



As autumn approaches...

Our hostas are rapidly developing their autumn colours. This is a delightful time, as the plants can look even more stunning than usual. But it is also a difficult time, if it coincides with the end of the show season...

A record-breaking season

This year has seen a series of highlights for us, not least of all two RHS Gold Medals. We will share the highlights with you in the October newsletter, when we expect the plants will have dictated an earlier than usual end to the year. This is the direct result of a very early spring, possibly the warmest we have experienced since turning our hosta collection into a business.

Initially, the early warm weather meant that plants we selected to bring forward for our early shows could be used alongside those which emerged without any intervention. We had a wealth of plants to choose from for our Harrogate Spring floral display but the advanced season has meant the opposite for our Harrogate Autumn display. Indeed, we reluctantly decided to cancel our attendance at the autumn show because we felt the plants were heading toward dormancy too quickly to be able to display at their best.

We are still attending the **Wisley Flower Show**, because the plants still look fabulous for a non-judged, outside display. However, they would not withstand the close scrutiny of floral exhibit judging. Nor would they stand up to being exhibited in the floral hall at Harrogate for the duration of the show, which would accelerate their seasonal changes. Although, educationally this would be a brilliant thing to show in the context of a Plant Heritage display, where we can explain what is happening to the plants, it isn't acceptable for a Floral Hall/Marquee exhibit. This is the first time we have pulled out of a show, and it was a hard decision to make in light of how we enjoy the Harrogate shows. However, 2012 is another year, and we hope to be back in the Spring. In the meantime we wish all the best to Martin, and his North of England Horticultural Society team, for their Harrogate Autumn show.

The 'Edger' series

As previewed last month, we are featuring varieties of hosta sported from *h.* 'Gold Edger' in this issue.

H. 'Gold Edger', was registered in 1978 as a sport of *h.* 'Blue Cadet'.

It is a small, gold leaved cultivar with a neat habit, turning from gold to lime green in heavier shade. Its parentage shows in the beautifully proportioned leaf shape.

Most of the sports produced by *h.* 'Gold Edger' show its characteristic leaf shape. The latest sports exhibit a wide range of variegations in colour.

Some of these do appear to be duplicates of each other and we comment on this in the following list of cultivars held in our collection:



Celebration of Plants Hyde Hall

We attended this show in the middle of August. The weather was lovely, if a bit cloudy at times, but unfortunately it didn't seem to attract as many visitors as last year's inaugural event.

We didn't see much evidence of event publicity in the run-up to the show. Some visitors actually told us they found out about the event from our website!



We created a slate-edged display, which was well received - click on the image above to view.

Website update

Mel has just undertaken her annual photo and image gathering for the website. The leaf scans have been added to the website and the parent images will be added over the next few months...

The 'Edger' series...

The following photographs illustrate the neat habit and leaf shape of *h.* 'Gold Edger', and its sports.



H. 'Radiant Edger'
H. 'Gold Edger' sport registered in 1990



H. 'Hawkeye'
H. 'Gold Edger' sport registered in 1999. It looks very similar to h. 'Radiant Edger'



H. 'Pacific Blue Edger'
H. 'Gold Edger' sport registered in 2009



H. 'Olympic Edger'
H. 'Gold Edger' sport registered in 1999



H. 'Cream Edger'
Unregistered h. 'Gold Edger' sport. It looks very similar to h. 'Olympic Edger'



H. 'Pamela Lee'
H. 'Radiant Edger' sport registered in 2007



H. 'Gold Edger Surprise'
H. 'Gold Edger' sport registered in 2002



H. 'Emerald Edger'
H. 'Radiant Edger' sport registered in 2009. It looks very similar to h. 'Gold Edger Surprise'



H. 'Dinky Donna'
H. 'Radiant Edger' sport registered in 2009



So far the only sport of h. 'Gold Edger' to deviate from the leaf shape and pattern is **h. 'X-ray'**, registered in 2000.

The newest cultivar in the series, h. 'Dinky Donna' is a particularly pretty cultivar, low-growing and producing leaves in a rosette pattern. H. 'Pamela Lee' is proving difficult to grow whilst maintaining the dark colouring. The plant tends to revert to it's parent, rather than to a plain colour, and we only have a couple of examples of the cultivar showing the correct pattern and depth of colouring. We displayed these cultivars in our Plant Heritage exhibit at Hampton Court to illustrate how apparent duplication can occur in branches of the genus but also how characteristics can be enhanced through successive generations. Visitors to the display were particularly taken with h. 'Dinky Donna', and were interested to see its origins.

Next month: We review our 2011 show season...

Click on the images below to view:



H. 'Pacific Blue Edger'



H. 'Olympic Edger'



H. 'Dinky Donna'

Nursery visits

As the season is drawing to an earlier close than usual we would recommend visiting the collection before the end of September - if you were thinking of doing so this year. The plants are still looking good, and we are making a start on our plans to develop the visitor experience, so there is a lot to see. We will devote a forthcoming newsletter to the plans so you can share the journey with us...

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 35 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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