



MICKFIELD HOSTAS

The end of another show season...

It always feels rather odd to finish our show season before the shows actually finish for the year but it's really good to be able to get down to some propagation work ahead of the plants entering dormancy, and get sales stock ready for next year.

Hyde Hall Flower Show

Our last show of the season was at RHS Hyde Hall in Essex. We had a good week despite the unfavourable start, weather wise. A full scale gale proved very challenging for all exhibitors trying to stage displays in front of their sales booths.

This year Mel constructed a series of circular islands, rather than one big display, which the visitors liked as they could move around the display and see everything. It was difficult to keep the moss from drying out in the wind and sun. The *Hosta* coped much better but the initial gale did snap a lot of stems.

The photographs opposite give a feel for the display, which received a 5-flower award. We did plan to use screens to decorate the sales area but the weather put pay to that idea. Rather annoyingly, they would have been great to use throughout the show but we had to make a decision and we didn't want to wreck the screens - maybe next year if our application is successful.

2020 shows

We have done our applications for 2020 shows, so fingers crossed they are accepted. As ever, we will let you know the outcome as soon as we hear - hopefully the November newsletter will carry this news and we will update our website accordingly.



Hyde Hall Flower Show

The image above shows the circular mounds in front of our sales booth. The images below are of some of the mounds/decks with pots:



We have decided to shorten our show season next year to enable us to spend more time at the nursery and work on the various developments we have underway.

It is always difficult to drop a show as the decision involves so many aspects. An immediate return on investment has to be taken into consideration with a show's ability to attract new customers, and retain their existing customer base. This often creates a transition period when a show is perhaps less financially profitable but when new customers start to return, and make use of the show and the contacts they can make, it soon turn around. An ideal example of this is BBC Gardeners' World Live, which became independent from RHS involvement a few years back. The last couple of years has seen the show rebuild and become, in our opinion, even better than the event it used to be.

These things take time, so our decisions have to be taken over a period of time too. In our case we decided several years back to refocus our attention on the nursery and build it as a destination for serious hostaholics.



In order to do this we need to encourage visitors to the nursery and that was the main reason we decided to start doing educational (Lindley) displays. It has given us the platform to share our experience of the genus and encourage show visitors to follow up, either virtually (via the website) or physically. Our determination to make the shows work for us to suit our business has worked well thus far with many visitors choosing to come and see our National Collection and take advantage of many varieties they may never see at flower shows.

As we build the gardens we can grow and share our experience with our nursery visitors, who get the chance to see the work in progress, which we also share via



Mickfield Hostas update

Take us as you find us!

The video clip is of Roy mud surfing in 2016...

Those of you who have met us will know we don't put on airs and graces and are, in turn, happy to accommodate the eccentricities of our customers.

To this end we would like to thank all our nursery visitors, especially those of you a little bewildered by Robin's ramblings.

Unfortunately, he has been diagnosed with a condition where you know what you want to say but cannot find the words to articulate your meaning.

The condition has also left him getting a little confused when dealing with customers, which is why Yvonne has had to step in if Roy and I are not available. As Yvonne struggles to walk very far it has proven difficult to chase down requests for plants if they are not immediately to hand, so your patience has been much appreciated.

these newsletters.

Returning visitors have commented on the changes they have seen, so we feel we are making headway - if only at a snail's pace, should we say that?

Nursery update

Right now we are focusing on propagation and 'traying up' the benches in the stock tunnels to help with the watering process. This is tricky as it requires stripping back the existing covers to expose the benches so the trays can sit flat. As we propagate, and increase the stock, there is less room to do this, which is one of the reasons it has always been difficult to maintain the benching system.

Consequently, Roy has decided to build a new tunnel stretching along the back of the poly tunnels, which will become our new stock tunnel. We will then re-purpose the stock tunnels to enable us to spread the collection. Currently it is all rather crowded and the plants struggle to show off when they are so densely packed.



One thing is for certain, nothing ever stands still here and there is always a need to keep rethinking how to use our space to best advantage.

Next month we return to the subject of National Collections and bring you up to date with our own.

Team Mickfield Hostas

As ever, we work best as a team but sometimes the team cannot all be in one place to assist visitors, so next season we will have to vary our opening times to avoid dates when Roy is transporting show plants.

We will try to make it clear on our website when we are open but we have had occasions when visitors have turned up to find the nursery closed. If in doubt do please call/email prior to visiting to avoid this happening.

We will again be open by appointment throughout the 2020 season.

We will also be offering more open weekends as we gradually reduce the number of show commitments over the forthcoming years. We want you to visit so will make every effort to ensure we can accommodate your plans.

Helmingham Autumn Plant Fair

Sunday September 15th

Once again we will be attending this wonderful plant fair in the picturesque grounds of Helmingham Hall as our last hurrah of the season.

[Find out more here](#)

