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Can I revert to a prior life and be Queen of England Again?

I am sitting at home looking out the window at a very large Miscanthus 'Variegata' I have in the back yard. It bugs me (and has for some time) because it has a couple of shoots coming up that are reverting to all green. You'd think that I could walk out there and chop them off!



It is not uncommon for variegated plants to revert to the more vigorous all green form of their prior lives. Believe it or not there are people out there who have the time to actually look closely at plants and observe them! They look for mutations within the plant to propagate and make new cultivars with. Miscanthus sinensis 'Variegata' is but one of a bazillion of mutated plants we utilize every day (alright maybe not a bazillion – I just like that word!). I think back to the old days when the hot plant was variegated Brunnera. Everyone bought it and then everyone complained because before long all the leaves were green. Now everyone wants 'Jack Frost' Brunnera – why? Well, it is a stable mutation and leaves will not revert. What about those "blue" Colorado Spruce – that is a stable mutation of the standard "green" Colorado Spruce. When we buy "mutated" plants we want to make sure the mutation is stable. Going back to the variegated Miscanthus, it is indeed a stable mutation, however even in stable crops there is always a risk of it sending up a rogue shoot from its past.

Have you ever had a variegated Hydrangea or Hosta that suddenly turned all green? No, I am sure you haven't because it doesn't happen that suddenly. You will see the green shoots and like me you will complain but not do anything about it! Over time those green shoots will overtake the mutated leaves and poof! now your plant is green! (I do want to interject here: Blue hosta are not a mutation in themselves. The blue on a hosta is a waxy coating that can literally melt in the sun and run off.) So what to do? Well, it is time to get up and walk outside with those expensive pruners! Prune out any reverting leaves and or branches. The lower you can go or the closer to the main stems is important. Don't wait like I do! Next year I will be writing about the beautiful Miscanthus 'Variegata' I had in the back yard that is all green and too big to dig out!



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