

Hosta Virus X

If you're seeing spots on your Hosta and think you have discovered a new sport, Then think again since it could be Hosta Virus X.

The virus was first identified in 1996 at the University of Minnesota and it was present in Hosta plants a good many years prior to the virus being identified. Several Hosta sports were named as new cultivars only to later discover that they were only plants disfigured by the virus.

Virus X Appearance



Ink-bleed – An early symptom, is a discoloration of the leaf, often along the veins of the plant.

Cell (tissue) collapse – As the virus progresses affected areas look more dull and thin, as if part of the leaf was scraped off. Surrounding healthy tissue often looks puckered as a result

Mottling – is a blotching/spotting which indicates HVX and this this symptom is also indicative of other Hosta viruses.

How is The Virus Spread...

The HVX virus spreads mechanically through the sap of the hosta plant. Anytime you accidentally or intentionally cut into an infected Hosta with your gardening implements and then continue using those same tools throughout the rest of your hosta garden you run the risk of infecting the rest of your hosta collection.

The potential also exists for your garden to become infected whenever you place a bulk order for hostas with a larger wholesaler who may not be careful during the propagation and cultivation of their hostas for resale. As well, you can sometimes purchase plants already infected with the Virus X from independent garden nurseries that may not even be aware that their hostas are infected. In a lot of cases, the home gardener does not have any knowledgeable of H.V.X., nor understand how it's spread or even how to identify or test for it.

What To Be Aware Of

An on-going study of the infection is being conducted at the University of Minnesota in an attempt to understand all of the ways the virus is being transmitted both in the private and business sectors. As a concerned grower, to insure your plants are virus free you can obtain the test kit, ImmunoStrip, from Agdia to perform on-site testing. As well, some university labs will test your hostas for Virus X for various nominal fees.

It's very important that you clean your tools and if you must cut or divide your plants then sanitize your garden implements using a 10% bleach solution. Check out the article by, Bonnie Blanchette, on the '[Fine Gardening](#)' web-site for more information about the handling and cleaning of your garden tools.

Hosta Virus X







What You Can Do

If after testing you do find infected plants dispose of them immediately. Then disinfect your tools and hands before working with any other Hostas. It is also advisable to wait for awhile before replanting in the same location of an infected plant. It's recommended that you purchase all your Hostas only from a reputable nursery. For your own peace of mind, don't be afraid to ask the nursery attendants about their knowledge of the Hosta 'X' virus. Be aware, that if you buy from big-box retailers then you do so at your own risk! Monitor your Hosta plants routinely not only for the HVX but for other symptomatic diseases even if you have had your plants for several years.

Finally You Can

Stay informed about the latest information about HVX and spread the word, since ignorance and apathy enable the continuing spread of the virus. Also, check out your local Hosta Society, such as, 'The Ontario Hosta Society' or 'The American Hosta Society' for continuing updates and information. Remember, there is no such thing as 'an immune Hosta plant' so stay alert and help to control this virulent disease.

Examples of Infection

		
Night Before Christmas With collapsed green tissue	Gold Edger with dark cell collapse	Infected Striptease
		
June Ink bleed symptom	Patriot Virus in green & white tissues	Sum and Substance Infection