



At long last - our first RHS Gold Medal!

This month we celebrate our best ever Malvern Spring Flower Show and share images of our Gold Medal Award exhibit. We also look forward to our Plant Heritage involvement at Hampton Court this year, featuring the *h. montana* branch of the genus...

Malvern Spring Flower Show

What a difference a year makes, especially with the weather.

This year the Malvern Spring Flower Show was exceptional for us, and the icing on the cake was being awarded our first RHS Gold Medal. We thought you might like to see the photographs, so click on the images in the newsletter to see more:

Our first RHS Gold Medal Award exhibit



This award is the culmination of years exhibiting at RHS shows and it is dedicated to Robin and Yvonne for all those years of perseverance.

We are looking forward to receiving the actual Gold Medal, which is presented to exhibitors on winning their first RHS Gold Medal, in due course.

As we mentioned, the show was our best ever and saw many of our regular customers plus lots of new faces - thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello (and buy plants of course).

However, there is no time to rest on our laurels with Gardeners' World Live fast approaching and Hampton Court and Tatton Park shows to prepare for. These shows fall quickly, one after the other, and we need to do as much preparation as possible beforehand, to ensure a smooth transition back at the nursery, between the shows. Our Plant Heritage exhibit for Hampton Court is being planned around the theme for 2011, which is *A living Library of Garden Plants*.

More photographs:

We used a copper beech and a maple to create a copper-coloured canopy over the stand - see main photograph.



But the stars of the show were the hostas, including:



h. 'Old Glory'

Plant Heritage at Hampton Court 2011

This year we will be featuring the *h. montana* branch of the genus to illustrate the theme. We will be doing this by creating a large book, open on pages dedicated to different aspects of the genus, and our National Collection. We are planning the exhibit planting to spill out of the pages, bringing the subject matter to life.

Alongside featuring *h. montana*, we will also look at the origins of a number of newly available varieties, which nicely illustrate the efforts of plant breeders to accentuate certain characteristics in their breeding programmes.

One of the more important aspects of our involvement in Plant Heritage is the opportunity to put together an educational display, which will, hopefully, inspire visitors to dig deeper into the genus. Our knowledge is always being updated and *h. montana* is a good example of this. Until recently we have referred to the plant as the disputed species, *h. 'Montana'*. But consensus is that it should be referred to as a true species. Our **April 2010** issue of the newsletter featured *h. montana* in detail, including forms and cultivars originating from it.

We plan to feature as many of these cultivars as possible, together with *h. montana*, in the display. Showing them together will highlight how the form and habit of *h. montana* is reflected in its offspring.

The following three newly available cultivars, have their origins in *h. montana*:



H. 'Fluted Fountain'

This variety is a cross between a seedling of *h. 'Sun Power'* and *h. 'Donahue Piecrust'*, which is a hybrid of *h. montana*. The wavy edge of *h. 'Donahue Piecrust'* has been nicely combined with the stately leaf shape of *h. 'Sun Power'* in this cultivar.



H. 'Tropical Dancer'

This cultivar is a sport of *h. 'Spring Fling'*, itself a cross between *h. 'Christmas Tree'* x *h. 'Donahue Piecrust'*, a hybrid of *h. montana*. This cultivar is a more exaggerated version of its parent but has a more prostrate habit and narrower leaves.



H. 'Victory'

This giant new cultivar is a sport of *h. 'Choko Nishiki'*, itself a sport of *h. montana*, often referred to as *h. montana 'Choko Nishiki'*. It has the lovely golden yellow colour of the parent, but looks much more like *h. montana* in leaf shape and habit.

We aim to have most of the exhibited varieties available for sale, in support of the plants we are using. Some will be in very limited quantities. As with many other National Collections, the more unusual plants are often in short supply. Some never become available commercially, which is why the work of Plant Heritage is so important.

Don't forget, we will also be supporting Plant Heritage in Hall 17 at **Gardeners' World Live**, as well as having a stand in the Floral Marquee - see you there.

Next month: We return to the subject of hostas with fragrant flowers



h. 'Hampshire

County' (large hosta),

h. 'Silberpfeil' (blue miniature hosta) and

h. 'Twist of Lime' (small lime-coloured hosta with a fine green margin)



h. 'Golden Meadows'



h. 'Queen of the Seas'



h. 'Brother Stefan' (left)
and
h. 'Potomac Pride' (right)

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 35 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**.