

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

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Miniature Plants in Your Landscape.

Yes, Donny Waldroup's subject at the August Chapter meeting will be "Miniature Plants in Your Landscape". We understand that Donny has guaranteed that we will not have to sing "It's a Small, Small World" after his presentation and therefore we can all relax and enjoy the program – which may have great potential for several of our members. A number of our folks have downsized to smaller homes or condos and (after they have a few hibiscus) they have precious little space for anything, much less the usual plantings. But perhaps some miniature plants – that may be just the thing! It should be an interesting program and (1.) Donny is always knowledgeable and entertaining and (2.) it will be nice to see everyone after not having a Chapter meeting in July.

That's the August Chapter meeting, 1:00 p.m., Sunday, August 9th at the Synovus Bank on the corner of Manatee Avenue and 26th Street West.

Not lost, not misdirected...

Your June issue of PETAL POWER did not get lost in the mail, actual or virtual. No, after 13 years of publication, month after month, with determined and steadfast loyalty to the Flag of the Golby-Reasoner Chapter, the Board of Directors graciously granted the staff of PETAL POWER their first month off – ever! (Well that's not really right – we had one other month off – just when, we don't remember. And, the Chapter really doesn't have a flag, – but if it did, we'd be determined and steadfastly loyal to it. Yes we would. Really.)

August Hibiscus Gardening

Wow, it's August and it's hot! Of course it has been for some time. July seemed particularly uncomfortable. Here are two items from our wish list. (1.) We wish the TV weather people wouldn't keep telling what the dew point is. (2.) We wish we hadn't learned that anytime the dew point is over

Reuben Santiago

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70, which it is during most of July and August, we can expect to feel miserable when we are outside.

However, as gardeners, outside we must go because the same factors that make us feel so miserable, tend to invigorate critters that may be harmful to our hibiscus and other plants and also provide an excellent

environment for plant disease. Just keeping enough water on our plants in this hot weather, particularly those in pots, is a challenge. (Don't forget to mulch your hibiscus, those in the ground – and those in pots.) Someplace in the Tampa Bay area gets rain almost every day during July and August, but a specific back yard seldom gets rain every day. Therefore, again we say (maybe it was Peggy Dessaint that said) that the best friend your plants can have is your shadow – every day. That is, if you are close enough to cast a shadow on your plants you (1) are there and (2) you are close enough to see if they are happy.

During August, be ready to give your plants an afternoon shower if they look droopy (they will love you for it) to cool them off and to upset the breeding cycle of several insects that are detrimental to the health of your plants. If that doesn't provide continuing relief from noticeable insect problems, apply a good systemic insecticide on at least an every other week schedule.

It seems like mites are particularly abundant this year. Several years ago, Barry Schlueter, editor of the new edition of the Hibiscus Handbook and a past editor of The Petaloid, the newsletter of the Lone Star Chapter, wrote at some length about the benefits of providing good spacing between hibiscus plants – and the monthly spraying of a fish emulsion mixture of 2-3 tablespoons per gallon of

water. Mr. Schlueter felt the fish emulsion spray – and late afternoon hosing “up” of the plants – provided complete control of mites and scale. That was chronicled in one issue of The Petaloid – and then the next month he told of an aggressive mite attack that in “a flash...had large areas nearly defoliated, with few to no remaining leaves when the damaged ones were removed by hand.” Of course he had to revert to the use of several miticides. The lesson to be learned is found in the fact that he had not maintained the fish emulsion spray/water spray treatment and the mites took the upper hand.

Now does that sound familiar? Haven’t we all found terrible things going on in the garden because we had been on vacation mentally? Or we were actually, physically on vacation?

How do you know when mites are doing lunch (breakfast and dinner too) on your hibiscus? In many cases yellow raised spots will appear on leaves. As the mites munch away there is a gradual transition of leaf color from green to dusty gray-green to pale yellow over a time span of several days to a week. The underside of leaves showing those symptoms will have a salt and pepper appearance, with the “pepper” actually being adult mites and the “salt” being eggs. If you shake the infested leaf over a sheet of (white) paper – the “pepper” will walk around. If you determine that mites are present and you see no evidence of other critters, a spraying with a miticide is just what is needed since it affects only mites. Since it seems like the “big box” garden centers seldom carry miticides you may have to go some place like “Come See Come Save” to find it.

Luckily, hibiscus tend to have few diseases. Of course that is true of most plants, excluding roses. Harmful insects tend to be the problem – look at the relative shelf space given to insecticides and fungicides in retail stores. However, if your plants are going to have a disease problem, this is a prime time of year for them to “come down” with something. If your hibiscus seems to have some disease – and you have roses, you probably have Ortho’s Funginex on your garden shelf – you can use that on your hibiscus. Daconil, also from Ortho, is a wide spectrum fungicide which can be used on

almost everything, including hibiscus, for almost everything.

The combination of hot weather and the water needed to keep plants alive takes a toll on fertilizer. You may well need to fertilize more frequently than recommended on the label during the summer months. While our hibiscus may not produce many blooms in the hot weather we must do what we can to keep them healthy as we look forward to cooler weather. If the hot weather and all the water required give your plant leaves a dull green color you may wish to supplement their regular feeding with a weekly application of a water soluble fertilizer, following label instructions, both as a foliar and root feeding. If you consider doing that, you might as well add a teaspoon of Epsom Salt – and you might as well put in 2 or 3 tablespoons of fish emulsion. (Mr. Schlueter would think it really proper.)

A flight of fancy...

Editor’s note: Our local reporter occasionally has a “flight of fancy” (more like a “stream of thought”) – on paper. We picked up one of those and although some apology is in order – here it is only because most Chapter members have similar, but different, thoughts.

I’ve had two cups of coffee and read the paper – what there was of it. A Sports Section of four pages! And now it looks like the Editorial Page is going to be just that – one page. So it looks like I can’t put it off any longer.

So don the old shorts and a tee shirt and head outside. Wait. Got to slather on the SPF 45 and put on the straw hat. Now for the great outdoors. The dew is still on everything. When the humidity is 110% - nothing dries. What was the quote in the last issue of that outstanding publication, PETAL POWER? Oh yes, “gardening requires lots of water – most of it in the form of perspiration.” Well I will have a lot of that. It doesn’t dry either.

Since it’s wet underfoot I’ll put on the work boots here in the shop. Now that’s comfort. Plenty of toe wiggle room. Well let’s see what the “estate” looks like this morning. Darn. I am going to get a pellet gun. But I really don’t know if it would faze an

armadillo. They sure were hungry last night. Holes all over. I need to spray for whatever they were feeding on. Well, at least they didn't dig up the new plantings.

When did I plant all those? Those 60 or so – talk about getting carried away. I've been hand watering with a sprinkling can every day except when it rains a lot for what seems like a month, but I guess it's only been a week and a few days. They all have the little dam built around them, just like Peggy Dessaint said, but now they all have sprung leaks what with all the rain. To get the two weeks "required" I need a few more days.

Well lets look at the hibiscus...there's at least a couple blooms...darn mites...time to spray again...the Bayer's three way which gets everything including mites with some miticide thrown in just for the mites seems to be making some headway... I thought the squirrels had dug up all the whatever...but they're at it again. You'd think the yard would offer enough digging room and they wouldn't have to dig in the pots! There's a couple more pots to fill back up with mix and mulch. Might as well get with it – another day in the garden...

Chapter Meeting: Luncheon and Officers Installation - June 14, 2009

President Flanders welcomed 25 members to the luncheon and installation meeting and recognized Dorothy Erikson for arranging the luncheon and decorating the tables so beautifully. The center of each colorful table was adorned with a hibiscus topiary, designed and made by Dorothy, which three lucky members were able to take home with them. He also thanked Gene Haugh and his able assistant, Suzanne, for creating and presenting us with the beautiful new Membership Directory. Lastly, he thanked all the members who worked so hard at our show and during the past year showing the spirit of our chapter and its fellowship.

After a silent prayer everyone enjoyed several trips to the bountiful buffet as well as conversation and fellowship with one another.

A short meeting was held before the installation. The May minutes were approved as printed in the Petal Power. There was no Treasurer's report. President Flanders called the two departing Board members, Dorothy Erikson and Betty Seipel, to the front and presented them with framed Presidential Citations for their many contributions as they supported and strengthened our chapter over the years. The deserving recipients received a standing ovation from all in the room.

Gene Haugh was called upon by President Flanders, and Gene installed the following officers as elected at the May chapter meeting:

Bob Haendel	2011/12
Jeri Lovett	2011/12
Dave Kaplan	2010/11
Belle Hilt	2009/10
Frank Vejrostek	2009/10
Shirley Boettcher	Treasurer
Rae Flanders	Secretary
Don Waldroup	2 nd Vice President
Janet Love	1 st Vice President
Dave Flanders	President

Because Jennifer Murdoch has voiced her resignation from the chapter and not renewed her membership, her position was determined to be vacant. In accordance with the by-laws, President Flanders appointed Janet Love as director to replace Jennifer Murdoch. Also, he appointed Don Waldroup as 1st Vice President replacing Janet Love. The office of 2nd Vice President will remain empty for now. At the last Board Meeting a motion was made and passed approving these changes, effective immediately following board installations on June 14.

The new 2009 – 2010 Board, following these appointments, now is:

Bob Haendel	2011/12
Jeri Lovett	2011/12
Dave Kaplan	2010/11
Janet Love	2010/11
Belle Hilt	2009/10
Frank Vejrostek	2009/10
Shirley Boettcher	Treasurer
Rae Flanders	Secretary
Don Waldroup	1 st Vice President
Dave Flanders	President

President Flanders reminded everyone that the Board has cancelled the July Chapter meeting in accordance with the wishes of the chapter membership at our last meeting. The July Board meeting has also been cancelled. He also announced that there will be no Petal Power printed in June, and to make note that our next meeting will be held on August 9 at the Synovus Bank. This will also be announced in the July Petal Power.

Donny Waldroup and the Taaffes volunteered to be responsible for picking up the key for the bank conference room the Friday before a meeting and to return it on Monday. The meeting was adjourned, followed by fellowship.

Rae Flanders, Secretary

Coming Events

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

Sunday, August 9, 1:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting, "Miniature Plants in Your Landscape" – Donny Waldroup.