

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

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October Potluck

Is there a potluck in your future? What could be better – particularly if you happen to be hungry? Well the current count for the (Annual) Chapter Potluck coming up on Thursday, October 23rd is around 30, a number that leaves room for more to attend. Therefore, if you have decided you would like to attend please call the Organizer Supreme, Dottie Erikson, and let her know. The potluck, which will include a very short business meeting, begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Shirley and Gayler Boettcher home, 9213 Forrester Drive. (If you use a navigator of some kind, it may respond to 9213 65Av. E.)

Directions to the Boettcher home.

Go east on Route 70 (53 Ave. E.) and at the second stop light past the I75 underpass turn right on to Braden Run, which takes you into Braden Woods. At the first stop sign turn right onto Forrester Drive and drive for a pretty long quarter circle to 9213. Don't let the house numbers confuse you – keep driving and you will eventually get to the 9000's.

Saturday, November 8

Chapter Meeting/Field Trip!

Our November Chapter meeting will be different in several respects.

1. It will be held on **Saturday** – not Sunday.
2. It will be held at the Earth Box Research Center – not the Synovus Bank.
3. It will be held under a huge oak tree – not around a board room type table.
4. The program speaker is not coming to us – we are going to him. (However he has been our program presenter previously – at our meeting place.)

That pretty well tells the story – our November Chapter meeting will be at 1:00 p.m. (at least that stays the same), **Saturday, November 8th**, at the

Earth Box store, 1023 Ellenton Gillette Road, Ellenton. Mr. Whisnant, the co-inventor of the Earth Box will demonstrate the way to set up an earth box – complete with, it is assumed, his usual good humor and wit. He has been featured as the Chapter meeting program twice in past 15 years or so and was always very well received. However, it has been a good many years since his last visit and – this will be the first time the Chapter has visited his “store”. Therefore, those who have seen his “act” before will enjoy seeing him on his home “stage” and anyone that hasn't seen plants growing in Earth Boxes will be amazed at those on display. And by the way, Mr. Whisnant has indicated he will be contributing an Earth Box for our meeting raffle!

We understand that several Chapter members who will be attending the “meeting” are planning on stopping at Hickory Hollow for a somewhat late lunch on the way home. Hickory Hollow is a local gem which was listed in some publication (was it Parade magazine?) as one of the top 10 barbeque restaurants in the U.S. Top ten or not, it is special. A sign at the entrance says something like, “If you are in a hurry, this is not where you should be.” The service is really pretty good, but they do not take credit cards or personal checks – cash only.

Directions to the Earth Box store: It is located just off Rt. 301 at 1023 Ellenton Gillette Road. If one is coming from Bradenton and crossing the river on the 1st Street bridge on Rt. 41/301 – turn off when Rt.301 goes right and 41 goes straight and proceed east on 301. Continue east for three or four miles to the stop light at the Ellenton Gillette Road. There is a Bank of America on one corner, a Methodist church and two convenience stores on the others. Turn left on Ellenton Gillette and the Earth Box store is on the left in about a block.

If one is coming from the other direction one should get off I75 and go west on 301. Just past the Gamble Mansion you will come to the stop light at the intersection of the Ellenton Gillette Road which

* Words of Wisdom *

Be careful when reading health books. You might die of a misprint. – Mark Twain

is described above. Turn right to the Earth Box store.

Chapter Garage Sale

In the August issue of PETAL POWER we introduced the concept of the Chapter having one or more garage sale type events this winter/spring. We asked that everyone start saving their garage sale treasures and we asked for information about when the parks/developments our members lived in were having their “annual” garage sales. Both requests are still appropriate and as the months pass and the balance in the Chapter treasury continues to decline (9/30 – \$1,672.23), they become even more pertinent. Therefore, we again ask that you identify and save all your garage sale type items. Also, if you are willing to host a garage sale “in your garage”, please let any Board member know when your park/development is having its sale. If tying a Chapter sale to a community sale is not workable, for whatever reason, would you consider hosting a garage/yard sale that would be advertised in the local newspapers?

Christmas at SaraBay

This year’s Christmas Luncheon will be at SaraBay Country Club. WOW! Yep, it is October already – so to mention where the Christmas Luncheon will be held is at least somewhat timely. Anyway, SaraBay is a new venue for us and may therefore be of interest to those that like going somewhere different. For your calendar, - the date is **December 14th**.

November Hibiscus Gardening

The dry season is here. At least gardeners in our area must assume that it is here and that it will continue until next May. So we are back to a regular watering schedule – which brings up the question, “Did you ever wonder if a plant in your garden needed water or perhaps already had too much water?” This question would most likely come up in relation to in-ground plants or in regard to plants in really big pots. The leaves were curling so you knew it was trying to tell you something, - so

do you water or not? According to Extension Service material, if the roots are too dry the leaves will curl up on the tips. If the roots are too wet, the leaves will curl up on the edges.

In addition to concerns about inadequate nature-provided water, November also brings concerns about cold weather. Now it is difficult to consider gathering together what’s needed to give our plants protection from the cold, when day time temperatures are still in the high eighties. However, our Chapter’s treasure, Eric Golby, stressed that we have had wind-chills that give the effect of below-freezing temperatures as early as the 10th of November. Therefore, that is a pretty good date to have gathered together at least what you could use to protect your plants from cold winds. If you do not provided your hibiscus with protection from those cold winds, about 10 days later you will have a fine crop of yellow leaves.

An old rule states that hibiscus should be given their last fertilization prior to the 10th of November. Of course that rule does not take into consideration the location of the hibiscus involved. Plants on the islands could perhaps be fertilized regularly throughout the winter however, considering that they wouldn’t eat much during the cooler weather, their helpings could be smaller. Light feedings could also be considered throughout the winter for potted hibiscus, wherever they are located in our area, but only if you are “for sure” going to move your plants “indoors” during the several cold nights many of us will experience.

Another rule for this time of year is that you should put away your pruning shears until late February or March. (NO SEVERE PRUNING FOR CHAPTER MEMBERS UNTIL AFTER THE MARCH 21 SHOW!!) Of course pruning induces new growth that can be easily damaged by cold weather. Some of our members live very near the Gulf or on the islands where frost/freezes are relatively rare. We have other members who live in what is called East Manatee or East Sarasota County, where frosts are common and freezes are more frequent than any gardener would like. (Most of Manatee County is in Zone 9b, but eastern Manatee is 9a.) So how does that relate to pruning? Well certainly one would have to say that the damage possible from pruning during the next several months is less for

those adjacent to the Gulf. However, winter pruning cannot be recommended for anyone, anywhere. Of course, as we so demurely indicated, no Chapter member should severely prune until after the show, in order to have all the blooms possible for the show.

The rainy season and the high temperatures may have left the foliage on some of your hibiscus in need of “greening up”. Hibiscus naturally vary, from one variety to another, in their “greenness”. (Another new word! Mark up another one!) That range of greenness (the greatness of a new word becomes evident with usage) may be wider at this time of year. Whether it is or not - we have discussed the use of Epsom salt monthly – if you haven’t been following that suggestion, now would be a good time for an application (1 teaspoon per foot of plant height). Include *Ironite* too, particularly if you have plants with yellowish leaves and green veins. An application of Minor Element Spray may also be beneficial. We think *Come See*, *Come Save* still carries a *Southern Ag* minors product.

October 13 Board Meeting Excerpts

Treasurer Shirley Boettcher gave the financial report for the period ending September 30, 2008. The beginning balance in August was \$2,144.38, with income of \$157.50. The August expenses were \$629.65, with an ending balance of \$1,672.23. The report was accepted as written.

The Board agreed to again decorate a tree with hibiscus at the Crosley Festival of Trees being held Tuesday, December 2 through Wednesday, December 10. Lots of Chapter workers will be needed, including people to pick up blooms from Randy Cox in Engelwood on some of the days. Dave Flanders will make sign-up sheets to be passed around at the Pot Luck.

Discussions were held on purchasing ribbons for the annual show, a possible Pat Grant Memorial, and changing signs for the show. Action on these will be taken when appropriate. Shirley will meet with her Show Sponsors committee and form plans for this activity. The fund raising garage sale committee will meet to plan their proposal for the sale(s).

Coming Events

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

Monday, November 3, 6:30 p.m.: Board Meeting at Central Library

Saturday, November 8, 1:00 p.m.: Chapter Meeting at Earth Box Research Center, 1023 Ellenton-Gillette Rd., Ellenton