

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 122

'Paradigm': Hosta of the Year (2007)

Name

Plantain lily, funkia or hosta are some common names referring to the same plant; however, the proper nomenclature is hosta. Hostas are from the *Liliaceae* family, and the genus is *hosta*.

History

Hostas are native to Japan, China and Korea. In the 1700s hostas were imported to Europe, and by the mid 1800s found their way to the United States. Hundreds of species and thousands of cultivars are available to today's gardeners, thanks to hybridization and tissue-culture propagation.

Habit

Hostas are a herbaceous perennial, easy to grow, shade tolerant and relatively soil adaptable. Hostas are grown mostly for their showy foliage and, sometimes, fragrant flowers. They are a low-maintenance and attractive addition to any garden, container or foundation planting around your home. Their huge leaves create lots of shade in the garden bed to reduce weed populations.

Standards

In 1996 the AHGA (American Hosta Growers Association) brought into conception the idea of having a Hosta of the Year. To be chosen, the hosta has to be widely available, grow well in zones 3 to 9, retail for around \$15, and have some unique quality that sets it apart from the others. In 2007, the AHGA members voted 'Paradigm' as Hosta of the Year for exceeding those standards.

Description

'Paradigm' is a sport of 'Abiqua Recluse' and was released in 1999 by Walden West and Charles Purtymun. The parentage is a cross between 'White Vision' and 2004 Hosta of the Year winner 'Sum and Substance.'

'Paradigm' has a large, roughly heart-shaped leaf, with a beautifully corrugated chartreuse to gold center, bordered by a wide, irregular, dark blue-green margin. Each leaf is heavily puckered with a glossy finish. By mid summer a 2-foot spike emerges from the center to reveal white to pale lavender-coloured flowers.

This hosta grows 1½ feet high and about 3 to 4 feet wide. 'Paradigm' grows fast in both warm and cool climates. Not only is it a great performer with its showy foliage, but also it is less likely to have slug and snail problems due to its lineage. However, it would still be wise to put crushed eggshells around the base of the plant for extra protection from these foliage-eating critters. Always remove decaying leaves as well.

Division

Hostas can be divided after a couple of years' growth or when they have reached maximum growing potential. As soon as the new leaf shoots break through the soil in early June, take your garden spade and cut the desired proportion you wish to remove. Fill the void with sandy loam soil. Either replant the divided hosta or give it away as a gift.

Everyone loves a Hosta of the Year!

Wes Rutter, Class of 2008

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