



Chelsea 2010

We decided to apply for Chelsea Flower Show when the application forms arrived at the nursery last autumn. Having not done the show for a few years, we thought it might be good exposure for us and, as Mel had yet to have a 'Chelsea experience', we thought it a good idea to apply...

Chelsea selection

We received notification that our application had been successful and that we had been allocated a background site - now we had to decide what to show and how. Unfortunately, due to the late arrival of warm spring weather we were forced to reconsider our carefully laid plans, but we were happy with the results:



Our design focused on different ways to grow hostas:
in flower beds, in pots and terraces

Mel's impressions

How on earth the RHS and their contractors manage to squeeze so much into such a small area of London astonished me. On arrival we had to shoehorn our lorry into the main Pavilion entrance to unload it. Forklift trucks, vans, lorries and trolleys were constantly on the go around the site whilst exhibitors and contractors weaved in and out of everything like day-glo worker ants. This is my fourth season of shows, so I know the work that is involved in getting a show up and running. In my previous career I did some event planning and organising, so I also have an appreciation of what it takes to logistically create a show. Therefore, my first impression was one of awe. The space we have at other shows is immense in comparison to Chelsea, so a huge amount of credit should go to the event team for the smooth running of it all.

I was also amazed at how many visitors come from overseas to the UK for the show, or who arrange their vacation to coincide with Chelsea.

It is easy to become a little jaded with the show circuit as tiredness can make us question which show we are at, or even what day of the week it is! But as every

Over 1 Million hits!

We did it this month, averaging over 40,000 hits/day on our website!

We want to also take this opportunity to thank Jane Powers, for her brilliant article about us in the Sunday Telegraph, *'Heavenly Hostas'*

RHS Bronze Medal

We were awarded a Bronze Medal for our Chelsea display, which coordinated well with the bronze accent materials we used!

RHS highlights

Visitor Gold Medal

Visitors to our display really appreciated the layout and ideas it gave them to recreate elements of the stand in their own garden. A large number of them said they would have given us a Gold. In our opinion, this is the most important accolade - so thank you.

Building background sites

This is the first background display we have built in years, and the first for Mel. There are some advantages to background exhibits, but they are outweighed by the reduced number of viewing angles

wave of visitors washed up at our stand I was delighted to hear so many different accents and languages. I was even more delighted how many people from East Anglia visited the show and looked us up as local to them.



Chelsea is the only show in our calendar where we cannot sell plants, other than those we wish to part with from our displays on Saturday. Visitors find it more than a little perplexing that they have to order plants at what is probably the greatest Flower Show on earth. Therefore, they use their visit as an opportunity to gather ideas. With this in mind we decided to focus on promoting our nursery to encourage people to come and see our extensive collection. Our display of 50 plants ranged from miniature to giant varieties with as many colours and shapes as we could fit in. The result was very successful and we look forward to seeing lots more of you at the nursery over the coming few months.

Hosta highlights

The following hostas drew a lot of attention in our display:



H. 'Raspberry Sorbet',
h. 'Dragon Tails' and h. 'Medusa'



H. 'Frosted Mouse Ears' and
h. 'Holy Mouse Ears'

Our **h. 'Sum and Substance'** also caught the imagination, despite it being somewhat bonsai-ed in a large pot. It did need a lot of water though, as temperatures hit 30 degrees, we had to hose down the display!

Coming up

With Chelsea now fading into memory, our attention has turned to Gardener's World at the NEC.

In two weeks time we will be setting up our Floral Marquee and Plant Heritage exhibits so we have a lot of work to do. We will be processing all our Chelsea orders during this time too, but visitors to the nursery are always welcome.

Wisley Flower Show

We have just had our application for Wisley accepted and so have added the details to our **show calendar**. This is a fabulous little show and well worth visiting.

Next month: Our plans for Hampton Court and our Plant Heritage involvement

and the danger of 'losing' plants at the back of the display. Our design managed to get over these problems but, on the whole, we prefer to build island exhibits because it gives us more scope to show the plants to better advantage.



Finally, a huge thank you to two brilliant friends and fellow exhibitors, Penny and Les of 'Organics'.

It was great to be able to stay with them during the show and experience some of the highs and lows of exhibiting in sundries, compared to floral.

I had Sunday off, so was able to experience the Columbia Road Flower Market - it was great. If you ever find yourself in London on a Sunday, why not visit it and see how an ordinarily quiet street can become such a hive of people and plants for a few hours each week. Whilst you are there make sure you visit **Organics** (Les's shop), just off the Columbia Road, and **The Garden Shop** (Penny's shop) on Columbia Road.

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 30 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](#).