

# Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter  
American Hibiscus Society

August, 2009

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## "Lets Talk Hibiscus!"

The September 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter meeting will feature a time to share Hibiscus problems and solutions in a "Lets Talk Hibiscus!" discussion, moderated by Gayler Boettcher. It has been some time since a significant amount of Chapter meeting time has been set aside to share thoughts about the little (or big) victories and defeats we have experienced with our hibiscus. Everyone is urged to bring blooms and/or plant parts to "show and tell" and certainly everyone will be encouraged to share "what's worked for you".

That's 1:00 p.m., Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Synovus Bank on the corner of Manatee Avenue and 26<sup>th</sup> Street W. It should be a fun time – so don't miss it!

## Back to PSBP!!

After an absence of a few years, the Chapter is returning – and will have a booth at the Palma Sola Botanical Park (PSBP) Festival, which this year is on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. We were one of the original participants at the festival and had a booth for what must have been 6 or 8 years. The festival has had numerous name and date changes during its 12 years. Our Chapter's namesake, Eric Golby pushed for the establishment of the park and several of our members were deeply involved early-on: the names Bob Hunter and Len Erikson come to mind. We therefore have a history at PSBP will have an opportunity to build on that history come October.

## Excerpts - August Board Meeting

President Flanders announced that Bob and Nancy Haendel have been appointed Co-chairs with Dottie Erikson to the Special Events Committee. Bob reported on the Bradenton Country Club being a possible venue in which to hold our Christmas Luncheon. It is less expensive for us to have these special events on Saturdays rather than Sundays.

A motion was made and passed to purchase three plants from Unbelievable Hibiscus for our Chapter meeting raffles.

The Flanders' reported that Burnett's have large Pride of Hankins and El Capitolio trees for sale for \$25-35, as a possible memorial for Pat Grant. Donny will look at the site at Crosley Mansion.

A motion was made and passed to purchase seven speaker gifts from Yvonne's Porcelain Creations.

*Editor's Note: In the approximately 13 years that we have been editing PETAL POWER, we have had the responsibility of chronicling the passing of a number of our members. That recognition took the form of a box containing the name and birth/passing dates. Past presidents and who held several offices were remembered with a short article. Last month we chronicled the passing of Ruben Santiago. We recently received a colorful card picturing Ruben as a pilot and containing a moving word picture entitled "Flying West", which we must assume was written by a family member. Many Chapter members may have received the card, but just in case some didn't, "Flying West" is as follows:*

I hope there's a place, way up in the sky,  
Where pilots can go, when they have to die.  
A place where a guy can go and buy a cold beer  
For a friend and comrade, whose memory is dear;  
A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread,  
Nor management type would ere be caught dead;  
Just a quaint little place, kinda dark and full of  
smoke,  
Where they like to sing loud, and love a good joke;  
The kind of place where a lady could go  
And feel safe and protected, by the men she would  
know.

There must be a place where old pilots go,  
When their paining is finished, and their airspeed  
gets low,

Where the whiskey is old, and the women are  
young,  
And the songs about flying and dying are sung,  
Where you'd see all the fellows who'd flown west  
before.  
And they'd call out your name, as you came  
through the door;  
Who would buy you a drink if your thirst should be  
bad,  
And relate to the others, "He was quite a good lad!"

And then through the mist, you'd spot an old guy  
You had not seen for years, though he taught you  
how to fly.  
He'd nod his old head, and grin ear to ear,  
And say "Welcome, my son, I'm pleased that  
you're here."  
For this is the place where true flyers come,  
When the journey is over and the war has been won  
They've come here to at last be safe and alone  
From the government clerk and the management  
clone,  
Politicians and lawyers, the Feds and the noise  
Where the hours are happy, and these good ol' boys  
Can relax with a cool one, and a well deserved rest;  
"This is Heaven, my son – you've passed your last  
test!"

## Time for Fun and Relaxation

We ran into a quote of Barry Schlueter's that was in the June Petaloid, newsletter of the Lone Star Chapter. Barry said: "Be well, and remember that your hobby is supposed to be fun and relaxing." Now that is a thought that we all should take to heart and ascribe to. When a hobby ceases being fun and relaxing something needs to change.

In a work-a-day world, finding a job that is fun and relaxing is virtually impossible. Perhaps the fact that something is not fun and relaxing to do, is why someone is willing to pay to have it done. Should it then not follow, that retirees (who don't have to work) should simply have lives that are all full of hobbies providing lives of fun and relaxation? That doesn't seem to happen ...

## September Hibiscus Gardening

August and September have the most rain, but of course it tends to be spotty – one area getting very little and another getting way too much. However,

in the two months, the amounts seem to even out. Hibiscus, like many plants, don't do well in either overly dry or overly wet conditions. Hibiscus show the results of too much water in only a few days and both in-ground and potted plants can be affected.

In-ground plants may be aided by digging a temporary ditch to drain water away. After particularly long or heavy periods of rain, some have dug up their favorite varieties and laid them in a well-drained shady location with their roots covered. After things dry out, the plants are pruned back and replanted, preferably with new soil. Of course, after such an endeavor, one might want to consider replanting on top of a mound of soil or raising the whole bed – high enough to by-and-large keep the roots of plants above the expected water level, which may be above ground level in some areas.

Potted plants, if planted in media that drain well, will normally pretty much retain only as much water as the plant requires. However, if the pot stands in water, due to heavy rain, it doesn't matter how good your planting media is – it can't drain. Therefore, experience will soon tell you when you will have to move pots or attempt to drain the water away from them. Or, find a new permanent place for your potted plants.

In between rains and sometimes while it is raining, it is downright HOT. While we don't have the 100 degree days like some areas of the county, the further inland you go the further you are from the 90-91 degree predicted most everyday by the TV weather man. And then there is the humidity! We are (hopefully) in air-conditioning through all this, but our plants aren't. Although tropical, our hibiscus really don't like this much heat. They will tell you about it too, by wilting, not blooming, and dropping buds that might develop. These symptoms will be overwhelmingly noticeable on most hibiscus, even those in filtered sun will suffer somewhat. Those in the 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 providing a cushion of air around the pot with the plant. 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.

We are approaching the time of year during which we can expect some of our most and best hibiscus blooms, - if, IF, regular critter control and fertilization is maintained. We have pretty much returned to using any *Ortho* product containing *Acephate* (the active ingredient of *Orthene*, which has not been available for some time). If mites are a problem, use a miticide such as *Kelthane*. Mixing *Kelthane* and *Acephate* into one spray will save some time. If your hibiscus and other plants are being eaten by worms or caterpillars, look for something like *Thuricide*, which contains *Bacillus thuringensis* (Bt). Bt is a naturally occurring soil-borne organism and so therefore controls certain larva stage insects. Since it is a bacterial agent, it should be stored in a cool area – storage in over 90 degree temperatures will decrease its effectiveness.

The fertilizer sold by the Chapter the last two years will probably meet most everyone's need for fertilizer for their hibiscus. Hot and rainy weather puts great demands on fertilizer. For plants in pots one tablespoon per gallon (proportional amounts on in-ground plants) once a month may be in the ballpark during the rainy season. As we indicated in last month's PETAL POWER, an occasional application of a water soluble fertilizer should be considered. You could make that weekly if the plant leaf color is bad.

Late September and into early October is when most everything should be fertilized. That is the time to feed your palms, shrubs, perennials and lawns.

## Chapter Meeting

August 9, 2009

Seventeen members were present as President Flanders welcomed all and called the meeting to order at the Synovus Bank.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed in the Petal Power. President Flanders gave the Treasurer's report as of July 31, 2009. The beginning balance was \$2,107.62. Income is

\$1,124.00, expenses \$1,194.53, with an ending balance of \$2,037.09. He thanked Bob and Beege Hunter for doing the annual audit and Shirley for her excellent job.

Dotty Taaffe, Sunshine Chairperson, reported that several members attended Ruben Santiago's funeral.

Tootie Baldini announced today's hosts are Beege Hunter and Betty Seipel. Tootie passed around a sign-up sheet for future hosts.

New business included the information that the Crosley Festival of Trees will be held December 2-9. We have again been invited and the Board has accepted. We will be looking for volunteers to provide information to visitors as we did last year. We have also received an invitation to have a booth at Palma Sola Botanical Park for their festival on Saturday, October 17. We most likely will have a free booth and distribute information on our chapter and our show. It has not yet been decided if we will sell plants, as the fee for this is \$50.

Program Chairman, Jeri Lovett introduced member and Vice President, Don Waldroup, who explained his method of growing miniature plants in the home garden. Donny put several varieties of his plants on display, some familiar and others not so familiar. It was interesting seeing a fully grown ponytail palm being less than two feet tall. This is a great concept for those of us with small yards. Thanks, Donny.

Our next Chapter meeting will be Sunday, September 13 at Synovus Bank. Carl announced the winner of the raffle plant is the Taaffes. The meeting was adjourned followed by fellowship and refreshments.

Rae Flanders  
Secretary

## Coming Events

Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting, Central Library

Sunday, September, 13<sup>th</sup> 1:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting "Lets Talk Hibiscus! A Sharing of Problems and Solutions", Moderator: Gayler Boettcher

