

Orchids: September's Meeting (September 9, 1:00 p.m., Synovus Bank)

We have had two programs about orchids in the last 15 years or so and both were interesting and well received by those attending. While there is no schedule for such things (that we are aware of), it seemed that it was time to have another and so at the September 9th meeting, "Orchids" will be the "subject of the day". Roger Miller from the Orchid Society will be our guest speaker and since many of our members raise orchids, he many get a lot of questions (or bits of knowledge) directed his way. Whichever, it should be a good program that will be of more than a little interest to our membership.

Sharing knowledge is the key...

Sharing knowledge is the key to success in many things, including gardening. That's the reason there are organizations like Golby-Reasoner and that's one of the reasons we have refreshments and a time for visiting/sharing after Chapter meetings. It is also the reason we invite guests to share their knowledge on gardening subjects. Many of these guests are very knowledgeable about their subject while others have less expertise, particularly as they depart from their primary area of proficiency. As we listen to anything anywhere, we process what we hear and we choose those portions we will accept and discard others. This sorting process should be applied, without fail, when subjects concerning the handling of dangerous chemicals are concerned. The "discard" pile resulting from such sorting must include anything that would increase the chances that garden chemicals would come in contact with the gardener's body.

It's called "Plasticity"!

Perhaps just plain "flexibility" is more easily understood. Whichever, our annual potluck (Oct. 25th) will again be taking the place of our October Chapter meeting and only a fun program is scheduled. However, if a number of our new

members sign up to attend, flexibility will take over and there will also be a hibiscus related program. Nothing too advanced – just sort of the basics which are perhaps the most important aspects of gardening.

Donation brought response.....

Treasurer Shirley Adams received a letter from Gary Reeder, President of the Manatee Friends of Extension, in which he said:

"On behalf of the Manatee Friends of Extension, I thank you for the kind and generous donation of \$200 to our Demonstration Greenhouse fund. We have almost reached the \$30,000 goal to receive matching funds for the project. It is our hope that construction will begin by the end of the year. The facility will be used by Master Gardeners and our Extension faculty to hold classes and house demonstration examples to enhance the local Extension Horticulture programs.

"Again, thank you for partnering with us on this endeavor."

Our Chapter Board of Directors voted to send a small (we had little else) token of our thanks to some function related to the Fair Grounds since our Show had been held there – and we were told to send what we wished to "Manatee County Friends of Extension."

And now we have...

Yes indeed, ladies and gentlemen – boys and girls, we now have a new insecticide from Bayer that contains *Imidacloprid* and a miticide. And why is that such a big deal you may ask? Well, we are not sure it is a "big deal", but with somewhat of a historical sort perspective – it is at least interesting. We don't need to start at the beginning of this saga, but let's at least recap a bit in the on-going tale of insecticides, specifically "*Imidacloprid*", as it has been documented on the pages of PETAL POWER.

A number of years ago we started writing about *Imidacloprid* when it was the sole active ingredient in *Marathon* (no, not *Marathon*). We, and some others in our Chapter, experimented with it, but it was quite expensive (about \$100 for five pounds – it was a powder). Initially, we thought it was very successful in controlling all insects. However, after the first few years of use we recognized that mites were a constant problem – and shortly thereafter it was recognized that *Imidacloprid* apparently aided in the propagation of mites!

We continued to monitor what gardeners were doing with *Imidacloprid* and saw that they were looking for a way to utilize it in some way that wasn't expensive and that would also control mites. *Bayer Tree and Shrub Insect Control* (T&S), containing *Imidacloprid*, came on the market with label instructions to use it as a soil drench. However, some folks found that they obtained good insect control on hibiscus by using the Bayer T&S as a spray, 2 tablespoons per gallon of water. (It was pretty inexpensive when used that way, too.) Later it seemed to make sense to include a miticide in the spray, using label dilution instructions. Therefore when we have mentioned the use of *Imidacloprid* in PETAL POWER in the last couple years, we have (we think) discussed it only in the context of the success some were having using a combination of Bayer T&S and a miticide as a spray.

Now, as we said in the first paragraph, Bayer has introduced a product containing *Imidacloprid* and a miticide. We can only say that the folks that used T&S and a miticide were just ahead of their time. The new product is called *Insect, Disease, & Mite Control* (IDMC) and claims “Up to 30 days Protection” which is of course a somewhat meaningless statement. In addition to *Imidacloprid*, IDMC contains *Tan-Fluvalinate*, a broad spectrum insecticide/miticide and *Tebuconazole*, a fungicide. Hibiscus tend to have few diseases so that element of the mixture is of little interest, but assuming the miticide is effective - having it in combination with *Imidacloprid* in proportions scientifically determined should be of interest to many back yard hibiscus gardeners. It really could be “a big deal”!

We have been positive in our view of the new

Bayer IDMC to this point. Now let's talk about the dilution instructions – which say, “Pour 2.67 fl. oz. (5 ¼ tablespoons)” of IDMC into 1 gallon of water. Note to the folks at Bayer, “Give us a break! Change the formula of IDMC so that the dilution requires even ounces or tablespoons!” Having had our vent...we are moving right along...

September Hibiscus Gardening

In the past, September and October were the months when some of the best blooms of the year were produced. Therefore, most of the Florida hibiscus shows were held in those months. We can recall Eric Golby saying that the second weekend in September was the very best time of the year for blooms – and therefore the Chapter (that was to carry his name) had its show on that weekend. For whatever reason the best time for fall blooms has seemingly moved to later in the year. However, rather than move the shows later into the fall the Florida chapters chose to move them to the spring, surely due to the fall being subject to the storms “whose name is never spoken on these pages” (shades of Harry Potter). All of that is to say that, there may not be all that many blooms in our gardens in September.

September is supposed to be one of our wettest months and much of the rain has a way of coming as part of late afternoon storms (disregarding the “storms whose name is never spoken on these pages”). Those storms may well have strong winds and so therefore now is a good time to stake plants that might be rocked around in windy situations. Such movement can be very injurious to plants and staking takes so little time it makes sense to do it. Plants in pots may need staking too, but of course the pots themselves are likely to tip over in windy conditions. Folks have been known to tie their potted plants to fence posts, patio roof posts, etc. Some with numerous potted plants in rows have even built a low railing type structure out of PVC pipe and tied their plants to it. “Whatever works” seems to be the motto.

The amount of rain received in September (and August, for that matter) can easily raise the water table to very close to or to ground level. That possibility brings us to consider that old adage that

hibiscus “don’t like to have their feet wet.” The roots of hibiscus planted in an area that has a water table that is within six inches of the surface of the ground will very likely die and rot off because of a lack of oxygen. Therefore, every effort should be made to – first of all – not plant hibiscus in an area that seasonally “floods.” If they are planted in such an area – and the rains come and it looks like they will be standing in water more than a couple of days – dig them up and plant them somewhere else. If that is not an option, dig them up and put them in the shade with their roots covered (wet towels will probably work) until the planting area dries out and then prune the plants back and replant them using new soil.

Due to the amount of water being applied to our hibiscus, either by rain or gardener, whatever fertilizer is put on the plants will be washed through the soil very rapidly. It would be difficult to put too much fertilizer on hibiscus during this time of year. If you have any of the hibiscus fertilizer that the Chapter purchased to sell at the Show – until this year – using monthly what the label says to use every three months could just about be right during the rainy season. In addition, while it may seem a bit much, a bi-weekly application of a solution of 1 tablespoon of some balanced water soluble fertilizer (like *Peters*) and 3 tablespoons of *Minor Elements* (available at “Come See, Come Save”) in a gallon of water would be welcomed by your plants. Use a half cup of the solution on three gallon potted plants and proportionally the same amount on larger or smaller plants. A monthly application of Epsom Salt should also be considered. Something like a tablespoon sprinkled on the surface of a three gallon potted plant may be about right – with again, proportionally the same amounts being applied to larger or smaller plants.

More Directory Corrections

Please make these changes to your copy:

Address for Hodill, Richard and Mary:

1700 21st Ave W, Apt 4050
Bradenton, FL 34205
Tel 748-4649

Chapter Meeting Minutes

Aug. 12, 2007

President Boettcher called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. The minutes from the last meeting as printed in Petal Power were approved.

Financial report given by Treasurer Shirley Adams was approved. Ending balance was \$3,707.10.

President Boettcher thanked Betty Seipel and Beege Hunter for the refreshments at today’s meeting.

Rae Flanders reported that Roger Miller from the Orchid Society will be our September speaker.

Dottie Erikson volunteered to chair the potluck dinner Oct. 25 at President Boettcher’s residence. Sign up will be at the Sept. meeting.

Shirley Adams will conduct a survey to determine the consensus of the membership for receiving their copies of Petal Power by email or standard mail. (65% have email addresses presently)

Palma Sola Botanical Gardens: President Boettcher discussed the condition of the Hibiscus Garden that we maintain at the gardens. The Taaffes have taken the responsibility for that maintenance, but at this time need help. President asked for volunteers and 10 members are willing to help. A workday will be scheduled in the future.

President Boettcher asked for a volunteer to pick up the key to the meeting room on Friday afternoon. Jennifer Murdoch volunteered and Frank Vejrostek will be her backup. President Boettcher asked for volunteers to help Jeanne Nathan on the calling committee. Jennifer Murdoch, Jerry Lovett and Petey Birchall volunteered.

Rae Flanders introduced Dick & Helen Evanson who presented a program of growing plants in his specially designed earth pots. They had the pots for sale.

Meeting was adjourned at 1: 55 pm.

Shirley Adams, Acting Secretary

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Cold Porcelain Creations! Lifelike Hibiscus and other flowers, singles/bouquets. Yvonne Santiago:
Yvonne@coldporcelaincreations.com, (941) 538-9521,
or www.coldporcelaincreations.com