

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

January, 2006

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It's Donny Waldroup in February!

Yes, Donny Waldroup will be featured in our Chapter's February meeting. This must be Donny's second or third appearance at one of our meetings – and for good reason. Donny always presents a down-to-earth, nuts and bolts discussion of real- world hibiscus gardening. If you are interested in hearing and seeing "the way things are", be at the meeting on February 12th!

What Else is Coming? A Lot!

Here's a look at what's coming in the next few months at the Golby-Reasoner Chapter. It is an exciting outlook that provides something for everyone including a good measure of work - and fun!

- a. **March 10th-12th**. The Chapter will have a booth at the Home and Garden Show which will be held at the International Convention Center (the old Sam's Club). Check your calendar so that you will feel free at the February Chapter Meeting to sign up to participate.
- b. **March 12th Chapter Meeting**. The thrust of the program at this meeting will be a mini workshop treating the subject "Who Does What at Our Hibiscus Show?"
- c. **March 31st and April 1st**. The Chapter will have another booth at the Manatee Garden Club, similar to our mid-November booth. In this case the event will be their "Romance of the Seas" festival. Again, all members should check their calendar so that they can sign up at the March 12th Chapter Meeting to staff the booth.
- d. **April 9th**. Our annual picnic will again be held in the lovely setting of the Durante Park on Longboat Key. Beege Hunter and Betty Seipel will coordinate the potluck that is a real feast every year. They will be asking members to sign up for that at the March Chapter meeting. The slate of nominees for officers and Board members for 2006-7 will be announced.
- e. **May 14th Chapter Meeting**. The election of officers and Board members will be held. The focus of the meeting program will be our Show with the Show Co-Chairs Janet and Mark Love leading the discussion. There will most likely be several opportunities for everyone to indicate their interest in participating in various aspects of the Show. Be

sure to be there if for no other reason than to hear what will be going on at the Show.

- f. **May 27th**. **The Annual Show and Plant Sale**. It has been determined that for flexibility, both the show and the plant sale will begin at 1:00 p.m.
- g. **June 11th**. The restaurant meeting is being moved from July to June provide a celebratory venue for the installation of officers and Board members which is now in June due to the recent changes in our Bylaws.
- h. **June 15th through June 18th**. This is when the AHS National Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, Bradenton. Everyone should attend to see first hand what your national organization does and view the good time they have doing it. As host Chapter, we will be operating a hospitality suite and there will be a need for volunteers to staff it. Could there be any better assignment?

More "A Look Back"...

This is the fourth of a four part series that we have written during the winter months when not much is going on in our gardens. This series has looked at various subjects related to the history of hibiscus, the American Hibiscus Society, and about the founders of our Chapter.

When "Golby" was made a part of our Chapter's name, both Eric and Sally Golby were being honored. However, when looking for things to write about the Golbys, Eric was the one who is usually written about since he was the one "out front". However, Sally was, as is many times the case, very influential in her husband's life, both personally and professionally, and was perhaps just as knowledgeable about plants as Eric. Therefore, we hope that our readers will understand that as we write about Eric we are including Sally, since in many ways they were one.

Eric's roots, going back four generations, were plantsmen on the large estates of titled Englishmen. Eric's great grandfather, Percival Golby, was a grower for Lord Heddonfield in the mid 1800's, his grandfather, William, was a grower in Buckland Surrey, and his father, Walter Golby, apprenticed at 12 in greenhouses and later worked for the world famous Rochefords before emigrating to the United State.

Eric grew up on private estates in Jamaica Plain and Chestnut Hill near Boston. His father sent around the country for unusual plants. His orders included some to the Reasoner Brothers of Oneco, where he got shrimp plants, pentas and hibiscus. Eric recalled, "Dad was the first one to grow pentas and shrimp in quantity for the Boston pot plant trade!" He recalled his father showing exquisite and unusual plants in Massachusetts Horticulture Society shows and all were in great demand by the wealthy elite of Boston's Beacon Hill. One of his famed customers was General George Patten. He handled the floral arrangements for both of Patten's daughters' weddings.

Talking about famous customers, about five or six years ago, *Petal Power* ran a picture of a sales receipt for eleven grafted hibiscus for Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. who was living in Palm Beach. It was dated March 6, 1980 and the hibiscus sold for \$7.50 each. And oh yes, the "Sold By" box on the receipt contained the initials "EVG" – Eric V. Golby.

A year or so before the Fairbanks receipt appeared on these pages, we ran an article from the *Rare Fruit News* which is published by the Manatee Rare Fruit Council. That article gave us an insight into another side of the Eric Golby, the person we only thought of as "Mr. Hibiscus". To also let our current readers know something about how well rounded Eric's knowledge was we will reprint a few portions of that article.

"His knowledge of tropical fruit was unequaled and his advice was sought throughout Florida. Eric introduced the Blackberry Jam Fruit to the U.S. He also introduced El Capitola Hibiscus from Cuba and others from India. ... Eric had a TV show on Channel 8 for 10 years in the 50's and 60's with Bert Livingston, Garden Editor of the Tampa Tribune and he produced over 70 shows. ... He is a walking encyclopedia of fruit trees and flowering trees in Central and Gulf Coast Florida, especially in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. ... He is a founding member of the Manatee Chapter of RFCI and a lifetime honorary member. He holds an Honorary Fellowship in the Royal Horticultural Society of England. ... Eric is co-author of the book, "Florida Fruit". This small handbook includes everything from cold tolerance, pests, soils, and fertilizers to fruit size and taste. Eric is a valuable resource to growers of tropical fruit trees."

It is interesting to note that Eric, along with other members of our Chapter, had a wide range of interests in the plant world. But we all have a special place in our hearts for hibiscus, as did Eric.

Election coming...

Ballots for the American Hibiscus Society annual election of officers will be received in the not too distant future by all members of the Society. As usual, many of those running for office will be unknown to most of the Golby-Reasoner Chapter members. Some of the offices will have only one candidate. Whatever the case may be, we should complete the ballots and return them within the time allotted. Should you wish counsel about who to vote for you might consider calling our President David Flanders who, as a Board of Directors member, has some knowledge about the candidates. While Dave will not endorse specific candidates, he can share his impressions about them.

Hibiscus Gardening in February

As February approaches, so does the subject of pruning. The general subject of when to prune, with weather being the main consideration, has always been with us. However, since our Show is now in late May there is another consideration. If plants are severely pruned in mid-February/early March, it is questionable if they will be blooming well by Show time. A light pruning in that time frame may not forestall bloom production for the Show. Of course in-ground plants may never need to be severely pruned, assuming no winter-kill, but potted plants will require some rather extensive pruning at some point. We have no solution to the quandary having our Show in May presents. Every member/gardener will need to make decisions, perhaps plant by plant, based on their personal preferences and goals.

Disregarding the Show as an aspect of pruning and as we look at weather as an element of determining when pruning should be accomplished, a major consideration is where the plants are. Several years ago, Peggy Dessaint wrote in her *Herald* column as follows: "The western two-thirds of the county is located in USDA hardiness Zone 9b, which has an average annual minimum temperature of 30 to 25 degrees. Eastern Manatee County is cooler in the winter, so it's in Zone 9a. Its average annual minimum temperature is 25 to 20 degrees."

While we aren't sure just what the definition of the "average annual minimum temperature" is, the bottom line is – there is a considerable difference between east and west county temperatures. Therefore, those in the western part of the county could prune in early/mid February (or almost anytime) with little or no fear of frost or freeze. However, those in eastern sections of the county should most likely wait until late February or early March before doing any pruning that will promote a burst of growth. Of course individual circumstances again enter into the equation. If an east county

gardener's plants were all in pots and would be taken into a garage or some such if a freeze threatened, pruning could be much earlier.

If the rainfall continues to be in short supply, be sure to pay attention to your plants needs for water. Don't wait until yellow leaves signal that plants are thirsty.

As in January, be on the look-out for mites. With our temperatures usually below 85 degrees we can now use oil sprays to safely control critters such as Red Spider mites, as well as scale insects, Mealybugs, and whiteflies. Oils are somewhat problematic during our hot summer months, particularly for plants in the direct sun. Horticultural oil sprays are highly refined petroleum based oils such as Ortho's *Volck Oil Spray*, which is readily available at most garden centers. What ever you use, be sure to read and follow the label instructions.

We have New Members!

Please welcome (and add to your Member Directory):

Isabelle M. Hilt Tel. 761-1188
4722 Independence Drive
Bradenton, FL 34210

Jeanne Schlesinger Tel. 778-7975
7001 Holmes Blvd.
Holmes Beach, FL 34217

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS

Chapter Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2006

President Flanders recognized the visitors to the meeting – Isabelle Hilt and Jeanne Schlesinger.

President Flanders reflected upon the Christmas Luncheon and the fine job done by Trudy Topolosky and Dottie Erikson in their organizing efforts and thanked the Erikson's and Gayler Boettcher for the door prize poinsettias.

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

Treasurer Shirley Adams reviewed the financial report for December 2005. As of December 1st there was a balance on hand of \$3,582.49. There was income of \$762.08 and expense of \$718.68, resulting in a balance on hand, December 31st of \$3,625.89. Since there were no questions, President Flanders indicated the report would be filed.

Several reports were made about members who are ill.

Hospitality Chairperson Marilyn Young passed a sign-up sheet for volunteers to provide refreshments for the few meetings during 2006 that have not been volunteered for previously.

President Flanders stated that the Chapter Outreach and Membership Growth Committee would meet after the Chapter meeting.

The planting of hibiscus at the Historium will be delayed until February.

President Flanders briefly reviewed items discussed at the January Board meeting:

- The ribbons necessary for the Show will be ordered.
- Tripods have been made and signs will be ordered.
- The plant sales at the Show will begin at 1:00 p.m.
- Betty Seipel reported on contacts she had made with people that visited our booth at the Manatee River Garden Club booth.
- The Board approved having a booth at another Garden Club event in March.
- The purchase of 20 plants was approved for use at the Garden Club and also at the Home and Garden Show which is also in March.
- Discussion was held about membership trends and the continued viability of our Chapter.
- Trudy was thanked for acting as Circulation Manager during the past two years.
- Beege Hunter volunteered to act as Circulation Manager during 2006.

An AHS slide program, "Hibiscus Blooms – Something Old and Something New" was shown. The accompanying script was read by Pat Grant.

A raffle was held for a hibiscus plant, Cloud Nine. Bill Fauls was the winner!

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed at 2:54 p.m.

Gayler Boettcher
Secretary

CLASSIFIEDS

Cold Porcelain Creations! Lifelike Hibiscus and other flowers, singles/bouquets. Yvonne Santiago: (941) 538-9521, Yvonne@coldporcelaincreations.com, or www.coldporcelaincreations.com

Coming Events

February 3, 9:30 a.m.: Board Meeting at the Hunter home.

February 12, 2:00 p.m.: Chapter Meeting, Donny Waldroup talks hibiscus.

March 10-12: Chapter Booth, Home and Garden Show at the International Conference Center.