

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

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41st Annual Show is coming, again! This time on May 27-28

May 8th - Show Time Meeting!

As hard as it is to believe, the very next Chapter meeting is the one that will be all about our annual show! Since it has been about 19 or 20 months since our last show, refreshing our memories is a good thing. In addition we have never had a show at First Baptist where we will all be learning about the new setting together. For those reasons, as well as numerous others, everyone should plan on attending the May 8th Chapter meeting! Be there!

While everyone is planning on attending the “Show Time Meeting”, we would be remiss if we didn’t remind everyone about doing some pre-planning about what they will be contributing to the Gift Table at the show. The Gift Table is an important element in making our show financially successful, while giving everyone the opportunity to clean out their storage areas of those little used “like new” things. Plants of various varieties have been good sellers in past show. However, be very sure they are insect and disease free.

Before you do another thing, mark your calendars:

May 27 SET UP SHOW!

May 28 SHOW TIME!

Both at Family Life Center
First Baptist Church

May shows

While most of our attention will be on our own show, a number of other Florida Chapters are having their shows in May. And, they are all at our “neighboring” Chapters. On May 8th, the Harry Goulding Chapter (Port Charlotte) has their show, followed by the Gulf Coast Chapter (Venice) on May 15th. Then the week before ours, on May 22nd, the Sunset Chapter will have their second show of the year in St. Petersburg (their first show was at the State Fair). Of course our show follows six days later on May 28th.

In addition to attending our show, plan on attending one or more of the three other shows. If you wear our Chapter shirt, it will be evident to them that our Chapter is supporting their shows, - which is important because we hope they support ours!

Hibiscus and the heart-friendly diet

Our eagle eyed Internet researcher, Gene Haugh, found an interesting article about hibiscus and medicine in the on-line U. S. News & World Report.

The article points out that hibiscus flavored sodas are available in Jamaica and Mexico. Liver or blood pressure problems may be treated with hibiscus by traditional healers in China. Of course we find hibiscus in few foods or medicines in the United States. However, researchers wanted to know if hibiscus flowers help prevent the build-up of cholesterol.

Therefore, the scientists boiled the flowers and filtered the solution to obtain concentrated hibiscus extract. First they tested the extract on human blood and then on groups of rats. Rats fed a high sugar and hibiscus diet had significantly reduced triglyceride (which can contribute to high cholesterol) levels in the blood. Rats fed a high fat and hibiscus diet had reduced levels of total cholesterol, particularly LDL or “bad” cholesterol.

Based on their experiments, the scientists think that hibiscus makes it harder for LDL cholesterol to bind to artery walls. That can cause blockage and heart disease. Aren’t hibiscus wonderful! Of course we knew that. (We have to mention that *Hibiscus sabdariffa* were used in the research.)



Show Chairpersons Mark and Janet Love storing needed energy at our recent annual picnic

April 1st Board Meeting Minutes Excerpts

Treasurer Shirley Adams reported that there was a balance on hand March 1st of \$3,043.22. During March there was income of \$352.00, while there was expense of \$746.67, resulting in a balance on hand on March 31, 2005 of \$2,648.55.

Chapter meeting programs for the year, some with tentative titles, were reviewed as follows:

- May 15: Janet and Mark Love, “Show Planning”
- June 12: Gayler Boettcher, “The Wonderful World of Hibiscus”

- August 14: (Bob and Beege Hunter to arrange)
- September 11: Peggy Dessaint, “New Critters, New Products”
- Oct. 9: Shirley Adams – Gourd Society, seeds
- November 13: Holly Righter – Plant Use in Prehistoric Times

Membership Chair, Frank Vejrostek, indicated that an attendance sheet would be circulated at future Chapter meetings which would provide information to allow a possible written follow-up to be sent to members not attending meetings, encouraging them to do so.

Gene Haugh will present thinking on honorary Chapter memberships in a future Board meeting.

Discussion was held at some length about the future of the hibiscus garden at PSBP.

It was decided that the July restaurant meeting would be held at *The Iron Skillet*.

Boettcher will attempt to determine a half dozen, or so, events during the year at which the Chapter could make an appearance.

Hibiscus Gardening in May

The long, hot summer starts this month.

Since our show is in May this year, we may have a different challenge with our hibiscus than we might normally have in other Mays. That is, it would be normal for many of our members to have conducted some aggressive pruning in early March (or late February). However this year, some of our members may have cut back on their cutting, or perhaps didn't do any pruning at all – thinking about having blooms for our show. Those who did significant pruning will need to really push the fertilizer (perhaps including some foliar feedings) in order to have good blooms for the show. Those who took a more reserved approach will need to fertilize, but not so much. Which ever camp you are in, be sure to water both before and after fertilizing. Monthly applications of Epsom salt are also a good practice. Use about two tablespoons in a three gallon pot, with proportional amounts in smaller or larger pots and in-ground plants.

May is a great time to add to your collection of hibiscus plants. It is therefore to our advantage that our show is in May this year, giving us a particularly good opportunity to do just that. Plants grow well during this time of year and we have the whole summer and fall to enjoy them – so “stock up” at the show!

Since this is a time when our plants grow very well, it is a good time to propagate plants by air layering. Look in the Handbook for instructions and try to remember the tips Donny Waldroup gave about air-layering in a Chapter meeting not too long ago. Air-layering rooting takes about 6 weeks.

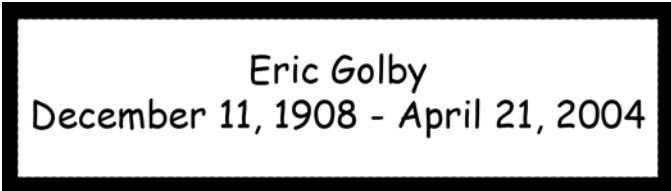
If you haven't seen any type of worm or caterpillar in your garden, you may be the only one in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. *Thuricide* is safe and only kills plant-eating caterpillars and worms. If you can't find *Thuricide*, there are other products containing the same active ingredient – *Bacillus thuringiensis* – which is, for good reason, commonly known as “BT”. Believe the label as it mentions the storage temperature for this product – don't store it in your hot garage.

Gardeners should consider ants in their plants (yes, I did type, “pan...” first) as a sign that something bad may be going on. Ants “farm” other insects such as aphids and scales around on plants. A pretty sure sign that the ants are good farmers is the presence of a sugary glaze of excrement on plant leaves. This substance will, in time, be covered with a more easily seen black, sooty mold (conveniently known as “sooty mold”) Therefore, controlling the ant population might be considered the first step in controlling the population of more

destructive insects. An approach used by some successfully is to spread a granular insecticide around plants, on a rather regular schedule, whether they are in pots or in the ground.

For the last two years we have applied the insecticide *Marathon* to our plants. While we cringe as we do so because of the cost, it has proven to be worth it. We have had no concern with any of the usual critters that we had BM (before *Marathon*). We watch for mites – and have had some – but probably not more than we did three or four years ago.

Several things may lead to leaves without good color. At this time of year, a leading cause may be a deficiency of minor fertilizer elements. This can be remedied with a product containing minor elements that is diluted and sprayed on plants. A minor-element product also comes in a granular form, but we haven't seen that for some time. It would seem to be more effective if you can find it.



Discoveries while trolling the internet

The website www.wordcount.org lists 86,800 English words in order of usage based on 100,000,000 word samples from written and spoken English. Here are the first ten:

the, of, and, to, a, in, that, it, is, was

Our favorite word "hibiscus" is in position 42,441 on the list, comes after "hippodrome" and is followed by "summative". Clearly something needs to be done to improve name-recognition.

While on the subject of language, here are some quotes from Yogi Berra:

- The future ain't what it used to be.
- If people don't want to come to the ball park, how are you going to stop them?
- I knew exactly where it was, I just couldn't find it.
- You should always go to other people's funerals. Otherwise they won't come to yours.
- If you don't know where you're going you will wind up somewhere else.
- You can observe a lot just by watching.
- I really didn't say everything I said.

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

Coming Events

May 6 9:30 a.m. Board Meeting
Manatee County Library, South Branch

May 15 2:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting
Show Preparations
Mark and Jan Love, Co-Chairs

May 27 SET UP SHOW!
May 28 SHOW TIME!
Both at Family Life Center
First Baptist Church