

Unbelievable Hibiscus in February

It is perhaps more proper to say that the Chapter will be visiting where unbelievable hibiscus come from in February. Don Mixon and Kathy Grandoff graciously invited our Chapter to visit their Unbelievable Hibiscus nursery in Wesley Chapel so we can enjoy the many blooms that will surely be on display – and so that we can see where the plants that we sell at our show come from.

The particulars of the “field trip meeting” are that we will meet at Unbelievable Hibiscus, 9224 Old Pasco Road, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544, on Sunday, February 8th at **2:00 p.m.** Note the 2:00 p.m. starting time! By making it a 2:00 meeting, it was thought that by leaving about the same time as you usually do (for 1:00 meetings) – you would get to Unbelievable Hibiscus by two o’clock, or perhaps a little after. In case you need to call, Kathy’s number is 813-355-6966 and Don’s is 813-390-5040.

Don likes to say that the Unbelievable Hibiscus Nursery is the result of a hobby that got completely out of hand. We will all have an opportunity to see just how far out of hand that hobby got and perhaps put together a shopping list of plants we’d like to buy at our show March 21st.

Dave and Rae Flanders, Chapter President and Secretary respectively, have done a heroic job in planning, coordinating, and promoting ride sharing among Chapter members for the field trip to Unbelievable Hibiscus. Reducing the number of vehicles making the trip was particularly appropriate when the subject of a field trip was first introduced, due to the cost of gasoline. While the price of gas has decreased, as this is being written it is on the way back up and no one knows how far it will go. If you wish to go and want to share a ride, perhaps Dave or Rae (722-6658) can link you up with someone who also wants to share a ride.

Since almost all the trip is on I75, it is a pretty quick jaunt to Unbelievable Hibiscus. From the SR70/I75

intersection, it is around an hour drive (about 65 miles total), depending on driving speed of course. The directions that Google gives from that intersection are as follows:

Merge onto I-75 North – 61.3 miles
Take exit 279 for State Hwy 54 toward State Hwy 54/Wesley Chapel/Zephyrhills – 0.3 mi.
Turn left at State Hwy-54/Wesley Chapel Blvd – 0.2 mi
Turn right at Oakley Blvd – 0.9 mi.
Turn left to stay on Oakley Blvd – 0.1 mi
Turn right at Old Pasco Rd. – 3.5 mi
9224 Old Pasco Rd. (Unbelievable Hibiscus) will be on the right.

Note: Unbelievable Hibiscus is in Wesley Chapel (33544), not Zephyrhills as indicated on the maps distributed in the Chapter meeting.

Note: Some of the 3.5 miles on Old Pasco Road, which is for the most part a “country road”, is posted with a very low speed limit. It is our understanding that one should abide by the posted limits since it is occasionally well patrolled.

State Fair Hibiscus Show

Both the excerpts of the January Board meeting minutes and the minutes of the January Chapter meeting in this issue of PETAL POWER have an entry about the hibiscus show at the State Fair, February 7th. Although the show has already been mentioned twice we are mentioning it again in hopes that those who might go if they knew when it was, will have three chances to find out when it is – and how to get in – free.

The State Fair hibiscus show is on February 7th and hibiscus folks can get in free by showing up at gate B, between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. - with some hibiscus blooms. There will be a hibiscus person at the gate, perhaps at the exit portion of the gate, to assure your admittance and to provide directions to the building the show is in. See you there – and good luck!

Now that can't be right!

But it is! As we write this – it is just about two months to our annual show! Now that can't be right! It is always in September, right? Not any more! OK then, it's in May, right? No, not any more! Now it is in MARCH! Gads. Yes, Saturday, March 21st to be exact – with set up on Friday, March 20th.

So even though it doesn't seem right, put "SET UP" and "SHOW" on your calendar for March 20th and 21st if it isn't there already. Of course everyone has most likely been contacted by Mark Love to talk about "work" assignments. Unlike those at PETAL POWER, Mark is aware that the show is "right around the corner". Shame on us.

Learning from the past...

The main reason we may wish to forget last year's show is that not many people came to see it. As the old saying goes (slightly abridged) – "you could have thrown a rock across the show room and not hit anyone."

In an effort to have an opportunity to hit a few people with a rock, President Dave Flanders is asking that Chapter members distribute ¼ sheet fliers advertising the show **everywhere**. Our reporter reported (isn't that what reporters are supposed to do?) that he saw a small pile of fliers on the counter at his dermatologist's office. That's the kind of place to put fliers that Dave had in mind – as well as health clubs, club houses, insurance agent offices, barber shops and hair salons, grocery stores, cleaners, and all types of doctors' offices, - not just dermatologists. If you don't have any fliers, President Flanders will have a new supply at the February and March Chapter meetings.

Where there is a will...

This may come as a surprise to you, but there are more Catholic churches than casinos in Las Vegas. Not surprisingly, some worshippers at Sunday services give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed.

Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect on the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan monastery for sorting

and then the chips are taken to the casinos of their origin and cashed in. This is done by the chip monks.

You didn't see that coming, did you...

Excerpts from January 5th Board Meeting

Treasurer Shirley Boettcher's financial statement shows a beginning balance of \$1,487.47, income of \$371.00 with expenses of \$162.20. The ending balance is \$1,696.27.

Reports were made regarding the annual show. Gayler led discussion on the facility layout of the plant sale. Shirley handed out forms to be given to possible sponsors. Mark is beginning to make job assignments. Show publicity chairpersons, Marion and Judy reported that the banners have been taken to the sign maker to have the show location change, and the cost will be \$120.66. Gayler suggested the show programs be revised and everyone agreed.

Dave Kaplan, Nominating Committee chairman, reported that the committee is actively pursuing officers for the upcoming year.

The State Fair Hibiscus Show will be Saturday, February 7. Everyone is encouraged to enter blooms, enjoy the fair and help with the show if you wish. Enter at Gate B, free from 8:30 – 10:30.

Hibiscus Seed Bank

Bob Carran, who is the AHS Seed Bank Chairman, recently made an email report to an online group about the 2008 Seed Bank activity, as follows:

"Hi everyone. I just thought I'd report the results from a pretty good year for the AHS Seed Bank. Although not as busy as 2007 the final totals were quite respectable.

"The total number of persons requesting seeds was 171. A total of 2,495 seeds were sent out. As you can see that averages out to 14 to 15 seeds per person.

"And now it is 2009 and it begins all over again."

Bob does a great job spreading the word about hibiscus – in the form of seeds – all over the world. There is nothing that says AHS chapter members cannot request seeds from the seed bank. Bob's address is on page three of *The Seed Pod*.

Hard times...

It seems like everything is on the down-turn, along with the economy. The 2008 word production here at PETAL POWER is no different. Last year's production of 20,871 words was down 1,442 from 2007. It is not clear how the economy affects our word production, but it is clear that we need a federal bailout! We urge all members to write their congressmen. Ask them to have the checks made out to "Golby-Reasoner..."

Hibiscus Gardening in February

In our January issue of PETAL POWER we usually discuss why constraint should be used in scheduling pruning in February. That discussion would talk about the likelihood of cold spells arriving in late February and so one would not want to prune until after that. Well, of course, all that type reasoning is **poppycock** (we have always wanted to use that word!) this year. It is poppycock because hibiscus don't bloom for some time after pruning and since all Golby-Reasoner folks want blooms to enter into their show on March 21st, all pruning should be delayed until after that date! Therefore we will wait until our March issue to discuss pruning.

As we thought about pruning we were reminded of an article we did some time ago about Bob Hunter – and pruning. As it turns out, the article was in the January, 2002 Petal Power and featured a nice picture of Bob smiling broadly and pruning a hibiscus plant. The caption said, "Happiness is...Bob Hunter pruning away! The headline of the short story led into the story and was as follows: "The ol' cutup ... was back at it at the January Chapter meeting. Dr. Bob Hunter stepped into the breach, with his own brand of 'show and tell' about pruning, when the scheduled speaker was unable to attend due to an auto accident. It seems Bob is called on every three or four years to remind us of the do's and don'ts of pruning – and just like fine wine, etc., etc."

And how does one prepare plants to provide as many blooms as possible during a period when frosts/freezes are possible. Of course, how possible that is depends on where the plants are in relation to the Gulf. Those close to the Gulf can certainly utilize fertilizer to induce blooms, but those living further inland may hesitate to use a general fertilizer. However, inland folks may be able to

give their plants a little boost with a spray of minor elements. Otherwise, everyone should get their plants as much sun as possible (move potted plants if possible) and keep them watered regularly.

Chapter Meeting: January 11, 2009

Twenty four members attended the first Chapter meeting of the New Year, along with two guests brought and introduced by Petey Birchall.

President Flanders opened the meeting by inquiring about the hibiscus seeds we planted five months ago. Several people reported success with theirs.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as printed in the Petal Power.

There is an ending balance of \$1,696.27 in the treasury. This is a low amount, so everyone was asked to save items for the gift table at the Show and for a yard sale. Donny Waldroup has already had a yard sale and will be donating most of the profits to the Golby-Reasoner Chapter. Shirley Boettcher also distributed sponsorship forms to be handed out to prospective donors.

Mark Love is beginning to assign jobs for everyone at the Show. Plants will be sold as soon as they are set up in the morning.

Carl Kramer reported that Holly Richter is in the hospital and has had surgery. Cards may be sent to her home address.

Program Chairman Jennifer Murdock passed around a sign-up sheet for next month's meeting at Don and Kathy's Unbelievable Hibiscus in Wesley Chapel on February 8. We will car pool as much as possible. We will tour the nursery, enjoy the fellowship and have snacks.

The Florida State Fair Hibiscus Show will be held Saturday, February 7. Everyone is encouraged to enter blooms and help with the show, if you wish, and then enjoy the fair. Entrance is free, with blooms, from 8:30 to 10:30 AM at Gate B.

Jennifer then introduced our speaker, Dave Flanders, who described how to use and automate micro-irrigation for a variety of hibiscus applications.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00. It was followed by refreshments served by Judy Duncan and Petey Birchall.

Rae Flanders
Secretary

Coming Events

Monday, February 2, 6:30 p.m.: Board Meeting, Central Library

Sunday, February 8, 2:00 p.m.: Unbelievable Hibiscus, 9224 Old Pasco Road, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

Saturday, March 21, 2009: Annual Show and Plant Sale, First Baptist Church