



Finding connections

When I first thought about creating this series, I jotted down a list of hostas that immediately sprung to mind as being great growers, from my own experience. I then looked at the list and started to group the hostas into themes for upcoming newsletters, a bit of forward planning as I was stuck in the office...



Serendipity isn't just the name of a hosta...

Then early this month Lenore suggested featuring [H. 'Luna Moth'](#) (above) as a great grower for the March issue of the newsletter, and I was more than happy to use that as my starting point.

My list of hostas features a lot of varieties as thankfully so many hostas are fantastic growers, but there were three cultivars I wanted to feature at some point; *H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'*, *H. 'Goldrush'* and *H. 'Patricia'*, without an obvious link other than they are all a similar habit, shape and size. Last month vase-shaped hostas was the theme but these varieties are rather typically 'hosta' shaped, so nothing unusual there. Then I did my usual next step and looked into their parentage to find they are actually all related, and, as luck would have it, so is *H. 'Luna Moth'*, a serendipitous start.

Interestingly, they originate from an unpromising sport of *H. 'Frances Williams'*, called *H. 'Sunlight'* and so I delved a little deeper and the results are in the side column, as I thought you might find it interesting too.

I have created a family tree of the featured cultivars below, so you can see more clearly how they relate:

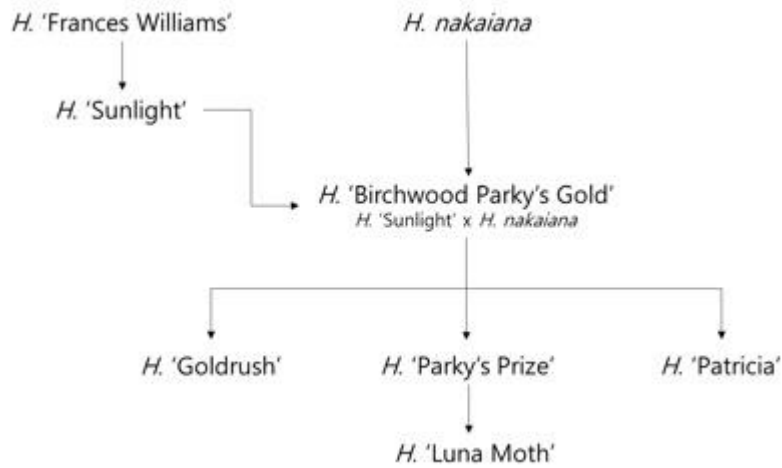
Good parentage

It doesn't always follow that a great grower will produce great sports, and vice versa.

[*Hosta 'Sunlight'*](#)

In our experience, *H. 'Sunlight'* is not a great grower but it has tremendous pedigree being a sport of [*H. 'Frances Williams'*](#), one of the greatest hostas to come out of the [*H. sieboldiana*](#) '[*Elegans*](#)' branch of the genus, with a wealth of offspring demonstrating its use in breeding.

Hosta 'Sunlight' probably lacks sufficient chlorophyll to make it



I'll cover off the four featured cultivars in order of when we added them to our National Collection.

[Hosta 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'](#)



This was a very early addition to our collection back in 1987, sourced from Peter and Jean Ruh, Cleveland, Ohio. It has beautiful heart-shaped 5" x 4" matt yellow leaves with prominent veins. It grows around 17" tall by 47" in diameter, with a dense mass of foliage and the lavender flowers poke up between the leaves on relatively short scapes. It is a treasure when used as a foil for other planting but is equally as lovely sitting as a specimen in at pot on its own.

[Hosta 'Goldrush'](#)

We added this cultivar to our collection back in 2004 as part of a consignment from Paradise Hostas in the Netherlands. It's a great grower, which falls into the small category as it doesn't grow quite as large as its cousins, around 12" x 22" unless it is stretching for more light. In these situations it can grow larger. We often found it got larger if we toted a parent plant around to early spring shows where it was deprived of the full spectrum of light at a key part of the season. The dark leaf margins look as though they are outlined in a very pale green, you can just see the effect in the photo below:

a great grower and it is only responsible for two hybrids; [H. 'Birchwood Gold'](#) and [H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'](#).

It is difficult to distinguish between these two hybrids as they are so similar, even when mature, but physically they look quite unlike their parent. They both grow very well, producing dense mounds of rich yellow foliage. The leaves are light in texture, not at all like their parent, which has much thicker leaves. They look as though they have *H. nakaiana* characteristics but the parentage of both is described as unknown on the Hosta Register. However, the Hosta Library states that *H. nakaiana* is the pollen parent of *H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'*. What do you think?

[H. nakaiana](#)



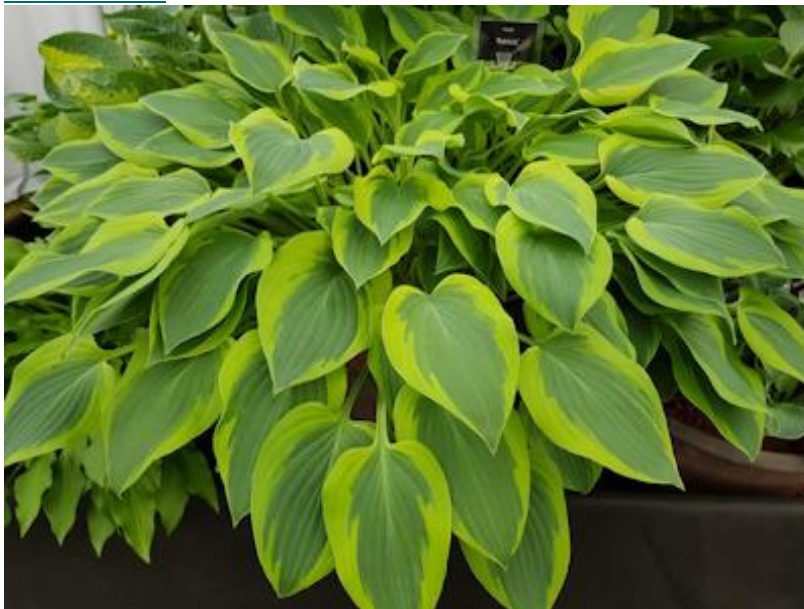
I am tempted to agree, and it makes perfect sense as this is a particularly good species for breeding very leafy offspring. The featured cultivars are all very generously leafy, which give dense mounds of colour, and is good news if you are a flower arranger!

The leaves are also very neat and even sized around the plant mound. The flowers are carried on shorter scapes, which look lovely as they start to peak through the foliage.



The 5" x 3" heart-shaped leaves are neat and tidy like its cousins and the pale lavender flowers are on short scapes too – delightful.

Hosta 'Patricia'



This sport of H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold' looks very much like H. 'Parky's Prize' in colouring, and was added to our National Collection at the same time as H. 'Goldrush'. It is registered as being a smaller plant than it actually grows, in the UK anyway. In size it is much closer to its parent and grows extremely well. The photo above shows it at the last Suffolk Show I did back in 2023, looking glorious. I do not usually sell very much of this variety so I was surprised when I sold out and had to bring more in for the following day.

Hosta 'Luna Moth'

We added this little beauty to our National Collection in 2015, again from Paradise Hostas. I'll let Lenore explain her love of this cultivar.

Greetings Hosta Gardeners,

Hosta 'Luna Moth' is a very pretty hosta and a truly great grower. Its heart-shaped, slightly cupped leaves have wide limey/gold margins with medium-green centers, mounding into a symmetrical 90 cm clump.

We do not hold all the offspring of H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold' in our collection but we do have:

H. 'Sweet Home Chicago'



This sport is very similar to H. 'Goldrush' in colouring and has leaves of similar size. The plant mound grows slightly larger at 16" x 36" because the leaves are held on longer petioles.

H. 'Roxsanne'



This is a much larger sport of H. 'Birchwood Parky's Gold'. Added to our National Collection in 2004, it looks like a perfect combination of its parent and grandparent. The 20" x 24" mound of yellow leaves are also lutescent like H. 'Sunlight', which means the leaves get brighter as the season progresses, especially in more light. However, the substance of the 8" x 6" leaves less thick, more like its parent.

H. 'Parky's Prize'



Added to our National Collection in 2006, we find this

During mid-summer it produces frosty, pale green scapes with abundant lavender flowers.



The originator of H. 'Luna Moth,' Bill Meyer, found it as a sport of H. 'Parky's Prize,' sometime around 2008. It was later offered for sale and finally registered with the American Hosta Society in 2020.

I planted H. 'Luna Moth' in 2019, at the front of a new, large garden bed, where it receives morning sun and dappled afternoon shade. It began as a small mail-order plant, and quickly filled its three-foot (90 cm) space. Comments from growers consistently reflect this hosta's great growing habit. It is said to be "foolproof," "worry-free," "easy to grow," and "a great selection for beginners."

It's true that H. 'Luna Moth' is a foolproof grower in my garden, and slug-resistant as well. But I grow it because it is attractive and stands out at the front of my garden bed. Visitors to the garden often point to it and say, "What is **that** one?"

Best wishes to all,
Lenore

Thank you for the lovely photos too, Lenore.
We hope you will consider trying these as are hard-working additions to any garden space.
Speak soon,

Team Mickfield Hostas

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cultivar also grows larger than its registered dimensions. It is very much like H. 'Patricia' but with very slightly narrower yellow leaf margins. The main difference is the height of the flower scapes, which can reach over 30" tall.

Complementary planting

All these wonderful cultivars look exceptionally good when planted alongside blue varieties as these tend to bring out the blue hues in their variegation and contrast brilliantly with the golds.

If you would like some suggestions then look on the [search page](#) for blue and blue-green cultivars of medium size.

There are a lot of great growing blue and blue-green cultivars – the trick is identifying the best when so many are excellent growers.

You could just play the name game and go for something that appeals, or take a look at the [June 2015 newsletter](#) which focused on blue cultivars.