

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

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Show Time Coming! And at a New Place!

It's like a scene from an old Mickey Rooney movie – “Hey kids, let's put on a show!” OK, so maybe the “kids” part is a bit much, but they always had lots of fun and so do we, putting on our show – at least most of the time. It is show time and here is a brief run down of the important dates and times for Chapter members, but let's start with the place.

Where: The Family Life Center of First Baptist Church, which is on the south-east corner of 13th Street West and 4th Avenue West. Confused? The First Baptist Church is on the (north-west) corner of Manatee Ave and 13th Street West. So the Family Life Center is across 13th Street (and north a bit) from the church.

When: Friday, September 17th, 9:00 AM. – Set-up Day. This year's Set-up Day will actually include setting up the tables and chairs we require. While this sounds like a big deal, it shouldn't take more than an hour or so. Therefore, since the decorating, bagging fertilizer, etc. was accomplished in previous years in something just over two hours; we should be wrapped up in 3 to 4 hours this year. Of course, all this depends on you being there and being a part of the effort. Everyone will be needed!

Saturday, September 18th, 7:30ish AM – Show Day. Co-chairs Janet and Mark Love said they were planning on being at the Family Center at 7:30 AM, - and the plant sale plants usually arrive about that time. Since there are always loose (and tight) ends to wrap up on the day of show, Chapter members will be needed throughout the day. Of course, most members have specific responsibilities that will require them to be there during specific periods of time and certainly the help of everyone is always required to pack up our “stuff” after four o'clock.

Schedule of events on Show Day

- 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., enter blooms
- 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., plant sale
- 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. – public exhibition

Things to remember on Set-up Day

- Bring scissors – with your name on them.
- Bring your Gift Table items – priced.
- Bring some new paper bags. The big ones from your favorite grocery store.
- Buy an official Chapter shirt – if you don't have one - \$14.00 each.

Things to remember on the day of the Show

- Bring blooms! It is a hibiscus show after all. (Any blooms, not just hybrids can be entered – or used as part of the decoration if they are not show quality) Remember, each person can enter just one bloom of each variety – and the bloom should have been brought to the show by the person entering the bloom.
- Bring your contribution to the brunch table.
- Bring your items for the Gift Table, priced – if you didn't bring them on Set-up Day.
- Wear your Golby-Reasoner shirt. (Don't stay at home if you don't have one or don't care to wear it.)

- Wear your Chapter name tag. Ask someone that has one where they are.
- Wear comfortable shoes and consider leaving another comfortable pair in your car to change into at some point during the day.
- Bring what ever you need for your bloom arrangement – if you are signed up to participate in that aspect of the show.

General Show topics

1. Chapter member plant purchases. Chapter members have always been afforded the opportunity to purchase hibiscus prior to the opening of the plant sale area to the public. Although sales to the public will begin at 10:00 a.m. this year, it is still expected that there will be some time – after the sales area is made “ship shape” and before ten o’clock – for members to make their purchases. Please, please do not enter the sales area until all the plants are in place and the bloom pictures are posted. Plants purchased may be placed in the holding area until you leave the show. All plants must be paid for prior to being placed in the holding area.
2. Fertilizer sales. The specially formulated hibiscus fertilizer will again be purchased by the Chapter and sold at the show. This is the only chance for Chapter members to get their year's supply of this product that appears to be well thought of by everyone using it. As the old saying goes – “get it while the gettin’s good”.
3. Reminder #4. We realize that everyone must surely have taken note of our previous three reminders about preparing and gathering together your contributions for the Gift Table. Also realizing that some folks may have put off deciding what they are going to add to the table we will again recap our previous thoughts, beginning with the fact that hibiscus-related items are certainly the hottest sellers at a hibiscus show. Items generally related to gardening are next best and after that – use your best judgment - almost anything in very good condition will be gratefully accepted. Make sure they are priced – and make that price appropriate for the item and for the setting in which it will be sold. Prices that are too high can and will be reduced at the appropriate time.
4. Lend a hand. We hope that the folks who have hundreds of hibiscus will enter scores of blooms at our show this year. While we all have fun entering our several blooms, it is the big producers that make the display tables so beautiful. Preparing gobs of blooms for judging is very time consuming and it is a process that most of the large growers prefer to do themselves. However, in the late morning, some of them may appreciate a helping hand, so ask if you can do something for them. Who knows, you may learn some things about hibiscus in the process.

Show flyer enclosed!

The flyer about the show that is enclosed in this issue of *Petal Power* is not, repeat not, intended for you! While it was sent to you, it is intended for your neighbor, your friend, or whoever. Better yet, how about putting it up on whatever bulletin board you have access to – at your church, lodge, grocery, etc. Although we know you will become attached to it, resist the urge to keep it and let the flier (pardon us) fly!

Plant sale plants after Charley - ?

Many Chapter members who know Donna and Gary Schneider thought about their well-being as the path of Charley was plotted to make landfall very close to Pine Island. Some of those same Chapter members may have had subsequent thoughts along the lines of “there go the pretty little hibiscus plants that were grown to be sold at our Show.” While that is a minor item in the total picture of things regarding Charley, it is still important to our little Chapter of the AHS. The good news is that Gary has enlisted the help of several growers not affected by Charley who will provide the plants we will sell at our show.

Since many of our Chapter members may welcome news about the Schneider’s we will pass along some of what was provided to members of The Hibiscus Mail List (THML) on the internet by Curt Sinclair. Curt is a

past-president of AHS and the owner of a hibiscus nursery west of Fort Myers which was not affected by Charley. Therefore, Curt was able to access the Internet and wrote the following to THML on the Sunday following Charley's passing on Friday the thirteenth.

“Hi all, I just spent the afternoon at Gary and Donna's. They are fine and the house is fine, but the nursery is a shambles. A good example of why we all love them is that, when I got there, Gary was on a neighbor's roof helping them. As if he did not have a bunch to do at his place. We finished the roof and then started on their stuff. First, they are fine and in good spirits. Gary wants to wait at least 6-7 days before any physical help cleaning up, as he has to clear paths and mentally figure out what needs to go where. Many of his plants had good shade from trees and will now be in full sun so he wants the limbs to stay put as some shade so the plants can adapt.

For those that who visited their place. The long road going in is not so bad. . . . You can see where there were mini hot spots in the storm. Two identical trees or houses and one is damaged and the other looks like nothing happened. Telephone poles – some perfectly straight and some snapped off or leaning. The poles seem to go in groups as far as leaning or snapped off. Half mile of one or the other. The further you go on Pine Island the more trees are down or snapped off. . . . Many houses OK. Even the little shops on the approach road OK.”

We thank Curt for the report and wish all the best to Gary and Donna in their recovery efforts.

Haku Lei Workshop Cancelled

All the folks involved are aware – that the Haku Lei Workshop scheduled for August 28th was, indeed, cancelled. There were many things that entered into that decision, but perhaps it can be rescheduled for sometime in the future. It sounds like it would be fun, particularly since a potluck lunch was part of the program.

Florida exports the PHM

It appears a Homestead, Florida nursery shipped a bunch of Pink Hibiscus Mealybugs (PHM) out of state! Of course they were attached to lots of hibiscus plants and we are pretty sure that effort didn't solve our state's PHM problem.

According to *AccessNorthGa.com*, Georgia State Department of Agriculture inspectors say hibiscus plants shipped from Florida to Home Depot and Lowe's stores in four Northeast Georgia cities may be infested with the Pink Hibiscus Mealybug. There were apparently “as many as 44,000 infested hibiscus plants” shipped to Lowe's and Home Depot stores.

The PHM problem is still with us and can be spread by situations such as the one discovered by the Georgia authorities. Of course, the PHM is found on many varieties of plants, not just hibiscus. A description of the PHM was included in previous issues of *Petal Power*.

The presence of the PHM should be reported to the county extension service, since the only known control for them is a small wasp which only the State can obtain and release. The Georgia Agriculture Commissioner said that the most effective action a home or garden owner can take, “is to double bag the infested plants in black plastic and tie them up securely, and then leave them in the hot sun for a minimum of two weeks”. We would add that the use of systemic pesticides may provide some protection.

Florida Gardening

The August/September issue of the magazine *Florida Gardening* had a nice article about hibiscus and the Conrad-Sunrise Chapter show which was held in West Palm Beach on April 25th. There was a good picture of the bloom display at the show and several pictures of blooms. The article was written by a Master Gardener

from West Palm Beach who, refreshingly, had something to say about the actual aspects of raising and propagating hibiscus. We have consistently felt *Florida Gardening* was more about gardens than gardening.

Words of wisdom from Peggy...

In Peggy (the Treasure) Dessaint's August 15th column in the *Herald*, a reader asked the following question:

"I found the most bizarre-looking insects on my red salvia annuals. They look like small white moths, and the bottoms of leaves have white spirals and frothy white masses. What could it be and where did it come from?"

In her answer, Peggy identified the pest as the "giant whitefly", which is about three times larger than the common whitefly. Of course the portion of her discussion that caught our eye, and probably the eye of many of our Chapter members, was the mention that the giant whitefly had been reported on several plant varieties in Florida, including hibiscus!

For those who didn't read Peggy's article, and we don't know why there should be anyone who didn't, we will quote her recommendations for controlling the giant whitefly as follows:

"Control methods include sanitation and applications of horticultural oil or insecticidal soap. Remove infested plants by cutting them off at the soil line with as little disturbance to the insects as possible. Have a plastic trash bag ready for the plants. Tie the bag and discard in the trash. Spray adjacent plants with the above mentioned oil or soap products, especially the undersides of leaves. Monitor plants for the recurrence of giant whitefly and repeat the above actions as needed".

Peggy's column now appears in only every other Sunday's issue of the *Bradenton/East Manatee Herald*. It is the only column in the "House and Home" section that speaks specifically to our gardening materials, situations and issues. Most of the other gardening columns in the *Herald* concern subjects that are not pertinent to our area. Such as tulips and crocuses, which were discussed in a "Knight Ridder" column that was placed beside Peggy's column quoted above. Sure, tulips and crocuses, both really big in Manatee/Sarasota Counties.

The new chapter web site...

seems to be generating some interest with over 1200 visitors in the 6 weeks it's been online. And there have been multiple visitors from Canada, Australia, UK, China, Peru, Singapore, Netherlands, Norway, France, Mexico, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Denmark, etc. We suppose they're reading about our doings in the archived *Petal Power* issues. And quite a few are emailing hibiscus greeting cards.

One of the recent features added to the site (and more are planned) is hibiscus world news items, and here is a sampling:

August 23, 2004, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa: Typhoon Chaba is headed toward Okinawa. Chaba is the Thai word for hibiscus. From a story in the Stars and Stripes Pacific Edition.

August 9, 2004, Del Ray Beach, FL: An explosion of the iguana population is feeding on flower gardens and consuming hibiscus flowers and leaves, with just naked stems left behind. From the Miami Herald.

July 29, 2004, Houston, TX: "Plant is called hibiscus but it won't get you high". Houston Chronicle story describes 10-man narcotics task force raid targeted at pot plants, which turned out be hibiscus.

September Hibiscus Gardening

Many of us may have a somewhat different outlook about our lives and how we live them, following our experience with Charley. Perhaps hibiscus, along with numerous other elements of our everyday life, have

either become extremely inconsequential as we look at what might have been – or – very dear to us as we look at what might have been.

Whatever our view, life is going on and our hibiscus and other garden plants need our attention, since they are either thriving because of all the rain (some due to Charley), or they may be drowning! Hibiscus show the results of too much water in only a few days and in-ground and potted plants can both 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-in-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 a medium that drains 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 are – 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.

The good news is that we normally don't get as much rain in September as we do in August. (August is the wettest month – September is number two, depending on whose figures are used.) On average, a little less than an inch less – BIG DEAL. It seems to us that we need to dry out some.

In between rains and sometimes while it is raining, it is down right 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.

Since we are approaching the time of year during which we can expect our most and best hibiscus blooms, regular critter control and fertilizing should be maintained. We continue to hear good things about Bayer's Tree and Shrub ?????, used as a spray (2 tbs. per gallon of water). Try to not spray anything on blooms just prior to the show, because discolored or deformed blooms could result. Of course, the fertilizer sold by the Chapter will probably meet most everyone's need for fertilizer, probably used about every two months during the summer.

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.

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS

Chapter Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2004

The meeting was called to order by First Vice-President Beege Hunter at 2:00 PM. Because the last meeting was the Annual Restaurant meeting there were no minutes to be approved by the members in attendance.

Treasurer Mike Bossert reported the balance on hand June 30 was \$3,430.45. During the month there was income of \$97.50 and expense of \$422.96, resulting in a July 31, 2004 balance of \$3,104.99.

According to Dottie Taaffe, as Sunshine Committee Chair, there was (happily) nothing to report.

Meg Bossert announced that those wishing to attend the August 28th Lei Workshop should contact her.

Mrs. Hunter reported that the five plants in the PSBP hibiscus garden that appeared to be terminal were "coming back", apparently due to the rain.

Janet and Mark Love, Show Co-chairpersons, discussed the many elements of the set-up day and the day of the Annual Show. Some of the subjects touched on included, the need for paper bags and scissors, gift table donations, bloom arrangements, grazing table items and the availability of fliers. Mark Love has made many signs for placement in numerous locations in the downtown area and around the location of the Show. A banner will be displayed across Manatee Avenue at Wares Creek during week of the Show.

A new Telephone Committee Chairperson is needed.

Refreshments were served, compliments of Dotty Erikson and Betty Seipel. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Gayler Boettcher, Secretary

CLASSIFIEDS

Cold Porcelain Creations! Lifelike Hibiscus and other flowers, singles/bouquets. Yvonne Santiago: (941) 727-7293, Yvonne@coldporcelaincreations.com, or www.coldporcelaincreations.com

Coming Events

September 10, 9:30 a.m. Board Meeting, Manatee Library South Branch

September 17, 9:30 a.m. Show Setup Day, Family Life Center, First Baptist Church

September 18, 7:30 a.m. 41st Annual Show, Family Life Center, First Baptist Church

October 10, 2:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting, Peggy Dessaint, "Pests and Pesticides"