



got to have it

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For the Love of Hostas

By Lora Keddie

My first love was a Hosta. I had no idea what it was or where I should plant it. All I knew was I had to have it. It was what I call my break through plant, the plant that hypnotizes a new gardener. I found myself leaving the safe land of the annuals department and bravely walking into the unknown territory of botanical names – the perennials department.

Ten years later, I'm still in love with Hostas. Their thick leaves come in hundreds of patterns and colors, ranging in many hues of blue, yellow and green. There are Hostas with large wide leaves that can reach 18" in size, and there are Hostas that have the narrow tiny leaves that make beautiful groundcovers. In spring, spikes of trumpet-shaped flowers either white or shades of lavender appear. Some varieties of Hostas have extremely fragrant blooms. Hostas require shade. They thrive best in rich, moist soils. Slugs are also in love with Hostas. Make sure you regularly bait for slugs, especially right before the Hostas emerge. Their tender young tops are irresistible treats for slugs.

I would love to have one of each, but with the limited amount of shade space like I have, you have to make choices. Here are my top "Got To Have" Hostas.



Sum & Substance

Appropriately named, this giant Hosta is huge. The heavily veined, very round glowing chartreuse yellow leaves are around 18 inches across. The mature plant will take up about five feet of space. It blooms pale lavender flowers in mid to late summer. Some morning sun will enhance its color.



Stiletto

My favorite little lady, this Hosta has very rippled, lance shaped satiny green leaves with creamy gold margins. One of the smallest Hostas, it is perfect for use as a groundcover. In the mid to late summer bell-shaped purple striped flowers appear.



Fragrant Bouquet

This is an oldie but goodie. This Hosta has upright apple green leaves with light yellow margins. What makes this Hosta so fabulous isn't its leaves but its amazing fragrance that comes from its large white flower in late summer. Fragrant Bouquet grows very rapidly and takes more sun than most Hostas.



Blue Mouse Ears

If you plant Hostas, you have to plant at least one blue Hosta. There are many fantastic varieties. I like Blue Mouse Ears, AHGA 2008 Hosta of the Year. It has very thick, almost rubbery, nearly round rich blue-green leaves. Considered a miniature or dwarf Hosta, it is a vigorous grower and pest resistant. It blooms bellshaped rich violet striped lavender flowers in midsummer.

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