



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Limey loveliness

Tantalisingly, the colours of spring are on the point of unfolding around us in all their glory - there really isn't anything like the freshness of spring growth when it emerges. It has seemed a long time coming this year but perhaps it is simply a typical year and the early spring of 2017 has made it seem late.

In anticipation of the impending emergence of spring we are featuring perhaps the most eye-popping of modern cultivars: [Hosta 'Orange Marmalade'](#) in the side column this month.

Nursery update

We are almost ready to transfer all the large and giant varieties into their re-erected collection tunnel. Robin and David are putting the final benching in and then we can relocate the plants, just in time for their emergence.

It has been very hectic around the nursery when the weather has allowed us to get out from under cover.

I have dug a new bed ready for planting and arranged the tyres for the 'rubber rockery'. I can't wait to get the topsoil delivered so I can start back-filling the tyres and getting it all ready to plant. Once we have relocated the large and giant varieties, there will be room to get a lorry up to the garden and half the distance I will need to move the soil, so it's worth the wait.



Nursery update

Still lacking the spring colour explosion - click on the image to view progress at the nursery.



Hosta 'Orange Marmalade'

This fabulous cultivar is perhaps the most sought-after sport from

Roy has been busy making props for my displays at the shows and I have taken delivery of the new posters and boards ready for the Harrogate Spring Flower show in a few weeks.

Just a reminder: if you are planning to catch up with us at the Harrogate Show, remember we will be in a different location - slap bang in the entrance to the Plant Pavilion on **stand 3**.

Also, if you would like us to take any pre-orders then please let us know before **Friday 20th April**, so we have time to pop them on the lorry before heading north.

Yvonne is in the office busy taking orders and we will begin sending them out after Easter, to avoid any potential delivery hold-ups over the holiday period.



This is a photo of *Hosta* 'Orange Marmalade' taken at Malvern Spring Festival in 2017, showing just how vibrant this cultivar is in spring. The colours fade as the season progresses but still pops with colour even into the autumn. In the spring *H.* 'Orange Marmalade' is perhaps best grown as a specimen, shouting out in isolation rather than trying to partner it up with anything variegated. I have certainly struggled to place it in show displays due to its proximity to other very pretty cultivars - see image on the left.

Show update

We will be kicking off our road trips with a local plant sale at [Redgrave and Lopham Fen](#), near Diss. If you are in the region on **Sunday 15th April**, it is well worth a visit for great plants and a precious reserve run by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, home of the largest Spider in Britain and source of the wonderful river Waveney, a natural border between Norfolk and Suffolk, leading to the Norfolk Broads.

[Hosta 'Paul's Glory'](#), which we featured back in February. Like its parent, [H. 'Orange Marmalade'](#) fades in the centre as the season progresses, to a creamy white - centre albescence. In the spring however, it has a golden yellow leaf centre, which will become more orange-gold as the cultivar matures as earns its name. It also becomes more textured as it matures, which gives the leaves more substance.

Once again, if you want to retain the bright colour for longer keep it sheltered and away from bright sunlight. This is a cultivar that can handle strong light, it seldom scorches in our experience but what you may gain in this area you certainly lose in vibrancy.

If you decide to plant one in a mixed border, it looks particularly good alongside rich glossy green or matt glaucous foliage, and flowers in the purple end of the colour spectrum. Once the colours become more muted in summer, it argues less with other more vibrant plantings.

Hosta 'Orange Marmalade' is a reliable grower and seldom reverts, staying true to characteristics, even when grown from first year tissue culture.

If you like *H.* 'Orange Marmalade' then its sport, [H. 'Forbidden Fruit'](#) is well worth investigating too. This variety has a wider,

Finally, don't despair if you think you have lost your Hosta over winter - the ground is still too cold for them to be emerging as yet. Even our container-grown plants are reluctant to surface, so patience is the order of the day. Just think, as the season starts a little later, it often goes on for longer, and that is always a cheery thought.

Speak soon,

Team Mickfield Hostas

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bluer margin and tends to establish more quickly as a result. The leaf centres are as colourful in the spring and the centre albescence tames the overall effect as the season progresses.