



Life at the nursery

This year Robin and Yvonne have been holding the fort at the nursery whilst Roy and Melanie do the shows. This means the nursery has been open every day, and lots of you have taken advantage of this to come and visit...

Collection reorganisation

This was always going to be a huge job now, that the collection contains over 2,000 different varieties. However, we are making steady progress, now that Robin has completed the new collection tunnel sufficiently to move plants across. Visitors have been able to see the scale of the task at first hand, though we haven't been able to tempt anyone into some voluntary work as yet...



The tunnel is constructed totally above ground using a steel framework anchored into concrete blocks. The framework is integral to the bench design, which will also help to anchor the construction once loaded with plants.



As you can see in the photographs above, currently a single layer of horticultural net wraps the sides and top of the tunnel, with a second layer temporarily laid over the top. This will be replaced later on in the season with a second cover made to fit. The original collection tunnel badly needs some maintenance, which will be much easier if we can free up some space! Alongside the move we are also undertaking a reorganisation of the plants according to size. This has complicated matters but it makes sense to do this at the same time, especially as the plants are currently indicating what their mature size should be.

Originally we had planned to construct the new tunnel on the north field of the nursery, large enough to take the entire collection. However, we decided it would be better if we built a slightly smaller tunnel and co-located it with the original. This gives us the flexibility of two tunnels, and avoids creating a divide between the sales tunnels and collection.

Our season so far...

We are really chuffed to report that our show displays achieved Gold Awards, at the **Malvern Spring Flower Show** and **Gardeners' World Live** - click on images to view:



The new collection tunnel creates a natural barrier between the orchard and the south field, which we plan to landscape, and turn into a hosta exhibition garden. This should make it much easier for visitors to navigate the various elements of the nursery, and hopefully encourage even more of you to visit us.



Robin has been mowing pathways through the south field, trying to avoid the colonies of pyramidal and bee orchids, which have naturalised in the field. We have also found some other plants we are currently trying to identify. Our plans may need to include some 'wild' areas, which we will leave largely uncultivated.



Visitors to the nursery share our excitement over plans for the exhibition garden and are enjoying the chance to see the area before we set to work on landscaping. It is surprising to see how the trees have established, and grown so well, despite suffering two years of very little rain. We have included some photographs of the field as it is now (click on the images to view) - just imagine it complete with mature hostas - wonderful!



Roy and David just manage to see over the top of the giant varieties on the sales table. Mel stayed by the miniatures - wonder why?

Suffolk Show

The show season has been beset by weather problems this year, not just restricting the range of plants we can draw on for display purposes, but actually disrupting shows. This year we exhibited at the Suffolk Show for the first time. Our display received a Gold Medal and Day 1 was very promising. However, the weather took a turn for the worse and the show was cancelled on Day 2. It was a huge disappointment for all those involved but the best decision in the circumstances. Gale force winds made for a nerve-racking experience whilst clearing our exhibit from the Floral Marquee.

The weather has badly affected other events too and we all saw what it can do to dampen spirits during the Jubilee weekend. We suspected that once the rain it started it would struggle to stop. Every cloud has a silver lining - at least our hosepipe ban has been lifted!

Next month: We feature h. 'Invincible', another fragrant flowered favourite

The advice and opinions contained within this monthly newsletter have been formed over more than 35 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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