

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

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Editor: Gayler Boettcher: gboet@gte.net

Publisher: Gene Haugh: gene.haugh@gmail.com

Web Site: 4hibiscus.com

And now for a picnic in the park...

And that picnic takes place at the next Golby-Reasoner Chapter "meeting", at 1:00 p.m., Sunday, April 13th at Palma Sola Botanical Park (PSBP). A G-R Chapter picnic is too much of a good many good things, such as too much good food in the potluck and too much good fried chicken, complements of the Chapter. (Come on, - you can surely have fried chicken once a year!) There are also many trips made back for seconds (thirds?) along with much good fellowship and perhaps getting to know someone better. All in all the annual picnic along with a couple other social events, is surely the "funnest" on the Chapter calendar.

If you are planning on going to the picnic but haven't sign-up or been contacted – or have a question – call Dorothy Erikson, 753-7785. (We need to know how many will be there in order to get enough chicken.)

There will be a short business meeting at the picnic since the Bylaws say the nomination of officers and board members is to take place at the April Chapter Meeting. Therefore the slate prepared by the Nominating Committee headed up by Carl Kramer will be announced after which there will be the opportunity for nominations from the floor. (Hopefully) we speak for all Chapter members when we say "Thanks" to everyone who makes the personal sacrifice necessary be a Chapter officer or board member.

Directions to PSBP: The PSBP is located at 9800 17th Avenue N.W. From the corner of Manatee Avenue and 75th Street West, turn north on 75th (toward the Manatee River) for about 21 or 22 blocks to - 17th Avenue North West and turn left (West). Go about 23 blocks to what would be 9800 17th Ave. NW. The entrance to the park is just before 17th Ave. NW turns to the left. Our picnic will be in the screened structure which is, as

you enter the park gate, to the left of the main building

It is almost Show time!!

Here it is March already. April will pass in a flash. And there we are - KER-POW! – in May – the month of our Annual Show. And so why are we writing about that now – you may ask. We bring up the subject because we want to make sure everyone has blocked out the dates of the set-up day and day of the show on their calendars. The dates involved? Friday, May 23 and Sunday, May 25. Please check your calendar and block out those dates if you haven't previously! Your help will be needed!

The Chapter needs tables!

Now there is an unexpected headline. However, in order to save the cost of renting tables, it is very likely that the Chapter would like to borrow your fold-up 5 or 6 foot long tables. Or, if you have one or more (flush) doors and "horses" they could be placed on – those may be useable too!

A short explanation. We have to provide more space for bloom preparation at the show (a place for exhibitors to prepare their blooms for entry) and therefore we are going to rent a tent for the plant sales. Moving the plant sales outside to a tent not only releases space, but also releases 20 some tables for bloom preparation. The fairgrounds only has 5 or 6 tables that can be used outside (inside a tent is considered "outside"). Therefore, we have a need for tables (or something like tables) – either from our members or as a rental.

If you have what the Chapter is looking for, please drop Gayler Boettcher an email (address in the Chapter member's directory) or give him a call (751-2924).

* Words of Wisdom *
Plan to be spontaneous.

How Many??

Go ahead – guess. How many hibiscus cultivars are there? The word from people working on updating the nomenclature database is – GET THIS! – 8,551! The goal is to have the up-dated nomenclature database available to everyone on the Internet.

Blond discrimination?

Could it be that blonds are being discriminated against? Could blondes be the only remaining group that is the brunt of “jokes” portraying folks that are less than mentally sharp? (Note how we skirted around the word “dumb” – it’s not “PC”.) Over the years, groups identified by nationality, university (Texas Aggies), or low intelligence were the subject of millions of “jokes”. However, it seems Political Correctness has ordained that they no longer be made the subject of jokes, but blonds it would seem have not been afforded that kind of consideration. It certainly would not seem fair. Discrimination? Whatever.... Did you hear the one about ...

A blond was using a Weed Eater in her yard and accidentally cut the tail off her cat which was hiding in the grass.

She rushed her cat, along with the tail, to Wal-Mart! Why Wal-Mart?
(BEWARE: IT’S A GROANER!)

Wal-Mart is the largest retailer in the world!

More Seed Bank Info...

We printed a little blurb about the AHS Seed Bank in our January issue, but since then the “head seed man”, Bob Carran, sent Dave Flanders some more information about the Seed Bank activity, some of which we will share with our readers. (The AHS Seed Bank sends hibiscus seeds to whoever request them.)

“...last year’s final total was: 4,549 seeds sent out to 388 people on 6 of the 7 continents (excluding Antarctica). By far the continent with the most requests was Europe, with requests coming

from Germany, Spain, Malta, Romania, Canary Islands, Serbia, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Montenegro, Croatia, Denmark and England. The most requests came from Spain, which has a seed club, and word was spread rather quickly that the AHS was giving away free hibiscus seeds.

“The Spanish speaking countries of Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands also requested many seeds. Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Trinidad, Bermuda, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Panama were foremost.

“South American countries included Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Peru.

“South Africa was the only African nation to request seeds.

“The Asian countries began asking for seeds also. South Korea and Taiwan were new requesters, with the countries of India, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sarawak, Malaysia, and Singapore also asking.

“And of course the island nation of Australia and the country of New Zealand wanted seeds.”

Just a matter of time ... ?

One can only wonder if it is only a matter of time before Manatee County follows Sarasota County’s lead and mandates some stiff restrictions on the use of fertilizer. Our Sarasota members could expand on the subject, but as we understand it Sarasota County has some wide-ranging restrictions governing everything from the types of fertilizers allowed in the county to when and where such products can be applied. It appears that Sarasota county residents are strictly prohibited from using any fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus during the height of the rainy season, between June 1 and September 30. Other restrictions apply, but ... is it only a matter of time ... ?

Hibiscus Gardening in April

April is often dry and windy, which is a bad combination since our hibiscus are really ready to shift into high gear growth. The windy conditions

will dry out our plants that are trying to put out new growth and so if there hasn't been an inch of rain in a week, get out the hose. Of course if plants have been pruned severely in the last month or so they will require less water, but since they will be putting out lots of new growth they certainly should not be allowed to dry out.

If your plants weren't staked and mulched as they were pruned or otherwise prepared for the growth season – do it now. The mulching will decrease the effect of the dry weather and the staking will provide the support plants need in windy conditions. A plant that can be moved around by the wind to the point that its roots are moving – will truly be an unhappy camper.

Critters looking for something to lunch on will think the nice tender new growth on your hibiscus looks delicious! Therefore, get out the soap solution or oil and soap solution and spray every week. If you are into chemicals, spray with some product containing Acephate (the active ingredient in the Ortho product *Orthene*) every other week. Whichever your approach, be prepared to maintain this spray schedule until late fall.

We have long maintained that a vigorous spraying of the undersides of our hibiscus leaves every day or so, with a watering wand with a curved end, will give pretty adequate insect control. However, it must be rather consistent – rain or shine – which isn't as difficult when the plants are in pots and need to be watered pretty much every other day. However, established in-ground plants are another issue since they will need very little additional water during much of the rainy season.

Propagating, both by rooting cuttings and by air-layering, can be particularly successful during the relatively cool weather of April. Either edition of the hibiscus handbook has good directions for either.

April is a good time to add to your hibiscus collection, however late May will be even better. Our point is, if you are interested in expanding your hibiscus garden, wait and purchase your plants at the Chapter plant sale May 25. Then buy lots!

Chapter Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2008

Called to order 1 PM.

Approved the minutes of the February 10, 2008 meeting as printed in PETAL POWER. Reviewed the February financial report. Total \$2,969.78. Approved.

Visitors Jay and Tammy were greeted.

A sign up sheet for food donations was circulated for the picnic, April 13. The Chapter will furnish chicken.

Show chairman, Mark Love has ordered 120 bags of fertilizer to be sold at the show. Southern Ag will deliver it to the fairgrounds. Continued discussion about renting a tent and the need for tables for the plant sale. Members to check for tables they may have and a sign-up sheet was passed. It was suggested that we have early plant sales at the show. We have \$200.00 in donations, so far, from Southern Ag and Burnett's Wholesale plants.

Refreshments were provided by Jean Nathan and Norma Bryar.

Rae Flanders, Program Chairman, discussed how important the May 4th meeting will be, making final plans for the show on the 25th with set up on May 23.

The speaker: Zelma Neff, show judge, discussed how a bloom is judged and ways to display a bloom. Neff's provided 4 plants for the raffle which were donated by Randy Cox.

Carl Kramer reported that nominations for officers and board members have been filled and will be announced at the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Janet Love, Acting Secretary

Coming Events

April 4, 10:00 a.m.: Board Meeting at the Haugh residence.

April 13, 1:00 p.m.: Chapter Meeting Annual Picnic.

May 23: Show Set-up

May 25: Annual Show and Plant Sale.