



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Hosta 'Niagara Falls'

This month we thought we would focus on Mel's absolute favourite [*H.* 'Niagara Falls'](#).

In our experience, this cultivar grows much better in the ground than in a pot. However, growing this cultivar in a pot does allow the leaves to cascade downward beyond the crown of the plant, creating a highly architectural display. Olga Petryszyn was looking for a giant variety that had deep veining and a rippled margin, so she bred [*H.* 'Niagara Falls'](#) from [*H. montana* f. *macrophylla*](#) and *H.* 'Sea Drift'. The latter variety we do not currently hold in our collection. It took several years before she was happy that the cultivar was stable and giving her the characteristics she was looking for. Olga found that once rippled edges are created they prove to be a too strong a characteristic to breed out so she needed to use flat leaf-edged parents to produce non-rippled offspring.

It is fascinating to read about the efforts of breeders in developing the genus and is something most hosta-holics enjoy delving into, and they are often inspired to have a go at hybridising themselves - if only we had the time!

Garden project development

As promised last month, here is the latest on our garden project.

Understandably, the physical development of the garden has not progressed recently due to the weather and ground conditions but it does give us the opportunity to plan.



[*Hosta* 'Niagara Falls'](#)

If you do decide to plant this cultivar in the ground, pop it in an elevated spot, or just mound the soil, to avoid the leaves grazing the ground.

Watch this cultivar develop its fabulous characteristics, and a 'wow' feature is guaranteed.

Planning the layout

Research into the natural environments of the various

Garden concept

The main idea behind the development of the reservoir garden is to sculpt the physical shape into areas where we can more closely replicate their natural growing conditions. Creating different environments for the various branches of the genus to flourish in might enable them to develop their characteristics to a fuller potential than simply growing them in containers in rows.

Although the effect of rows of containerised plants is impressive to see many suffer from being a little overcrowded, or swamped by more aggressive varieties they may be positioned alongside, in order for us to better manage the large number we have in the collection. We keep constructing more space to display them but, because many really do better in the ground, what we really need is for them to show us what space they actually need more naturally.

We will continue to add more detail as we work on it, meanwhile you can visit the [project page](#).

Here's hoping spring is not too far away for us to resume work on this exciting project.

Team Mickfield Hostas

different species has highlighted the huge range of environments Hosta have been found growing in, from the rim of a volcano, to alpine meadows. Some environments might prove a little challenging to replicate in the gently undulating countryside of Suffolk but the reservoir does present us with a rather exaggerated landscape we can carve up to help get somewhere close, although the rim of a volcano might prove a step too far.

Click on the image below to view the draft layout

