



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Another golden year of exhibiting...

It will be tough to accept anything less than a gold medal in future as this year we swept the board for the third year running - it can't last!

We certainly didn't think the year would be up to much back in the spring as the weather kept thwarting our attempts to get underway.

We also had a poor Harrogate Spring Show being out front in the main entrance, although it was lovely to feel more a part of the show as we could see out the glass doors. The trouble is that a slow spring can wreck a year because it is the peak time for plant sales. Fortunately, this wasn't to be the case and every subsequent show exceeded expectations, ending the season on a high.

Too hot to handle

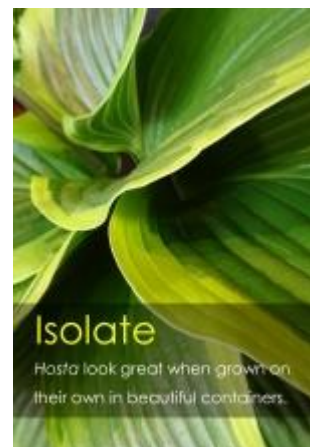
One of the most surprising things of this year was how we got acclimatised to the heat. As a nation we are used to short bursts of heat and we don't normally get the opportunity to get used to it but this year was different and show visitors made the most of the best summer we have had in years. The flip side of all that wonderful heat was the drought that went with it. Thank goodness Roy was at the nursery all season as most of his time was spent watering, especially in the poly-tunnels.

In previous years, when the weather turned hot it had a negative impact on visitors wishing to visit the floral marquees. This year was very different, indeed, many visitors

Show season highlights

The photo at the head of the newsletter is Mel's favourite of the show season as it shows how well alternative styles of display can inspire visitors. Although some plants look best exhibited in traditional ways, it is good to challenge these views and give show visitors something new to see.

This was the basis of our display design for 2018 and the following photos are some of the ones she used to highlight different ways of looking at *Hosta*.



This image of the leaves of *H. montana*

welcomed the chance to get out of the sun and into the relative cool of the marquees. A key problem facing exhibitors is how to keep our lovingly created displays looking tip-top throughout long shows in conditions of high heat and humidity, especially when many of the plant families on show are less suited to such an environment.

Show highlights

Hanging baskets

Definitely the highlight of the season was the reaction to our hanging baskets and how it inspired many of you to give *Hosta* a second look.

Roy's brilliant hanging basket stands were widely admired and the plastic hanging baskets have doubled in price since I purchased them in the spring, which probably means a lot of folks have decided to give them a go.

Better than gold?

We were also delighted to go one better than a Gold at Gardeners' World with a Platinum Award. It is great to have such a positive response to a plant, which is too often overlooked.

A different perspective

Many visitors commented on the photo posters we used and how they highlighted different aspects of the genus that they may not have already considered, which the main idea behind the displays was this year. I like to think we have encouraged people to look at the genus with more appreciation of the range of textures, colours and forms. See opposite for more information.

Videos and plant lists

All the judged displays are available to view as short videos on our [YouTube Channel](#) or via our website, where there is a dedicated page to the [2018 show plant lists](#) we used in each display - clicking on the show name will take you to the video.

Nursery news

The feedback we received from our show displays this year has encouraged us with our garden development plans, which are moving apace now that the demands of the show season are behind us for a while.

[We have decided to convert our reservoir into a sunken garden.](#)

['Auromarginata'](#), arranged in a vase, was used to illustrate how fabulous a plant can look without any other accent, grown or shown in isolation:



A new cultivar, *H.* ['Sugar Snap'](#), which has intensely puckered leaves to highlight the variety of colours and forms of *Hosta*.



The rich colour of *H.* ['June Spirit'](#) was used to illustrate the depth of colour which *Hosta* often possess, even in the darkest shade. There is a bee busy pollinating the flower!

The next photo shows an unusual view of *H.* ['Mourning Dove'](#).

This is a huge project, which will take a lot of heavy machinery to get underway. Mel will begin working on a plan designed to make the most of the range of aspects and micro-climates the reservoir presents to enable us to showcase the very best of the genus over the coming years. This is a very exciting project for the nursery and we will provide regular updates on progress, through the newsletter, as we reach different stages.

Coming up in the next issue...

We will share our show calendar for 2019.

Team Mickfield Hostas



Looking from below presents a very different perspective. Indeed elevating your plants enables a better view of colourful petioles and flower scapes.

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