



MICKFIELD HOSTAS

Busy, busy, busy...

Every year we ricochet between shows and nursery activities that leave us all rather exhausted, so it is with some relief we can report we have made it through another very hectic July.

The weather has also tested our mettle, with high temperatures and humidity. This year's roller coaster weather has taken its toll on the plants. The colours have been less vibrant and many of our plants are showing signs of autumn already.

We welcomed three garden clubs to the nursery during July and everyone had a good time, using the opportunity to see what are doing around the place, and buy a few plants.

We are now beginning to make plans for the autumn, which we will share in next month's newsletter, so for now here are some brief reviews of the Hampton and Tatton shows:

Hampton Court

This year the RHS decided to re-brand the Hampton Court Flower Show as a Garden Festival, which no doubt was intended to widen its appeal to the public. I am sure it worked with four live music stages and plenty of space for visitors to sit and soak up the atmosphere. The show layout was changed to integrate the show gardens with the sundry stands, which looked good but proved somewhat confusing for visitors seeking the show gardens in clearly defined areas.

The changes looked good BUT they seem to be aimed at encouraging visitors to seek an experience rather than to take the opportunity to engage with the



Hampton Court Garden Festival

We were awarded a Gold Medal for our display, [click on the image to view the video.](#)

Hampton Court Garden Festival is not just an endurance test for exhibitors, it takes quite a toll on the plants. As a result we had to swap out more than half the display in preparation for Tatton Park Flower Show. Also, much of the sales stock bought back from Hampton wasn't usable for Tatton due to the leaves suffering in the heat. This presents a lot of additional work in a very short time, less than a week between the shows.



Tatton Park Flower Show

exhibitors. This is a worrying trend, not just with RHS shows, as attempts to widen the appeal of flower shows is moving away from, and diluting, the horticultural focus.

Tatton Park

The Tatton Park Flower Show is usually a more relaxing event than Hampton, although it is only a day shorter in length. There were several weather challenges at the show, not least of all the torrential rain on the Thursday and Friday, which left a lot of the Floral Marquee under water. Our leaf-shaped stand looked more like a dingy as the waters rose and flowed under and around it. Fortunately, the dry weather left the ground hungry for water so the floods didn't last long.

Tatton Park gardens

Whilst Mel and David were at Tatton Park they visited the gardens on judging afternoon, something they have been trying to fit in for the past few years. It was a delightful visit and although the gardens were looking a little dry, the trees were fabulous.

The main attraction was definitely the Japanese garden, which nestles into the overall garden design so seamlessly it appears to be a natural transition between styles. Mel's favourite view of the Japanese garden in at the head of the newsletter and she found it inspiring as she contemplates the next steps in the reservoir project.



Finally...

Although we have struggled with getting work done beyond watering, nursery visits and fulfilling mail order

We were awarded a Silver-Gilt Medal for our display, [click on the image to view the video.](#)

Unfortunately, our 4-year 'Gold' record was broken with a Silver-Gilt due to inconsistencies in judging and interpretation of the Lindley criteria. As ever, exhibitors cannot challenge the judging result so we just have to roll with it and, after all, there's nothing wrong with a Silver-Gilt. We will just make Mel sit in the corner wearing a collar of shame for a few weeks.

Hyde Hall Flower Show

Once again, there is a very tight turn around between Tatton Park and our last of the season at Hyde Hall.

Hyde Hall takes a massive toll on the display plants used as it is a very windy site and the displays are exposed to all weathers. Indeed, Mel has returned from the show this evening leaving the display is the grips of gales force winds and torrential downpours. On a positive note, it is a good opportunity to see how certain varieties withstand the conditions, so it can be a useful exercise in many ways.

As this newsletter reaches you, the

demand, it is always good to get positive feedback from visitors. Indeed, we have met a number of visitors to the nursery at the flower shows this year and they all said how good it was to see the collection and get the opportunity to talk to us about all sorts of things, not just Hosta related!

It all helps to encourage us with our plans for the nursery.

Speak soon

Team Mickfield Hostas

10th [Hyde Hall Flower Show](#) in underway, running from 31st July to 4th August. Set in the gardens of the RHS garden, this is a lovely event for those of you less keen on the crowds of the larger shows. Also, the bad weather is due to vacate the show in time for the opening day, so why not visit?



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