

August 2022



Getting out and about

This is the time of year when we can get out and about to visit some of the lovely gardens and historic buildings that dot our landscape - that's if you are not running a nursery of course.

However, we did manage to escape for a few hours to Somerleyton Hall in Suffolk. We share photos, and the reasons behind the visit, but first Lenore gives us an insight into this year's American Hosta Society's (AHS) annual Convention. Click the image below to visit the Convention website...



Greetings Hosta Gardeners,

In June Tom and I attended our fourth American Hosta Society Convention. Each convention has been a hosta lover's paradise, filled with inspiration, education, and camaraderie.

This year's convention was the revived Minneapolis, Minnesota "Hosta 20/20 Vision" convention cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic. The theme this year was, appropriately, "Rising from the Ashes."

How can we describe the convention experience?

It begins with walking into a beautiful hotel, decorated with magnificent hosta containers. Smiling people greet us at the registration table and present us with a gift bag and the hosta gift plant (this year it was the gorgeous 'Phoenix Feathers,' understandably fitting). From then on, we are surrounded by hundreds of hosta enthusiasts, most smiling, happy, and knowledgeable. Among them are the hosta hybridizers whose plants we grow and whose work we admire. We meet kindred spirits in the hallways, on elevators, at meals, at "hostatality" events, on the tour buses, and in the gardens. By the time we leave, we've gained friends from all over the U.S., and other countries as



Lenore and Tom Tipping
at the AHS Convention.

AHS Convention featured gardens

Lenore has shared photos of some of the beautiful gardens she and Tom visited during the convention, which give a flavour of the many and varied ways to grow hostas.

How about creating different layers to elevate areas and create depth to a garden?

well.

The convention is held in mid-June, over a three-to-four-day period. This year we arrived for the pre-tour day and viewed gardens not included in the regular tour schedule. For this pre-tour we went to southern Minnesota, had a catered lunch in a fabulous garden, and toured a total of six remarkable hosta gardens.



The convention activities began the next day. Typical convention activities include a fabulous, judged, cut-leaf show; captivating presentations, including at least one with a scientific focus; and two days of touring incredible hosta gardens.

One exciting activity is visiting the vending room, which this year had many different hosta vendors from various areas of the country, all bringing new introductions as well as sought-after favorites. (The phrase "kid in a candy store" comes to mind here.) There are also contests, award presentations, judges' training, and AHS business meetings, as well as an exciting hosta auction, where collectors and hybridizers bid on some of the newest and most promising plants. The most difficult part of the convention, for us, is trying to fit in all the activities we want to attend.

Our most enjoyable activity is the garden tours. We travel by bus, this year to six different gardens each day, seeing the best of the best hosta gardens in the area. It is exciting and inspiring as well as relaxing, and a time for visiting with fellow hosta growers. I took a few photos of tour gardens and share some of them here.



What fabulous containers - really eye-popping colour but it works so well.





We leave each convention feeling happy, inspired, exhausted, and looking forward to the next one. Next year's convention will be held in Ames, Iowa, June 7 through 10, 2023. Maybe we'll see you there!

**All the best,
Lenore**

Visit to Somerleyton Hall Gardens

We have known Simon Gaches, Head Gardener at [Somerleyton Hall](#), for a few years, helping to satisfy his love of hostas both in his role at Somerleyton and previously at the Bishop of Norwich's gardens. When Simon visited us last year he mentioned us coming to name a few of the hosta divisions, which lost their labels during the move. We took him up his offer of a tour at the start of July and, despite the overcast day, the planting were really singing out their summer colours, especially in the long borders in the walled garden.

Simon has been busy developing all the different elements of the 12 acres of gardens surrounding the Hall with his own style of planting, bringing architectural forms and structures into the existing layouts to great effect. He has an eye for dramatic and unusual plants and has so much more space to stretch his creative gardening skills here than at his previous post.



The hosta borders are coming along well and the plants cope well with the levels of sunlight they currently sit in. Plans to develop a shady archway down the length of the

Planting in sweeps of one cultivar can be very effective.



More levels, this time with water and other plantings.

Dealing with damaged leaves

Lenore's photos look wonderfully rich and green compared to how the summer heat, and lack of rainfall, has left gardens in parts of the UK parched. The current heatwave has forced me indoors, and into an early writing of this newsletter. Not only does it stress us, it will stress your hostas too.

Their leaves have been busy feeding the plant since they emerged in April and by now are showing signs of exhaustion. Hostas do not like it too hot and sultry, they are not tropical plants so expect them to look a little sorry for themselves in such conditions.

This year I have had to remove exhausted leaves before the end of

July as they have effectively stopped serving the plant. You do not have to remove the whole leaf to tidy up a plant, you can cut away the damaged area, which is something I do regularly at this

paths will ultimately create much more shade and allow many of the cultivars to develop richer colours. Ground grown planting does mean the hostas can drive their roots down for moisture and create the kind of root structure that enables them to cope with sunnier aspects. It reminded me of when we moved one of our collection tunnels and how surprised we were that the plants generally coped really well with being fully exposed to the sun. This is encouraging for when we start planting collection plants into the arboretum as they will have to grow initially with little shade until the tree canopies develop.



It was inspiring to visit an established garden and see how it acts as a framework for development and expansion. There is such a lot of work involved in even the smallest garden but the rewards are so worth the effort. If you would like to visit, why not tie it into the inaugural Plant Fair to be held in the grounds on **Saturday 24th September**. Tickets will include entry to the gardens - keep an eye on the [Somerleyton Hall events page](#) for more details nearer the time.

As a final thought this month, why not take a trip around your garden and gather photographs of all your plants. Create a folder so you can find them easily and use this as the perfect aide memoir when out on plant hunting trips. I recently had a visitor to the nursery who has done just that and he said he uses it so much and is really pleased he took the time to create it.

Hope you are enjoying all the colours of summer,
Team Mickfield Hostas

time of year alongside dead-heading. It helps improve the overall look of your plant and stops you focusing on the imperfections. Removing spent foliage encourages the generation of new leaf, which can last well into the autumn looking fresh and beautiful.

Coming up...

Continuing the theme of inspiring gardens to visit, the RHS gardens at Hyde Hall will be hosting their summer show in a few days. It is an excellent chance to visit the gardens and indulge in some retail therapy with the many specialist nurseries and horticultural sundries exhibitors who will be attending the 5-day event. **The RHS has banned the use of plastic bags at their events so remember to bring your shopping bags with you.**

RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show

3-7 August 2022

Drop by and see us at the show for lots of lovely hostas.

[Visit the event website](#)

Norfolk Hardy Plant Society

Autumn Plant Fair at Hethersett,
Norfolk

28th August 2022

NORFOLK PLANT HERITAGE
Reg. Charity No. 1004009
PLANT FAIR
Sunday May 1st 2022
Hethersett Village Hall NR9 3JJ
10am - 1pm
specialist nurseries choice plants displays
refreshments plant doctor tombola
Focus on Woodland Iris
Entrance £1 - free to members
www.norfolkplantheritage.org.uk