



## Happy New Year

We kick off the ninth year of our newsletters with a small but impressive cultivar, **Hosta 'Gold Drop'**.

This older variety has produced a number of offspring, which have proved equally good growers - read on...

### Hosta 'Gold Drop'

Hosta 'Gold Drop' is a hybrid of **H. venusta** x **H. 'August Moon'**, registered in 1977.

The former parent guarantees a mass of lovely foliage and the latter, the beautiful colour and excellent substance. This beautiful, small cultivar is often overlooked but can be a valuable foil for some of the more exotic modern cultivars, which have been produced since.



Hosta 'Gold Drop' develops its colour as the season progresses, emerging green and lightening to gold by summer. It distinguishes itself from other similar cultivars by its slightly thicker leaves and tendency to develop further texture as it matures. These characteristics are also apparent in its offspring. The table below lists those we hold in our collection:



**H. 'Abby'**

Sport registered in 1990



**H. 'Drip Drop'**

Sport registered in 1988



**H. 'PeeDee Absinth'**

Cross with 'Subcrocea' registered in 1990



**H. 'Brash and Sassy'**

The variegation of this unregistered sport is more pronounced as it matures



**H. 'Gum Drop'**

Sport registered in 1987



**H. 'Pooh Bear'**

Sport registered in 1988



**H. 'Dew Drop'**

Sport registered in 1988



**H. 'Marilyn'**

Cross with H. 'Green Piecrust' registered in 1990



**H. 'Sun Drop'**

Sport registered in 1999



**H. 'Tick Tock'**

Unregistered sport

### Importance of flowers

Over recent years the colour and shape of hosta flowers has become a more important consideration in the decision to purchase a variety.

This is why we decided to feature a particularly lovely flower for our 2015 newsletter banner. This flower, from **H. 'Secret Love'**, is delicately coloured and emphasises the plant's beautiful foliage. It is also fragrant, which means it tends to flower later in the season. Remember to think about late afternoon and evening warmth to encourage fragrant varieties to flower. Radiated heat from a fence or wall is particularly good.

Although we advocate the removal of flowers (before they open), for the first couple of years, it is not critical. If you find joy in the flowers then by all means let them show off. Flower removal simply redirects the plants energy into the development of the root system, helping the plant to establish more quickly.

We plan to do a few features on hosta flowers over the forthcoming year, to respond to the increasing interest in them. They do add another dimension to the genus, which is perhaps overlooked, as foliage colours get more exotic.

*Hosta* 'Tick Tock' is an unregistered sport which has a striking variegation, which can be a bit unpredictable. The variegation is more striking in the early leaves and fresh growth, fading somewhat as the season progresses. Conversely the colouring of both *H.* 'Abby' and *H.* 'Amy Elizabeth' improve with the season:



### **Hosta 'Abby'**

The variegation and depth of colour of the leaves improves with age in this cultivar. The neat growth habit allows the layered leaves to stand out against each other in a very pleasing way. It is a great plant to use with its offspring, *H.* 'Amy Elizabeth', whose variegation is the opposite way round.



### **Hosta 'Amy Elizabeth'**

We regard this cultivar as an excellent alternative for *H.* 'Cracker Crumbs'. Although the latter has a sheen to its leaves, they both share excellent form and substance. In our opinion *H.* 'Amy Elizabeth' is a more elegant plant.

It is also an excellent variety to bonsai as the root system is much stronger and can withstand a restricted growth space - see **July 2008** newsletter

Both varieties can be cut back part way through the season and the fresh growth is often better than the first spring growth, which can be damaged by late frost.

*Hosta* 'Dew Drop' is the smallest of the offspring, and particularly lovely grown with other miniatures rather than small cultivars to avoid overcrowding. It has quite a fine root system and benefits from a more open soil mix.

Of the plain leaved offspring we find *H.* 'Gum Drop' a lovely foil for small hostas as the foliage is a deep blue-green. This cultivar has produced a sport, *H.* 'Forest Shadows', which is very similar to *H.* 'Amy Elizabeth' but doesn't grow quite as reliably.

*Hosta* 'Marilyn' is a larger growing hybrid and is particularly good as a companion plant for more subtle variegated varieties.



**Next month:** We look ahead to varieties we will have available for sale in 2015

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**.

## **2015 Show season**

Once again, our show season will be busy, but due to some date clashes we won't be able to attend some of the shows in our region. We have updated our **show calendar** with the events we will be attending.

Here is the list to date:

### **Harrogate Spring**

### **Malvern Spring**

### **Gardeners' World Live**

### **Hampton Court**

### **Tatton Park**

### **Hyde Hall Summer Show**

### **Harrogate Autumn**

We are particularly pleased to have been allocated space inside the Floral Marquee at the Malvern Spring Festival and Hampton Court Flower Show in 2015.

We are also applying for the Suffolk Show and Hadleigh Show, plus some other events.

Unfortunately, we won't be applying for the Royal Norfolk Show or Great Comp Summer Show due to date clashes.

Once again we plan to open the nursery daily throughout the season. We will confirm this nearer the spring, so check back to our **Shows page** for the latest information.

NOTE: We will be closed on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August for our annual family reunion.