

Johnson Brothers Greenhouses

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Hostas

Where to Use Hostas

Hostas look elegant on their own, mixed into a perennial or shrub border, as background plants, specimens, ground covers or edging plants. Ferns, dicentras, corydalis and other fine foliated plants make good companion plants with their delicate foliage. Shrubs, tall perennials, and architectural obstacles that can be challenging are softened with the use of hostas. Use them to outline a pathway or encircle a tree trunk.

Light

Hostas do their best in dappled sunlight. Such a setting may receive only about one or two hours of direct sun each day. If only deep shade is available, hostas will survive, but it will limit their potential for growth. Leaves will be thinner wider and fewer than those in ideal light conditions.

Soil

Hostas do their very best in rich, organic, humusy, well-aerated soil. In the Willamette Valley, the clay soil can be a good environment, if it is lightened with amendments, such as peat moss or compost. When planting hostas, it is a good idea to add a 2-3 inch layer of compost to improve soil fertility. Slow release fertilizers (such as Osmocote) should be worked into the soil in the spring. All fertilization should stop about six weeks before the first frost. Hostas can be vulnerable to changing moisture levels in the soil, especially in the first few years after planting. If the root system dries out at an early stage, the plants end up shrinking in size over time.

Pests

Insects and diseases are rarely a problem for hostas. Slugs and snails are the most common problem plaguing hostas. They produce holes in the foliage making the plant less attractive. Slugs/snails can be picked off the foliage at night, when they are active, and dropped into vinegar or salt water. Some gardeners put down coarse or rough barriers around hostas, such as wood chips, cocoa mulch, sand or pea gravel to keep slugs/snails away. The best way to prevent damage is applying liberal amounts of slug/snail bait early, as the plants emerge from the ground in the spring. Pet friendly Sluggo or rain-tough Dealine are recommended. Hostas are not deer resistant, deer will eat them by the bushel-load!