

Enjoying 'Stained Glass'

Background

In 1996 the American Hosta Growers Association began recognizing the Hosta of the Year as a guideline for horticultural professionals and enthusiasts in choosing appropriate plants from the multitude of cultivars introduced every year. 'Stained Glass' was the winner in 2006 on the basis of its showy and long-lasting colour, general vigour and hardiness.

'Stained Glass' is a sport of the 2002 Hosta of the Year cultivar, 'Guacamole.' A sport is a spontaneous and notable variation from the normal growth habit and appearance of the rest of the original plant. If you were impressed by 'Guacamole,' you'd better hold onto your hat when you try 'Stained Glass.'

Characteristics

The plant is fast growing and large: up to 20 inches tall and spreading up to 40 inches wide.

The medium-sized leaves are shiny and brilliantly golden, highlighted by a 2-inch margin of dark green. The leaf veins are prominent, due to their darker yellow colour, and give the leaf the look of a stained-glass window. This wonderful colouration appears well before the leaf attains its maximum size and persists almost until the plant's dormancy.

If the fantastic foliage isn't enough for you, 'Stained Glass' also has large, very fragrant flowers at the end of July to early

August. To top it off, the flowers are nearly white: they will, therefore, beautifully complement their own foliage and virtually any other plant or flower in proximity.

Uses

Like most hostas, 'Stained Glass' is perfect as a groundcover. The large leaves, showing lots of brilliant colour, immediately brighten any shady part of the garden. They will add some light to the east side of a structure or around the base of a large tree.

Unlike most hostas, 'Stained Glass' will also tolerate full sunlight. Its striking foliage looks positively radiant in sunlight, so it can be exposed where everyone can see it.

'Stained Glass' works well as a foundation plant along a southern exposure or as a border planting in a sunny part of a yard. Given the unique leaf colour, 'Stained Glass' also makes a striking accent in a favourite container.

Further reading

An excellent print resource is editor Kathleen Norris Brenzel's *Western Garden Book* (Menlo Park: Sunset Publishing Corporation, 2001).

On the Internet, be sure to check out the AHGA site:

<http://www.hostagrowers.org/ahga_hosta.html>.

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