



Our 2010 season

Although the season isn't quite over for 2010, we thought we would share the show highlights with you now, and what sort of year we have had...

A slow start with an excellent finish

Yes, this year started really slowly for us. We believe this had more to do with the weather than anything else.

The spring was so late in arriving, it was well into May before things began to warm up. Once the warmer weather arrived things picked up well.



Harrogate Spring and Malvern Spring

Both shows were cold affairs, especially **Malvern Spring Flower Show**. We haven't felt so miserable at a show for years - exhibitors were forced to wear multiple layers of clothing even in the Floral Marquee! Our exhibit plants were not fully out for the **Harrogate Spring Flower Show**, and our sales plants were loaded onto the lorry still tightly furled. The tulips we had chosen for our 'shrubby' looked just like red-tipped spears. This wasn't intentional but it did fit very well with the theme of the stand, 'Spamalot!' [Click here](#) for more images.

After an absence of nine years we decided to apply for **Chelsea Flower Show**. Despite a dark corner, background stand and a bronze medal, we attracted a lot of interest and subsequently hosted many visits to view our National Collection. It proved a tiring but worthwhile show to do as a result. Two stars of our exhibit: **h. 'Frosted Mouse Ears'** and **h. 'Holy Mouse Ears'**.



A familiar face rejoined us this show season. Roy helped us set up, and breakdown, at Chelsea. It was great having an extra pair of hands (and lorry) on call for the bigger shows, which meant we could take bigger plants, and larger pieces of hard landscaping, for our exhibits. Whilst at Chelsea, Mel drafted an idea for our stand at **BBC Gardeners' World Live**. Roy turned the sketch into a fabulous elliptical decking feature, which we used

at the show to great effect. The decking also featured in our Plant Heritage display at **Hampton Court**, in July. Despite the whole stand listing like the Tower of Pisa, it was also very well received - see side column, and the **July newsletter**, for more details.



Plant Heritage

This year we supported Plant Heritage both locally and nationally at shows and plant sales.

The plant sales at **Helmingham Hall** in the spring and autumn featured a number of Collections from the Suffolk Group of Plant Heritage. The spring sale was especially good, attracting visitors from as far away as Lincolnshire!

BBC Gardeners' World Live

at the NEC in June, was a real challenge. Plant Heritage organisers had an enormous stand space to fill. Located at the entrance to Hall 6, the stand attracted a lot of interest though it was particularly dark. Plants do not look their best under the lights of the NEC halls and many get 'leggy' over the course of the show, as they stretch towards what little light there is. However, we enjoyed our involvement with Plant Heritage at the show, and hope to be involved again in 2011.

At **Hampton Court Flower Show** we had an island stand in the Plant Heritage Marquee, and a Plant Mall stand just outside the entrance to the Marquee.



H. 'Fried Bananas'

During August we attended the inaugural **Celebration of Plants** event at **Hyde Hall** in Essex.

Set out along the lines of the Wisley Flower Show, this event proved very popular with visitors and exhibitors alike. It was good to do a show so close to home.

It was also excellent timing for some of our fragrant varieties - **h. 'Fried Bananas'** was a show off with its long flower scapes and large fragrant flowers.

In September we headed off for **Wisley Flower Show**, which again was very enjoyable for us. We did a concentric circle display, which went down very well with visitors, so much so that it inspired our **Harrogate Autumn** exhibit. Taking the idea a little further we created an elliptical display of pot-based plants, using different hard landscaping materials to contrast with the foliage.



H. 'Lady Isobel Barnett' stealing the show at Harrogate

All in all we had a very busy season but the best part was seeing so many more visitors at the nursery. Our National Collection continues to impress and delight and we get the biggest buzz from sharing our enthusiasm for this genus. We are looking forward to next year, and planning our new collection house - more later.

Psst... you still have time to order and plant hostas this season

We are happy to continue fulfilling orders and, as long as you are not already suffering from ground frosts, you can still plant them out.

Next month: We take another look at miniature varieties...

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](#).

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It was great fun being involved in staging the display and meeting lots of enthusiastic Collection holders from around the UK.



Our first 'educational' stand was very well received encouraging visitors to think about the diversity of the genus.

In July we supported Plant Heritage at **Tatton Park Flower Show**. This was perhaps our most disappointing show of the year. However, we were able to meet up with regular customers.



Footnote: since Roy's guest appearances during the year, you have noticed his absence at the later shows. Don't worry, the 'mad one' will be back next year...