



Book Review by Margaret Hodgson

The Color Encyclopedia of Hostas by Diana Grenfell & Michael Shadrack
 Timber Press, Inc. Portland, Oregon, 2004.
 407 pages, approx. 348 colour photos,
 Appendix One - Best Hostas for Different Purposes, Appendix Two – Where to See Hostas, Appendix Three - Sources for Hostas, Bibliography, Index of Hosta Names,
 Hardbound, \$67.95
 ISBN –10: 0-88192-618-3(hardcover)

Diana Grenfell became fascinated by hostas in the mid – 1960s when few gardeners were aware of them. She is co-founder of the British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society. Grenfell has done much to raise the profile of Hostas throughout the world, broadcasting, lecturing and writing on all aspects of the plant. She has also contributed many authoritative books and articles on the subject. Having recently retired from Apple Court Nursery, where she held the National Plant Collection for Small-leaved Hosta, she is now in the

process of creating a small town garden in Gloucestershire, England.

Michael Shadrack has been a member of the British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society for twelve years and is currently their chairman and bulletin editor. He is also a member of the American Hosta Society, presently serving as chairman of their Strategic Planning Committee. His interest in photography has led to a library of nearly 3200 Hosta images, many of which have been published in books, magazines and catalogues. He regularly gives talks and lectures on Hostas in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada.

The Color Encyclopedia of Hostas, (Foreword by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales) is an authoritative guide to one of the gardener’s favorite perennials. Since Hostas were first introduced to the Western world in 1862, the advent of tissue culture and specialist nurseries has made it possible to offer more than 4000 species and cultivars to the home gardener. Diana Grenfell and Michael Shadrack have coordinated the task to provide in this encyclopedia a fully illustrated collection of the world’s finest hostas as handpicked by Ms. Grenfell. This valuable resource provides a full description and colour photograph for more than 750 plants, allowing the hosta lovers to judge esthetic merit and to choose the right plant for the right location.

After a few brief chapters describing Hostas in the wild, Hostas in the west, Cultivation of Hostas, the book is very well organized into Hostas by colour, moving from Hostas with green leaves, to the next chapter of Chartreuse, Yellow and Gold Leaves, on the Glaucous Blue, Blue Gray, Blue Green & gray-Green. The Chapters then move into variegated Hostas, Streaked Hostas, Marbled, Misted and “Hostas for Connoisseurs”.

The appendices in the book are particularly useful as they include: The Best Hostas for Different Purposes, Where to See Hostas, and Sources. Following the Appendices is a very good index of Hosta names.

An Excellent Book for Hosta Lovers