

March 2020



Nursery update

As we have managed to spend some time around the nursery in the past month, we thought you would like to see progress. We have also managed to squeeze in a visit to Barnsdale Gardens...



South garden

Mel has dodged out into the garden at every opportunity over the past couple of months to catch up on all the work she was unable to do last autumn. The two most recently dug beds still need weeding and mulching but the 'rubber rockery' and the 'Galapagos' bed have been prepared for the forthcoming season. She has also planted out some shrubs for the back of the rockery, together with a selection of dwarf conifers and plants re-located from her front garden.

Our first video of the year is in the side column and shows you around the key areas we have been working on over the winter.

[Barnsdale Gardens](#)

Last week Mel attended a meeting at Barnsdale, which finished early afternoon leaving time for a long-awaited tour of the gardens. Although she had to shelter from the intermittent squalls, she thoroughly enjoyed having the place almost to herself due to the weather.

The beauty of visiting gardens in winter is the ability to see the structure laid bare. Mel found it very inspiring, especially in light of her desire to landscape the whole nursery. Obviously this is a long



Nursery update

Click on the image above to watch our first video of 2020, from the nursery.

Photos from Barnsdale Gardens



term project but it is great to be able to get ideas and Barnsdale is one of the best places she has yet visited. She particularly enjoyed the Japanese garden - see the photo at the head of the section.

The gardens are sub-divided into themed spaces offering something suitable for every space, climate and soil condition. The gardens flow from one to another but are distinctly separate, which is a brilliant achievement and there are plenty of vistas that open out in between.

The use of hedging and fencing creates areas that have their own micro-climate and visitors can read about the key features according to the time of year. There was plenty of evidence of spring's arrival with hedging and shrubs budding up together with plants for winter interest punctuating the gaps, which will fill later in the season.

An important element of design is the 'space' in between the planting, which should complement the hard landscaping and not compete with it and this is a delicate balancing act, especially when it is so hard to temper an enthusiasm for filling every space with wonderful plants.

Mel was left thoroughly enthused by the idea of tackling areas one at a time rather than feeling daunted by the prospect of landscaping the whole area at once. There needs to be as much attention to how the areas link but it makes the whole project somewhat easier to think in terms of bite-sized chunks.

Nick has successfully built on his father's creation and I highly recommend a visit if you haven't yet been. Even if you have, you can revisit at another time of the year and experience it in quite a different way. The photos in the side column are just a few of the dozens Mel took on the day.

Tunnel update

Roy and Mel have completed all the traying up in the poly tunnels, ready for the season ahead. This involved a lot of bench extensions and strengthening work whilst the benches were uncovered. They should all last several more years without major work.

We filled a 10 cubic metre skip with the old capillary matting and plastic lining, which we couldn't recycle. We don't like throwing anything out but in this case it was necessary.

The last element of the upgrade is a label system for the sales tunnel, which Roy will construct whilst Mel is creating the 1,000+ labels.

A rather handsome
Eucalyptus

An artistic shallow pond

Mel would like to create similar features at the nursery but design them to look as good when filled with water as when not.

We plan to re-locate the large and giant tunnel again and the space left will be turned over to garden. It would be the perfect location for some shallow ponds to help our frog population, and the wildlife struggling to locate water during the summer. Click on the image to view:



A clump of hellebore looking very eye catching at this time of year when there are few flowers to admire.

Newsletter archive

Mel has spent some time creating PDF versions of all the email newsletters she has sent since 2015. They are all now linked from the [Newsletters](#) page and 'special feature' issues have been classified according to the subject. They join the original format newsletters that ran from 2007 to 2015. We didn't plan to still be creating these communications, mainly as we thought we would run out of content ideas, but 13 years later they are still going and we appreciate your continued interest.

Speak soon

Team Mickfield Hostas



The bark on this birch looks incredibly white against the deep purple of the stormy sky. This was taken after a wintry squall moved on and the sun came out to darken the sky - fabulous!

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