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**Heuger**

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(54) **HELLEBORUS PLANT NAMED ‘HL 1040’**  
(50) Latin Name: *Helleborus niger* X *Helleborus x hybridus*  
Varietal Denomination: **HL 1040**  
(71) Applicant: **Josef Heuger**, Glandorf (DE)  
(72) Inventor: **Josef Heuger**, Glandorf (DE)  
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(52) **U.S. Cl.**  
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See application file for complete search history.

*Primary Examiner* — Karen M Redden  
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — C. Anne Whealy

(57) **ABSTRACT**  
A new and distinct cultivar of *Helleborus* plant named ‘HL 1040’ characterized by its upright to somewhat outwardly spreading and mounded plant habit; moderately vigorous growth habit; dark green-colored leaflets with lighter green-colored venation; freely flowering habit; light purple and light pink to white-colored flowers; and good garden performance.

**2 Drawing Sheets**

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Botanical designation: *Helleborus niger* X *Helleborus x hybridus*.  
Cultivar denomination: ‘HL 1040’.

**STATEMENT REGARDING PRIOR  
DISCLOSURES BY INVENTOR/APPLICANT**

An European Community Plant Breeder’s Rights application for the instant plant was filed by the Inventor/Applicant, Mr. Josef Heuger of Glandorf, Germany, on Dec. 1, 2022, application number 2022/2769. Foreign priority is not claimed to this application.

The Inventor/Applicant asserts that no publications nor advertisements relating to sales, offers for sale or public distribution occurred more than one year prior to the effective filing date of this application. Any information about the claimed plant would have been obtained from a direct or indirect disclosure from the Inventor or Applicant. Inventor/Applicant claims a prior art exception under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)(1) for disclosure and/or sales prior to the filing date but less than one year prior to the effective filing date.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Helleborus* plant, botanically known as *Helleborus niger* X *Helleborus x hybridus* and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘HL 1040’.

The new *Helleborus* plant is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Glandorf, Germany. The objective of the breeding program was to create new uniform *Helleborus* plants with unique and attractive plant habit, leaf and flower coloration and tolerance to biotic and abiotic stresses.

The new *Helleborus* plant originated from a cross-pollination conducted by the Inventor in Glandorf, Germany in December, 2015 of a proprietary selection of *Helleborus niger* identified as code number P629, not patented, as the female, or seed, parent and a proprietary selection of *Hel-*

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*leborus x hybridus* identified as code number O1466, not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The new *Helleborus* plant was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a single flowering plant from within the progeny of the stated cross-pollination grown in a controlled greenhouse environment in Glandorf, Germany in November, 2017.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Helleborus* plant by in vitro axillary meristem culture in a controlled environment in Glandorf, Germany since April, 2018 has shown that the unique features of this new *Helleborus* plant are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

Plants of the new *Helleborus* have not been observed under all possible combinations of environmental conditions and cultural practices. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environmental conditions such as temperature and light intensity without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘HL 1040’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘HL 1040’ as a new and distinct *Helleborus* plant:

1. Upright to somewhat outwardly spreading and mounded plant habit.
2. Moderately vigorous growth habit.
3. Dark green-colored leaflets with lighter green-colored venation.
4. Freely flowering habit.
5. Light purple and light pink to white-colored flowers.
6. Good garden performance.

Plants of the new *Helleborus* differ from plants of the female parent selection in the following characteristics:

1. Leaflets of plants of the new *Helleborus* are darker green in color than leaflets of plants of the female parent selection.



2. Flowers of plants of the new *Helleborus* are light purple and light pink to white in color whereas flowers of plants of the female parent selection are white in color. Plants of the new *Helleborus* differ from plants of the male parent selection in the following characteristics:

1. Leaflets of plants of the new *Helleborus* are darker green in color than leaflets of plants of the male parent selection.
2. Flowers of plants of the new *Helleborus* are darker purple and pink in color than flowers of plants of the male parent selection.

Plants of the new *Helleborus* can also be compared to plants of *Helleborus niger* 'COSEH 1000', disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 25,316. In side-by-side comparisons, plants of the new *Helleborus* differ primarily from plants of 'COSEH 1000' in the following characteristics:

1. Leaves of plants of the new *Helleborus* are larger than leaves of plants of 'COSEH 1000'.
2. Flowers of plants of the new *Helleborus* are larger than flowers of plants of 'COSEH 1000'.
3. Flowers of plants of the new *Helleborus* are light purple and light pink to white in color whereas flowers of plants of 'COSEH 1000' are white in color.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new *Helleborus* plant showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new *Helleborus* plant.

The photograph on the first sheet (FIG. 1) is a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'HL 1040' grown in a container.

The photograph on the second sheet (FIG. 2) is a close-up view of a typical flower of 'HL 1040'.

#### DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The aforementioned photographs and following observations, measurements and values describe plants grown during the autumn in 17-cm containers in a glass-covered greenhouse in Glandorf, Germany and under cultural practices typical of commercial *Helleborus* production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures ranged from 12 C to 32 C and night temperatures ranged from 5 C to 12 C. Plants were 48 weeks old when the photographs were taken and 14 months old when the description was taken. In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2015 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Helleborus niger* X *Helleborus x hybridus* 'HL 1040'.

Parentage:

*Female, or seed, parent.*—Proprietary selection of *Helleborus niger* identified as code number P629, not patented.

*Male, or pollen, parent.*—Proprietary selection of *Helleborus x hybridus* identified as code number O1466, not patented.

Propagation:

*Type.*—In vitro axillary meristem culture.

*Time to initiate roots, winter.*—About 55 days at temperatures about 12 C.

*Time to produce a rooted young plant, winter.*—About 170 days at temperatures ranging from about 4 C to 15 C.

*Root description.*—Thick to thin, fleshy; typically white to brownish in color, actual color of the roots is dependent on substrate composition, water quality, fertilizer type and formulation, substrate temperature and physiological age of roots.

*Rooting habit.*—Low branching; sparse.

Plant description:

*Plant and growth habit.*—Herbaceous perennial; upright to somewhat outwardly spreading and mounding plant habit with flowers held within and slightly above the foliar plane; plant shape, flattened globular; moderately vigorous growth habit and moderate growth rate.

*Plant height, soil level to top of foliar plane.*—About 21.7 cm.

*Plant height, soil level to top of flowers.*—About 27.5 cm.

*Plant diameter (area of spread).*—About 43 cm.

Leaf description:

*Arrangement.*—Leaves arranged in a basal rosette; leaves palmately compound with typically five, or occasionally, seven, leaflets per leaf.

*Leaf length.*—About 18.9 cm.

*Leaf width.*—About 20.4 cm.

*Leaflet length.*—About 12.2 cm.

*Leaflet width.*—About 6.6 cm.

*Leaf shape.*—Palmate; roughly reniform in outline.

*Leaflet shape.*—Elliptic to obovate.

*Leaflet apex.*—Acute.

*Leaflet base.*—Attenuate.

*Leaflet margin.*—Serrate; moderately and coarsely undulate.

*Leaflet texture and luster, upper surface.*—Smooth, glabrous; coriaceous and tough; moderately glossy.

*Leaflet texture and luster, lower surface.*—Smooth, glabrous; coriaceous and tough; slightly glossy.

*Leaflet venation pattern.*—Pinnate and reticulate.

*Leaflet color.*—Developing leaflets, upper surface: Close to 143A to 143B; at the base, close to 187A. Developing leaflets, lower surface: Close to 144A; midvein, close to 187A. Fully developed leaflets, upper surface: Darker than a blend of 139A and 147A; at the base, slightly tinged with close to 200A and 200B; venation, close to 146D. Fully developed leaflets, lower surface: Close to NN137C to NN137D; venation, close to 144B to 144C and tinged with close to 152B.

*Petioles.*—Length: About 15 cm. Diameter: About 6.5 mm by 7 mm. Strength: Strong. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145A; moderately covered with fine dots, close to N186B to N186C.

Flower description:

*Flower shape and habit.*—Single rotate bowl-shaped flowers arranged in panicles; freely flowering habit with about three or four flowers per inflorescence



and about 21 flowers and flower buds per plant; flowers face mostly outwardly to nodding.

*Fragrance*.—None detected.

*Natural flowering season*.—Plants begin flowering about ten months after planting; plants flower naturally during the late autumn into the winter in Germany.

*Flower longevity on the plant*.—About ten days; sepals persistent, other flower parts are not persistent.

*Flower buds*.—Length: About 3.4 cm. Diameter: About 1.9 cm. Shape: Ovate to oblong. Texture and luster: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color: Close to a 145C to 145D; towards the apex, tinged with close to 187D; venation, close to 187C and 187D.

*Inflorescence height (including peduncle)*.—About 25.2 cm.

*Inflorescence diameter*.—About 14.5 cm.

*Flower diameter*.—About 9.3 cm.

*Flower depth*.—About 4 cm.

*Petals*.—All petals are transformed into nectaries.

*Sepals*.—Quantity and arrangement: About five arranged in a single whorl. Length: About 5.6 cm. Width: About 4.9 cm. Shape: Broadly ovate; slightly concave. Apex: Broadly and bluntly acute. Base: Cuneate to truncate. Margin: Entire; not undulate. Texture and luster, upper surface: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Texture and luster, lower surface: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color: When opening, upper surface: Close to 70B flushed with close to 76B and 76C. When opening, lower surface: Close to N155B; towards the margins, close to 71A; venation, close to 64A. Fully opened, upper surface: Close to a blend of 56D and N155C; towards the margins and apex, close to 75A and 75B; marginal and apical edges, close to 59A; towards the apex, tinged with close to 146C; at the base, close to 146D tinged with close to 183B; venation, similar to lamina colors; color does not change with subsequent development. Fully opened, lower surface: Close to a blend of 186D and 196C; towards the margins, close to 71A; marginal and apical edges, close to 59A; towards the apex, tinged with close to 146C; venation, close to 60A; color does not change with subsequent development.

*Flower bracts*.—Quantity per flower: Typically one. Length: About 8 cm. Width: About 5.2 cm. Shape: Ovate to broadly obovate. Apex: Acute to three-lobed. Base: Truncate to cuneate. Margin: Mostly entire; distally, slightly serrate; coarsely undulate. Color, upper surface: Slightly darker than NN137A; towards the base, close to 144C; midvein, tinged with close to N186C. Color, lower surface: Close to 147B; midvein, tinged with close to 187A.

*Peduncles*.—Length: About 16.7 cm. Diameter: About 7 mm to 9 mm. Aspect: About 10 degrees from vertical. Strength: Strong. Texture and luster: Smooth, glabrous; moderately glossy. Color: Close to 146D; heavily covered with fine dots, close to 187A and 187B.

*Pedicels*.—Length: About 3.5 cm. Diameter: About 0.3 mm. Aspect: About 25 degrees from peduncle axis. Strength: Moderately strong. Texture and luster: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color: Close to 150C; heavily covered with fine dots, close to 187A and 187B.

*Reproductive organs*.—Stamens: Quantity per flower: About 120. Filament length: About 1.6 cm. Filament color: Close to 70D; towards the base, close to 150D. Anther shape: Double and broadly reniform; basifixed. Anther size: About 2 mm by 3 mm. Anther color: Close to 154C. Pollen amount: Sparse to moderate. Pollen color: Close to 4D to lighter than 4D. Pistils: Quantity per flower: About five to seven. Pistil length: About 1.2 cm. Stigma diameter: About 0.3 mm. Stigma shape: Club-shaped. Stigma color: Close to 156D. Style length: About 1.15 cm. Style color: Slightly darker than N186C; proximally, close to 187C. Ovary color: Close to 150C; adaxial rib, close to 187C to 187D. Nectaries (transformed petals): Quantity per flower: About 13 or 17. Length: About 1.4 mm. Diameter: About 4 mm. Shape: Tubular, flattened; apices, obtuse. Texture and luster, inner and outer surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color, immature, inner and outer surfaces: Close to 145A; towards the base, close to 152A. Color, mature, inner and outer surfaces: Close to N144A; towards the apex, close to 151B and 151C; at the base, close to 152A; venation, similar to lamina colors; with subsequent development, colors towards the apex, closer to 153C and at the base, closer to 152B. Seeds and fruits: To date, seed and fruit development have not been observed on plants of the new *Helleborus*.

Garden performance: Plants of the new *Helleborus* have been observed to have good garden performance and to tolerate rain, wind, high temperatures about 35 C and to be suitable for USDA Hardiness Zones 5 through 9.

Pathogen & pest resistance: To date, plants of the new *Helleborus* have not been observed to be resistant to pathogens and pests common to *Helleborus* plants.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Helleborus* plant named 'HL 1040' as illustrated and described.

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FIG. 1





FIG. 2