this hosta encyclopedia in the quest for the perfect color of this almost perfect perennial." Marianne Binetti, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 24, 2004 "[A book] that I refer to often and find very useful ... Excellent chapters on companion plants and design principles." Beverly Fitts, Hardy Plant, January 1996 About the Author Without a doubt, Paul Aden of Baldwin, NY is the king of commercial hostas. He is also Paul Aden is a landscape designer and consultant. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Hostas offer, not only VARIETY, but also CONTINUITY in the garden, a measure of comfort, just as does the horizontal line of the earth. When visiting the gardens of the leading plant collectors, I am often surprised that despite the many beautiful plants, there is no garden. The magnificence of each individual plant is lost. It is busy fighting adjacent plants. There is little sense of continuity, of a WHOLE VIEW. Similar problems of grouping exist in literature, in music, in museums, as well as within your home. For example, imagine trying to group many pictures on a living room wall. Having each picture "fit" in the group takes some thought. After all, they will be together for a long time, and it is important that adjacent pictures "get along." Barriers and conflicts which interfere with the response of a viewer must be lowered, not raised when setting plants. It usually takes some experimentation to avoid barriers. A site without a sense of order cannot be a garden. Too many colors, too close with too many high-impact plants of equal quality, raises barriers. Hostas successfully act as "marriage brokers" in a mixed landscape scene, offering a unifying, horizontal theme that tends to be relaxing, while the different colors, variegations, sizes, textures and flowers (in most cases) add the right amount of tension to be interesting. All too often, drifts of a single hosta variety with the foliage intermeshing would be preferable to the extreme conflict observed in the gardens of many collectors. Plants with a vertical aspect, like fern, astilbe, arum, carex, acorus, hakonechloa and hemerocallis work extremely well as hosta companions. They complement the broad, horizontal line of hostas. A vertical sub-motif brings relief and highlights the dominant plants. In some cases, they add an airy, feathery quality. In other cases, they add a thin, grass-like, fragile quality. In the process, companion plants relieve monotony and intensify the value of each in the garden. The goal in using companion plants with hostas is to create the effect of THE WHOLE BEING GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS. Changes in level and plane create a variation of mood. It may be the echo of the horizon line, or a calm sea, but, whatever the origin, horizontal planes suggest tranquility and repose. Vertical planes, as in mountains and tall trees or angry seas, suggest power and aspiration. Diagonal planes seem to defy gravity, almost as if something is falling. They catch people off-guard and suggest instability or that a subject is alive. Setting plants on slopes which slant towards the viewer makes it easier to see all of the plants in the bed, not just those in the foreground. The plants are displayed or "staged" better, each having a more nearly equal opportunity to show what each is doing, as well as adding a sense of greater depth and interest. Different planes, together with varying levels adds tremendous interest ... Any chapter dealing with landscape concepts can't ignore color, particularly hosta colors. The range of new colors, whether as single or in combination, becoming available in hosta cultivars, certainly is one of the prime reasons that gardeners want to learn more about them. In single colors, there are yellows which brighten up the darkest corner, blues which cool on the hottest day, and at least five distinctly different greens. Combinations and patterns (variegations) of all of the above with white or yellow are almost infinite. The foliage of Hosta 'Reversed', H. 'Wide Brim', H. 'White Magic,' for example, would test the skill of the master painter. The common thread in all hosta colors is that they are easy to look at, and easily combined with colors found in other genera. With the possible exception of intense yellows, all the hostas display "cool" colors in their foliage and flowers. Why we feel better and more relaxed when "cool" colors predominate is hard to pin down. Maybe they are less threatening. The general "cool" color of hostas lends itself in "facing down" the vibrantly colored flowers of hemerocallis, astilbe, heuchera and bergenia (on rebloom). A useful landscape concept deals with depth perception, as imparted by color. "Warm" colors, such as yellows are perceived as coming forward, while "cool" colors, a dominant characteristic of hostas, such as greens and blues recede. Placing yellow hostas in front and blue hostas in the background creates an illusion of greater depth. The bolder, variegated plants are easy to see at a distance, a way of describing "carrying power." Seen at the end of the garden, they seem to be "waving hello" and so bring that section closer. I hasten to recommend that hostas with superb variegation or fragrance be placed very close to the viewer for full enjoyment. The softer, darker and cooler colors seem to move farther back. Summing up, placing warmer colors nearby and cooler colors farther back produces the illusion of greater distance ... Let me share some colors that I have used in designing gardens. The use of blue, either in flowers, or flowers adjacent to light yellow hostas or hostas with some yellow or white in them sparks interest. A pastel pink of a hemerocallis works very well with blue foliage of hostas. The pastel blue flowers of hostas work very well with yellow flowers of achillea nearby. It is not necessary for the colors to be very close. Much of the garden is viewed from a distance, so if the mass of color is large enough, colors many yards (meters) apart will seem to be very close. A rich purple flower is nicely highlighted near some light green hosta foliage. Glossy surfaces are more strident than matte finishes, and with the range of surfaces and colors available in the Hosta genus, a custom-color scheme can

easily be achieved.