



# MICKFIELD HOSTAS



## *Autumn signals the start of planning for 2019...*

This year has been such a challenging one weather-wise. Although our sales plants are very much showing how tired the old leaves have become, there is a lot of fresh leaf emerging.

We have done little in the way of propagation so far this year, as we have been watering relentlessly in the tunnels. As a result, a lot of our sales plants are quite generously sized - a purchasing opportunity if you were thinking of visiting before the end of the month, when I expect we will get our sticky fingers back into dividing again.

## **Shows update**

The Hyde Hall Flower Show at the start of August was good for us and our display was awarded 5 flowers, which is equivalent to a Gold Medal. Once again it was interesting to see which varieties stood up well in the searing heat and wind of the Essex climate for the week. The hanging baskets did surprisingly well considering how exposed they were.

We have applied for the major shows we usually attend each year and await the show organisers' decisions. Once we know which applications have been successful we will update our show calendar.



## *A Grand Day Out*

As slaves to the nursery we seldom get the opportunity to see the plants people have bought from us in their lovely gardens so we decided to take Simon Gaches's offer of a visit to [The Bishop's House Gardens](#) in the grounds of the magnificent Norwich Cathedral. Simon Gaches is the curator of this lovely set of gardens and wanted us to see the newly planted Hosta Walk he has designed there. We were delighted to see how well the plants were doing despite the challenging weather conditions this summer and this area will only get better as the plants mature.

**Our National Collection is still looking colourful** and continues to be a real inspiration to visitors. This is the time of year when it really pays to look at more mature *Hosta* in order to make a plant choice, which is something we can only provide limited access to away from the nursery, especially when we do not stage a display at an event. As a consequence we have reluctantly pulled out of the [Inspiration Weekend at Blooms of Bressingham](#), over the 8th and 9th of September, and the [Helmingham Autumn Plant Fair](#) on 16th September. However, if you were planning to go to either of these events and would like to take advantage of visiting us whilst you are in the area, **we will be open on these dates from 10am to 4pm.**

### Nursery update

We have finally reorganised the original Collection Tunnel and have done an audit of all the miniature, small and medium varieties. There is now room for us to add plants of these sizes over the next few years, to swell this part of the collection. The re-erected tunnel is crammed with large and giant varieties and we plan to take out a large number of these for planting in the exhibition garden. This will free up space in that tunnel for expansion. Encouraged by how well the ground grown plants have done this year, we want to trial each of the large and giant varieties in the ground so they can reach their mature dimensions, whilst retaining container-based ones as back up, and for use in flower show displays.

### RHS Hosta AGM Forum

Mel has been involved in the RHS review of Hosta with the Award of Garden Merit over the past year and she attended the round table voting on the short list of *Hosta* varieties being considered, towards the end of August. The short list consisted of existing AGM varieties and any non-AGM plants which received two or more votes from the panellists when the original list of over 2,500 plants was analysed. It was an interesting process and only a handful of plants divided opinion. The results of the voting will be ratified by the RHS and the new AGM list will be issued in 2019 at which point we will update our AGM list accordingly.

The highlight of the day was getting the opportunity to catch up with fellow *Hosta* growers whilst enjoying the

We were very taken with the exotics section along the rear wall of the garden and loved the idea of the walkway to travel its length. It creates a lush and striking jungle in the heart of the city and we went away with lots of ideas for our own garden developments.

The *Zantedescia* were looking particularly fabulous - see below



This Snail Vine was new to us, trailing over the glasshouse at the end of the kitchen garden, this vine has intriguing creamy white bean-shaped flower buds that gently unwrap into flowers, which look like intricate works of art - a charming plant.

The flowers had a very heady fragrance, which is what drew our attention to the vine initially.

delights of June Colley and John Baker's delightful gardens. June and John hold two [National Collections](#) of Hosta and are based in Hampshire. We have mentioned their wonderful collections before but this was the first time Mel had had the chance to see it.



Snail Vine flower

### **Coming up in the next issue...**

We review our 2018 show season and bring you some exciting news of a new feature at the nursery.

Ta ta for now,

**Team Mickfield Hostas**

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