



MICKFIELD HOSTAS

What comes first, the garden design or the garden designer?

Yvonne and Mel took the opportunity to see a film about the garden designer Piet Oudolf, at [Howard's Nurseries](#), and we were left pondering exactly when is a garden design deemed worthy of being considered uniquely of a certain style or 'movement', and who decides this.

When watch the film Piet is at pains to distance himself from the label of garden designer as he considers himself a plant lover first and foremost. He paints a scene using plants he considers important to the emotion, he is trying to achieve, which is what I suspect most gardeners do, without necessarily reflecting upon whether they are attempting to replicate the style of a specific garden designer.

There is little doubt Piet has a distinctive style. If you visit his [website](#) you can see some of the challenges he has taken on, which include the High Line (see side column) and Battery Park gardens in New York. He has also designed a garden area at Wisley.

Piet started with the plants and his love of them is evident throughout. This is something you can clearly see when you visit a flower show and see the nurserymen and women displaying their plants as they like to see them shown, even in such limited spaces and for a limited time. Some exhibitors are either trained designers, or employ trained designers, to create their displays but most of us are amateurs when it comes to design. We all have to start somewhere with our displays and my guess is that we all approach the task in different ways so the results often reflect our own underlying style and our emotional attachment to the plants we are using.

The flower shows are still an excellent place to seek inspiration and ideas for your own gardens so don't worry about design rules, just go with what pleases you and before you know it you will have a design forming that will be



The High Line

This 1.45-mile-long park in New York is an amazing elevated green path that snakes through Manhattan. It was created from a raised section of disused rail track, which was due to be demolished until a team of designers decided to turn it into a park. [Read more](#)



2020 Show Season

uniquely yours. Who knows you may even start a movement!

At the nursery

We are continuing to upgrade our benching system to enable easier watering of plants.

At this time of year the plants are rapidly going dormant and look very untidy. This is a good opportunity to remove dead leaves to avoid the crowns becoming damp over winter. Every year we do this and clean every pot, and the bench underneath. This helps us find any slugs and snails that have decided to over winter among the pots as well as making our annual stock check easier.

This year the job is a bigger one as we are also removing all the plastic and capillary matting that formed the waterproof membrane to the benches. Each bench is very slightly angled from the end of the tunnels to the front. We used to flood the end sections and allow the water to drain the length of each bench through a series of dammed sections. However, climate change has forced us to rethink our watering strategy as we are no longer able to abstract water from our ditches - we simply do not have the rainfall we used to rely upon. The system wasn't perfect and there was always an element of hand watering required because the benches sink over time and the waterproof membrane perished in places. The level of hand watering has increased significantly over recent years until it is almost a full time job in the height of the season. As hosta need to be watered from below for the best root development, we are replacing the dammed sections with trays - see images opposite.

In the collection tunnels we are also busy emptying the water trays and allowing the plants to drain before the frosts get too deep. The only conditions likely to harm a hosta is an extreme of wet or dry. Both extremes can cause irreparable damage to the root system, which is the be avoided if possible, so remember to allow your plants to drain freely over winter and check them periodically to ensure they are not too wet or dry.

Next month we will be featuring a few more of our favourite architectural cultivars ahead of the 2020 season.

Team Mickfield Hostas

We are delighted to have been successful with all our applications again.

Our [Show Calendar](#) has been updated with the shows we have had confirmed, and those we are planning to apply for, together with our nursery open dates.

We will be returning to:

[Malvern Spring Festival](#)

7-10 May

[Gardeners' World Live:](#)

18-21 June

[Hampton Court Palace](#)

[Garden Festival](#)

7-12 July

[Hyde Hall Flower Show](#)

5-9 August

We hope to attend all our usual plant fairs in 2020.



Former plastic lined benches



New watering trays



Removing collection pots from water trays