

Hostas in floral art

This month we take a look at the [subject of flower arranging](#).

The growing popularity of hostas in the UK is leading to the wider use of hosta leaves by floral artists. We highlight recent developments and list some varieties that our floral art customers are purchasing.

A cut above...

One of the pleasures of doing the flower shows throughout the hosta season is visiting the floral art sections and marvelling at the imagination and creativity of floral artists across the UK.

A good friend of ours, Margaret Harrison, uses hostas in many of her floral arrangements, like the one illustrated here.

Over the years she has made a number of arrangements for us to display on our sales table at shows. This often gives rise to much hilarity as customers think her arrangements constitute a single variety and they ask for 'one of those please'!



As a family we often use hosta leaves in wreaths, celebration arrangements and wedding bouquets. We add hosta leaves to our own floral arrangements around the house and at this time of the year there is always a vase or two of cut leaves on display as we take the opportunity to scan leaves for the website.

Being surrounded by so many fabulous examples of hosta inspired us to create a new logo for our website design that tries to capture the variety of leaf types available. [Find out more](#) about the leaves we chose for this.

Hostas lend themselves extremely well to floral art as they can survive for several weeks as cut leaf.

Looking at hosta leaves, prepared as cut flowers and presented for sale in this way, helps the buyer to appreciate the variety of colour, texture and shape that the genus is able to offer.



This picture was taken in New York's Plant District - [photo credit](#)

Floral art top ten

The following are the most popular varieties we have sold to flower arrangers over the past 2 years:



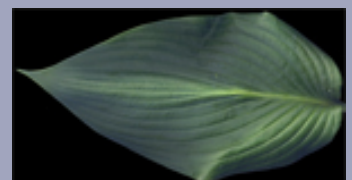
H. 'Dancing in the Rain'
- for the white, twisting leaves.



H. 'Dance with Me'
- for the colour and shape



H. 'Summer Music'
- for the unusual colour



H. 'Snowden'
- for elegance and colour

Modern cultivars

A number of more recent trends in hosta breeding have helped to make modern cultivars more attractive to flower arrangers. In particular, breeders have managed to genetically modify plants for better colour retention and pest resistance. Being able to grow hostas in less shady gardens helps flower arrangers who prefer to grow their own blooms, as these require more sun. Improved pest resistance makes it easier to keep the hosta leaves pristine and those cultivars that can be grown in more sun are not as much of a target for those pests that prefer dark, damp environments.

Hostas lend themselves well to traditional flower arrangements but are perhaps used to more striking effect in contemporary styles of floral art. Cultivars with particularly long or brightly coloured (red/pink) petioles, and a more erect growing habit, have gained in popularity as more than the leaves are on display in contemporary designs. As ever more impossibly exotic blooms become more readily available perhaps we shall see an even more widespread use of hosta leaves to help frame them and create balance in displays?

The Beijing Olympics

It was a delight to see hosta leaves used as part of the design of the official bouquets used at the Beijing Olympic Games.

The 6,000 bouquets, awarded alongside the medals, were designed to convey cultural messages of particular importance to the Chinese. The number 9 in Chinese culture is considered especially propitious as it stands for longevity; evergreen; everlasting; eternity. The number 6 stands for smooth running; flowing; smooth; frictionless. The resulting bouquet was elegant, simple and perhaps epitomised the level of detail the Chinese gave to every aspect of their hosting of the games.



The Beijing Olympic Games official bouquet comprised:

- 9 red China roses - red is traditionally propitious and when combined in the rose it denotes the hospitality of the Chinese people.
- 6 hypericums
- 6 physostegia virginiana
- 6 leaves of hosta
- 6 ophiopogon japonicus

The supporting foliage has gold margins to mirror the gold medal and the bouquet is tied with China silk ribbons, which bears the Beijing Olympic emblem, in traditional China bowknot style.

A couple of notes...our show season is almost over

We will be showing at **Wisley Flower Show** and **Harrogate Autumn Show** over the next couple of weeks, so hope to see you there.

Newly available

We have been busy dividing parent plants in our collection and have several cultivars we can now offer for the first time - in limited quantities. [Find out more](#)

Next month: Reflections on the 2009 hosta season

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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H. 'Praying Hands'

- for the upright, furred habit.



H. plantaginea

- for the fragrant flowers and shiny leaves



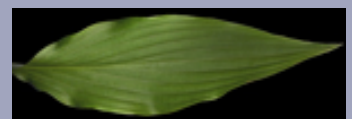
H. 'El Nino'

- for the unusual colour



H. 'Devon Green'

- for the darkest leaves



H. 'Pineapple Poll'

- for the elongated leaves



H. 'One Man's Treasure'

- for the red stems and deep green leaves.