

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

August, 2008

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Master Gardener for September

The September Chapter meeting will feature a Master Gardener discussing a topic that is unknown at this time, but which is sure to find a “fit” with everyone because it will treat – you guessed it – some aspect of gardening! There will also be a short “Share and Tell” period during which any and all hibiscus related subjects can be brought up by “one and all.” Also sure to be on the agenda will be a discussion/planning session concerning the forthcoming Chapter garage sale(s) which is discussed in an article in this very issue of PETAL POWER – your guide to the world of the Golby-Reasoner Chapter!

Pat Grant

All who knew her were shocked by the sudden passing of Pat Grant. Pat was president of our Chapter in 1998, 1999, and 2004. When not president or some other officer she continued in an active role, being involved in virtually everything anyone needed her to do. She was tireless, talented, and easily became a good friend.

The esteem with which Pat was held by Chapter members was evidenced by the large number that was in attendance at the service held in her memory at the Crosley Mansion. Pat’s involvement in the Crosley Foundation made the mansion an appropriate setting for many of Pat’s friends to pay their respects to the one-of-a-kind person that was Pat Grant.

Exciting is the word...

Perhaps it is hard to believe, but the August 10th Chapter meeting was, yes – “Exciting”! As far as anyone here in the HHOPP (Hallowed Halls of Petal Power) can remember, the August 10th meeting was the first to specifically treat the subject of planting hibiscus seeds with a show and tell. To top it off, everyone left with seeds that they can plant on their own at home.

Patricia Grant
April 3, 1933 – August 2, 2008

Those at the meeting will recall that speaker Jim Bridges planted some nicked seeds in a small domed planter which was later part of the raffle which is held after every Chapter meeting. We understand that our editor was the winner of the part of the raffle that included the planted seeds. The reason we relate that occurrence is that our editor’s wife, Shirley Boettcher, reports that some of the seeds sprouted (had the beginning of thin “trunks” rising from the planting medium) on Monday following Sunday’s meeting! On the day of this writing, which is Friday (9-15-08), several have developed their first two “leaves”. Our reporter at the meeting reports that all the seeds had been “nicked” by Jim Bridges at home. He then placed them in a folded, moist paper towel which was placed in a plastic “baggy” and kept at around 80 degrees for several days. When the paper towel was unfolded in the meeting – to the surprise of almost every one – virtually all the seeds had started to develop roots!

Everyone has heard the comment, “When all else fails, read the instructions”. This certainly applies to finding out more about hibiscus seeds and growing seedlings. We shared the thoughts from two hibiscus growers about growing seedlings in our last issue of PETAL POWER and Jim Bridges shared his knowledge at our August meeting. If that has piqued your interest, your next stop should be *The Tropical Hibiscus Handbook*. The Handbook has a dozen pages that tell you all you could ever want to know about hybridizing (which is what we are talking about) complete with some good pictures.

Since everyone at the August Chapter meeting received 5 seeds, president Flanders said that next year everyone will be offered the opportunity to

*** Words of Wisdom ***

The second mouse gets the cheese.

show off the plants that originated as a result of planting their seeds. Now that should be fun! Remember, August, 2009 – the First Annual Golby-Reasoner Seedling Evaluation!

Seems like old times...

It seems like old times when we here at PETAL POWER think about writing an article that has as its point – asking Chapter members to save and gather up their garage sale stuff for a forthcoming sale.

Up until three years ago, the Chapter had a “Gift Table” at the annual shows which gave Chapter members the opportunity to donate their “treasures” and the Chapter the opportunity to gain a few hundred dollars. (The Gift Table brought in over \$500.00 several years.) In earlier years it seemed that the items on the table tended to be fairly “high class”, but as the years passed the table took on the appearance of an indoor garage sale. A First Baptist Church representative commented during our first show there that the Gift Table detracted from the “look” of the rest of the show, including the blooms. Those in the elected positions of the Chapter agreed and decided to eliminate the Gift Table. Really, it seemed like everyone was pretty happy to see the Gift Table go. Then, when the show moved to the Fair Grounds there wasn't room for a Gift Table. Little did we know how much we would miss the Gift Table, monetarily.

Anyway, during the heyday of the Gift Table, the pages of PETAL POWER had an article urging Chapter members to save their stuff in what seemed like every issue. We hope that kind of “over-kill” is not repeated, however – SAVE YOUR STUFF! Not for a Gift Table at next May's Show, but for a garage sale – perhaps two – sometime this winter/spring. Why? Having a garage sale or two will offer an opportunity for the Chapter members to socialize and it will provide some badly needed funds for the Chapter treasury.

As you have guessed, the date(s) of the Chapter garage sale has not been determined and, perhaps more importantly, neither has the location. Current thinking is that perhaps the Chapter should have its garage sale when a park/development/community

does. The early concept is to involve all members in sort of a traveling garage sale with items being carried over and other items being added to each sale instead of donating left-overs to charity after each sale.

So here comes the question, “When does your park/development/community have its garage sale – and would you host a Chapter garage sale then?” Contact any Board member with your date as soon as possible!

Excerpts - August 4th Board Meeting

Treasurer Shirley Boettcher submitted the financial report for the period ending July 31, 2008. It shows a beginning balance of \$2,889.41, income of \$89.50, expenses of \$834.53 (dues were sent in to National), with an ending balance of \$2,144.38.

Special Events Chairman, Dotty Erikson reported that the annual potluck at Boettcher's will be Thursday, October 23. The Christmas luncheon will be at Sara Bay Country Club December 14. A motion was made and passed to authorize a \$250.00 reservation fee for the luncheon. The locations for the April 5 picnic and the June 14 Restaurant and Installation are yet to be determined.

The meeting was heavy with thoughts and sorrow at our loss of Pat Grant. Jennifer Murdock accepted appointment as Program Chairman.

The Board discussed having a fund raising sale (or two) in winter or spring. Gayler, Shirley, Frank and Tootie will serve on the planning committee.

September Hibiscus Gardening

The good news is that we normally don't get as much rain in September as we do in August. (August is the wettest month – September is number two, depending on whose figures are used.) The figures we use show that, on average, September will have an inch less rain than August. Big deal! But then it seems that we need to dry out – even if it is just a little.

In between rains and sometimes while it is raining, it is down right HOT! While we don't have the 100 degree days like some areas of the country, the further inland you go the further you are from the 88 to 90 degree highs predicted almost every day by the TV forecasters. We are (hopefully) in air

conditioning pretty much all the time, but our plants aren't. Although "tropical", our hibiscus really don't like this much heat. They tell you about it too, by wilting, not blooming, and by dropping buds that might otherwise develop into blooms. These symptoms will be overwhelmingly noticeable on most hibiscus, even those in filtered sun will suffer somewhat. Those in afternoon sun will look and surely feel, miserable. If they are in pots, find shade for them and if that doesn't seem to help, try something to cool their roots. The easiest approach to cooling a potted plant's roots is to put its pot inside a larger pot, thereby adding a cushion of air. You can also paint the pots a light color which will provide some cooling by reflecting the heat. Of course, an afternoon shower, from your hose or from Mother Nature, will be greatly appreciated by all your plants – not only your hibiscus.

September is one of the peak months for storms whose name shall remain unspoken. There is nothing you can do for your hibiscus to prepare them for that nameless thing, but healthy, well-staked plants will surely suffer least. Test the staking in your plants regularly, because they may not be doing what you want them to do – and then there is the fact that the bottoms of wooden stakes have a way of rotting off.

This is the time of year when insects will be doing lunch (and dinner) on your plants unless the rain is regular or you are hitting the undersides of the leaves with water from a spraying wand. These "nature friendly" approaches may not provide adequate critter control and you may need to resort to some of the chemicals we have discussed in previous editions of PETAL POWER.

Copious amounts of water, whether from nature or your hose, will rapidly leach fertilizer through Florida soils or potting mix and therefore relatively copious amounts of fertilizer will be required to keep plants nourished and healthy. Late September marks the beginning of the period when we obtain good quantities of quality blooms, but they won't arrive without appropriate amounts of fertilizer.

Chapter Meeting, August 10, 2008

The Golby-Reasoner Chapter meeting was called to order by President Flanders at the Synovus Bank building at 1:00 pm.

The minutes of the July 13 meeting were approved. The treasurer's report was received and a motion to file was passed.

Gayler Boettcher presented Mark and Janet Love with a framed Presidential Citation for their fine work in planning our 2008 Hibiscus Show, with a round of applause from all members.

President Flanders announced that a fund raiser yard sale will be held this winter, with a committee formed under Gayler Boettcher. Please begin saving your items for the sale.

The new hospitality chairpersons are Dee Pastorius and Tootie Baldini. Jennifer Murdock has accepted appointment as the new Program Chairperson.

Jennifer announced that September 14 program will be presented by a Manatee County Extension Center Master Gardener on "Non-Hibiscus Tropicals". There will be no regular meeting in October, but our annual "much looked-forward-to" Pot Luck will be Thursday evening, October 23 at the Boettcher home.

Several members agreed to receive Petal Power by e-mail to conserve on the costs of printing and mailing.

Jim Bridges, President of the Harry Goulding Hibiscus Chapter, presented a very informative program on "Starting Hibiscus from Seed". He took us through the process of pollinating the bloom, gathering the seed and preparing it for planting and finally showing us plants, at different time intervals, of seeds he has planted. Every person received five seeds, labeled as to parentage, and printed directions from Jim. Kathy Grandoff prepared pots and soil for planting them. Our thanks to both of them. Everyone will report on the status of their seedlings at future meetings. Who will be the first to produce a new bloom? Take pictures of your progress and particularly of any blooms that don't agree to show themselves on a Chapter Meeting date.

Gayler held a short session on "What's With Your Hibiscus?". This is an informative sharing time for all and will continue to be a part of each meeting.

There were five items for raffle today: Zelma and Wally Neef donated three plants, another came from Unbelievable Hibiscus, and an El Capitolio from Jay Cowart. Jim Bridges g. donated 10 seeds planted in a "green house" from his demonstration today.

A motion to adjourn was made. Dorothy Erikson furnished a delicious variety of refreshments.

Rae Flanders, Secretary

Coming Events

Monday, Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m.: Board Meeting, Family Life Center, First Baptist Church

Sunday, Sept. 14, 1:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting: Master Gardener Show, Synovus Bank, Manatee at 26th Street W.