



MICKFIELD HOSTAS



Do you like the view?

I know it is a little sad but I am writing this month's newsletter from my Scottish base whilst on holiday.

The image above is the view from the lounge windows of 'Wee Breeze' the holiday let we have rented - it is hard to describe how fabulous the location is and how it proves the saying, if you don't like the weather just wait half an hour. We discovered a gem of a garden on Skye, which we describe in the side column. On our travels we are always keen to see how hosta are used and gather ideas for use at the nursery and it was a delight to stumble across the varieties used to good effect in the castle gardens...

Our National Collection update

We have continued to host visitors to the collection from all corners of the world this year, we never would have thought there were so many dedicated hosta-holics out there. It is always interesting to get visitor perspectives all manner of subjects, not just hosta-related.

This year the plants have excelled themselves in growth and flower production - I don't think we have never seen so much flower. We have made the decision that the collection is still too crammed, despite planting out some of the extra parent plants we have divided from the originals. We are now working on a plan to give them all more space and to perhaps display them differently. However, due to the number of plants we have, this will take time and so it is important we free up some space first.



Dunvegan Castle

Whilst exploring Skye we visited Dunvegan Castle, in the far north of the island.

In the gardens, we found quite a few hosta and despite it being towards the end of the season, they were all showing what brilliantly versatile plants they are in a planting scheme.

The photo above shows a variety cascading down the side of a bridge over a stream. This habit is exhibited by many hosta and creates a lush under story of planting. I couldn't find a label without falling into the stream

Over the past two years we have not added any new varieties to the collection as we have been in a state of reorganisation and, although we are planning yet more changes, we are now in a position to consider adding once again, which is very exciting.

Working with Plant Heritage

This brilliant organisation has had a new lease of life under Chairman Cecilia Bufton, who has managed in a short time to do much to promote the aims of the organisation and steer a more direct path towards achieving these aims.

Cecilia opened the Plant Heritage exhibit at Hampton Court this year and spoke engagingly about her vision for Plant Heritage. Like all organisations, it is really important we move with the times and use every element of modern communications to deliver the messages and get more people engaged with the charitable works.

A very important message is how everyone can play a part, and that you don't need to hold a stupidly large collection like ours to get involved. You can play a significant part by taking on a single plant, become part of a dispersed collection or simply support through membership. Why not check out the [Plant Heritage website](#) to find out more of what goes on both nationally and in your area.

One very important element of holding a National Collection is keeping good records of the plants you have, their provenance and origins. You need to be able to identify when they were added to the collection and be able to record additions and losses, as this comes hand in hand with growing any plant. Once a year we need to produce reports and ensure the relevant databases are updated so that Plant Heritage has accurate records of all the plants protected by their collection holders. It also provides an excellent way to identify plants under threat.

Clare Hogan, editor of the Plant Heritage Journal has written a short piece on Mickfield Hostas receiving the RHS Lindley Award for 2018 in the forthcoming Plant Heritage Journal. This is a great publication, free to members, which highlights the work of the organisation across the UK with really useful

but there are several cultivars it could be.



The photos above (click to view larger) and below show a mound of [Hosta 'Blue Angel'](#) accentuating the bend in a pathway. The bold foliage is the perfect foil for the more delicate foliage of the ferns and trees above it and the blue leaves highlight the dark red bark of the trees in the far background. It is a lovely combination.



Here we have [Hosta 'Fragrant Bouquet'](#) (below) with the vibrant colouring it develops during the season from a more subtle combination of green and cream in the spring. It really lightens up a

articles in all manner of plant-related techniques and cultivation tips.

The Suffolk Group

I am proud to be a part of one of the hardest working groups in the UK with a thriving array of unusual National Collections and activities, including the increasingly successful Plant Fairs held at Helmingham Hall. We attended the autumn event last month and the day was lovely with beautiful weather and lots of visitors. The event attracts both local nurseries and a few from outside East Anglia. If you find yourself in the area at the end of May, or mid September, why not pay a visit - keep an eye on the [Helmingham Hall website](#) for event details.

If you wish to find out more about the Suffolk Group you can visit the [Plant Heritage Suffolk Group website](#) or the [Suffolk Group website](#).

Coming up, we return to featuring different cultivars and aspects of the genus as we cruise through the winter months. If you have any ideas or suggestions of topics you would like us to cover then please get in touch as we want this newsletter to be useful to you all.

Speak soon

Team Mickfield Hostas

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very dark area under quite a dense canopy.



At Dunvegan they have been used in ways we hope to emulate at the nursery, from perching above water features to lining walkways. It was interesting to see well established some of the older varieties were and how some of the cultivars we have struggled with were also not flourishing for others, such as [H. 'Venus'](#).