



Welcome to our review of the 2012 season

What a memorable year it was for so many reasons, not all of them positive.

Fortunately the weather largely behaved itself for the Olympics and Jubilee celebrations. We needed this to lift the nations spirits when the weather did all it could to dampen them...

The 2012 season...

Before we launch into a look back on our own season, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the efforts of all horticulturalists across the UK, who had to battle such extreme conditions, just to keep going this year.

We do hope to see all our friends and colleagues back on the show circuit again next year, and hope that the winter is kind to all.

We must also highlight what a fantastic job show organisers have done this year, to keep the major horticultural shows going, despite terrible weather conditions. This blighted many major events, forcing many cancellations during the season.

Visitors to the Hampton Court show will have heard tannoy announcements quelling rumours of a possible cancellation at Tatton Park. Exhibitors were under no illusion that this was a real possibility, given the horrendous state of ground conditions only five years ago when the RHS were battling even worse weather, during preparations. So, when we all rolled up at Tatton, we were delighted to find the showground fully functional with very limited damage - a brilliant effort from all involved. This year the Great Yorkshire Show was cancelled and, after the Harrogate Spring Flower Show was closed early on the last day, due to the weather, we all had our fingers crossed for the Autumn Show. Although the weather wasn't brilliant, it was much better than forecast, but the high winds did stress the ropes somewhat, and our tent developed a distinct bend in the middle, even in the shelter of the campsite at the bottom of the showground! Yes, this was the year we decided to contain our fuel costs by not towing the caravan to shows and camping instead. At least we know the tent (nicknamed the Graf Zeppelin) is fully weather-proof.

Our own season

As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, this year began with the decision to scale down our show presence, because it requires so much of our time during the hosta season. As our National Collection grows, so does our need to spend more time looking after it. We also have to try to find ways to share the collection with more people, as part of our commitment to Plant Heritage. As the collection is now too big to adequately represent on the road, we need to encourage more people to visit the nursery, by being open all season. However, we still need to get our plants out there in the public eye, and the shows are fundamental to this. It is a dilemma trying to decide how best to do this, but we are encouraged by the number of visitors to the nursery this year suggesting that we have taken the right decision.

As far as wear and tear on ourselves, it has been a really good move. Yvonne has been able to answer customer queries and process orders in real time, rather than catching up between shows. Robin has been refurbishing the original collection tunnel, after completing the new structure in the spring, whilst hosting numerous nursery visits. Roy and Mel have been able to devote more time to single show stands and have been helped out by Mel's hubby and son, David and Andrew, when this has required two lorries and additional stand support, at Gardeners' World and Tatton Park. This year we staged two 17' round displays at these two shows, which was exhausting and time-consuming.

2012 in Awards

This has been our best year so far for awards.



Harrogate Spring: Gold

Malvern Spring: Gold

Suffolk Show: Gold

BBC Gardeners' World: Gold. Rumour had it that we were up for 'Best in Show' but the most positive aspect of this award was the judges enthusiastic feedback, and our customers' endorsement of those views - it was great.

Tatton Park: Silver Gilt

Harrogate Autumn: Premier Gold and the Harrogate Corporation Trophy.

The dreadful spring weather put paid to us being able to dip into our collection to exhibit as many different varieties as we normally do, so by Tatton many were looking quite sorry for themselves. Strangely, the ones we rested after Gardener's World recovered well and looked fabulous for the Harrogate Autumn show, three months later - these plants are so resilient. Below is a montage of some of the most popular cultivars this year, which includes a mix of old and new varieties:



Over the winter we will be creating a new website area featuring photos of displays, which we hope will give you some planting ideas for your own garden space.

Next month: We feature the species *h. nigrescens*...

The silverware handed out at the Harrogate Shows, denote how highly ranked each display is within the Premier Gold category. It was a fabulous surprise to walk in on the first morning as see the silver glinting on the display.



Just checking!

We also received the British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society's Peter Fernyhough award, which recognises "the Best non-commercial Show Garden during the year". **Note:** if you are a confused reader of the BHHS September newsletter, it incorrectly lists our awards, and misses out the Harrogate shows for some reason.

Are you stuck for Christmas gift ideas?



Why not give a gift voucher - **find out more**

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**.