

# Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter  
American Hibiscus Society

September, 2008

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## NEW SHOW DATE, NEW SHOW PLACE!

The less than acceptable results of our May show is now part of Chapter history and since the date of the show (on Memorial Day weekend) was thought to be at least part of the problem it was decided to find a new date for the show. Various aspects relate to the dates available, and when other Florida Chapters are having their shows certainly is in the mix. Anyway, the 2009 show will be on **Saturday, March 21st** – with set up on **Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**.

The location of the 2009 show will also be changing. The only date available at the Fairgrounds was the Memorial Day weekend. As one of the “powers that be” there said, “The only reason you are here is that you took the Memorial Day weekend”. Therefore, if we were to change the date of the show we would have to change where the show was held. It just so happens that new personnel are in place at the First Baptist Church which has resulted in lower costs for us to use that facility. Therefore, the 2009 show will be held at the First Baptist Church as it was in 2005 and 2006.

What is important at this time is for you to put “Hibiscus Show” or some such notation on the dates March 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> on your 2009 calendar. Well now that may present a problem for most folks since 2009 calendars aren’t too much in use yet. Anyway, you get the idea. However you are scheduling things for 2009 – include the set up day and show on March 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

## October means potluck...

Perhaps no where else but at Golby-Reasoner, October has become the month for potlucks. We have had one at the Boettcher’s for at least the last ten years. To check that, we went back through old issues of PETAL POWER and we find that indeed, the first potluck at the Boettcher’s was

October 22, 1998. We didn’t go much further back, but did ascertain that in 1997 there was an October potluck at the Beesley’s (active members who had to leave the Chapter due to business necessities – and we still miss them).

Up until a couple of years ago we had a second Sunday of the month Chapter meeting in October and the potluck later in the month. Then we started having only a short Chapter meeting after the potluck, which is what will happen this year. The date is October 26<sup>th</sup> and the time is 6:00 p.m. and the place is at the Boettcher’s, 9213 Forrester Drive. We will put directions to the Boettcher’s in next month’s PETAL POWER and arrangements for what everyone will bring will be achieved by telephone – these calls will also ascertain how many will be attending). Expect a call...

## What’s up?

So you may be asking yourself, “What is ahead for Chapter meetings for the rest of the Chapter year?” (Well probably no one is really asking themselves that, but just play along – OK?) The answer is in the Chapter meeting minutes which are in the last portion of this issue of PETAL POWER. We are sure you will agree that a wide variety of activities and programs are scheduled, resulting in what should be a GREAT year!

## Board Meeting Minutes Excerpts

Special Events Chairman, Dorothy Erikson reported that the charge for the Christmas Luncheon at Sara Bay Country Club will be \$12.95, including gratuity. It was decided that the Restaurant Meeting & Installation will again be at Peridia Country Club.

President Flanders stated that our portion of the magazine ad in Florida Gardening’s three bi-monthly issues has risen from \$91 to \$110. A motion was made and passed that we pay the \$110.

\* Words of Wisdom \*

*Inside every older person is a younger one  
wondering what happened.*

## The Edible Hibiscus

By Eric Golby

When conversing about Hibiscus with newcomers, I am sometime asked, “and can you eat them?” I am tempted to say, “Who would want to eat something as lovely as a Hibiscus?”

But that question does remind me of, years ago, before we had Interstate 4 to speed us to Orlando, we used to drive north through Tampa to Brooksville, and go east on Highway 50 to that then small city of Orlando. Midway, there was a huge boggy area alongside the highway for a couple miles – and in the summer, it was loaded with Hibiscus in full bloom. My chauffeur, (he never let anyone drive him!) the late Norman Reasoner, identified them for me as Rose Mallow, or Marsh Mallow (remember that name – “Marsh Mallow”), *Hibiscus Moscheutos*. It is native from Massachusetts to Michigan and down to Florida, usually on poorly drained soils. He explained that in the growing conditions on wet or boggy ground, different roots for the plant were necessary to allow oxygen and air to supply life to the plants. That is why the major roots are at the surface. The fleshy, reddish-brown roots have a rubbery skin, covering a soft, spongy, white interior. As the story goes, a couple of hundred years ago, pioneer families who eked out their living, discovered how they could get some pleasure in their meager food regime. They harvested some fleshy Hibiscus roots, peeled off the outer skin and cut the white spongy pith into little one-inch cylinders. These were then simmered in a pan with a mixture of water, corn or cane syrup and honey. Then they were drained and coated with cornstarch – which was replaced with powdered sugar as finances improved. It makes a wonderful confection – and was “dirt cheap” at that! And, they were called Marsh Mallows.

Of course we still know them today as marshmallows and Boy Scout Golby fondly remembers toasting them on a stick over a campfire. Of course today, Kraft and others don't use a single Hibiscus as they turn our millions of

marshmallows and no one knows – or cares – where they originated years ago.

*(Editor's Note: While visiting Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania recently we were more than a little interested to see a man in three feet of water, wearing wading boots, taking spent blooms off what was certainly a hibiscus plant – which was thriving on an island that was perhaps under a foot of water. We approached him and said something to the effect that we recognized the plant as a hibiscus, but seeing it in water was certainly a different sight for us. The gardener said it was a hibiscus – a mallow! Of course that reminded us of the above story that Eric Golby wrote a good number of years ago.)*

## October Hibiscus Gardening

October is the beginning of what one might call the fall. However, in Florida there is no drastic change as there might be in northern areas. Usually there is less rain than in August and September; of course, weather patterns called something we do not mention here, could bring unwanted amounts of rain.

In a way, you start to prepare plants for winter now, particularly in areas susceptible to frost or freeze. October would be the last month to do any pruning that might be necessary. That would consist of pruning required to keep plants “in bounds” or “in shape”. Since we have had some pretty good rains, any fertilizer applied has probably washed half way to China. You may therefore have to replace the lost fertilizer. In cold prone areas the final application for the year should be early next month.

There is some evidence that mites are particularly active. The most visible sign of mites will be the appearance of light green or yellow spots on leaves – that spread, turning the entire leaf yellow. Daily spraying of the underside of plant leaves with a water wand may provide control. If that doesn't do the job an insecticide labeled for mites or a miticide that is specific for mite control may be called for. *Kelthane* is an example of a mite specific product that will not harm bees or other beneficial insects.

## Chapter Meeting Minutes: September 14, 2008

The Golby-Reasoner Chapter meeting was called to order by President Flanders at the Synovus Bank building at 1:00 pm. Twenty-six members and one guest were present.

There was still much excitement over the hibiscus seeds that were planted last month. Several members reported that leaves had sprouted and several brought their plants in for "show and tell".

A motion was made and passed to approve the August Chapter minutes as printed in Petal Power. There was no Treasurer's report this month.

Mark Love reported on the Board's action to change then date and location of the Annual Show. We will return to the First Baptist Church in Bradenton on Saturday, March 21, 2009, with set-up on Friday, March 20. Mark and Janet both received a round of applause for their fine work.

Frank Vejrostek reminded members to "save your stuff" for the upcoming yard sale, date to be announced.

Sunshine Chair, Dotty Taaffe, said no cards were sent this month. She will call the Santiago's to see how Rueben is doing.

Dee Pastorius and Tootie Baldini are the new Hospitality Chairs. They passed around a sign-up sheet for the year.

Program Chairperson, Jennifer Murdock, announced the rest of the programs for the year. They are:

Thursday, October 23: Pot Luck Dinner at Boettchers

Saturday, November 8: Demonstration of the Earth Box by Blake Whiseant at his facility, 1023 Ellenton-Gillette Rd. Ellenton at 1:00 PM. He will donate one for our raffle.

Sunday, December 14: Christmas Luncheon at SaraBay Country Club

Sunday, January 11: "Automating Micro-Irrigation" by Dave Flanders

Sunday, February 8: Field trip to Mixon's Unbelievable Nursery via car pools.

Sunday, March 8: Show Planning – "Who Does What at Our Annual Show"

Friday, March 20: Show Set-up

Saturday, March 21: ANNUAL SHOW

Sunday, April 5: Picnic at Durante Park

Sunday, May 3: Flower Arranging by Dorothy Ericson

Sunday, June 14: Luncheon & Installation at Peridia Country Club

Jennifer then introduced Janice Hamlin, Master Gardener and past-president of the Manatee River Garden Club, who told us many interesting things about Bromeliads and how to use them in our landscapes. She showed many examples-of interesting and beautiful bromeliads taken from her yard.

The meeting was adjourned followed by refreshments, courtesy of Tootie Baldini and Pat Kramer.

A beautiful plant, "Grand Finale"-was donated by Kathy and Don for the raffle. Frank Vejrostek was the lucky winner.

Rae Flanders, Secretary

## Coming Events

October 13, 6:30 p.m.: Board Meeting, Central Library, 1301 Barcarrota Blvd. W.

October 23, 6:00 p.m.: Potluck/Chapter Meeting, The Boettchers, 9213 Forrester Drive