

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

February, 2006

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Who Does What?

You will find out “Who Does What at Our Hibiscus Show?” at our March 12th Chapter meeting. The chairpersons of each of the committees at last year’s Show are being asked to give a one to three minute description of the purpose of their committee, what they did before the Show, and what they did during the Show. It should be interesting for everyone since the chairs and those who are not chairs will be afforded a complete overview of just what goes on – at our Show.

For months, nothing...

Indeed, for months there is nothing “extra” on the Chapter calendar – and then there are lots!

Case in point is the month of March. The usual Chapter meeting is, as usual, on the second Sunday, which is the 12th of March. On the Friday and Saturday prior to that – and on that Sunday too – the chapter is having a booth at the Home and Garden Show at the International Convention Center. That’s a fancy name for the old Sam’s Club building across from the airport on old Route 301.

Then, just three weeks later, the Chapter is having another booth at the Manatee River Garden Club’s “Romance of the Seas” event. That’s on March 31st and April 1st. Talk about busy! But it will be fun – albeit a bit challenging.

Of course the fact that there is a total of five days in which a booth will need to be staffed for these two events requires that a number of folks be involved. Happily, a sufficient number of volunteers signed up to do just that at the February Chapter meeting. Hopefully, those who signed up will remember that they did. Just in case they don’t, we have been told that they will be called a few days prior to when they are to “report for duty”.

WD-40 in the Garden

From time to time we have written about the use of WD-40 in the garden. Yes, that favorite-of-many for protecting metal items, stopping squeaks, and loosening bolts. That is a “can’t do without” item in many handyman and professional shops, rivaling duct tape in importance. It may be hard to believe, but WD-40 is the

weapon of choice of many gardeners in the fight against scale insects. (As is PAM.) This was brought to mind recently by an exchange of emails on The Hibiscus Mail List on the subject of WD-40 vs. scale.

Richard Johnson in Tahiti wrote that he successfully used WD-40 to control a perpetual snow scale problem, but felt that it had caused tip die back on about a dozen plants, one of which died.

After other messages, some of which introduced other subjects, Tom Miller of the Sunset Chapter wrote: “WD-40 (the WD stands for water displacement) and Pam are oils and kill scale on contact. Avoid spraying leaves and use during the cooler times of the day and these two items are fine. While others say they have had problems using WD-40, my plants have never complained.”

About an hour after Tom Miller’s contribution, which we agree with, Pat Merritt, the Secretary of the AHS from the Houston area wrote the following in answer to an intervening email:

“Barb, in my opinion neither WD-40 nor PAM should be used by a novice hibiscus grower or any man. Men don’t grasp the “light spray” theory. Roz’s (*Editor: Roz is Pat’s husband and a past President of the AHS*) “if a little is good, a lot must be better” methods killed a number of nice hibiscus several years ago. He has the same theory on using Drano. ☺ If you are going to use either product, do so in shade and keep the plant in the shade for 24 hours, even after you wash it off. The carrier is what causes the bark to darken and crack. Hold the can at least 12 inches from the scale and spray in short bursts. The scale will run around to the other side of the trunk to avoid the spray, so get both sides. LIGHTLY is the key. I only use it to clean up small patches of scale left behind by the insecticide, then scrub it with a toothbrush. One of the most effective treatments that Roz uses is a hard blast from a garden hose nozzle that has a tiny hole. Take the plant to an isolated area of the yard and knock the scale off. Tedious, but safe and effective.”

Disregarding Pat’s negative remarks about males, accurate as they may be, she introduces a subject not often mentioned on these pages which relates to washing

the area treated with WD-40 or PAM within several hours of application. Failing to do so may result in damage to the plant's bark, depending on just how lightly the product is applied. Carefully used, either WD-40 or PAM is a good addition to a gardener's arsenal of "tools".

Another reminder.....

At some point we will all receive the ballots for the election of the AHS officers and board members in the mail. We should all assume the responsibility to complete the ballots and return them. Since our Chapter is sort of "graded" on the percentage returned, it is important that we all do return them.

Hibiscus Gardening in March

As we write this and enjoying eighty degree weather it is hard to believe that not too many days ago we were busy moving plants indoors and covering those in the ground or otherwise not moveable. It was quite a cold weather event for our area – that luckily didn't totally materialize. The *Petal Power* Editor, living east of I75, feels that the temperature only got to about 34 degrees, not low enough to do much damage. The only plants that have any appearance of being damaged by the cold are some Sea Grapes that are displaying some rust colored leaves. We imagine that a number of our Chapter members put their cold weather plan into effect.

After our cold snap, it seems appropriate that we should be looking forward to discussing on these pages next month, what are commonly called "Hardy Hibiscus" – just the thing for what we almost had! We will mainly be sharing notes that Gene Haugh compiled after reading Hibiscus, Hardy and Tropical Plants for the Garden, by Barbara Perry Lawton. To many of our readers it will make fascinating reading and it is sure to lead some of them to look through their favorite plant/seed catalogs.

March in Florida, in addition to the advent of Spring Training games, marks the time when spring is about to begin – if it isn't already in full swing. It is a month that is usually dry and windy, not a good combination for many of our plants that are trying to wake up. If you have in-ground plants that you want to move, March is a good month to do it. They are semi-dormant and the shock that occurs when plants are moved will be less now than later. Be sure to prune the plant to compensate for the roots that were cut in the moving process.

If you have plants that need pruning and you didn't do it last month – do it now. In-ground plants will, by and large, benefit from a relatively severe pruning occasionally, thereby promoting new growth and perhaps additional branching. However, if the in-ground plant is growing and blooming vigorously and is being a



Belle Hilt with "New Member Survival Kit" (Photo by Dave Flanders)

good neighbor (not encroaching on its neighbors), perhaps no pruning should be contemplated.

Plants in pots will require pruning at some point – at least every two or three years and perhaps annually. The pruning of potted plants perhaps actually has more to do with how full the pot is with the plants' roots than with how big the plants' branches are. So when should a potted plant be pruned? Well certainly if it is always falling over because it is top heavy – it's time to prune. If the roots are profusely growing out of the holes in the bottom of the pot or if the plant requires water daily or even twice a day because the pot is full of roots – it's time to (repot or repot into a larger pot) prune.

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS Chapter Meeting Minutes February 12, 2006

President Flanders recognized new member Belle Hilt and presented her the new New Member Survival Kit, which contained a number of publications related to hibiscus, our Chapter and the AHS.

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m.

Hearing no corrections or additions, President Flanders indicated that the minutes of the January 8, 2006 Chapter meeting as printed in *Petal Power* would stand approved and filed.

Treasurer Shirley Adams reviewed the financial report for January 2006. As of January 1st there was a balance on hand of \$3,625.89. There was income of \$120.50 and expense of \$68.41, resulting in a balance on hand, January 31st of \$3,677.98.

Jack Taaffe (who recently had bypass surgery) complained that he had not received a card from the Sunshine Committee Chair. (The Chair happens to be Dot Taaffe.)

Under the heading, "Hospitality Committee Report", President Flanders acknowledged that Dottie Taaffe and Jeannie Nathan were providing refreshments following the meeting.

Gayler Boettcher initiated signup sheets for attendees to volunteer to staff the Chapter booths at the Home and Garden Show, March 10-12 and at the Manatee Garden Club, March 31-April 1.

Donny Waldroup will be seeing if the people at the Historium are ready to start work on the hibiscus garden.

President Flanders indicated that the nominees list is due to the Board at the 3/31 meeting. Nominating Committee Chairperson Carl Kramer stated that there was still no candidate for President.

President Flanders reported on "Highlights of the February Board Meeting":

- a. Karen Delbert reported on a recommendation for a place to hold the June 11 restaurant meeting, which will include a Chapter meeting and the installation of officers and Board members. The meeting will be held at Nicki's at 2:00 p.m. and the meal pricing will range from about \$8.95-\$9.95.
- b. The Chapter Outreach and Membership Growth Committee has been dissolved.
- c. Janet Love and President Flanders reported on progress being made on the Annual Show preparations.
- d. Booths at the Manatee Garden Club and Home and Garden Show were discussed.

A raffle for a Holly's Pride was held.

President Flanders introduced Donny Waldroup who presented a program entitled "Waking up Your Garden".

Following the program, President Flanders presented a brief outline of the coming Chapter meetings and events, as follows:

- a. AHS ballots for national officers and board members will be received in the mail. They should be completed and returned. It is important!
- b. March 10-12. Chapter booth at the Home and Garden Show.
- c. March 12 Chapter meeting will have a program entitled "Who Does What at Our Hibiscus Show?"
- d. March 31-April 1. Chapter booth at the Manatee River Garden Club.
- e. April 9. Our Annual Chapter Picnic will be held at Durante Park on Longboat Key. The nominees for our Chapter officers and board members will be announced. Nominees "from the floor" will be called for.
- f. May 14th Chapter meeting will feature the Loves detailing efforts necessary in finalizing the details for our Show. There will also be the election of officers and board members.
- g. May 26-27. Annual Show and Plant Sale!
- h. June 11th Chapter meeting will be our restaurant meeting normally held in July, but moved in order to provide a celebratory venue for the installation of officers and board members.
- i. June 15-18. The AHS National Convention will be held at Holiday Inn in Bradenton. Everyone should attend to see first hand what the national organization does and to see the good time they have doing it. We will be operating a hospitality suite which will require some volunteers. Yvonne will be presenting a demonstration Saturday afternoon for those that do not go to Selby Gardens.

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed.

Gayler Boettcher
Secretary

CLASSIFIEDS

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Coming Events

March 3 9:30 a.m. Board Meeting
The Haugh's home

March 12 2:00 Chapter Meeting
"Who Does What at Our Hibiscus Show?"

March 10-12 Chapter Booth at Home and Garden Show

March 31-
April 1

Chapter Booth at Manatee
Garden Club