

## *Niagara College Greenhouse Centre Success Sheet No. 69*

# 'Guacamole': Hosta of the Year (2002)

### Hostas

New hostas are appearing every year, adding to over 5,000 kinds in a wide selection of captivating colour combinations. These popular perennials are noted for their growing ease, long life, and attractive foliage.

### 'Guacamole'

'Guacamole' is a 'Fragrant Bouquet' mutation that has proven to be an outstanding landscape plant, with a fast growth rate even when transplanted into 1- or 2-gallon containers.

It is in the colour group GMYC, meaning that its foliage has green margins with yellow centres. The colour will intensify with more light and continues through the growing season.

The flowers are attractive, medium-sized, funnel-shaped blooms, pale lavender in colour and with reblooming capabilities. Flowering between mid July and August is accompanied by a sweet fragrance

The plants reach 54" by 24", with leaves up to 10" by 8½".

### Care

One of many reasons that hostas are valued is for the varieties that tolerate different lighting conditions. 'Guacamole,' a yellow-centered hosta, must have an hour or two of direct sun each day. Exposed to insufficient light, foliage will stay green or look as if it's attempting to turn yellow.

To reduce water loss, keep the plants watered and put down mulch. Generally, hostas tolerate drought well and are hardy. Fertilizer can be used if plants seem to be yielding poorly. Top dress three or four times a season with water-soluble 20-20-20

fertilizer. Make sure that fertilizer is applied before the middle of August because later application could affect the hardening off of the plants in fall (too much tender young growth). Under fertilizing will result in smaller leaves.

Slugs loves to eat hostas but can be controlled by being picked off in the evening.

### Landscape Uses

'Guacamole' is a larger hosta with unusual foliage and could be used in a background planting to show it off. Other hostas are valued for edging beds, softening corners, and enhancing curves. In addition, hostas as a ground cover are beneficial. The big overlapping leaves create deep shade, so weeds are reduced.

This perennial will do well in containers, an attractive option to add interesting textures to a landscape. Unlike other perennials (such as grasses) that look better in wind, hostas are best in calmer, more sheltered landscapes. High winds can result in leaf and stem damage.

### Dividing

No later than the middle of June, hostas can be divided, just as leaves are poking through, to avoid leaf damage. When two or more shoots appear is the best time. Leaves will grow in proportion to the size of available roots. Plants will develop their root systems before going dormant.

Division is an inexpensive way to create more plants. It's also an opportunity to share with friends and family the rewarding efforts.

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