

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

September, 2005

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Cold hibiscus in October meeting -

Not exactly cold hibiscus, but cold porcelain hibiscus will be a feature of the October 9th Chapter meeting program entitled "Cold Porcelain Hibiscus with Yvonne." There should be little doubt about who Yvonne is, but for those that don't know we will say that Yvonne is Yvonne Santiago, who is a member of our Chapter and owner of "Cold Porcelain Creations". The Chapter has used Yvonne's creations as prizes at our Shows, gifts for our program presenters, and as an item for the auction at the national convention. Everyone will want to be at the October meeting to see how Yvonne makes her creations and to see examples of her art – art that "anyone" can do.

Petal Power topics

This article isn't about the topics of articles in *Petal Power*, it's about various subjects relating to the production and production costs of *Petal Power*. That should give you enough information to know whether you want to read further or not. Since the next couple paragraphs contain some pretty good stuff, we hope you will choose to continue reading.

First, would you have guessed that it costs an average of \$0.64 for one copy of *Petal Power* to be delivered into your hands? We think it was our Circulation Manager, Trudy Topolosky who came up with that figure – and we thank her for it. Of course, postage is the largest single cost in the production and distribution of *Petal Power*. Which brings us to the first "topic" of this article, which is "Would you like to receive your *Petal Power* by email only?" Of course, virtually all costs are eliminated when *Petal Power* is "delivered" electronically. However, if you choose this delivery method, we hope you will, at least, print a copy of the page(s) showing coming events of the Chapter for easy reference. If you would like to receive *Petal Power* electronically only, call Gene Haugh at 359-3544, or email him at ehaugh@tampabay.rr.com or tell him the next time you see him.

The second topic of this article deals with the second highest cost of *Petal Power* – copying costs. Our current costs are \$.20 for one 11" x 17" page, duplicated on both sides. We realize that most copiers do not "run" 11" x 17" paper, however does anyone have access to a copy machine that could be used to produce *Petal Power* on smaller sheets for no, or a minimal cost? In February

and March of this year we used 8 ½"X 14" paper for *Petal Power* and it looked fine. Let Gene Haugh know if you know of a copier that could be used for *Petal Power*.

Excerpts from September 2nd Board Meeting Minutes

The following special events remain in the year:

October 27: Potluck at Boettcher's – coordinated by the Loves.

December 11: Christmas Luncheon at El Conquistador–Trudy Topolosky and Dotty Taaffe (New price \$17.95 w/o dessert vs. \$14.95 last year.)

A study of *Petal Power* duplication costs compiled by Gene Haugh was reviewed. The conclusion was that the duplicating should be obtained at "Staples".

Trudy Topolosky reviewed the research she did on obtaining a new Chapter shirt. No action will be taken at this time. The work Trudy accomplished was greatly appreciated.

It was determined that there would not be a quorum of Board members available for the October 7th Board Meeting. So, the October 7th meeting was cancelled.

Several requests have been received for speakers and booths:

1. Speaker, Sea grape Garden Club, Nov. 8 (G. Boettcher)
2. Speaker, Anna Maria Garden Club, Jan. 19 (D. Flanders)
3. Speaker, University Park Women's Club, Jan or Feb
4. Speaker, Oaks Garden Club, Osprey, Feb. 6
5. Booth, Home and Garden Show, Convention Center, March 10-12

The signs for the annual show were reviewed by Dave Flanders. The pots filled with concrete and the old signs have been discarded. Five new signs will be needed along with appropriate tripods for them.

Mites, Aphids, and the Gall Midge - Oh My!

As we mentioned in the last issue of *Petal Power*, the Mike Bernard Acadiana Chapter newsletter reprinted an exchange of

emails from The Hibiscus Mail List on the Internet that we might use in the future. The future has arrived! Therefore, in this issue, we are including an edited version of the exchange – in which mites, aphids, and gall midges were discussed. While we have discussed these critters several times in these pages, reading the observations of other gardeners is always refreshing and worthwhile. The comments are somewhat disjointed, but that's the way they occurred.

Sonny said. "What is the difference between mites and aphids? There is a "mitey" big difference between Mites and Aphids. Mites are in the spider family and suck juices from the leaves. They also spin very tiny webs on the plants. Aphids also suck juices from the leaves. Both can transmit viruses to the plant."

Charles said. "Gnarled leaves are often due to insects such as aphids, whiteflies, mites or others attacking them when they are just first emerging. That messes up the basic structure of the leaf and as it grows it shows this deformation more and more. The insects are usually gone by the time you notice the gnarled leaves. I take such leaves off because it bugs me to look at them. If you have not looked at your leaves, top and bottom, at 20-30 times magnification you are in for an interesting experience once you do. There is a lot going on that you cannot see with the naked eye."

Eric Day, Director of Virginia Tech Lab said. "Spider mites have a pair of needle-like structures called stylets, which are used to rupture leaf cells. A feeding spider mite pushes its mouth into the torn tissue and draws up cell sap. Small patches of cells are killed, resulting in a stippling or fine flecking on the upper surface of leaves, giving the leaves a 'sandblasted' appearance. On heavily infested plants, the foliage will become bronzed, bleached, yellow or gray. Untreated, such plants lose vigor, become progressively thinner, and may eventually die."

Charles said. "Spider mites are a mid-summer problem, mostly. It is hard to get through a summer without spraying for them once or twice. Or keep blasting the undersides of the leaves with water which if done often enough will keep them away, too."

Buddy Short said. "It seems like right now, aphids are attacking everything and that has me concerned because I have about 50 seedlings that are ready to bloom for me for the first time and that tender growth seems to be an attraction to these critters."

What exactly are aphids and will they ultimately kill your plant? If you spray them with water, are you just temporarily removing them from your buds/leaves or does this spraying actually kill them? Are any of you having more success with certain products to control these pests and do any of you use a granular form of insecticide on the soil in your pots in addition to the liquid form?"

Pat said. Buddy, we use Marathon granular systemic (or Merit, same active ingredient – imidicloprid) once a year (early spring – February/March) in our pots. This controls aphids and white fly just about all year long. If we see signs of aphids in the fall, another spot application is used (not

necessarily on EVERY plant). It will not control thrips (not taken up into the buds), but we spray the buds only with a contact spray to keep these at bay. We also watch out for a spider mite invasion about three weeks after the imidicloprid is applied in early spring. Avid and/or Triazicide for these. There has been some mention of a resistance to imidicloprid cropping up. We have not yet had this happen, we are watching out for it. Roz sprays for gall midge about once a month, rotating products. This spray also helps with any aphid outbreak (probably why the Marathon/Merit seems to last all year)." (*Editor's Note: Hobbyists will not wish to purchase Marathon or Merit due to the costs involved. Some say that monthly applications of Bayer Tree and Shrub [which contains imidicloprid @ 2 tablespoons per gallon of water may achieve some control similar to Marathon/Merit.]*)

Wally said. "Aphids do not work alone. You will probably notice ants crawling up and down the plants. These guys are farmers milking their aphid cows of their sugary exudation. They also transport them from place to place. Consequently, you need to treat the ground and often your pots for ant infestations. As fast as you remove the beasties, the ants put more in place. They also slowly can crawl back themselves when dislodged with water. Treat the ants and do one tip area spray with Imidicloprid and you should have control success."

Yvonne said. "Aphids are insidious little critters, born pregnant and ready to eat from day one. They are particularly attracted to the sap of new growth, so you'll see them as tiny green or black blobs on the shoots. If the infestation is severe the whole growing tip will be covered with insects. You can also find them on the back of leaves, but they're less fond of the tougher, older growth. They rarely kill their host plant, stupid to destroy your food source, but they can cause serious damage and invariably they cut down your bloom count. Water will NOT kill them; take it from one that knows! All you do is knock them to the ground so they have to crawl back up again. It's better to, urk!, squish them between your fingers than use plain water spray.

In my opinion, aphids are the easiest to control pests out there. I've tried pesticides, pyrethrine based ones work great, but it's really overkill. What you need is some dish detergent and lukewarm water. Pour up the water in your sprayer then add enough detergent to make it foam a bit if you shake it gently. Spray liberally on all surfaces but especially at the growth tips. The detergent will strip off the protective waxy coating on the insects and they will die. If you can try a product which mixes both soap and oil as it's even more effective and not just against the aphids either. (*Editor's Note: Do NOT spray soap or soap and oil on plants in the direct sun.*)

To guard against recurring infestations, clear away all weeds, treat surrounding vegetation with the spray as well as the infested plants, and make sure your plants are not situated under an infested tree that drops new aphids down on them!"

Jill said. What products for gall midge does Roz use? In reply, Pat said. (*Editors Note: Pat is Roz's wife.*) "Jill, Triazicide, Bayer Tree and Shrub, Bayer Advanced Garden Spray are the three of the moment. Almost anything like them will work. Orthene, if you can still find it. Immunox is a fungicide/insecticide mix he has used. They are fairly easy to kill, but one must keep up regular spraying until cool weather arrives. Gall Midge head for the hills when the weather gets

cold.” Jill said. (*Editor’s Note: Jill lives in Hawaii.*) I did see an article from the University of Hawaii on Gall Midge, but as far as I can tell I don’t have it and it is not widespread.

The ‘check’ for it is to cut a fallen bud in half and wait to see if something jumps around, right? So far, I haven’t seen any. I don’t have much in the way of bud drop, and when I do I attribute it to those darned thrips.

Hibiscus Gardening in October

Wow, is it October already? The year is about over and the things we were going to do – we didn’t.

We found a 1981 “news letter” written to members of the Norman A. Reasoner Chapter by Eric Golby, who would have had his name made a part of the Chapter name about 20 years later. Eric made the following observation about October: “October is the beginning of fall – a season more definitive in the north rather than in the Deep South. With us here in the Manatee-Sarasota area we seem to ease from our long summer to an easy transition into the cooler weather period of winter without the colorful leaf change pattern one associates with fall in the north.” Some thoughtful musings of a gentleman of the soil.

For those who live in areas that tend to have frosts/freezes, October is when we start preparing our plants for winter, particularly our in-ground plants. This is the last month to do any pruning so that new growth will be hardened off before winter. In general we should make sure our plants are in their best condition possible, because a healthy plant has the best chance to survive the cold.

Continue to be on the lookout for critters on your plants. They will take over if you don’t keep “the upper hand.”

As we were writing this, September 2005 was setting records for the least amount of rain. August was pretty dry too, so this year’s rainy season wasn’t much. Therefore as we enter the dry season we need to make some judgments about fertilizer applications, since not all that much will have been washed out of the soil by the normal rains. For those living in-land, the rule of thumb is that the final application of fertilizer of the year should be early in November. Hibiscus need some fertilizer during the winter months so gardeners will have to make their applications in view of the amount of rain their specific area has had and the likelihood of damaging cold weather there.

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS

Chapter Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2005

President Flanders called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and introduced several visitors.

Treasurer Shirley Adams reviewed the financial report for August. With income of \$83.50 and expense of \$62.00, the ending balance on August 31 was \$3,776.69

Frank Vejrostek repeated his earlier request that members find one potential new member, and tell him their name and phone number.

President Flanders presented highlights of the September 2nd Board of Directors meeting:

- a. The board approved bylaw changes for submission to members during this meeting.
- b. Voted to remove and replace existing interior Annual Show signs with better ones.
- c. Accepted a request from Historium to provide approximately 57 plants and supervise their planting by high school Key Club Members. Donny Waldroup and Jack Taaffe volunteered.
- d. The chapter will support the Crosley Christmas show by providing blooms, people, and literature (11/29-12/7). Pat Grant will circulate sign-up sheets at the next Chapter meeting.
- e. The board approved our participation in operating a booth in the 2006 Home and Garden show during March 10-12 at the Convention Center.

Old business: Mike Topolosky, in reporting for the Chapter Outreach and Membership Growth Committee, said that Mary Magdalene Church in Lakewood Ranch has a meeting room which can be made available to us, and other Lakewood Ranch information is being obtained. President Flanders suggested having a Chapter meeting there.

New business: President Flanders passed out copies of the proposed, revised bylaws for review by members, summarized the changes, and announced it will be voted on at the October meeting. He also commented on Hurricane Katrina's effects on AHS Chapters. Members desiring to contribute financially to them can send checks to Damon Veach, PO Box 44370, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70804. Bob Hunter announced that the Manatee Players will have a special matinee of "Pippin" at 3 pm on Sept. 17, with proceeds going to hurricane relief. Admission is \$20.

President Flanders introduced the program presenter, member Peggy Dessaint, who discussed, “New Critters, New Products.”

Carl Kramer held the plant raffle, and Janet Love won a Cloud Nine.

The meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m. Refreshments were served by Rae Flanders and Janet Love.

Gene Haugh, subbing for Secretary Gayler Boettcher

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

- October 7 **No Board Meeting!**
- October 9 2:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting
 “Cold Porcelain Hibiscus with Yvonne”
 Yvonne Santiago
- October 27 6:00 p.m. Potluck
 At the Boettcher home