



## The sweet smell of summer

This month, as we enter the best time of year for fragrant flowering hostas, we thought it would be a good idea to profile *h. plantaginea*. This species is the only one that has fragrant flowers, which leads us to suppose that all fragrant cultivars must have parentage that ultimately leads back to *h. plantaginea*...

### *H. plantaginea*

Native to central China *h. plantaginea* has been around for a while. Introduction has been attributed to Ascherson back in 1838 and records exist that claim that the species was the first hosta on the continent of Europe as long ago as 1784. There are two other forms of *h. plantaginea*: *h. plantaginea Grandiflora* (also known as *h. plantaginea Japonica*), which has a slightly more elongated leaf, and *h. plantaginea China*. Little is known of their origins but both have strikingly fragrant flowers.

The following table links to cultivars (in our collection) that have been introduced from *h. plantaginea*, in chronological order. Not all cultivars bred from *h. plantaginea* have fragrant flowers - those that have are marked with an asterisk:

	→	<p><b>*H. 'Sugar Babe'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Saishu Jima'</i>, registered in 1996.</p> <p><b>H. 'Ginsu Knife'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Green Fountain'</i>, registered in 2002.</p> <p><b>H. 'Columbus Circle'</b> Unregistered cross with a sport of <i>h. 'Frances Williams'</i>.</p>
<b>*H. 'Iron Gate Glamour'</b> Hybrid registered in 1981.	→	<p><b>H. 'Peedee laughing River'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Neat Splash'</i>, registered in 1992.</p>
	→	<p><b>*H. 'Fragrant Bouquet'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Fascination'</i>, registered in 1982.</p> <p><b>*H. 'Aqua Velva'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Polly Bishop'</i> and <i>h. 'Blue Lace'</i>, registered in 1983.</p> <p><b>*H. 'Bette Davis Eyes'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Christmas Tree'</i>, registered in 1987</p> <p><b>H. 'Rising Sun'</b> Cross with <i>h. 'Aztec Treasure'</i>, registered in 1988.</p> <p><b>*H. 'Edwin Bibby'</b> Unregistered sport of <i>*h. 'Summer Fragrance'</i>.</p>



*h. plantaginea*

**Mound size:** medium.  
**Leaves:** 10" long x 6" wide. The leaves are of a medium substance and glossy green.

**Flowers:** lily-shaped white, fragrant, opening in evening, from August until October - hence its alias as the 'Old August Lily'. Heat tolerant, *H. plantaginea*, requires sun to produce flowers so it is a plant that will grow well against south-facing walls.

### Next generation fragrance

*H. 'Fragrant Bouquet'* has produced a number of modern cultivars including many of our favourite fragrant varieties.



*H. 'Fragrant Bouquet'*

**\*H. 'Buckwheat Honey'** - cross with *h. 'Ginko Graig'* registered in 1984



**\*H. 'Royal Standard'**  
Cross with *h. sieboldiana* -  
registered in 1986.



**\*H. 'Hoosier Harmony'**  
Sport registered in 1995.  
**H. 'Dee's Golden Jewel'**  
Cross with *h. 'Galaxy'*, registered in  
1996.  
**\*H. 'Royal Super'**  
Sport registered in 2000.

**\*H. 'Honeybells'** - cross with *h. sieboldii* registered in 1986.

**H. 'Snow Flakes'** - cross with *h. sieboldii 'Alba'* registered in 1986.

**\*H. 'Sweet Susan'** - cross with *h. sieboldii* registered in 1986.

**\*H. 'Emily Dickinson'** - cross with *h. 'Neat Splash'*, registered in 1987.

**\*H. 'Flower Power'** - sport registered in 1996

**H. 'Hertha'** - is a non-fragrant cross with *h. 'Neat Splash'*, registered in 1988.

**\*H. 'Bennie McRae'** - hybrid registered in 1989.

**\*H. 'Old Faithful'**  
Cross with *h. 'Regal'*  
*Rhubarb'*, registered in 1991.



**\*H. 'Fragrant Fire'**  
Sport registered in 2003.

**\*H. 'Austin Dickinson'** - cross with *h. 'Resonance'*, registered in 1992.

**\*H. 'Warwick Essence'**  
Cross with *h. 'Northern'*  
*Halo'*, registered in 1993.



**\*H. 'Essence of Summer'**  
Sport registered in 2004.

**\*H. 'Aphrodite'** - an unregistered sport.

**H. 'Rayleigh Remembrance'** - an unregistered cross with *h. 'Sum and Substance'*.

**\*H. 'White Fairy'** - an unregistered sport.

Understandably the fragrant properties of *h. plantaginea* has been something hosta breeders are keen to develop further and we look forward to seeing what the future holds in the way of new cultivars.

**PSST . . .** we will be at the nursery all of August.

If you were thinking of giving us a visit at the nursery then you will be most welcome and we will be around most of August - [find out more](#).

Our last show of the season is **Harrogate Autumn Show**, why not try it for yourself and remember, if you would like us to bring your orders to the show then let us know at least two weeks beforehand.

**Next month:** We take a look at cultivars developed from *h. venusta*

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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Registered by Paul Aden in 1982, this variety was awarded Hosta of the Year by the American Hosta Society in 1998 and is one of our favourite fragrant cultivars.

The following cultivars come from *h. 'Fragrant Bouquet'* - registered cultivars have the year of registration in brackets:

**\*H. 'So Sweet'** (1986)  
**\*H. 'Showtime'** (1987)  
**\*H. 'Sweetie'** (1988)  
**\*H. 'Miss Saigon'** (1999)  
**\*H. 'Fragrant Dream'**  
**\*H. 'Sweet Bouquet'**  
**\*H. 'Sweet Innocence'**  
**\*H. Guacamole'** (1994)

This cultivar has produced these lovely sports:

**\*H. 'Fried Bananas'** (1994)  
**\*H. 'Fried Green Tomatoes'** (1995)  
**\*H. Avocado** (1998)  
**\*H. 'Stained Glass'** (1999) as featured in our Hampton Court display this year



[click to see larger picture](#)

We have a full list of all the fragrant varieties in our collection but not all are available for sale so do check out the individual varieties for pricing.