

May 2025



## Heaven scent

Some of the first arrivals each spring are the fragrant varieties.

Lenore got in touch to suggest looking at great growing fragrant varieties this month, and as they are among some of the first to emerge, it seems and good time to do so...



## A popular subject

This is a shorter than usual issue as I covered off the key points of fragrant varieties back in June 2023 in [Part 6 of my Identifying Hostas series](#) - it is well worth a revisit, click on the image on the right. I surprised myself how much I covered, which certainly helps when time is tight during the growing season, such as now. Here is Lenore...

### Greetings Hosta Gardeners,

When thinking of fragrant hostas, one of the first that comes to mind is [H. 'Irish Luck'](#). It is a gorgeous hosta, tall and vase-shaped with very glossy, thick, dark green leaves. The leaves have rippled edges and deeply impressed veins. It reaches a size of 45 x 90 cm (18 x 35 inches), with leaves 33 x 19 cm (13 x 7 inches). 'Irish Luck' is an open-pollinated seedling of popular H. 'Invincible', registered in 2007 by Irene La Londe of Naylor Creek Nursery. I believe it is the prettiest green hosta I grow.

'Irish Luck' is a performer in the garden. It emerges early in spring and puts on a show all season. I grow it near the back of a large bed, yet it stands out and gets noticed! Late in the season it produces tall scapes (115 cm, 45 inches) with large, pale lavender, very fragrant flowers.



## Observations

One thing I have noticed over the years is how reluctant [H. plantaginea](#), and its closely



You may recall that we've had a serious deer problem here in Orono, Maine and have now acquired fencing in our garden. During a prior spring, when the deer were particularly destructive, they ate my 'Irish Luck' to the ground. It quickly produced a new, full set of leaves, and then was eaten again. I hoped it would rest and regroup, but it produced another new, full set of leaves! As we struggled with deer deterrents, the deer chewed the new leaves. The poor hosta returned the following year, a bit smaller that year but still very substantial. It is a spectacular hosta, and deserves a spot in every hosta garden.

Happy gardening!  
Lenore

I agree with Lenore, *H. 'Irish Luck'* really is a smashing hosta, and the fragrance of the flowers is beautiful. However, it didn't make my top five for fragrance, which are as follows:

1. [\*Hosta 'Fragrant Bouquet'\*](#): check a [feature newsletter](#) in 2012.
2. [\*Hosta 'Rippled Honey'\*](#)
3. [\*Hosta 'Tea at Betty's'\*](#)
4. [\*Hosta 'Fried Bananas'\*](#)
5. [\*Hosta 'Avocado'\*](#)

Let me just add the caveat that my sense of smell is not finely tuned. Indeed I struggle to detect any fragrance in some of the supposedly fragrant cultivars, so my list is very much those that pack enough punch to stop me in my tracks.

Next month, the best things come in little packages, mini marvels await.  
Speak soon,

Team Mickfield Hostas

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related cousins, are to flowering at the nursery. I suspect they get insufficient light and warmth in our shade tunnels to encourage flowering. As they are night-flowering they really require warmer nights too. The vast majority of the plants in our collection require cool shade for best colour and so the fragrant ones get those conditions too.

I would advise you to grow your fragrant cultivars in lighter, dappled shade. Ideally place them in a spot where they can benefit from radiated warmth overnight. The north side of a wall or fence which gets hot during the day and then gives off heat as it cools down would be good. You can augment the effect by using shingle under the plant or grow them in pots on paving, which also warms up during the day ready to radiate out that stored heat overnight. Patio heaters are also effective but do remember that all this heat will dry your plant out so remember to water more often if your plant is exposed to these conditions.

If you would like to add some fragrant varieties to your collection you can visit our ['search page'](#). There you will find fragrant varieties are listed with an asterisk either side of the name.

Alternatively, we have a page, which lists all the [fragrant varieties](#) in our collection.

Available cultivars are highlighted in purple.