



Before and afters...

Following on from the last newsletter, Lenore shares her approach to designing garden spaces with some lovely results, and we report on our website updates ahead of the new season.

While we are very much in the 'before' state with our plans, we are progressing well with our project. We reveal the latest news further down the newsletter, including a short video...



Greetings Gardeners,

In the January newsletter, Melanie described beautifully the process of garden design. Her recommendations resonated with me, from encouraging trial and error to considering favorite colors, shapes, and spaces. Likely she inspired you to think about your own garden design.

Design is a crucial part of gardening. It's the creative aspect, the fun part! Designing with hostas is particularly enjoyable, as their overall similarity creates peacefulness

Website updates

How timely, if Lenore's article is making you think about hostas to purchase in 2022. I have just completed the annual website update with details of the cultivars we will have for sale and the plant fairs, shows and nursery open days for the new season.

As so many people now use the Internet to purchase I have created a sub-section of the site which lists only the cultivars we have available for sale. You can access this area by clicking on the image below - or go into the 'Collection: A-Z' page.



while their differences in colors, textures, sizes and shapes create variety and excitement. During this time of year we may be placing orders for new hostas and planning for new planting space. It can be challenging to plan and arrange an entirely new hosta bed. I'll share with you a method that I use.

Once I have decided on the location and size of a new bed, I measure it carefully and transfer the measurements to graph paper, with one square on the paper equal to one square foot. I draw a circle for each selected hosta onto the graph paper. I try to incorporate a few mature transplants along with my new hostas, to give the bed a more finished appearance while I wait for the newbies to grow. In a large bed, there may be many decisions to make regarding locating each hosta. I sometimes sketch each hosta with colored pencils, approximating the shape and color of each. I cut them out and move them into different positions on the graph paper until I find the design I like best. I then take my tape measure to the garden bed. Of course, I may spontaneously change the plan as desired during the planting process!



The photo above shows my plan for a garden bed planted several years ago. The Stillwater River floods the lower part of my property every spring. I planned this garden to begin just at the level where the floodwater tends to stop. Existing features are large rocks, a small creek, two Green Ash trees, and a side hill. I also planned for a small patio in one portion of the garden, and various stepping stones. I planted the bed mostly consistently with the plan. (The photo at the start of Lenore's article shows the finished area and the photo below shows [H. 'Sum and Substance'](#) and [H. 'Winter Snow'](#), among others maturing there)

I can understand how it might be frustrating to scroll through the collection pages and see so many listed as unavailable. However, many of them are actually available but is such limited numbers I would have to keep update the website daily throughout the season. Therefore, if we fall below 6 of anything I remove it as available.

We produced our website to support folks who had already purchased hostas and wanted a resource they could return to for more information. This is why the emphasis of the website will continue to be the plants and not a web shop. Of course, the best way to engage with our collection is to visit it but that isn't always possible. Our calendar is busy again this coming season - click on the image below to view:

| 2022 | Wed | Thu | Week | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun | Show / event |
|-----------|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Warren Open Weekend |
| April | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | Rodgers Plant Fair, Rodgers and Lopkin Fall |
| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | Warren Open Weekend |
| May | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | Warren Open Weekend |
| June | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | Warren Open Weekend |
| July | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | Warren Open Weekend |
| August | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | Warren Open Weekend |
| September | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | Warren Open Weekend |
| | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Warren Open Weekend |

This year we have made the decision to open fewer weekends. Work to create the arboretum and garden will continue throughout the year and we need to be able to devote more time to this. It is a difficult balancing act but do not worry if you cannot make our Open Weekends as we do have capacity to take visits by appointment - all the details are on the website.

Removing the 'big boy' poplar
An important element of the work



Good luck to you in your planning, ordering, and dreaming. Before long we'll be outdoors enjoying our beautiful hostas!

All the best,
Lenore



Land clearance progress

Work to clear all the poplars at the nursery has continued apace whilst the weather has been good (for us in Suffolk anyway).

We have become quite adept at felling a tree, cutting it up, stacking and clearing before felling the next tree. This is essential as the trees are large with a lot of branches. It would become a huge tangled mess if we felled several at a time before clearing.

The trees have been showing their age with many very brittle branches and dead/dying cores.

We have even had a few days when we could burn at the same time, which has been good to keep us warm on the coldest days.

The photo above shows the remnants of two enormous stacks of bramble, blackthorn and poplar twigs.



we are currently doing work was the removal of the large poplar in the centre of the nursery.

This tree was slightly younger than the ones lining the north field but grew exceptionally large due to being close to a boggy patch of ground. The telephone cable was attached to it and all the trees and shrubs nearby struggled to get sufficient water.

Before...



During...



Adam and his team made short work of it all. Chris, the 'climber' had a face full of icy winds and sleet at one point but they managed to cut the tree down with limited damage to the surrounding plants. It was a specialist piece of work due to the

It hasn't all been demolition during January.

We have covered the last of the three stock tunnels, see photo above, and Roy is now working on the front and rear end sections to stop them turning into wind tunnels! The top sections will be left open to allow the dissipation of heat and pollinators to get in and out. It's amazing how large they look without the polythene and how much neater.

Fencing and windbreak

We have also managed to erect the first 100m section of fencing at the rear of the tunnels. I have just finished planting the windbreak trees so the wire netting and middle rail can go up to complete it. We are now one sixth of the way through this job!

You can get a sunny glimpse of the fencing in the progress video - click on the film image opposite.

I am looking forward to when I can start creating planting plans for the north field because that's the exciting bit. I have temporarily sated my desire to plant with the windbreak trees along the fence and soon the season will be underway so I will need to prioritise the hostas again.

Next month we will be looking forward to the new season. It doesn't feel like five minutes since the end of the 2021 season, which is probably because we have been able to continue working throughout the winter so far.

Let's hope that continues.

Team Mickfield Hostas

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proximity of the tunnels, packing shed and office.

After...



Analysis

Of course, a vital part of all tree felling is a deep analysis of the process, and hairy moments, over a cuppa.



Progress video

Click on the image below to watch a short video of progress on the north field:

