

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

March, 2007

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A Picnic in the Park

Now doesn't that sound idyllic? Now we are not too sure just how peaceful the annual Chapter picnic will be, but we will guarantee that there will be gobs of wonderfully delicious food – and that the picnic *will* be in a park, - the Palma Sola Botanical Park (PSBP). Of course we are talking about the Annual Chapter Picnic which falls on Sunday, April 1st this year. (This year Easter falls on our normal “second Sunday” meeting day.) And while we are thinking about it, the festivities begin at 1:00 p.m. and bring something to sit on – like a lawn chair!

The Chapter will again be providing the chicken and everyone attending will be expected to bring some kind of side dish or accompanying type item. This month, the diligent Chapter members who make the calls prior to each meeting will be asking if you will be attending the picnic in order that sufficient chicken will be there for you to enjoy.

There will necessarily be a short business meeting at the picnic, primarily because according to Chapter bylaws the nominees for officers and board members for the coming year are to be announced in April and, as noted previously, the picnic is on April 1st. However, the prospect of a short meeting is not the important thing to look forward to – it's the **food!** And - the opportunity to visit with the other fine people of the Golby-Reasoner Chapter!

It has been several years since the Chapter had any kind of an event at PSBP which is located at 9800 17th Avenue N.W. Therefore, we will spend a few lines of our permitted few with some directions to the Park. Go to 75th Street West. Go north (toward the Manatee River) on 75th about 21 or 22 blocks to 17th Avenue North West and turn left (West). Go about 23 blocks to what would be 9800. The entrance to the park is just before 17th Ave. N.W. and curves to the left. Our picnic will be in the screened structure which, as you enter the park gate, is to the

left of the main building

Dues Duel!

While it may seem otherwise, Chapter dues are not collected more than once a year. And that “once” could occur any time, but normally takes place some time during the two month window of time prior to June 1st – like during April and May. Therefore, as you prepare for the picnic, pack your check book! The dues remain the same as last year and are: \$27.50 for single memberships and \$30.00 for family memberships. Make your check to the “Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS”.

Words from Jean and Tom

During the first week in March we received a letter from Jean Tourt that we want to share with our readers since Tom and Jean Tourt were well-known Chapter members. For those who can't quite place them, Tom served as a Board Member and Jean played the piano at Chapter Christmas parties for several years. Here are some excerpts from Jean's letter:

“Just a note to let all our friends at the Hibiscus Club know that we have moved to the frozen northland. Tom had a slight stroke ... so our son thought it would be safer for us to move to Illinois. We are currently in an assisted living center which is a barrel of laughs as you can imagine.

The issue of Petal Power was forwarded to us here and we enjoyed reading it. Here the ground is covered with a new layer of snow and there surely aren't any hibiscus around. I don't know if we will ever return to Florida to see our beautiful flowers.

Say hello to Karin & Leo (*Delbert*) for us and also Kathy Grandoff when they come to speak. We enjoyed all our many friends there and will miss you all.”

President Boettcher read excerpts of Jean's letter at the March Chapter meeting and Leo Delbert and Kathy Grandoff were there to hear their names

mentioned. Talk about surprise! The Tourt's Illinois address is: Jean and Tom Tourt, % Jeff Tourt, 11429 State Rt. 71, Yorkville, IL 60560.

Real Estate Report

Having a report from a "Real Estate Committee" at a Chapter meeting would be a first, but that "first" happened at the March meeting. However, it appears that that agenda item was only a hoax to provide Leo Delbert the opportunity to announce that he and Karin had sold their home – "like about" the previous week – and would be moving out of the state in mid-April. Both Karin and Leo have been active and faithful Chapter members for many years and to say they will be missed is a huge understatement. They are extremely busy since they don't have much time to buy another home and make the move. However, we understand they may be attending the Chapter picnic on April 1st. You will want to be there to bid the Delberts farewell.

Hibiscus Gardening in April

April, in-so-far as rain is concerned, is a continuation of the preceding six months – and will be a precursor to what can be expected in May. All this means is that April is part of the dry season and so there most likely won't be much rain. However, that fact may be particularly worth noting in April, compared to the other dry months, since the hibiscus gardener may have lots of new growth on his/her plants that can be easily hurt if it dries out. Therefore, for your in-ground plants, if you don't get an inch of rain a week, get out the hose! Potted plants will need watering frequently – more than once a week – the amount of foliage on the plants will have a bearing on how much water will be required. We haven't mentioned it previously, but April is also a pretty windy month which compounds the lack of rain/tender new growth situation. The bottom line is, pay attention to your plants, particularly those which were pruned.

You should have fertilized your hibiscus by now, using some kind of formula with a low middle number if at all possible. In addition to the regular dose of fertilizer, the following formula of goodies, applied bi-weekly, will jump start your plants that are just waking up or that have had some amount of pruning. (We read about this some time ago in some Chapter newsletter, but we can't remember

which one in order to give that editor credit. We would if we could. Be that as it may, it seems to work.) Put a tablespoon of water soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer (like Peter's) and 3 tablespoons of liquid minor elements in a gallon of water and put a half cup on plants in three gallon pots or the equivalent on plants in other size pots or in the ground. Of course the formula can be increased or decreased according to individual needs. Minor element spray is not readily available in the mass volume garden centers – in Bradenton, look at *Come See – Come Save*. Southern Ag has a General Purpose Minor Element Spray which contains a bunch of yummy goodies (only from a plant's viewpoint of course). How many applications should you make? Perhaps as many as you think are worth the effort.

Whether a granular or a liquid fertilizer is being applied, be sure to lightly water the plants first, then fertilize and then again lightly water. The idea is to keep the feeder roots, which are at or just below the surface of the soil, from getting a fertilizer burn. The water/fertilize/water sequence would certainly be a good tack to follow when the pretty high energy solution discussed above is applied.

The new plant growth that gardeners pay special attention to by watering regularly and perhaps giving extra fertilization also gets special attention from every hungry insect critter in the neighborhood. The new growth is apparently particularly appetizing to them. To keep it simple for the hibiscus hobbyist, one of two approaches might be best to consider when determining how to control insects.

The first involves the use of soap or soap and oil and a pressure sprayer. To make a soap spray, put 2 ½ tablespoons of liquid dish soap in a gallon of water. (We have heard that "true" soaps, like *Ivory* or *Palmolive* are better than something like *Dawn*. But we know of no real scientific research on the subject.) To make an oil spray, use 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil and 2 tablespoons of liquid dish soap in a gallon of water. Whichever spray is used it should always be applied in the coolest part of the day (here on the Sun Coast it doesn't feel like there is much difference between 93 and 83 degrees, but there is) and never in the direct sun. Apply every 7 to 10 days. If control is not achieved with soap or

soap and oil, you may wish to proceed to the second approach.

The second involves the use of a systemic insecticide – which means the insecticide is taken up into the plant. For the hobbyist hibiscus gardener probably the easiest way to do that is to obtain an insecticide containing *Acephate*. *Acephate* is a chemical used by the Ortho Group and which they initially marketed in a product called *Orthene*. Currently, unless they have changed it again in the past couple months – which is doubtful, the Ortho product containing *Acephate* is *Systemic Insect Killer*. At least they used a very descriptive name. Apply every two weeks. Perhaps the second application could be 10 days after the first, but we have heard that if extend use is required using a two week timing would be preferred for the health of hibiscus.

There are those of the old school (which is a pretty good school) that say in addition to spraying the hibiscus with *Orthene* (acephate) the other plants nearby and the surrounding lawn area should be sprayed with *Sevin* to control other insects that might transfer to the hibiscus. “Now days”, we are at least somewhat restrained in our use of chemicals and wouldn’t automatically use the *Sevin* on vegetation surrounding our hibiscus. However, if you never seem to get the upper hand on the critters eating, sucking or otherwise being a nuisance on your hibiscus, you may want to remember what the “old school” folks had to say.

We have a new member!

Please welcome:

Estella Wick
4719 Independence Drive
Bradenton, FL 34210
792-1843

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS Chapter Meeting Minutes March 11, 2007

President Boettcher called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Synovus Bank meeting room, and welcomed five guests and visitors. Dave Flanders introduced new member and raffle winner Estella Wick.

A motion was made to accept the February 11, 2007

minutes as published in Petal Power. It was seconded and approved. Treasurer Adams’ report for the month of February showed an initial balance of \$3943.26, income of \$32.00, expenses of \$104.65, and ending balance of \$3870.61. The report was accepted.

Leo Delbert announced that he and Karin sold their home and are moving to South Carolina. President Boettcher thanked them for their many contributions to the chapter.

A signup sheet was circulated for the upcoming picnic. President Boettcher covered these items:

- The next meeting is the Annual picnic which will be held at the Palma Sola Botanical Park on April 1 at 1 p.m. Attendees are requested to bring folding chairs. Carl Kramer will announce a slate of officers and Board Members prepared by the nominating committee.
- The annual restaurant meeting will be held at 12:00 p.m. on June 10 at Peridia Country Club. Cost is \$10.00 for members, and about \$16.50 for guests.
- Recent Board actions included: approval of the proposed budget of the Show Publicity Committee; Pat Grant will let the chapter use her credit card device and account at the next show; new members signing up at the show will receive a copy of the Monthly Care booklet and get chapter discounts on plant purchases.
- A letter was received from former members Jean and Tom Tourt who have now moved to Illinois.

Rae Flanders introduced Don Mixon and Kathy Grandoff who gave a talk and demonstration regarding preparing blooms for show display and other tips, e.g., removing the calyx and opening mature buds for display, trimming hibiscus plants to grow as trees, use of sphagnum moss containers for rooting, and use of citrus fertilizer.

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m. and Norma Bryar and Jeanne Nathan provided refreshments.

Gene Haugh, Secretary

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Yvonne@coldporcelaincreations.com, (941) 538-9521,
or www.coldporcelaincreations.com

Coming Events

April 1, 1:00 p.m. Annual Picnic, Palma Sola Botanical Park

May 6, 1:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting: Show details