



Hosta hypoleuca

We round off the 2014 newsletters with a feature issue investigating the unusual species, *H. hypoleuca*...

The 'white-backed' hosta

The species, *H. hypoleuca* is native to Japan, specifically the Mikawa area of Aichi Prefecture and around Tenryu in Shizuoka Prefecture, where it can be found growing out of south-facing canyon walls and rocky ledges.

It typically only produces 2-3 leaves in the wild but will grow more leaves per plant mound when grown as a garden plant.

We have found that it also seems to develop a slight wave to the leaf margins when cultivated.

The white backs to the leaves developed to protect the undersides from the effects of radiated heat from the surrounding rocks.

The prominent, widely-spaced veins and large heart-shaped leaves make this species an architectural statement.



A selection of the species, *H. 'Maekawa'*, was named after the botanist and has sometimes been confused with *H. hypoleuca*. It differs from the latter in leaf size and more pronounced undulating margins.

This selection has produced some notable offspring, including one of Mel's particular favourites; *H. 'Neptune'* - see photograph opposite. Crossed with *H. 'Salute'* and *H. 'Halcyon'*, to enhance the habit and colour characteristics, this is a cultivar that clearly shows its parentage.

H. hypoleuca has produced a number of offspring and overleaf we list related cultivars from our National Collection. It is interesting to see how characteristics can be emphasised in the offspring of a plant, which is why we list parentage details on our website, if they are known.

The list of cultivars is not exhaustive and others can be found online. We have used leaf images to highlight how the dominant leaf characteristics, such as the pronounced and widely spaced veins, are carried through into each successive introduction. A particular favourite is *H. 'A Many-splendored Thing'*, which featured in our Hampton Court display this year - see photo on right.



Preparing for dormancy

Here at the nursery we are in full swing with preparations to over-winter our plants.

Roy has just finished re-potting a section of medium-sized plants in Collection Tunnel 2:

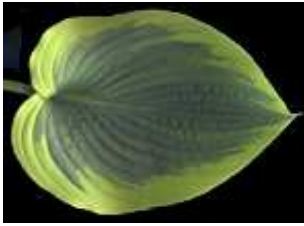


The collection, which is currently pot-based, have all been removed from their trays and allowed to drain before the coldest weather hits:



This is a wet and heavy job, which Roy has just completed. He and Robin have cleared the final section of the new Collection tunnel ready to construct the last section of benching to raise the plants clear of the ground.





H. 'A Many-splendored Thing'
Registered cross with
H. 'Dorothy Benedict',
1999



H. 'Arc de Triomphe'
Registered cross with
H. 'Foxy Doxy', 2000



H. 'Azure Snow'
Registered hybrid, 1991



H. 'Band of Gold'
Registered cross with
H. 'Dorothy Benedict',
1999



H. 'Bedford Blue'
Unregistered cross with
H. 'Halcyon'



H. 'Big Top'
Registered cross with
H. 'William Lachman',
2003



H. 'Celestial'
Registered cross with
H. 'Dorothy Benedict',
2000



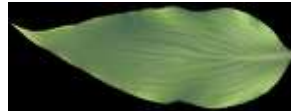
H. 'Elkheart Lake'
Unregistered cross with
H. 'June'



H. 'Gosan Sunproof'
Registered cross with
H. longipes var. latifolia and **H. montana**, 2009



H. 'Kiwi Hippo'
Registered cross with
H. longipes, 1999



H. 'Glacier Cascade'
Registered cross with
H. kikutii, 1999



H. 'Lakeside Breaking News'
Registered cross with
'LBSR', 2000



H. 'Lemon Meringue'
Registered hybrid, 1991



H. 'Maekawa'
Registered selection, 2009



H. 'Merry Sunshine'
Registered cross with
H. 'Fascination', 1998



H. 'Ooh La La'
Registered cross with
H. 'Sea Prize', 2000

H. hypoleuca is a distinctive species, both in growth and habit. We are awaiting feedback from a couple of our customers, who have purchased plants to grow in rock crevices, to see if they will grow as they do in the wild - watch this space.

Next month: We take a closer look at the *H. 'Gold Drop'* branch of the genus...

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 38 years of experience with the *Hosta* genus. We are constantly learning and refining that knowledge and would welcome any suggestions that readers of this newsletter would like to make so please **contact us**.

The collection looks far smaller than when the plants are in full leaf:



Sales stock plants

Mel is currently clearing through the sales plants, removing dead leaves, cleaning pots and condensing the numbers to create space for next season:



She enjoys this task as it brings out the librarian in her and it is rewarding to get the stock into order ready for the next season:



The last job with the plants, at this stage of the year, will be a stock-take so we know what we have for next season, in order to identify varieties to be divided in the spring.