

# Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter  
American Hibiscus Society

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## Is this your LAST PETAL POWER?

If you haven't paid your dues, it could be. And we are sad to report, a number of our members have not paid their dues this year – some who have been members for a number of years. We understand that calls have been placed to those who haven't paid and several memberships have been renewed as a result. However, if you have not paid your dues, please do so at the next Chapter meeting or send your check to Shirley Adams, 2704 Bay Drive, Bradenton, FL 34207. (Single memberships - \$27.50; family memberships - \$30.00.) Those not paid-up when our next issue is mailed, will not be sent what surely must be the best read received all month (assuming everything else is bills).

## BIG NEWS!

At the recent National Convention of the AHS, Bradenton was chosen as the site of the 2006 convention! In concert then, the Golby-Reasoner Chapter was chosen as the host chapter for the convention! We think this is the first time Bradenton and our chapter will host the convention. We have to assume that many thanks are due Dave Flanders, currently a member of the Board of the AHS, for capturing these honors for our area and our chapter.

Certainly the details of what having the convention here entails, are not known at this writing. It is certain there will be a number of things that will need attention, but with the number of active members we have in the Chapter, no one should have too much to do.

## August meeting program

The program of the Chapter meeting in August is one of several this year that will depart from the topic of hibiscus. The topic for August 14<sup>th</sup> is, "A Community Farm in West Bradenton" and the presenter is Laura Morgan. This is a community effort that has and will in the future surely spread to

other parts of the two county area. Be sure to be there and hear about it!

## Restaurant meeting a bash!

A good turn out of Chapter members enjoyed the opportunity to visit – and to enjoy the food at The Iron Skillet! The place isn't much to look at, but the menu and the food served were outstanding. In addition, the management went out of their way to make sure our gathering was treated as special as they could.

Unexpectedly and greatly adding to the event were place mats with full color pictures of hibiscus blooms, towering centerpieces, and hibiscus napkins – all crafted/provided by Dorothy Erikson. It was a special treat when the centerpieces were given away in a raffle. Thanks so much Dot – you really made the event special!

In addition to giving our Chapter a site for our mid-summer event, this year's restaurant meeting may have introduced some to a new place to eat. Neighborhood family gathering places aren't all that common among today's eateries. It appears The Iron Skillet may well be such a place.

## Show wrap-up

Perhaps the aspect of the show most will find interesting involves the fact that, unlike the past several years, the show was apparently significantly profitable. Profitable to the tune of \$3,063.63! Working to make the show noteworthy always provides everyone with a feeling of accomplishment, but it is much more fulfilling to have worked hard and have the show make a profit! Since we have been around for about 12 years, we can say with some assurance, it is the most profit made by any show in those years.

Some amount of work is being accomplished for next year's show. A somewhat different arrangement is being finalized for the main room

which will allow those arriving at 10:00 a.m. for the plant sale to have a view of the bloom tables, but not interfere with those working in the bloom area. A review of both interior and exterior signage is also on-going.

### Excerpts from July 1 Board Meeting

Treasurer Shirley Adams reviewed the financial report for June. As of June 1<sup>st</sup> there was a balance on hand of \$1,757.89. There was income of \$5,373.95 and expense of \$2,724.15, resulting in a balance on hand of \$4,407.69. Adams also reported on the financial aspects of the show separately, which indicated a profit of \$2,847.63 (plus \$216.00 for something not a direct show expense) with virtually all the expenses having been paid.

In a discussion of the Show, it was decided that the three gallon pots filled with cement would be discarded and replaced with easels and different signs.

The national convention of the AHS will be held in June 2006 at Bradenton's Holiday Inn, Riverside.

Yvonne Santiago contributed a ceramic spray as the Chapter's contribution to the auction at the national convention – it sold for \$120.00!

Due to a change in AHS bylaws, AHS dues will be due June 1 in 2006.

### Hibiscus gardening in August

Now here is a real piece of news! August will be hot and wet! Of course, anyone who has lived here for at least a year is well aware of that. Hibiscus, like us, aren't that happy about the hot weather. They, like us, will spend much of their time being uncomfortable and would enjoy a late afternoon/early evening shower, which nature provides on occasion. On those evenings when it doesn't rain, spraying your plants with upward streams of water will cool them off and upset the life cycle of whatever critters are using your plants for dinner. An over-abundance of rain water could adversely affect in-ground plants so make sure the water drains past them if possible. You may also want to rake back the mulch around them so they will dry out more readily.

Of course, our rain is not consistent although at times it seems like it rains every day. Therefore, we must be aware of our plants' needs, particularly those in pots, on those days when it does not rain. Charles Black, on The Hibiscus Mail List, recently pointed out that if plants exhibit some leaves that "rapidly turn brown, starting with the edges, the likely cause is too high a dissolved salt content being sucked into the plants as the pots dry out. Plants in the ground have huge buffer against drying out too fast that the potted plants lack. As a pot dries down the remaining water becomes saltier, much as a glass of salt water will become saltier as water evaporates from it." The solution is to keep the plants in pots from drying out which could mean, in this weather, watering more than once a day. On the other hand, as long as we have "daily" rains, the fresh water should help keep the salts flushed out of the pots.

We have proven to our satisfaction many times, that mulch significantly keeps plants from drying out. In-ground plants can be mulched with whatever you are using on other plants. Use something like pine bark, about two pieces deep, around potted hibiscus if there is room in the pot. One of the benefits of pine bark is that when (not "if") the pot tips over the bark is easier to pick up and put back in the pot than mulches made up of smaller pieces.

Although we always think of hibiscus as being sun loving plants, we are pretty sure that maxim doesn't apply to all varieties. If you have well watered hibiscus in pots that wilt badly every afternoon, try moving them to some place that doesn't get full afternoon sun and see if they don't do better. Of course if you have potted plants that need watering more than once a day – and they have not been repotted or potted-up for a year or two – they are probably root-bound. That is, the pot is so full of roots that there isn't enough soil to retain sufficient water to sustain the plant throughout a day. It's really a poor time to root prune, but since none of us is able to water plants twice a day (or more) without fail, it is probably preferable to the alternative (a possibly dead plant).

A close weekly inspection of hibiscus is a very important element of hibiscus gardening this time of year. The heat and moisture of August and September provides an ideal breeding situation for many of the insects that feed on them. Finding

evidence of critters early and responding appropriately may keep a serious infestation from occurring. The daily spraying of water under the leaves may keep the pests under control. If not, try spraying with 2 tablespoons of *Bayer Tree and Shrub Insect Control* in a gallon of water bi-weekly or some Otho product containing *Acephate* (*Orthene*). If you are experiencing bud drop, you might try spraying only the buds every day or two with *Bayer Rose and Flower Insect Killer* until the condition seems under control. We have only seen this product in a ready-mixed spray bottle and it is therefore rather expensive. However, if you spray only buds it will go a long way.

Don't forget to keep up a systematic fertilization program. If you are using the hibiscus fertilizer that the Chapter sells, the frequency of application should probably be increased to every 6 to 8 weeks during the hot summer months. Or, cut the rate of application in half and apply it every 3 to 4 weeks. The rationale for this lies not so much in the growth rate of the plants, but in two other aspects of gardening in Florida's summer heat. Although we are not sure about our Chapter fertilizer, many time-release fertilizers (which our fertilizer is) release their nutrients faster as the temperature climbs. Therefore, more fertilizer is needed due to the release rate - which in turn is flushed away by the amount of water flushing through the soil/potting medium from rain and/or the considerable amount of watering necessary during the hot weather.

It is sad but true that weeds grow year-round. They even seem to grow faster during hot weather - when it is the most uncomfortable to combat them. They grow everywhere, including around our hibiscus, whether they are in the ground or in pots. Pulling out the weeds is the time-tested approach to the problem. However, the chemical industry leapt into the fray a number of years ago with various weed killers, the best know of which is surely *Roundup*. If you have a batch of *Roundup* mixed up in a sprayer should you pass by the weeds around your in-ground hibiscus - your hibiscus in pots? Not necessarily. We have found that if there is no wind and using very low pressure, weeds around all our hibiscus can safely be sprayed. Certainly care is required, but for any plant, weed or otherwise, to be killed, more than half the leaves need to be covered with the *Roundup* solution.

## No Chapter meeting minutes!

Fans of meeting minutes will again be saddened by the fact that no meeting minutes appear in this issue of *Petal Power*. Although President Flanders made a few remarks and announcements at the restaurant "meeting" it wasn't considered a meeting by the Secretary. Of course we all realize said person tends to take every opportunity to not prepare meeting minutes. Should not formal impeachment proceedings be considered?

## We get letters??

Dear Hibiscuits Society Editors:

I write to you Hibiscuits people and hope you can help my biscuits bake better. They are like solid rocks no matter how long they bake, and guess dough needs to raise more fluffy first. I read about your hibiscuits and wonder do mine need more water or malthizon, or maybe 6-2-6, and my neighbor thinks pinch of TNT?

Any help will be grateful. Also my hibiscuits looks lot plainer than yours.

—P. O. D.

*First, we never thought we would be called Society Editors, but indeed, that's what we are. In regard to your question, we respectfully urge you to consider making a rock garden.*

— *The Editor.*

The above fakery is a slight modification of what appeared in the Dec. 1997 issue of *Petal Power*. Prior issues are archived on the chapter website at:

[www.4hibiscus.com/html/newsletters.html](http://www.4hibiscus.com/html/newsletters.html)

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## CLASSIFIEDS

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

## Coming Events

August 5      9:30 a.m. Board Meeting  
Manatee County Library South

August 14     2:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting  
Laura Morgan, "A Community  
Farm in West Bradenton"