



Welcome to our 100th newsletter

This month we look at which, in our opinion, are the best chartreuse to mid-green cultivars.

Shades of green

The classification of chartreuse includes viridescent golds and yellows, which spend more of their season green. It is difficult trying to determine the most appropriate colour to describe the leaves of many varieties due to their propensity to look slightly different depending upon their growing conditions. The following selection of cultivars are the ones we feel hold their colour for most of the season, as shades of green from chartreuse through pale, to mid-green.

In essence many of these varieties have a matt look to the leaves, which can be a delightful foil for other planting, especially in more subtle arrangements of colour and texture.

Starting with the miniatures, a stand out new cultivar is **H. 'Curly Fries'** - right, which could almost be described as variegated. The leaves turn up from the mid-rib making them appear to be a different colour in the centre compared to the margin.



The plant has an arching habit, which can start out taller than 6" but the leaves do bend over as they grow during the season. The effect is akin to a miniature fountain of wavy-edged spikey leaves and is delightful.



If you would like a cultivar with a similar, habit then **H. 'Chartreuse Wiggles'** is a good bet and looks especially good planted with other small and miniature hostas for leaf contrast.

Another older cultivar we recommend is **H. 'Limey Lisa'** - left, which has almost round, heart-shaped, wavy-edged leaves. It is really cute and we used it at a few shows again in 2014. It has such a lovely compact shape and is great grown with other contrasting miniatures, such as some of the variegated 'Mouse Ears' varieties. It does have a fine root system, so we would recommend a grittier soil mix for planting.

Moving onto small varieties, our favourite is probably **H. 'Harry van de Laar'** - below. The beautiful light matt green leaves sit on the end of red petioles, a stunning combination. The habit of the plant is such that you can see the red petioles from above, so it is great for planting in borders as well as in containers. The leaves are large in context to the size of the plant mound, so looks lush.

The underside of the leaves have a white bloom. As the leaves mature they twist slightly towards the leaf tips, revealing the undersides. The prominent veins serve to enhance the twist to the leaves.

All in all, this is a hard cultivar to better.



The nursery is now open for the season.

During the last three years we have been in a position to open the nursery on a daily basis from April through to September.

This year we do so again, and invite you to drop by to see for yourselves the huge range of plants we have for sale, and to take the opportunity to browse the National Collection.

Once again we will have lots of specials and one-off divisions. We actually have a very limited number of some of our new additions to the National Collection available for sale.

As the season progresses we will be diving into the National Collection to report and divide as the plants dictate. This often enables us to offer limited quantities of rarer cultivars.

Don't forget to let us know if there is a particular species or cultivar you would like. We can then offer you first refusal on a division, when one becomes available.

Robin and Yvonne will be on hand at the nursery for advice and guidance throughout the season.





Two older cultivars are still well worth considering for their pale green foliage, *H. 'Gold Edger'* and *H. 'Gold Drop'*. Both make excellent edging plants and can look very effective when used to define a border.

A small variety, which looks very yellow in the spring but chartreuse for the rest of the season is *H. 'Vanilla Cream'* - left. It is a plant we have used time after time in displays because the leaf shape and colour is distinctive. It also grows exceptionally well for a small variety and looks particularly good alongside *H. 'Blue Mouse Ears'*.

There are several medium-sized varieties we would like to recommend, including a rather lovely species, *H. hypoleuca*, which we featured in the December 2014 newsletter. As we need to narrow down the number we have selected the following as the best:

Hosta 'Shimmy Shake': this has one of the best habits we have seen in a hosta and is particularly lovely showing off in a container as a specimen plant.

Hosta 'Marilyn Monroe': this cultivar has a white bloom to the undersides of the leaves and, although the leaf tops can look slightly darker in more shade, their matt substance makes them look pale in many situations. This cultivar looks exceptional when planted alongside shiny foliage, which acts as a foil to enhance the matt quality of the leaves.



H. 'Shimmy Shake'



H. 'Marilyn Monroe'

Hosta 'Cold Heart': one of the best round-leaved cultivars in this colour range. Again, it looks at its best as a specimen grown in a container, where it can develop its layered shape.

Although we do not have many varieties on the large to giant scale with chartreuse to mid-green leaves, we are able to recommend *H. 'Valentine Lace'* and *H. 'Something Else'*. The former is a variety we have held in our collection for a long time but it is still a great garden plant and hard to beat for its growth and habit. The latter is a plain-leaved sport of *H. 'Olive Bailey Langdon'*, which shares the leaf shape of the parent and the tendency for subtle colouring, with a bloom to the leaves. Two giant cultivars we can offer are: *H. 'Elkheart Lake'*, which has *H. hypoleuca* in its genes, and *H. 'T Rex'*, which has much paler matt green leaves than is usual in such a large-leaved variety.



H. 'Elkheart Lake'



H. 'T Rex'

Next month: We feature the best dark green-leaved cultivars...

Mel and Roy will also be on hand in-between show commitments.

Show calendar

Our show calendar looks rather more manageable this year, with better spacing between shows. However, there are still some date clashes which have precluded our attendance at some of the smaller plant fairs in our region.

We apologise if you were hoping to catch us at one of these events – perhaps next year the dates will shift and we can include them again.

We have just added the **Woottens Plant Fair** at Wenham on May 3rd and the **Hadleigh Show** on May 16th. Both events are in Suffolk.

We are gradually getting details of our stand allocations at the RHS shows and will be putting more detail onto our shows page, as we get it.

NOTE:

Harrogate Autumn

We are awaiting notification for Harrogate Autumn Show. Although this is one of our usual shows, the North of England Horticultural Society, who organise the event, are having to work around some construction work at the showground. This may result in reduced space for exhibitors and we are not necessarily guaranteed space until they have had a chance to go through all the applications. We will let you know as soon as we hear.

The plans we have seen, for the rearranged show layout, look interesting and should have the effect of refreshing the visitor experience.

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 39 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**.