

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

March, 2006

Editor: Gayler Boettcher: g.boet@gte.net

Publisher: Gene Haugh: gene.haugh@gmail.com

Website: www.4hibiscus.com

Picnic in the Park...

It has a nice sound doesn't it – “picnic in the park”. It brings to mind a beautiful setting - made even better with good food and good company, in this case our fellow Golby-Reasoner Chapter members. Of course we are talking about the Annual Chapter Picnic, **Sunday, April 9th, at 1:00 p.m.** in the pavilion at wonderful Durante Park on Longboat Key.

The Chapter will once again furnish chicken and it's up to the members to provide the salads and desserts. A sign-up sheet was circulated at the March Chapter meeting on which those attending designated what they intended to bring. If you were not at the meeting and you intend to attend, please call either Beege Hunter (792-6712) or Betty Seipel (792-4129) to indicate what you are bringing, in order to insure we don't end up with 15 dishes of baked beans, and to make sure enough chicken is purchased.

And now for a brief discussion about how to find Durante Park. As one comes from either direction on Gulf of Mexico Drive on Long Boat Key there is a large sign that says “Joan Durante Park 500 feet” – then watch for the flagpole on the east side of the road, which marks the park entrance – turn in and follow the road to the pavilion.

While there is some seating in the pavilion, it usually is not sufficient for our crowd so if you have some light chairs – please bring them!

Dues time!

We hope you will at least marginally commend us for not saying “Dues Due” again – as we usually did do. (We will probably not be able to withstand the compulsion to say that next month.) Anyway, our dues must be paid to the AHS by June first, therefore please come to the picnic April 9th, check in hand for \$30.00 for family memberships and \$27.50 for singles. Should you forget, only one

Chapter event will remain for you “pay up”, that being the May Chapter meeting so don't take the chance (that you might forget twice) and make out your check now!

The Chapter needs you!

If we had one of the old recruiting posters from WWII (which was way before our time) that we could doctor with the above admonition – we would! The Chapter indeed needs you, **if** you will serve as the next president. That's right, “president”.

The slate of candidates to be nominated at the April picnic and to be elected at the May meeting has been ready for several months – except for a candidate for the presidency! While we could enumerate several thoughts on the subject, one stands above all others – we can't have a Chapter without a president!

The previous and current presidents (Pat Grant and Dave Flanders) had already served two terms and, we understand, only took another term because no one else would consent to serve at the time. We are at that point again and we are therefore asking each and every member to give consideration to being Chapter president. If you are willing or would just like to discuss what's involved, call Dave Flanders (722-6658), Nominating Committee Chairman Carl Kramer (723-2342), or any of the past presidents listed on page two of the member directory.

Meeting dates changed!!

The dates for three meetings have been changed! There is good reason for each change, but we won't bore you with them. Well, come to think about it, why should we be the only ones to be bored? So here is the story, as we understand it.

Board meeting, changed from **March 31st** to **March 30th**. The Chapter has a booth opening at the Manatee Garden Club on March 31st that

requires several board members to be there and they could not therefore attend the board meeting.

Chapter meeting, changed from May 14th to May 7th. The fact that May 14th is Mother's Day was overlooked when the calendar was approved.

Chapter meeting, changed from June 11th to June 10th. Due to the recent Bylaw changes, the June meeting features the installation of officers and Board members. It was felt that the installation should be performed in a festive setting, such as would be found at a restaurant. Therefore the restaurant meeting was moved from July to June and since the restaurant couldn't have our group in on a Sunday, the meeting was moved to Saturday.

"Thems" the facts as we know them. And after reading what we have written – it was pretty boring.

Very short book review...

Some time ago, our Publisher Gene Haugh read Hibiscus, Hardy and Tropical Plants for the Garden by Barbara Perry Lawton. It appears that Gene makes notes as he reads and we thought we share some of them with our readers in the following three paragraphs, followed with some comments of our own.

The Mallow family (*Malvaceae*) contains 116 genera (plural of genus). Hibiscus is the largest genus with some 220 species. Other genera include okra, flowering maples, hollyhocks and cotton.

Ornamental hibiscus types can be divided into hardy and tropical. Hardy ones mainly derive from the native North American species swamp mallow (*H. coccineus*) and the swamp rose mallow (*H. moscheutos*) which is the most widely used for hardy hibiscus breeding. It grows in swamps throughout the United States. The Rose of Sharon is the hardiest of all. Most tropical hibiscus derive from the Asian *H. rosa-sinensis*.

Hardy hibiscus are available in a wide variety of colors, with flowers up to 12" in diameter, significantly larger than tropical hibiscus blooms. They require a cold season and do best in full sun with moist soil, but will tolerate drought. These plants emerge in the late spring and should be tip-pruned before June 1 to encourage bushiness and to

produce pleasing shapes. Spent blooms and seed pods should be removed to encourage flowering.

Ms. Lawton is associated with the Missouri Botanical Gardens which is in St. Louis. As might be expected, the gardens there have examples of many of the species discussed in her book. On a visit there, we were amazed by the many hardy hibiscus growing there, most in a country garden setting. The blooms are colorful and huge.

You will note that in Gene's "review" he mentions that hardy hibiscus require a cold season and Ms. Lawton specifically mentions that they will not do well in south Florida. Manatee County is mostly in hardiness zone 9b; however the eastern portion is in 9a. Since those members living east of I75 are in or are close to zone 9a, perhaps hardy hibiscus may survive there, but it will be questionable. The Editor had (note the past tense) a hardy hibiscus, but its demise was due to neglect and not the weather. He intends to obtain another plant and to pay more attention to it. Or so he says.

In our visits to areas in the north, we see very few hardy hibiscus (or Rose of Sharon, which are great plants) in yards or public areas. Perhaps we should do a little missionary work in the cause of hibiscus and urge our families and friends living in the north to get some because they are such amazing plants. The tropical hibiscus is becoming widely used as an annual in the north, but the perennial hardy hibiscus is rarely seen. Of course they do get rather large (up to six feet or so), so that may be a concern for the hobbyist gardener.

Here are some miscellaneous notes from Gene:

- Ancient Egyptians thought tea made from red hibiscus flowers promoted lust.
- The Confederate Rose was widely planted at Confederate cemeteries.
- Jamaica means hibiscus in Spanish.
- The national flower of Malaysia is *H. rosa-sinensis*.
- Petals of *H. rosa-sinensis* have traditionally been used for hair dye, mascara, shoe polish and to color liqueurs. Portuguese explorers called hibiscus "shoe black".

Several years ago, “Mr. Hibiscus”, Eric Golby told the editor that the word “hibiscus” was both singular and plural. He has therefore continued to use the word as both, contrary to the usage deemed appropriate by his word processor “spell check” and the author, Ms. Lawton.

Hibiscus Gardening in April

Due to our infatuation with the subject of hardy hibiscus, our hibiscus gardening article will be short this month.

April is the month our hibiscus plants shift into high gear in their growth pattern. It is a dry month, so this is a good month to think about mulching or renewing the mulch around all your plants, not just hibiscus. With new growth come insects, particularly aphids. If you can find something with acephate (*Orthene*) in it – use it. Or, as we have said before, some have found that using 2 tablespoons of “*Bayer’s Tree and Shrub*” in a gallon of water provides good control of about every kind of critter. Every kind except mites that is. Therefore you might want to include a midicide in the Bayer’s T&S every time you use it as a spray. April is a good month to plant additional hibiscus and to root cuttings. Of course fertilize with some of the Chapter’s own mixture (or something else, with a low middle number) if you didn’t last month.

Please Welcome New Members!

Edward and Beverly Bryan
11808 Rose Lane
Riverview, FL 33569
(813) 677-7624

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS

Chapter Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2006

President Flanders called the meeting to order shortly after 2:00 p.m.

Hearing no questions or corrections, President Flanders indicated that the minutes of the February 12, 2006 Chapter meeting, as printed in *Petal Power*, would be filed as written.

Treasurer Shirley Adams reviewed the financial report for February 2006. As of February 1st there was a balance on hand of \$3,677.98. There was no income and expenses of \$301.24, resulting in a balance on hand, February 28th of \$3,376.74. Since there were no

questions, President Flanders directed that the report be filed.

It was noted that Belle Hilt was acting as the Welcoming Chair and was distributing name tags to those attending. (The name tags had been “missing” for several months.)

Rae Flanders told those attending that Dave Flanders would be going to Moffit Cancer Center this coming week for tests.

President Flanders, while reviewing committee reports, indicated that the “after meeting refreshments” would be provided by Trudy Topolosky and Betty Seipel.

The nominees for officers and board members were (unofficially) announced and a discussion was held about the need for a candidate for president.

The Board took action to move the Chapter meeting from May 14th, which is Mother’s Day, to May 7th.

Beege Hunter conducted a signup for side dishes for the Annual Picnic which will be held April 9th at 1:00 p.m.

Many of those who acted as chairs of committees for last year’s Show described what they did before, during, and after the Show.

President Flanders reviewed the coming Chapter meetings and other events:

- a. March 31 & April 1: Chapter booth at the Manatee River Garden Club
- b. April 9: Annual Picnic. Slate of officers will be (officially) announced.
- c. May 7: Chapter meeting – Election of officers – final show planning.
- d. May 26 & 27: Annual Show and Plant Sale
- e. Saturday, June 10: Restaurant meeting (Nicki’s). Installation of officers and Board members.
- f. June 15-18: AHS National Convention – Holiday Inn, Riverfront. As host chapter, we will be providing a hospitality suite on at least one evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08.

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

March 30, 9:30 a.m.: Board Meeting at the Gayler Boettcher home

March 31-April 1: Chapter Booth, Manatee River Garden Club

April 9, 1:00 p.m.: Annual Picnic, Joan Durante Park, Longboat Key

May 26, 27: Annual Show and Plant Sale