

July 2022



Celebrating the arrival of the flowers

This month we continuing with last month's format and sharing photographs of hosta flowers as they emerge - the shapes and forms are as varied as the cultivars themselves...



Hostas in mid-season

Hosta flowers are fleeting in comparison to the wonderful foliage that lasts for months.

This is the time of year when some early risers are showing signs of fatigue as many leaves have been actively processing the sun's rays, water and nutrient since April. It is not surprising that some are getting scorched more easily, and are developing brown areas where perhaps the leaf cells were a little damaged by late frosts. We had two frosts right at the end of May. Although they were not deep, penetrating frosts, it was enough to do some damage and to perhaps pucker softer leaves.

Hostas are great plants for the length of season you get but don't forget they do not really care for heat and humidity and an excess of such conditions does exhaust them. They can develop what looks a little like bruising to areas of the leaves, which then turn brown. If your hostas are in pots you can relocate them to a cooler part of the garden, if the weather turns hot and humid for a period of time. This will help keep them looking good for longer.

Remove tatty old leaves

Don't be surprised when your leaves start to look less

A side column of images

I admit to wandering all over the place taking these photos, and many were taken without consultation to the cultivar they belonged to. These images capture just some of the different forms and colours you can get with hosta flowers:



than perfect, you can always remove tatty ones to encourage the production of fresh foliage. Indeed, many small and miniature varieties would benefit from the removal of older leaves to do just this. Don't completely denude your plant of all the leaves, just the older ones will do for now. You can keep this process up for another couple of months as new leaves will continue to be produced until around September.

Hosta 'Amy Elizabeth'

All hostas flower but some are more prolific than others. This set me thinking about an old favourite of Robin's, [H. 'Amy Elizabeth'](#), see the photograph at the start of the newsletter. Many years ago he planted up a bonsai pot with this cultivar and found that it not only kept the leaf size greatly reduced, the flower spikes and flowers were also bonsaied so the whole thing looked like a miniature of the original. You can see more about this in the [July 2008 newsletter](#).

Hosta 'Amy Elizabeth' comes from the branch of the genus originating from [H. 'Gold Drop'](#). This is a great little sub-set of the genus and most of the cultivars are extremely prolific flower producers. You can wander through the tunnels and see the relationship, especially in the sales stock. The flowers are dainty and top off the leaves in an adorable way. This particular small cultivar develops its colour as the season progresses. It starts out looking like its parent and then develops the fine blue-green margins. These margins are more pronounced on fresh leaves later in the season and rather nicely outlines their shape and form - delicate and beautiful - see below.



Leaf colour changes

As we approach the mid-season point for hostas, some are starting to change colour and, in some instances, leaf

Buds just beginning to open



Poking through the leaves



Elegantly layered flower



shape too. A particularly curious cultivar is [H. 'Captain's Adventure'](#), which starts the season looking similar to its parent, [H. 'Captain Kirk'](#). By now the leaves will have changed colour and the started to curl upwards from the midrib of the leaf. Ultimately the leaf becomes very different in the latter part of the season and much more striking. The variegation looks painted and is rather wonderful. It certainly makes a talking point if shown off in a container. There is a swathe of hosta cultivars, which start the season very bright and then turn green, either across the whole leaf or perhaps only in the white or cream areas. Some varieties become brighter or develop their variegation into late summer, so bear this in mind if you want the colours you start the season with to continue. Ask your supplier as they should be able to let you know what happens.

The photograph below is of [H. 'Blue Vision'](#)



At the nursery

Roy has just finished creating new front to Tunnel 2, which incorporates a sliding door. This is a fabulous upgrade to the old hinged doors and the operation is so smooth you can open it with an elbow or foot if you have your arms full. He is now replicating it on the front of Tunnel 3 and will do the sales tunnel later. We currently have a large pergola spanning the entrance to the sales tunnel to give us somewhere dry to run to when it rains.



Large clusters of flowers



Dramatic flower scapes...



Topped with spiky flowers



The sales tunnel is looking almost as chock full as the collection tunnels these days and it is a bit of a squeeze to get all the sales varieties in there.

Turtle doves

We have been enjoying our resident turtle doves, the male of one pair spends a lot of his days on top of the 'Robinson's Gold' conifer alongside the drive. This is the highest point at the nursery since we had the giant poplar taken down near the packing shed, and he loves to sit up there and sing. He seems to like showing off when visitors come to see us but stayed out of sight and sound when a birding friend came to see him last week – typical.

Don't forget we are open for two long weekends again in July and one long weekend in August to catch him before they leave in September.

On the road

At the time of publishing last month's newsletter we were at the Suffolk Show for the first time since 2019 and it was great to be back. We received the 'Notcutts Salver' for our display, which was a lovely surprise.

June has been a busy month for plant fairs and events and I have been doing lots of talks, many of which had been postponed during the pandemic. It is so good to be able to get out and about as well as welcoming visitors to the nursery. July is less busy which will allow us to get some more propagation and plant care work done before the [RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show](#) at the start of August.



The Great Suffolk Garden Trail

We will be at [Columbine Hall](#) in Stowupland, a village only 5 miles from us, on **Sunday 10th July** when the villagers open up their gardens as part of the Great Garden Trail 2022 in aid of the [St Elizabeth Hospice](#).

Hosta 'Blue Monday'



Hosta 'Toy Soldier'



More beautiful trumpets



Spidery flower forms



It would be great to have lots of support for the event and raise lots of money for the charity.

Finally, I only have three varieties in my garden, one of which is supposed to be variegated, [H. 'Titanic'](#). Occasionally it will throw up some very subtle variegation but mostly it looks like a darker version of its parent, [H. 'Sum and Substance'](#). I don't really mind and it still looks fabulous as you can see below:



I hope you have enjoyed the photographs and that you are enjoying your hostas in all their glory.

Happy gardening
Team Mickfield Hostas

Such unusual shapes



The purest white buds...

