



Our first year with the NCCPG

A year has passed since our hosta collection was designated as a National Collection and much has happened. This month we look forward to the upcoming year, including our involvement in the Plant Heritage event being held in June, and we introduce our 'top 10' classic varieties...

What a difference a year makes

We believe a great part of our success in 2007 resulted from our National Collection designation, awarded in March. Designation stimulated much interest in visiting the nursery and certainly boosted interest in our website, where we detail the collection.

This year we will be supporting the NCCPG at several events including the spring and autumn plant sales at [Helmingham Hall](#) in Suffolk and the [Plant Heritage event](#) at the Cambridge Botanical Gardens on the 8th June 2008.

In addition we will again be co-located with the NCCPG stand at [Gardener's World](#).

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to be able to work alongside the NCCPG event team and promote the organisation to our customers. The NCCPG exhibit features plants from many National Collections and there are many specialists on hand to provide more information on the valuable work of the Council.

Perhaps the most important aspect of our collection is the way in which we can ensure the continuation of specific varieties that may have fallen out of circulation due to the proliferation of new cultivars coming to the market every year. Keeping the older varieties true allows us to supply back into the market and can be very valuable when there are so many varieties sold by garden centres incorrectly labelled. We get many enquiries every year about varieties that are obviously not sold as they should be and that can be for very innocent reasons. After all, as the 'friendship plant', hostas are split and shared very widely, so mistakes do happen.

So what do we consider to be classic varieties?

Here are our choices for a 'top 10' of classic varieties to grace any garden:

1. ***h.* 'Fortunei Albopicta'**

For outstanding spring performance it needs a cool spot in dappled shade and you will get light yellow-green leaves with a deep green margin. The variegation disappears gradually as the season progresses (see photo) but still looks stunning as a backdrop to other planting.

2. ***h.* 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'**

Not as large as some of the more popular blues, this variety needs shade for the best blue and the cupped leaves are wonderfully textured - just wait until you see them holding droplets of water after a shower.

3. ***h.* 'Francee'**

An excellent grower with startlingly white leaf margins that will grow happily in sun or shade - brilliant in a large pot as a centre-piece.

4. ***h.* 'Sum and Substance'**

This plant needs plenty of space as it can grow up to seven feet wide. For this it will reward you with lime green leaves in the shade and gold leaves in the sun. A truly attention-grabbing plant.

5. ***h.* 'So Sweet'**

Needing dappled shade, this variety is amongst the earliest flowering of the fragrant hostas. In July the white margined green leaves are topped off with

Our 'top 10' classic collectors plants:



1. *h.* 'Fortunei Albopicta'



2. *h.* 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'



3. *h.* 'Francee'



4. *h.* 'Sum and Substance'

delightfully fragrant, almost white flowers.

6. ***h.* 'Gold Standard'**

This is a real beauty of a plant with gold centred green margined leaves that show best in dappled shade. Gold Standard is an important plant as parent to many of the newest introductions

7. ***h.* 'Fortunei Aureomarginata'**

Keeping its colour throughout the season, this variety will take sun or shade and be equally glorious in either condition.

8. ***h.* 'Blue Cadet'** and ***h.* 'Banyai's Dancing Girl'**

Both plants are almost identical to each other, each have blue leaves with an abundance of lavender flowers that are in proportion to the leaf mound.

9. ***h.* 'Fortunei Moerheim'**

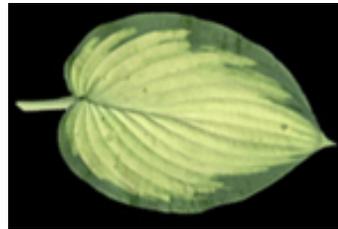
A shade loving variety, this hosta has wide undulating white margins to the dark green leaves.

10. ***h.* 'June'**

Every garden should have one! Plant this variety in the sun if you want bright gold centres with blue margins. Plant in the shade for lovely subtle shades of blue and green across the leaf. Buy one, split it when it is large enough and try a clump in another situation to see for yourself. Even better, give a piece to a friend to get them started.

Click on the links underneath the images to find out more.

Just outside the top 10 but worthy of mention is [*h.* 'Paul's Glory'](#) (on the right), Robin's all time favourite and the most expensive plant we have ever bought into the collection. It likes dappled shade and has large gold-centred leaves with blue margins - smashing!



Size matters update

There is one very important factor that links all hosta enthusiasts - their attention to detail and fastidious cataloguing of facts concerning the genus. This is perhaps most noticeable to readers of the American Hosta Journal, a publication which includes some fabulous photography. As long standing members of the American Hosta Society (AHS) we try to keep up with developments across the Atlantic and are pleased to see that it is becoming easier to engage with the organisation as they operate more widely online these days. For example, the AHS is currently running a '[mini hosta forum](#)' where you are invited to add to the debate over which hostas should be classified as miniature.

Subsequent to our analysis of size classifications in the [November 2007](#) issue, we have decided to change our smallest category of hostas from dwarf to miniature at the end of this season in line with the majority, and now the AHS too.

We will keep you informed of developments.

PSST... [reorganising our collection](#)

We have just completed a major reorganisation of our collection tunnels and their associated records. We are implementing a new labelling system that should make it much easier for visitors to the nursery to navigate the collection and find out more about these fascinating plants. We look forward to your reaction.

Next month: [We introduce the 'Gold Standard' of some recent introductions...](#)



5. *h.* 'So Sweet'



6. *h.* 'Gold Standard'



7. *h.* 'Fortunei Aureomarginata'



8. *h.* 'Blue Cadet'



9. *h.* 'Fortunei Moerheim'



10. *h.* 'June'

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](#).