



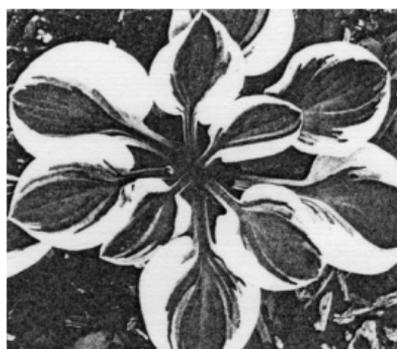
# PANSIES!

## FOR WOMEN AND MANSIES

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## PLANT CORNER

Welcome to another year of the Plant Corner, a series of profiles of STAR PERFORMERS among perennial garden plants from the folks at Chaska Farm & Garden.



### *Hosta 'Frosted Mouse Ears'*

With so many different perennials on gardeners' palettes we might wonder why hostas get so much attention. The short answer is three: they are tough, hardy and durable; they are beautiful; and they have enormous variety.

Winter hardiness is naturally a big issue here north and hostas of course can handle our cold, but other extremes can also limit a plant's use. Extremes like heat, drought, soil types, and sun or shade. Hostas do not thrive in wet, clay soils and their leaves char in hot sun, but they otherwise go the distance. They tolerate dry shade, one of the most difficult conditions especially under trees where tree roots severely limit choices.

While beauty is in the eye of the beholder we northerners probably see the big, fat leaves of the basic hosta as tropical and unusual. Even the most plain, green hosta is distinct and very clean in form. Add to this the variations in leaf color, variegation and leaf patterns plus the bonus of the white to deep purple flowers and you can see why they nearly plant themselves.

Size variety in hostas is another whole chapter. This year's hosta of the year, 'Blue Mouse Ears' is a blue-leaved variety that tops out at a petite 8 inches. Already a number of sport variations of 'Blue Mouse Ears' are available, including this Plant Corner's 'Frosted Mouse Ears.' The frosted version also has the small size and very thick-substanced leaves that resist slugs, the dense clusters of lavender flowers in July plus a wide creamy-white leaf margin to give 'Frosted Mouse Ears' a clean, black-tie formality. Use this hosta where it can shine. Don't limit its use to only in-ground uses, try it in fairy gardens and in mixed container gardens and troughs with stones and mosses if space is at a premium.

We carry a number of dwarf and small hostas in our list of nearly 300 hostas, along with medium and tall varieties that can grow to 3 ft. We're excited about this year's crop of new hostas and enjoy offering the latest tissue-culture varieties plus the best classic hostas.

Spring is at hand and great care should be taken to not trample the growing points of hostas as they break ground. Crushed points can mean crumpled, deformed leaves. Enjoy!

— Tom

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