



Pure indulgence

This month we flag up varieties to look out for in 2015 and we preview a new mini series of newsletters in which we share the varieties we consider to be the 'best of' a specific characteristic - read on to find out more...

Too much choice

Although we take pride in our ability to bring you more than 1000 different varieties for sale this coming season, we are very aware that this can cause significant problems for you in trying to decide what to select.

This is why we have decided to create a new mini-series of newsletters featuring what, in our experience, are the best of a specific characteristic, such as the best blues, best fragrance, best miniatures, and so on. Over the course of the next 12 months we should be able to cover the key characteristics and hopefully help you in your decision making process.

What to look out for in 2015

Although we have lots of new varieties for sale, there are many more that have proven to be good growers over the years. Because we hold many of these varieties in our collection, for a number of years, we have gained valuable insights into the effects of weather and seasonal variations on the growth and characteristics of the plants.



H. 'Seducer'

We are therefore able to advise customer on what to expect with the varieties they have chosen. For example, last year *H.* 'Seducer' came through a little fast, and in too much light, due to the early spring. Consequently the plant didn't exhibit the depth of colour it usually produces, which, coupled with the shape of the leaves, makes it so striking.

They all look the same!

Many varieties can look very similar as immature plants. This is a criticism we often hear when customers are browsing sales plants, especially when they come across a new, perhaps more expensive, cultivar. This is where our experience can give you a better idea of what to expect from a specific variety. Our disappointment with the colour of *H.* 'Seducer' last year means we now know what to do to avoid this happening again, and can advise customers accordingly.

You cannot mistake *H.* 'Dream Queen', opposite, even when immature.



It has been available for a number of years, consistently delivering excellent colour, substance and form. It certainly has the 'wow' factor with the size of the leaves. Two more dramatic cultivars to look out for again this year are, *H.* 'Dark Shadows', on the left, and *H.* 'Cold Heart', on the right:



Collectors special

Last autumn we divided, and re-potted, quite a few of our collection plants. The following list of new varieties includes those we can offer for the first time BUT please take note that quite a few will be limited in number:

H. 'Abiqua Delight'
H. 'Academy
Mavrodaphne'
H. *aequinociantha*
H. 'Aphrodite'



H. 'Arctic Circle'
H. 'Awakening Angel'
H. 'Baby Blue Eyes'
H. 'Bill Dress's Blue'
H. 'Blue Ice'
H. 'Border Bandit'
H. 'Chabo Unazuki'



H. 'Chartreuse Wiggles'
H. 'Crepe Suzette'
H. 'Dark Victory'
H. 'Decorata Normalis'
H. 'Duchess'
H. 'Elephant Burgers'
H. 'Erie Magic'



H. 'Faithful Heart'
H. 'Full Moon'



The former is a brilliant hosta with unusual dark foliage colours. The leaves are very elegant and the markings vary from leaf to leaf, making it visually interesting aside from the depth of colour. It is an excellent foil for varieties with brighter/lighter foliage and can help pull together colour schemes.

H. 'Cold Heart' is also likely to be on the road with us again this year - who can resist such colour and form, despite the sad name. Both these cultivars have proven their worth year after year and are great varieties to add to any garden.

Living up to the hype and promise

We often get feedback from customers saying how well their plants are doing and one of the reasons for this is the fact that we do not choose to exhibit varieties we are less confident of. Unfortunately, some new cultivars fall into this category, so we are always a little reticent about trumpeting the arrival of the new, especially when looking at the parentage and questioning its credentials.

A classic example of this was the launch of *H. 'Hands Up'* at Chelsea a few years back. It was heralded as the miniature sport of *H. 'Praying Hands'*, which immediately aroused our suspicion. *H. 'Praying Hands'* is a vigorous variety for a hosta. We decided to add the cultivar to our collection and watch it to see if it did indeed stay as small as stated. It didn't and has since been revised to 'medium' status. Although *H. 'Hands Up'* has a slightly wider margin, we still prefer *H. 'Praying Hands'*, for the drama it can create, wherever it is situated. Here it is taking pride of place on our display at Hampton Court last year.



Having said all that we do bring new varieties for sale to plant shows because we need to be seen to support their introduction. However, if we find they are less reliable we will say.

Over recent years, for example, we have been selling variegated forms of the 'mouse' series of cultivars. These are highly attractive plants, but can be liable to reversion. Of the 'mouse' series, it is impossible to beat *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* for growth, reliability and value. Therefore, it is the one we recommend and suggest that if you are looking for a variegated cultivar to plant with it, don't necessarily go for one of the variegated mice, explore some of the many other options.



The variegated 'mice' do not grow as large as *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'*, consequently, they may not be the best planting partner.

Two potentially beautiful cultivars to plant with *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* are *H. 'Amy Elizabeth'* and it's offspring, *H. 'Abby'*.

The photo on the left shows *H. 'Amy Elizabeth'* with of *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'* on the right of it. The photo below shows *H. 'Abby'* with the reverse colouring of *H. 'Amy Elizabeth'* - lovely!



- H. 'Gaijin'*
- H. 'Gilt By Association'*
- H. 'Gingee'*
- H. 'Golden Spades'*
- H. 'Gosan Mina'*
- H. 'Gosan Shining'*
- H. 'Grant Park'*
- H. 'Green Cheese'*
- H. 'Green Lama'*
- H. 'Green Piecrust'*
- H. 'Haku Chu Han'*
- H. 'Honey Moon'*
- H. 'Janet's Green Sox'*
- H. 'Kelly'*
- H. 'Kifukurin Ko Mame'*



- H. 'Lizard Lick'*
- H. 'Lost World'*
- H. 'Majordomo'*
- H. 'Maple Leaf'*
- H. 'Mohrchen'*
- H. 'Moi Marlene'*
- H. 'Oder'*
- H. 'Ogon Chirifu Hime'*
- H. 'Photo Finish'*
- H. 'Planet X'*
- H. 'Prestige and Promise'*
- H. 'Red Dragon'*
- H. 'Saint Fiacre'*
- H. 'Sea Nymph'*
- H. 'Shade Beauty'*
- H. 'Shady Affair'*
- H. 'Sherborne Swallow'*



- H. 'Shere Khan'*
- H. 'Silver Halo'*



- H. 'Split Decision'*
- H. 'Star Light Star Bright'*
- H. 'Swizzle Sticks'*
- H. 'Tambourine'*
- H. tardiva*
- H. tardiva 'Gosan'*
- H. 'Tortilla Chip'*
- H. 'Totally Twisted'*
- H. 'Watermark'*
- H. 'White Gold'*
- H. 'Yucca Ducka Do'*

Next month: We start our mini series with the best gold-leaved varieties...

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 39 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**.