



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

Thomas Becker  
Extension Agent, Florida  
Yards & Neighborhoods



### FYN Topic: Hosta in Florida

**Question:** : I miss having hosta lilies that frequent gardens up North. Someone mentioned there is a hosta sold that survives here? If so, where can I see or obtain it? Murray via email

**Answer:** The normal rule of thumb in Florida is..... **Don't try growing hosta where orange trees flourish.** In SWFL the controlling factor is our lack of winter cold. Hostas are out of their normal hardiness range south of Jacksonville. However, they can be grown as annuals in containers or flower beds. Hostas require a winter cold dormancy period. Daytime temperatures need to average 43°F for 30 days. Even the so-called, 'tropical' hostas rarely survive multiple winters. *Hosta plantaginea*, the August lily, is the one most heat tolerant. One exception to the rule is a medium-sized (10-18"), variegated hybrid called SunHosta™. Its leaves have a green stripe in the leaf center and white variegation stripe on either side. SunHosta™ require less cold requirement compared to other variegated hosta varieties. Plant it in full sun. And, keep the soil moist but not constantly saturated. Horticulturists at the Edison Estate are growing it. They may have plants for sale. If you try it, let us know your results. If possible add peat to the soil before planting. And, avoid fertilizing it in the heat of summer. In place of hosta lilies here, gardeners substitute hardy caladiums or large leaved begonias like 'dragon-wing', and rhizomatous-rooted types (other than tuberous types like Begonia 'Rex').



Dragon-Wing



Caladiums



SunHosta™

#### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M 07/28/2012.