



## This month we return to miniature matters

*H. venusta* is a charming plant and one of the smallest species of hosta, which has been used by breeders to create a range of cultivars. Here we look at a couple of generations of cultivars originating from *h. venusta* - some of which have proved to be more successful than others...

**H. venusta** is a miniature hosta species that sits at the head of an interesting family tree. *H. venusta* has a Japanese alias; Otome Giboshi (meaning 'beautiful maiden hosta') but the species actually originated from Korea. Before we start though, there are two cultivars, *h. venusta* 'Minuet' and *h. venusta* 'Porter', that we have decided to pull out of the family tree because very little is known about them and in characteristics they are both almost identical to *h.* 'Thumb Nail'.

As ever, we restrict our analysis of this plant to those members of it's family that we hold in our collection and list two generations of cultivars chronologically in the table below and include the year of registration for registered cultivars:

	→	<p><i>H. 'Honey Moon'</i> - sport (1982)  <i>H. 'Dew Drop'</i> - sport (1988)  <i>H. 'Drip Drop'</i> - sport (1988)  <i>H. 'Pooh Bear'</i> - sport (1988)  <i>H. 'Abby'</i> - sport (1990)  <i>H. 'Marilyn'</i> - cross with <i>h. 'Green Piecrust'</i> (1990)  <i>H. 'Peedee Absinth'</i> - cross with <i>subcrocea</i> (1990)  <i>H. 'Sun Drop'</i> - sport (1999)  <i>H. 'Tick Tock'</i> - unregistered sport.</p>
<p><i>H. 'Gold Drop'</i> Hybrid registered in 1977</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Alpine Dream'</i> - cross with a <i>venusta</i> seedling, registered in 1982.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Ballerina'</i> - hybrid registered in 1982.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Rim Rock'</i> - cross of a <i>h. venusta</i> hybrid and a <i>h. 'Nakaiana'</i> hybrid (1982).</p>	→	<p><i>H. 'Bells of Edinburgh'</i> - hybrid registered in 1993.</p>
<p><i>H. 'Thumb Nail'</i> - hybrid registered in 1982.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Pinwheel'</i> - hybrid registered in 1983.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Misty Morning'</i> - hybrid registered in 1986.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Venucosa'</i> - cross with <i>h. ventricosa</i>, registered in 1986.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Suzuki Thumbnail'</i> - sport registered in 1987.</p>		
<p><i>H. 'Leather Sheen'</i> Cross with <i>h. 'Sum and Substance'</i> (1988)</p>	→	<p><i>H. 'Warwick Sheen'</i> Unregistered cross with <i>h. 'Christmas Tree'</i>.</p>



*H. venusta*

**Mound size:** miniature.  
**Leaves:** 1¼" long x 1" wide. Medium matt green in colour.

**Flowers:** Purple flowers top off the plant mound during the summer.  
*H. venusta* grows well and creates weed-suppressing ground cover.

### Variegated forms


There are two variegated forms of *h. venusta* that have been introduced:



*H. venusta aureomarginata* - a.k.a. Kifukurin Otome. This variety has narrow yellow margins.



*H. venusta* variegated - renamed *h. Masquerade* in 1996. This variety has white centred leaves, flecked with green.

<b>H. 'Little White Lines'</b> Sport of a <i>h. venusta</i> hybrid (possibly <i>h. Masquerade</i> ) registered in 1988.	→	<b>H. 'Lakeside Elfin Fire'</b> A seedling cross registered in 2000.
<b>H. 'New Wave'</b> - cross of a <i>h. venusta</i> hybrid and <i>h. 'Sum and Substance'</i> , registered in 1988.		
<b>H. 'Gosan Gold Midget'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Golden Prayers'</i> , registered in 1989.		
<b>H. 'Lakeside Neat Petite'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Blue Cadet'</i> , registered in 1991.		
<b>H. 'Brandywine'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Montana'</i> and <i>h. longipes Hypoglauca</i> , registered in 1993.		
<b>H. 'Blue Eyes'</b> - hybrid registered in 1996.		
<b>H. 'Cody'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Shining Tot'</i> , registered in 1996.		
<b>H. 'Surprised by Joy'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Flamboyant'</i> , registered in 1998.	→	<b>H. 'Little Bit'</b> Sport registered in 1999.
<b>H. 'Striker'</b> - sport registered in 2000.		
<b>H. 'Rock Island Line'</b> - cross with <i>h. 'Flamboyant'</i> , registered in 2001.		
<b>H. 'Amanuma'</b> - cross with <i>h. capitata</i> , registered in 2001.		
<b>H. 'Golden Decade'</b> - cross of a <i>h. venusta</i> seedling with <i>h. 'Sum and Substance'</i> , registered in 2003.		
<b>H. 'Cat's Eye'</b> - unregistered sport.	→	<b>H. 'Kitty Cat'</b> - unregistered sport.
 <b>H. 'Masquerade'</b> - unregistered hybrid formerly known as <i>h. venusta</i> variegated.	→	<b>H. 'Dixie Chick'</b> - cross with <i>h.</i> <i>'Invincible'</i> (1999) <b>H. 'Munchkin'</b> - sport (2003) <b>H. 'Paradise Parade'</b> - unregistered sport.
<b>H. 'Orphan Annie'</b> (a.k.a. Otome Giboshi Fukurin) - unregistered sport.		
<b>H. 'Paradise Puppet'</b> - unregistered hybrid.		
<b>H. 'Red Tubes'</b> - unregistered sport.		
<b>H. 'Venus Star'</b> - unregistered hybrid.		

## PSST... we have recently split a number of varieties in our collection

If you have been thinking about getting hold of varieties currently listed as unavailable then do let us know because we have recently split a number of highly sought after plants from our collection, such as *h. 'Corona'* and *h. 'Herkules'*.

If we cannot supply the one you want then we can put you on a waiting list for first refusal when we do have some available.

**Next month:** We review the 2008 season as it draws to a close...

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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## Breeding miniature cultivars

Some varieties struggle to establish but some are excellent growers. The following cultivars from *h. venusta*, are not only favourites of ours they are also highly popular with customers and collectors:



*H. 'Paradise Puppet'*



*H. 'Cat's Eye'*



*H. 'Lakeside Elfin Fire'*

## Are they all worth collecting?

In our opinion some of the miniature cultivars that have been introduced are not worth the effort it takes to grow them. Among those related to *h. venusta* that we have abandoned are: *h. 'Tiny Tears'*, *h. 'Shining Tot'* and *h. 'Tot Tot'*.