



## The 'Kiwi' series

This month we travel to the opposite side of the world to investigate introductions from New Zealand...

### New Zealand cultivars...

The Kiwi series was introduced by Barry Sligh of Taunton Gardens, Lyttleton, near Christchurch.

Barry has been credited with around 60 hosta introductions, not all of them with the prefix 'Kiwi'. Most notable of these is a sport of h. 'Blue Angel': h. Duke of Cornwall', which was named by Prince Charles.

A full list of Barry's registered introductions can be found on the **Hosta Register** - search for 'sligh' under Hybridizer (OINR).

To find out more about the nursery, and view some of the wonderful photos in the gallery, visit the **website**. It is certainly worth pointing out that Barry is a larger than life character having been involved in numerous projects, aside from breeding hosta. Like many New Zealanders Barry has travelled widely and been involved in many activities outside his home country before settling back there. Find out more on the Internet.



#### Kiwi's in our collection

We hold **16 of the Kiwi series** in our collection and, as usual, we will focus our attention on those cultivars.

Of the 16 varieties we have, only three are currently available for sale from us. However, these three cultivars have often featured in our show exhibits over the years because they are lovely, garden worthy plants.

**H. 'Kiwi Cream Edge'** caused a stir last year when we planted it in a pot with **h. 'Praying Hands'** - see left. We are still being asked for

that combination because it looked so good.

The parentage of h. 'Kiwi Cream Edge' is not known but the bright lime coloured leaves retain their colour all season.

**H. 'Kiwi Blue Baby'** is a **h. 'Halcyon'** selfed cultivar. It is a deliciously rich blue, which rivals **h. 'Blue Mouse Ears'** for impact. We used this cultivar at Malvern

#### Show season latest

It has been great to see so many customers at the nursery over the past few weeks, including several holiday makers from Europe...

The show season got off to a slow start but that is no surprise given the cold weather. During May we attended two shows and three plant sales:

#### Wootens Plant Sale at

Wenhaston in Suffolk was lovely. Beautiful weather and lots of customers - it was an enjoyable way to spend the day. The good news is that it looks like Wootens will repeat the event next year, so make a note in your diary...

#### Malvern Spring Flower

**Show** fell victim to the continuing cold weather and was really windy. Sales were a little disappointing for such a major show and, although we saw lots of regular customers, there wasn't the usual 'Malvern buzz' to the event. Unfortunately, our plants were not fully unfurled, which resulted in a Silver Medal - feedback from the judges was summed up with the comment that we should have done an educational display like the one we did at Harrogate in April. Oh well, cannot win them all!

earlier this month. It is best shown in spring when the bloom on the leaf is at it's best.

*H.* 'Kiwi Full Monty', a sport of

*h.* 'Striptease', is also best shown in spring when the early leaves are their most glaucous - the photo opposite was from our Malvern display in 2012.

#### Other 'Kiwis' in our collection:

Click on the names to find out more about each of the cultivars listed.

We hope to have more of these available for sale over the next few years.



*H.* 'Kiwi Black Magic'



*H.* 'Kiwi Crinkles'



*H.* 'Kiwi Spearmint'



*H.* 'Kiwi Blue Sky'



*H.* 'Kiwi Emerald'



*H.* 'Kiwi Skyscraper'



*H.* 'Kiwi Canoe'



*H.* 'Kiwi Hippo'



*H.* 'Kiwi Minnie Gold'



*H.* 'Kiwi Gold Rush'



*H.* 'Kiwi Kaniere Gold'



*H.* 'Kiwi Sunshine'

The inaugural 'Festival of Plants' held at **Cambridge Botanical Garden** was a success for the gardens but not so good for the avenue of plants element, which lacked buying customers. Many visitors to the event seemed unaware they could buy plants!

#### Helmingham Hall Plant

**Fair** was set fair but was sadly disappointing this year.

By this time we were beginning to wonder if spring was going to ever get going...

However, things changed perceptively we we attended the **Suffolk**

**Show** in Ipswich. Despite the still chilly conditions, visitors came out in droves with a noticeable spring in their step - thank goodness. We detected a definite 'buzz' around the show and in the Floral Marquee.

We were delighted to receive a Large Gold award for our display. Our efforts seemed to be inspiring a lot of people to think about growing hostas for the first time, or indeed expanding their collections to include more unusual varieties.

We found the show to be better than the last time we exhibited at Chelsea (2010), for sales and enthusiasm.

Congratulations to the organisers and many thanks for taking the time to express their appreciation to all exhibitors.

**Next month:** [Previewing our Plant Heritage display for Hampton Court...](#)

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 38 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**.

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