

November 2025



The penultimate newsletter...

After 19 years of publishing a monthly newsletter, I have decided to put my digital pen down.

I didn't think I would be still finding new content after the first few years, let alone going for 19 and so perhaps it is time to call it a day. Next month I will sign off with an attempt to encapsulate the last 19 years – it might be a lengthy one!



Landscaping update

As the photo above shows, we are still battling with clearing the reservoir but, yet again, the weather changed to thwart our plans. The two days we were able to use the digger and dumper were very productive.



We managed to clear out the fallen trees and willow debris from around the sides of the reservoir, and into the water. It still leaves a shallow rooted stretch of willow, which we will need to don waders to reach with the chainsaw and remove.

We managed to get part way into removing more of the bank on this side of the reservoir to drop the level into a step-down:

RHS State of Gardening Report 2025

The RHS has launched the first [report](#) of what it calls "a comprehensive national baseline for gardening across Great Britain and the wider UK."

It makes interesting reading but it doesn't really address a key aspect to the future of gardening in the UK, that of the UK horticulture industry.

The report states that more must be done to address horticultural skills and to better recognise careers in horticulture as valid "green skills pathways" for entrants into the industry yet fails to acknowledge existing practitioners of horticulture. This cohort is ageing fast



This will enable us to get closer to the water in order to clear out the rest of the willow and maintain the plants growing in the water. This is the view of the reservoir from the stepped down area, which shows how many plants have largely colonised the water:



Maintaining some clearance will help encourage more wildlife into using the area and stop the take over of certain more invasive plants. What we want to do is encourage more diversity to an already well used part of the nursery.

Future developments can be seen at the nursery, so please do ask when you visit as we are happy to let you know what we are up to. I do plan to post updates on the website periodically, so keep an eye out.

As winter approaches

For the past 19 years I have covered off over-wintering hostas but this advice can be distilled to three basic rules:

1. Don't let your plants become too wet – ensure pot-based plants are able to drain freely, raise them on bricks if need be.
2. Don't let your plants dry out – you can avoid this risk by keeping your pots outside rather than moving them to a garage or greenhouse and forgetting about them.
3. Remove dead leaves to avoid crown rot – best to wait until the leaves have turned dry and brown and then they should pull away easily. This will maximise their potential to still add nutrient to the plant whilst there is still some colour to enjoy.

Ground grown plants should be fine dealing with the ambient conditions but removal of dead leaves is just as important, as Lenore says in her piece:

and striving to survive in an economy that is dominated by cheap plant imports. The report actually states that “the value of ornamental imports currently stands at £1.5 billion whilst exports sit at £49 million, a 9.2% decrease on 2023.”

This is a really shameful statistic and probably highlights best how the UK horticulture industry has deteriorated over the past decades through lack of support from all stakeholders.

Many horticultural specialists have ceased importing and exporting plants since the tightening of biosecurity measures were introduced.

It was long overdue that more stringent controls were placed on the importing/exporting of plant material but the way in which they have been implemented may come at the cost of biodiversity.

The inability of small growers to pass on these additional costs to customers has weakened their position in competition with large producers, where economies of scale mean they can more readily off-set the costs of these additional measures.

The risk to plant diversity is already being felt as large-scale plant producers will grow/source a range of plants limited to what they consider are their best product lines. Anecdotally we are hearing more

Greetings Hosta Gardeners,

It's a beautiful autumn here in Maine! In Orono, where I live, we're reaching peak leaf season and the colors this year are magnificent. Most of my hostas have turned golden yellow-orange, with leaves still intact and firmly fastened.



After the first hard freeze, the leaves will wilt, and I'll be able to pull them from the hostas to discard in the trash. I never compost hosta leaves, in case of unseen pests or diseases.



In the past we have tried different methods of managing fall hostas. We've left the leaves until spring, which requires picking them up in the spring to keep them out of raked leaves headed for the compost pile. At times we have cut the leaves in the fall, which limits their time to gather nutrients, and also entails cleaning the clippers thoroughly between each hosta. So, we're waiting to pull the leaves after the first hard freeze, hoping we won't have a heavy snow before then.

Happy autumn!

All the best,

Lenore

Thank you Lenore, and what a treat it has been to have your input over the past few years. It has certainly inspired me to continue with the newsletter for longer.

Speak soon

Team Mickfield Hostas

Copyright © Mickfield Hostas 2025, All rights reserved.

customers complaining that they cannot find anything different or unusual at garden centres.

The RHS report also highlights briefly how at least 48,000 cultivated plants are under threat and how efforts of organisation such as Plant Heritage are working to mitigate this level of threat. It fails to acknowledge that many of these threatened plants are likely to be varieties that haven't proven to be garden worthy, for whatever reason. It doesn't necessarily follow that a threatened plant needs saving – it might never prove suitable to grow in our climate, regardless of effects of climate change.

In short, although I think the report is a useful mechanism to monitor the state of gardening in the UK. it would have been much more useful to have rooted it within the UK horticulture industry to enable recommendations to be acted upon in a more holistic way and for a truer picture of the state of UK gardening to be evaluated.

As a last thought:
I know of 5 independent and specialist nurseries within Suffolk that have closed, or plan to, within the year. That is a scary rate of attrition.