

July 2025



## *Mid-season update*

This month I thought I would bring you up to date with the season so far and Lenore shares some photos of her stunning hostas - see below from left to right: [H. 'Regal Splendor'](#), [H. 'Silly String'](#), [H. 'June'](#), [H. 'Little Hobber'](#), [H. 'Big Daddy'](#) and [H. 'Guacamole'](#):



## *Enjoying the season*

Now is the time to enjoy the results of all your efforts in the garden, so this month is a celebration of hostas, over to Lenore to kick off:

### *Greetings Hosta Gardeners,*

It's been a very rainy Spring here in Maine, and our hostas loved it. They are growing well and looking pretty. We are busy here preparing our garden for an Open Garden Day for the Garden Club Federation of Maine.



## *Mid-season care*

Here, in the UK, we have had one of the most prolonged dry periods in East Anglia that I can remember. Coupled with two heatwaves so far, this summer is shaping up to break records yet again. This has presented many challenges, not least of all with watering. However, yet again the hostas have proven to be mighty resilient and are still looking great.

The main issue we are struggling with at the nursery is the drying wind accompanying the heat, which means any watering is having to be directed to the roots more efficiently. Thankfully



We notice that most hostas in our garden tend to exceed their predicted sizes. This is likely due to our climate here in Maine, as well as our efforts to provide good soil. For example, H. 'Alligator Alley' (on the right in the photo below) typically is described as medium, which in the Northern U.S. would be 15 to 22 inches tall (38 to 56 cm), and about two times that in width (112 cm), per the American Hosta Growers Association. Our 'Alligator Alley' is 33.5 inches (85 cm) tall and 62 inches (157 cm) wide. It is stunning! But since it has exceeded its allowed space, it is a bit crowded:



This raises some issues: Should I divide 'Alligator Alley' to decrease its size (and possibly decrease that stunning appearance)? Or move the adjacent hostas ('Forbidden Fruit' to the left and 'August Moon' in front.) to allow more room? Note that they've also exceeded their spaces a bit, but are growing well. Or should I make no changes now, since the hostas are thriving, happy, and looking gorgeous?

I like giant hostas, and although I plan for adequate space when planting, I don't mind a bit of crowding. My decision at the present time is to leave them alone and enjoy the beauty. Other gardeners likely will make different decisions.

Enjoy this gardening season!

All the best,

Lenore

One thing is for certain, the climate in Orono suits hostas very well – they look fabulous Lenore, and how we could do with some of that wonderful rain.

Although most of my effort is entirely focused on generating income at this time of year, it doesn't mean it's all work and no play, so here are brief reports from two events held in June, where I was able to escape for a little while to explore the delights of the venues.

our tray-based system is helping us do just that but the hosta leaves are transpiring water at a much faster rate than they would without the wind. We are starting to notice leaf damage due to this transpiration a bit earlier than usual, especially in the miniatures and propagated divisions. In both cases the leaves have already been working their socks off and can be sacrificed, as there is plenty of season left to generate fresh leaves.

If your hosta leaves are looking past their best, removing the most damaged will encourage fresh leaves to appear to carry on the work until autumn.

You can also help re-direct energy by removing the flower spikes.

The wind has been a feature of our weather for much of the season so far. It has been a complete pain when we are trying to do a plant fair in gale force winds.

I always used to stake a lot of the plants I took to flower shows to help prevent the stems from damage when they are loaded, unloaded and handled by customers. It was time consuming but it did mitigate a lot of damage, and makes it easier for customers to distinguish one plant from the next without having to disentangle leaves.

I have carried on the practice at plant fairs but this can

The first was Lavenham's Hidden Gardens, which I detail in the side column. Here is another photo from Clive and Susie's beautiful courtyard garden – the hostas are too numerous to mention individually:



### *Somerleyton Hall*

Once again the summer Plant Fair was held on the third Saturday of the month on a blisteringly hot day. This time there was a bit of a welcome breeze helping reduce the inland temperature by a few degrees. I enjoy these events as it gives me the opportunity to see how Simon's (the Head Gardener) hostas are settling in since their move from the Bishop of Norwich's Garden a few years ago.



Somerleyton Hall is in the far north-east corner of Suffolk and Simon gardens on very light soil. Although hostas can cope with most soil conditions, it is very difficult to retain moisture in the dry conditions we have been experiencing this year.

The hosta bed is massive, extending the complete length of one side of the walled garden and this year the hostas are looking fabulously well-settled and voluptuous. I took far too many photos to include here so all I can say is go see it for yourself, it is well worth the trip.

Simon is obviously managing their water needs well and I suspect he will have some dividing to do over the next couple of seasons as some of the plants are getting quite densely packed:

create a top-heavy plant pot, which then refuses to remain upright in high winds – very stressful. The pots also dry out quickly under such conditions, so a lot of the events I have attended this season have been rather trying. They have been very good though and customers have thankfully braved the heat to venture out and buy.

One event, which has been running for a number of years now is the Lavenham Hidden

Gardens:

LAVENHAM'S



HIDDEN GARDENS

This event combines the joy of visiting one of the prettiest large villages in Suffolk with the chance to peak behind the facades to the gardens beyond.

One such garden belongs to Clive and Susie Boyce, who are hosta fans, and newsletter readers.

I finally managed to tear myself away from my windy stall to pay their garden a visit and what a delight it was.

The courtyard is on several levels, delineated by brick pathways, steps and raised beds, which are richly packed with beautiful plants and pots cluster in areas where paths emerge and cross.





Despite the plants being in full sun for a portion of the day, they are remarkably vibrant, even [H. 'Delta Dawn'](#), sitting in front of [H. 'Key West'](#) below, has perfect white margins and no sign of scorch so far:



It was all I could do not to sneak off to the tool shed and liberate Simon's magnificent [H. 'Niagara Falls'](#):



Happy gardening

Team Mickfield Hostas

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A lovely water feature adds to the ambience and I can imagine it is a little heaven on earth when not packed with visitors – it was beautiful and a credit to their hard work having only been there for a few years.

#### **A note on [H. 'Silly String'](#)**

I have been asked for this cultivar numerous times recently following its launch at Chelsea back in May. Coincidentally, Lenore has a lovely example of this cultivar in her photos, so I asked her about her experience of growing it. She received it by mail as a gift to attendees at the AHS Convention in 2021. It is a hybrid of [H. 'Curly Fries'](#) and has proven a good grower despite being a bit scrawny on receipt.

The main reason I was curious was the delay between being able to source plants in the UK, as compared with the US, where most new cultivars originate. There has always been a lag of a few years, which is understandable as plants need to mature before you can reasonably assess their garden-worthiness. In the case of 'Silly String', it looks a good bet.