

January 2021



Welcome to 2021

We kick off our newsletters this year with a look at what we will have available for sale and our plans for plant fairs and nursery opening with our fingers crossed for a great gardening year...

Firstly we want to bring you up to date with changes we have faced over 2020 both as an individual nursery, and as part of the UK horticulture industry.

Changes to import/export of plant material

Horticulture is not a well-funded, or financially blessed industry, in the UK. The introduction of tighter controls over the import and export of plants, which kicked in at the end of 2020 will hopefully enable UK growers to become more competitive in our own market. Hopefully these controls will stem the tide of dodgy plants being sold in the UK and help us keep our plant stocks disease free.

From now on all plant passports will be called UK Plant Passports and will no longer be valid beyond our borders. More information on importing plants into the UK can be found on the [Government website](#).

How this will impact us

Because we are a small specialist retail nursery, the cost of certifying every order for export has meant us deciding to no longer offer this service. We would like to thank all our customers overseas for their patronage over the years and we are sorry to have to make this decision. However, we would need to raise our prices across the board to subsidise overseas orders and we cannot afford to do this to our predominantly UK customer base.

Price rises

Over the past decade we have kept our prices largely frozen, which means our plant prices have fallen quite a lot in real terms. We decided that it is ridiculous that our base price for



Seeing is believing

We use over 44 years of experience to inform customers of whether a plant is a good buy. Obviously new varieties will need to be grown to maturity for us to be able to judge their worthiness but we can make an assessment based on the branch of the genus the plant originates, combined with the expected characteristics.

Very often immature hostas don't exhibit their full potential, but that can be said about all growing things. Don't worry if a characteristic doesn't quite look as expected as it will develop over time. Leaf and stem colours are usually evident from the start but characteristics such as rippled margins and rugosity often take time to develop. The most important thing is a great root system. Although we will no longer be

post and packaging is higher than our cheapest plants. As a consequence we have raised all our £5 plants to £6. As a counter-balance, we have dropped quite a few prices because some varieties are easier to grow, and we are able to keep pace with demand through propagation. Those cultivars with plant breeders' rights (PBR), have had to remain the same, or rise in price, to cover our costs of buying in stock.

As ever, we will be as fair as possible with our pricing policy to accurately reflect the costs we face in order to bring you the best possible plants for your gardens.



Division of mature plants

You may have noticed two prices quoted for some varieties. This is where we have been able to divide mature plants and can offer a division, which has fully matured characteristics, alongside immature, but garden-ready, plants. In the past we have done this on an individual basis of someone wanting a division of a specific cultivar, not otherwise readily available. We operate a wish list for customers after something specific from our collection.

During 2020 Roy started on the large and giant varieties, mostly older cultivars we have had since the beginning of our collection back in the late 1970s. He mainly focused on those still in 35 litre pots, which have become rather heavy to move about. He was able to take divisions and offer quite a few varieties for sale either for the first time in years, or as a more mature option. The balance of the large and giant varieties will need to go up at least one pot size, which may theoretically make the job easier. Mel focused on dividing the miniature cultivars and doubling up many small varieties, which were crammed into single pots. She divided quite a few and was able to add these to the sales list.

at large flower shows, we will be able to open our nursery so visitors can see the whole National Collection rather than a small selection at a show.



Red Stems

One of the most popular developments with hostas in recent years is the breeding of varieties with more red/purple in the stems and into the leaves. We still find the more red that goes into the leaf, the less we like it. However, strong stem colour can add another dimension to a plant, especially when grown in a container - see [H. 'Totally Twisted'](#), above.

[H. 'Volcano Island'](#) is one of the best variegated, red-stemmed cultivars, to be introduced in recent years and last year we offered [H. 'Purple Heart'](#) for the first time - a stunning grower.

We have divided our parent plants of [H. 'Miss Susie'](#), which has great leaf colour and texture on top of very red stems - a great combination.

We will be re-introducing [H. 'Cherry Berry'](#) after quite a long absence and lots of others with varying degrees of red stem.



Newly available

Visitors to the nursery have

The decision to stop attending large flower shows will allow us to develop this aspect of our service as we will have more time to do the necessary work. This is something we have wanted to do in a more concerted way for many years. It is also an essential aspect of maintaining a healthy and vibrant National Collection.

Database updates

During 2020 Mel captured new images for over 800 cultivars in the collection which she is using to update the website. At the same time she is cross-referencing each variety with their registered details on the [American Hosta Society Register](#).

Updating our own records, the website, Plant Finder and Persephone (the Plant Heritage database) is taking a while as so many varieties have had their dimensions updated since this was last done. Mel is hoping to complete this by the end of January.

We will be re-classifying our collection with the results which will mean quite a bit of movement between tunnels but, as visitors to the nursery will know, there are some cultivars quite clearly in the wrong place. All this takes time and is a work in progress, but it does make for an interesting visit.



New and re-introduced cultivars for 2021

We always listen to customers and undertake our own analysis of popular varieties to inform our stock buying and propagation activities ever year and this year was no different.

What we have done is to focus on covering as many different characteristics as possible with the best cultivars we feel give the best performance. This has meant us buying stocks of some varieties we haven't had for a while as micro-propagation techniques have improved over time, resulting in stronger versions of the originals.

[Our availability list](#)

Once again we have only listed varieties we have in

been wowed by several of our newer medium/large varieties in the first Collection Tunnel, so we are delighted to be able to offer the following for the first time:

[H. 'Amalia'](#); [H. 'Bridal Falls'](#) and [H. 'Orion's Belt'](#).

We will also have limited number of miniature cultivars, newly available as a result of Mel's division work, such as: [H. 'Rheingold'](#); [H. 'Cody'](#) and [H. 'Tears of Joy'](#).

We did introduce many of the cultivars last season together with new stocks of older favourites such as [H. 'Surprised by Joy'](#) and [H. 'Cookie Crumbs'](#).



Yellow/gold cultivars

We were able to offer this stunning yellow cultivar, [H. 'Dancing Queen'](#) in 2019, for the first time in a few years, and promptly sold most of it at Malvern Spring Festival as it was so eye-catching. The colour fades to lime during the season but maintains the beautiful lustre of the leaf.

The last few years have seen more demand for yellow and gold-leaf varieties so we are pleased to be offering cultivars from giants such as [H. 'Key West'](#), to miniatures such as [H. 'Dragon Tails'](#) and [H. 'Miss Susie'](#), which has great texture, colour and red stems.

sufficient stock to sell without the need to constantly revise availability. It is always worth asking if a variety you want is not listed as we have a couple of hundred cultivars with less than six for sale.

Visitors to the nursery will always find more available as this is the front line of our operation and will continue to be. Although the Internet is a great selling tool, nothing beats seeing the product in real life.

We have highlighted some of the more popular cultivars we will have available, alongside some we will have for the first time. There is so much more than we could hope to list here, so why not get a drink and a comfy corner to browse our website.



Event Calendar

Being positive has been quite problematic during 2020, with so many aspects of our lives we have taken for granted, removed or at least severely curtailed. Events and shows have had to be cancelled, although we were able to attend two plant fairs in September, which were great fun.

We hope our [2021 calendar](#) will become more populated over the coming months as events are confirmed. At the moment we would like to open long weekends throughout May, June and July and all other times by appointment. Keep an eye on our website for the latest information.

For those of us lucky to have our own green spaces it has been an opportunity for us to develop them and when nurseries were able to begin trading again, the great British public supported us brilliantly.

For many people, gardening came as a new challenge. We fervently hope those new to the hobby found it a rewarding pastime and something that will stick when all this is a memory.



Wunderbar

We started selling this cultivar last year - an absolutely stunning sport of [H. 'Empress Wu'](#), which is proving an excellent grower - we have one outside the back door of the bungalow and it was still producing new growth into November.

We have introduced [H. 'Wu La La'](#) into the collection this year, so new we haven't got any photos yet! It is very similar to [H. 'Wunderbar'](#) and so we will see if it is as strong a grower.



Large and giant cultivars

Roy's re-potting programme produced lots of great divisions of some of the older varieties of hosta - many of which are really hard to beat even by some of the modern cultivars. We have also bought in a number of PBR plants to augment our large and giant variety stock. In 2021 we will have some of the best:

[H. 'Big Daddy'](#); [H. 'Empress Wu'](#); [H. 'Frances Williams'](#); [H. 'Krossa Regal'](#); [H. 'Liberty'](#); [H. 'Patriot'](#); [H. 'Paul's Glory'](#) (above)

We are also able to re-introduce several of what we consider to

Finally, we apologise to those of you looking forward to reading my interview with Liz Burroughs. Unfortunately, we were not able to do this in time for this issue, so are holding it over in the hope that we can bring it to you in February.

In the meantime, we hope you all remain safe and well.

Team Mickfield Hostas

be modern classics such as : [H. 'Brother Stefan'](#); [H. 'Forbidden Fruit'](#); [H. 'Orange Marmalade'](#); [H. 'Beyond Glory'](#) and [H. 'Old Glory'](#), which really came into its own as part of the [Rubber Rockery](#), growing really well and topped with large flowers.

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