



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Dear Subscriber

Welcome to our October newsletter and autumn...

We have already shared our shows success with you via these newsletters but we thought we would share some of our gardening news from the year.

With a little help from the wildlife...

This year we have been delighted to witness thrushes in our garden once again. Thrushes are quite secretive birds so are often not seen about the business of hunting their prey. However, we cut down a lot of foliage last autumn, which was strangling our garden. We opened out the lower canopy but left much of the shady top growth. This left border space to plant *Hosta*, among other things.

I duly popped out my little jars with a few slug pellets in each but was dismayed to find damage quite early on, and more than usual. It has been a tough year for the gardener with regard to pests. The thrushes have done their share of the work and together we have managed to lower the population so we can all live together harmoniously again. Indeed, the thrushes have had three broods, which is brilliant. It is also evidence that use of pellets in a controlled way can produce excellent results without risking the wildlife sharing your garden.

Other pesky varmints

We didn't suffer too much damage from vine weevil this year but much of that is probably due to our zero tolerance approach to seeking them out and removing them where we find damage occurring. Although we sometimes experience white fly damage, particularly in areas of the tunnels where there is less air movement, this year wasn't too bad. Thrip, on the other hand, became a problem towards the end of the season. These insects look like tiny thunder flies and feed on the chlorophyll in the leaves, turning them prematurely autumnal. They don't cause lasting damage, especially as they tend to do this towards the end of the season when the leaves have done their sugar production.

You can find out more about these various pests in the [RHS advice pages](#)

Removing unsightly leaves

The lack of rainfall in East Anglia was balanced by the excellent light levels, which encouraged many plants to produce a second flush of



Hosta 'Quill'

One of the stand out plants at this year's shows was *Hosta 'Quill'* (click on image to view). We have been exhibiting this delightful small cultivar for a number of years but, probably because it was looking exceptional, this is the first time it was really noticed.

If you missed our coverage of this season's shows - [click here](#) to find out more.



Hosta 'Amy Elizabeth'

The image above is of the flower of *Hosta 'Amy Elizabeth'* another very

leaves, even those in the ground. Now the leaves are turning autumnal quite rapidly. We are often asked what we do about tatty looking leaves and whether to remove them or not. In our opinion, once the leaves lose their colour, they have done producing sugars for the roots and are no longer required. We tend to remove and compost them but they would also do a good mulching job if you wanted to scatter them round the plants.

We would certainly advocate removing them before winter just in case the weather turns very wet, as this would help reduce the risk of rot entering the crown of the plant.

Overall, we found the season good for growing and not too challenging for pests. Although it seems an odd thing to wish for, we could do with a proper winter to help control pest numbers for 2017. But not too soon as we still have a few months of essential gardening maintenance to do before the season ends.

Please note

We will continue to send out mail order consignments until November because it is a great time of year to get your plants in the ground. A settled dormancy will encourage the conversion of sugars into shoots, so that next spring your plants will be one step ahead.

[Team Mickfield](#)

popular cultivar from 2016. Click on the images to find out more.



[A short tour...](#)

This month we feature a short video of our nursery as we shut the gate for another season. We share plans to move one of our collection tunnels and begin landscaping two areas ready to begin planting large and giant varieties next year.

We will share progress over the coming months, so keep in touch.