



H. 'Sagae' - an early spring favourite

This month we look at the plant that caused a stir at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show in 2009.

Often used by exhibitors at spring shows because it grows quickly once it has emerged, *h. 'Sagae'* creates a statement in any garden - this month we take a look at why we think it is becoming more popular.

H. fluctuans 'Variegated'

was the western name that was attributed to *h. 'Sagae'* because of its similarity to *h. 'Fluctuans'* but any link was not subsequently established. Therefore, the parentage was registered as unknown in 1985.

H. 'Sagae' is the original and correct name and denotes the town where the cultivar was discovered in Northern Honshu, Japan.

A recipient of the AHS Benedict Award, which recognises cultivars that perform well in gardens across the USA, *h. 'Sagae'* also performs well in gardens across the UK.

It has been used by breeders to develop modern cultivars with enhanced characteristics. The following table illustrates cultivars from our collection related to *h. 'Sagae'* and shows how the characteristics have been developed further. Click on the names to find out more.



A hit in Harrogate

Despite *h. 'Sagae'* being one of the oldest cultivars in our collection, it was as if people were noticing it for the first time last spring at Harrogate.

We exhibited the plant in our Chinese themed display:



Why is it so popular?

We believe the early emergence of *h. 'Sagae'* in the spring, is an important factor in the increasing popularity of the cultivar, and its sports. Although it needs protecting from late frosts, the cultivar does have excellent substance to the leaves. This characteristic has been continued into the new generation of cultivars with the result

Sports



H. 'Ivory Coast' (1999)

Seedlings



H. 'Devon Hills' (NR)

Crosses



H. 'Millennium' (1995)



H. 'Majesty' (1999)



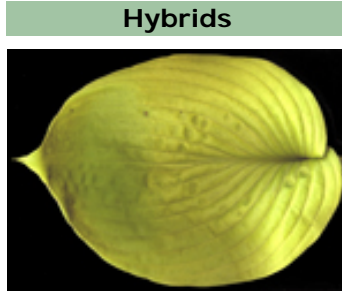
H. 'Kiwi Skyscraper' (NR)



H. 'Blue Hawaii' (1999)



H. 'Clifford's Forest Fire' (2000)



H. 'Fat Cat' (1996)



H. 'Gunsmoke' (2000)



H. 'Emerald Emperor' (NR)



H. 'Hercules' (NR)



H. 'Lonesome Dove' (2005)

Improvements on *h. 'Sagae'*

Our current favourite sports of *h. 'Sagae'* are *h. 'Magic Fire'* and *h. 'Liberty'*:



As *h. 'Liberty'* (2000) matures, the margins become more orange-yellow and the leaves more textured.



H. 'Magic Fire' (2004) has deeper, more streaked margins and a flame-like twist to the leaves.

Next month: We highlight another early spring emerger, *h. 'Montana'*...

that colouration is held well throughout the season and the leaves are less prone to pest damage.

We have highlighted our two favourite sports from *h. 'Sagae'*, which both have more dramatic colouring that improves as the plants mature. Indeed, there are some images of *h. 'Liberty'* that show great texture and rugosity in the leaves of the mature plants.

New for 2010

We are planning to have a new, unregistered, sport of *h. 'Sagae'* available in 2010. *H. 'Super Sagae'* is supposed to be a bigger and better version of the parent, so we await the promise of this over the next few years.

Plant Heritage at Hampton Court 2010

We are delighted to be one of the collections selected to feature in the Plant Heritage Marquee at Hampton Court this year. We can tell you that there are some ideas being proposed that will make the Plant Heritage Marquee a 'must visit' element of the show.

We will also be exhibiting in A8, right outside the main entrance to the Plant Heritage Marquee - so you cannot miss us!

The RHS has made a number of changes to the format of the show this year, so why not make a date to visit it - more details can be found on the **RHS website**.

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](#).