

May 2024



Gathering ideas and inspiration

As if the early arrival of spring isn't sufficient inspiration, there are so many places where you can gather ideas for use in your own garden spaces.



Inspiration for all

We are all very different in what inspires us but a love of hostas usually coincides with an appreciation of the environments they suit best.

Secret, shady spaces, from hidden narrow alleyways to wooded glades are some of the environments I find particularly interesting and was delighted to see the progress made in the garden at [Columbine Hall](#) recently – see photo above.

Kate and Hew came to the nursery at the end of 2022 hunting for plain leaved hostas to add to their scheme and I was eager to see how it was all progressing. We had the perfect opportunity when David and I had a stall at the Hall on their recent Open Day in aid of St Elizabeth's Hospice.



The hostas are starting to establish themselves but are currently playing second fiddle to the wild garlic and other planting, which was already

The shady dell at Columbine Hall



Walking down from the gate at the top you are immediately invited into the space by the gentle curve of the path. The atmosphere was greatly enhanced by the smell of fresh growth and the abundant wild garlic. The sea of delicate white flowers is just delightful and the garlic scent isn't overpowering either.

in place. Over time the hostas will assert themselves and compliment the scheme and I will enjoy seeing their progress through visits and Kate's regular Instagram posts.

This is almost the perfect environment for the hostas with shady slopes, running water and a pond at the bottom – it is completely delightful and I recommend a visit if you are in Suffolk, check their website for more details, including the opportunity to stay in a holiday cottage.



Great Garden Trail

This year the [St. Elizabeth Hospice's Great Garden Trail](#) celebrates its 10th anniversary with another fine selection of gardens to visit in Suffolk, spread across the season. Visit the website to find out more.

The National Garden Scheme

This is an excellent national charity which raises huge sums of money through individuals opening their gardens. It is perhaps the best way to get inspired closer to home, or on a staycation. You can find event details from all over the UK on the [NGS website](#). [Click here](#) for the 2024 Suffolk booklet.

Open weekends

Opening the nursery a couple of weeks earlier than originally planned has encouraged plenty of visitors to the nursery and it is always really gratifying to hear their reactions to the National Collection. Many visitors tell us how inspiring it is, especially tunnel 3 where the large and giant varieties are laid out in a less utilitarian manner. I would love to replicate this in tunnel 4, where the minis, smalls and mediums are but that would be a much larger undertaking as it is so crammed. As ever, I have had so many plans and ideas for the nursery that have not been actioned due to lack of time but where we have been able to implement new ideas they have been well received.

This is the time of year to enjoy your hostas with all that beautiful fresh growth. The vibrant colours of the cultivars that emerge with their variegation, and leaf bloom, from the start. Many emerge and develop their blue blooms and variegations as the season progresses. Having



Coming up...

May is usually a busy month and this year we kick off with

Norfolk Plant Heritage's Spring Plant Fair at Hethersett.

Sunday May 5th 10am-1pm

An event eagerly anticipated by plant hunters so be there early to ensure you get the dibs on all those specialist plants.

The Garden Market at Bungay

Sunday 12th May: 9am-4pm

This is a real treat when Earsham Street is closed to traffic and devoted to all manner of horticultural goodies as well as street food and craft artisans. You can wander at leisure and drink in the great atmosphere.

The Plant Lovers Day at Creak Abbey

Saturday 18th May: 10am-4pm

This is a favourite event of ours. A brilliant location and a host of specialist nurseries welcome you to north Norfolk. With the coast just a stone's throw away, why not consider a weekend break?

Helmingham Spring Plant Fair and Artisan Craft Market

such a broad range of hostas on show means there is always something different to see and many customers visit multiple times each season to experience these changes.

The two photographs below, and in the side column, are a couple of shots from Tunnel 3. Most of the occupants are unfurling at quite a rate and, despite the cold snap, are quickly putting on their new season's growth. It is exciting to look in on them each day as they come through.



Visiting the nursery is an informal affair. If you haven't been before we will show you where everything is and then you are free to wander through the Collection, or just get some retail therapy urges satisfied. We make ourselves available for questions and advice but otherwise you are free to spend as little or as much time as you wish browsing. We want you to enjoy your visit and appreciate that many visitors just like the peace and quiet, and chance to satisfy their hosta cravings.

Sometimes a garden space can present a number of challenges but there is so much information out there to help you make the most of them, that any limitation could be viewed as an opportunity rather than a problem. Visiting other peoples' gardens can illustrate how these challenges can be overcome. There is a wealth of gardening experience to tap into out there, and lots of enthusiastic plant lovers ready to share their experiences to help others achieve their gardening dreams.

Next month Lenore and I share more of the season's delights so until then...

Happy gardening

Team Mickfield Hostas

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May 26-27: 10am-4pm

This event now happens over two consecutive days and has grown into one of the best events in our locality – we are only 5 miles away from the venue. This event attracts plant specialists from as far afield as Yorkshire and Somerset, and is the flagship event in the Suffolk Plant Heritage Group's calendar.



Nursery Open Dates

On top of these events, the nursery is open every weekend throughout May

Friday to Monday

10am – 4pm

Including Bank Holidays

We now have a lovely new National Collection plaque on our gate to go with our banner signs, so you shouldn't miss us:

