

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 148

'Earth Angel' Hosta of the Year 2009

In 1996, the American Hosta Growers Society (AHGS) established an award for hosta of the year. The award is selected by a vote from AHGS members and was established due to the increase of hosta cultivars.

This increase was making it difficult for nurserymen and gardeners to choose the right hosta for gardens and sales. Winners are good garden plants in all regions of the country and are widely available to the public.

Description

The 2009 Hosta of the Year designation goes to the most beautiful hosta of all: 'Earth Angel.' It was introduced by one of the country's best hosta breeders, H. Hansen, in 2002. It is a mutation of the famous hosta 'Blue Angel.'

The flowers are pale lavender with blooms on 30-inch scapes in July. The gorgeous flowers last for weeks. The heavily textured and thick, heart-shaped leaves are bluish green. Leaves have 2 inches of yellow around the edge, the yellow maturing to cream in the summer. It is the first giant blue hosta to have a border. 'Earth Angel' is very long lived and utterly adaptable.

Growing Habits

Hostas are easy to grow and require very little maintenance. Shade tolerant, it will not thrive, however, if grown in deep shade. It'll grow best with morning sun and afternoon shade. Hostas grow best in rich organic soil.

Recommended soil is well drained, has a slightly acidic pH (ideal pH is 6.5 to 7.5) and is enriched with nutrients and organic matter.

Sandy loam is better than clay because it provides more aeration for the roots. Highly filtered or dappled sunlight is necessary for clean, healthy growth. Morning sun intensifies the leaf colors, but afternoon sun is usually deadly to hostas.

'Earth Angel' will become 16 inches high by 39 inches wide. The hosta leaves can grow larger than 12 inches long by 9 inches wide.

Landscaping and Maintenance

You can find these hostas at home in shady woodland settings. These also do well in any garden beds (hosta beds) and work well as an edging plant.

Hostas should be mulched with a finely shredded organic material to prevent heaving in the winter. Watch for holes in the center of the leaves (indicating the presence of slugs).

To help reduce the slug population, apply slug bait in early spring when shoots begin to emerge. After the plant is firmly established (in a few years), the mulch can be removed. Following this procedure should eliminate the slug problem altogether.

Also be sure to remove all foliage from the garden in early winter after the plant has gone dormant. By doing so, you'll be ridding the area of the eggs of leaf-eating insects.

Keith Guillet, Class of 2009

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