

March 2022



What will the 2022 season bring us?

As the new season approaches we have been enjoying the early spring flowers and the promise of things to come with a visit to The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew...



Visit to Kew

The photo above shows a panoramic view from the balcony in the Temperate House - what a fabulous construction and brilliant refurbishment - see also the photo overleaf.

Visiting in February meant we were able to see a lot of the skeleton of Kew. Trees are my first love and it was great to be able to see the shapes and forms of the trees without their canopy of leaves. It was especially interesting looking from above on the tree top walkway, if a little vertigo inducing. The storms had taken a slight toll with a few damaged trees and missing panes of glass but otherwise it looked like Kew had escaped the worse effects of Dudley, Eunice and Franklin.

The Palm House was a delight and we spent a lot of time wallowing in the lushness of everything.

The feature exhibition was in the Princess of Wales Conservatory where there was a display of orchids, many native species from Costa Rica. It was a riot of colour and we spent quite a long time exploring this architectural gem of a glasshouse.

There were lots of snowdrops and crocuses out but there will be much more in a few weeks when the first zesty shoots of foliage start to emerge. I can't wait until we can create a similar experience (on a much smaller scale) in our new arboretum.

Our 2022 calendar

Once again we have a busy season in prospect with lots of plant fairs, a couple of shows and lots of re-booked, and new, talks scheduled.

Given the crowded diary, and our need to continue work on the arboretum and garden we have decided to reduce our opening times down to 10 weekends. This will still enable us to open for 40 days of the season but if you cannot make any of these dates and would still like to visit then please contact us to organise an alternative date.

Our plant fairs, shows and talks will still see us travelling widely throughout East Anglia, so if you live further afield then why not consider a short break to the region. If you would like some ideas of places to visit and stay check out our website.



New and re-introduced varieties for 2022

This year we have focused on having more large and giant varieties for sale because they have been so popular over the past few years.

When we were doing shows it was the smaller cultivars that were the most popular and there seemed to be a widespread notion that large and giant varieties would only be a few foot across. I suspect this may have been as a result of seeing immature plants used in displays. It is difficult to appreciate just how large some hostas can get when you are only relying on written dimensions. Even at the nursery, where all our collection plants are currently container-grown, it is difficult to appreciate just how the plants could mature if given the room to develop. Therefore, although the expected dimensions of a mature hosta can only be considered an approximation, be prepared to give your plant plenty of room. Even some miniature cultivars have a decent spread. Although you can routinely divide plants to restrict the space required, it seems like a lot of hard work when you could select a less vigorous variety for a space, and just let it have its head.

Key plants for 2022

If you like large, textured golds then look out for [H. 'Sutter's Mill'](#). This cultivar turns heads in our collection tunnel for several reasons and we divided one of our parent plants for a special request a few years ago. We have been wanting to get our hands on this one for a while so are pleased to be able to offer it this year.

A plant we added to our collection a few years ago, we can now offer for sale is [H. 'Snow Bunting'](#). This is joined by an all gold sport of [H. 'Wunderbar'](#), called [H. 'Wundergold'](#). If it grows like the rest of the [H. 'Empress Wu'](#) progeny then it will be a stunner. We will also have a new variety called [H. 'Zero Sum'](#). The clue of its parentage is in the name but this offspring of [H. 'Sum and Substance'](#) has deeply glossy rich green leaves.

Not a native plant to East Anglia but I couldn't resist sharing a photo of a **Stag's Horn Palm** - below, isn't it fabulous? You can see it up close in the Princess of Wales Conservatory upper level.



Plant fairs and shows

Regular events are all back in the calendar for 2022, together with a return to [Wootens of Wenhasten](#) in May. Usually this event clashes with the [Norfolk Plant Heritage](#) spring fair at Hethersett but in 2022 it is the following weekend. The event takes place at the iris fields so fingers crossed they are blooming at the same time - it should be a fabulous sight.

At the end of September we have been invited to [Somerleyton Hall](#) for their first autumn plant fair, which is being held in the walled garden.

It will be good to be back at the [Suffolk Show](#) after two years away and we have had our application for [Hyde Hall Flower Show](#) accepted too. These are the only events we do now involving building a display so hopefully I won't be too rusty.

Once again Dibleys are organising a [Virtual Flower Show](#) in April and

This year we will also have stock of some varieties we haven't been able to offer for a few years, including: [H. 'Earth Angel'](#), [H. 'Kiwi Full Monty'](#), [H. montana 'Aureomarginata'](#), [H. 'Frosted Jade'](#) and [H. 'Irish Luck'](#).

This season we are also re-introducing [H. 'Fire and Ice'](#) after declaring we wouldn't recommend it as a strong grower. We are keen to see how they look from our local supplier having been field grown. We are hoping they will have a much stronger root system to enable better development than you would otherwise expect of a cultivar with so much white in the leaf. We are also getting new batches of [H. 'Autumn Frost'](#) and [H. 'First Frost'](#) from the same supplier as we were getting very low in numbers. We will also have [H. 'Sagae'](#) for sale again having sold out for many years. This is a very elegant cultivar, with a more subtle colouring than its more popular offspring, [H. 'Liberty'](#). It makes a great companion for [H. 'Krossa Regal'](#) if you are looking for taller, more upright giants.

Once again we have decided not to stock varieties with more red in the leaves - it's a personal choice as we don't think they look particularly nice and you have to believe in the products you sell. We have also chosen not to buy in stocks of some of the popular miniatures because they do not grow reliably well. Instead we will choose to sell cultivars we are confident grow well for us before offering them for sale.

Once we are able to plant out many of our collection plants we will be able to add more details to the website about how they develop in the ground. We have wanted to do this for so many years and are champing at the bit to start experimenting. We also plan to have more information on flowering but feel this will be more reliable when the plants are outside of the shelter of netted tunnels.

Don't forget you can pre-order plants for delivery in the spring. You can also arrange to collect orders from the nursery, or from an event we are attending.

Finally, three heads are always better than one:



we are taking part. This is a two-day event packed with all sorts of content to help get you in the mood for the season ahead - why not register and sample the delights offered by many of the show scene regulars.

We are delighted that the Plant Fair at [Moggerhanger Park](#) will be back in June. Held in the walled garden, this is the furthest west we travel with our plant fairs these days. Once again we will be attending most of the plant fairs we have been going to in recent years - [click here](#) to see the full calendar and open weekend dates.

Key plants for 2022

Just to whet your appetite here are a few of the plants we will have either newly available or re-introduced this year:

Hosta 'Snow Bunting'



Hosta 'Irish Luck'



Hosta 'Kiwi Full Monty'



I loved this bronze in the gardens at Kew, it uses oak leaf impressions to create texture and form the cut-outs which make it look like the head is emerging from the foliage - what a dramatic piece. I couldn't decide which photo to use so put the three together so you can see it from different angles.

Hosta 'Frosted Jade'



Next month I plan to devote the whole newsletter to the subject of dividing hostas.

Team Mickfield Hostas

Hosta montana 'Aureomarginata'



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