



Mike Bernard Acadiana Chapter American Hibiscus Society



**Join us at the next meeting
Tuesday, November 5th at 6:00pm
at the Ira Nelson Horticultural Center**

Cooler temps have arrived and you should be seeing your hibiscus displaying their delight with lots of buds and blooms. The big question is "Are you ready for Cold Temps?" We will have a discussion of the various ways to protect our babies during the cold months ahead. We have had a wonderful year in our corner of the hibiscus world. I want to thank our 2013 officers for all of their hard work. We will be electing our 2014 officers at the November Meeting. President ~ Vice-President ~ Secretary ~ Treasurer, are you willing to take a more active role in our chapter? Hope to see you there! Ann



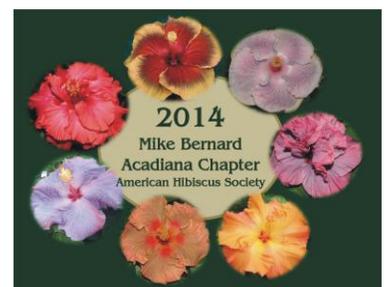
Bloom Photo Contest

Our 2013 Bloom Photo Contest came to a close with the selection of the remaining photos to complete our 2014 calendar. The winners were submitted by Inez Barras, Marc Davis, Lata Johnson, Brad McManus, and Lorraine Kizziar with the following photos:



2014 Calendar

Our 2014 Calendar has been compiled and placed in the hands of the printer. We have ordered 200. Be prepared to make your purchases as well as taking a few to sell to your friends and family. At \$12.00 per calendar, it is a great buy and a super holiday gift idea.





Mini Bloom Show

Congratulations to Lorraine Kizziar, the winner of our October Mini Bloom Show with Silver Memories.



Bring your blooms to the meeting. Each member can enter up to 2 blooms in each of 3 categories: Single-Double-Miniature.



MBAC Website

Lata, our new Webmaster, continues to make updates and improvements to our MBAC website, www.acadianahibiscus.com. Take time to visit and check out the wealth of information available.



"Blossoms from our Members' Gardens" is there for you to display that special bloom you would like to share with others.

You have to submit the photo to Lata at latalj@bellsouth.net for it to be displayed. She welcomes your input, so please feel free to contact her with anything that you would like to see added to the site or just to say "Great Job".



Convention 2014 ~ Lafayette, LA

Jennie has been busy making contacts and accumulating information for possible outings for the convention attendees and gathering donations for the Ditty Bags. Please contact her to volunteer your assistance or with ideas.

Fall Membership Meeting
November 8-10, 2013

Hilton Garden Inn, Tampa East/Brandon
 10309 Highland Manor Drive, Tampa, FL 33610
 Tel: 813-626-6700

COSTS

Registration \$25 Per Person
 Lunch \$15 ~ Dinner \$30
 Payable by check, PayPal, or credit card to:
 AHS Treasurer, P.O. Box 1580, Venice, FL 34284



Houmas House Outing

Thanks to the New Orleans Chapter for once again giving us the opportunity to spend a wonderful Sunday afternoon in the beauty of the Houmas House Gardens with our hibiscus friends exchanging word and acquiring desired cultivars.



Do you have a **Tropical Hibiscus Handbook**? It is a great guide and source of information. Our chapter has copies on hand for sale. See Buddy for details.



Tea's Tidbits

What's in a Name?

Whether you pollinate, harvest your own seeds and sow them or whether you grow another hybridizer's seeds, your goal is to create a new Hibiscus. That all sounds easy enough (and fun!) The challenging part is naming your new plant!

The name can be anything you choose, as long as that exact name has not already been selected and registered with the IHS (InternationalHibiscusSociety.org. If you haven't visited this site, you should.) Sometimes the name is a combination of the parents. That may give you a hint as to why a new bloom is a certain size, color or form or whether the leaves are serrated or smooth.

Naming new plants after fallen soldiers has been a project of our Chapter. Buddy's new plant (called a seedling) Sgt. Seth Trahan earned Best of Show Seedling and is now in the running for Hibiscus of the Year. Honoring a relative or a friend is another choice, either with their name or with a nickname. Buddy has a bloom dubbed The General, in honor of his father's military accomplishments. Sandra Theall named one of her creations Godiva. Is that after a woman of the 13th century who rode naked on a horse through the streets of Coventry in opposition of the taxation imposed by her husband on his tenants? Naw, I bet it was in honor of the chocolate of the same name!

Late Fall is not the best of times to sow seeds though it is a good time to pollinate your plants so you will have a fresh crop of seeds to harvest and plant in the Spring. Over the next few cool months, take a stroll through the IHS website and read the names growers have chosen. It will be entertaining and educational and may help you when it's time to name your own Hibiscus seedling. Oh, and nibble on some Godiva chocolate while you're browsing!

Theresa



For your viewing pleasure.....



Hotsy Totsy



Blue Jean Baby



Bright Horizon



Buddy's Blooms and Things

Most of us should be concerned about one very important maintenance procedure at this time of year and that would be, *How do I protect my plants in the upcoming colder months*. The following two articles written by two hibiscus experts, Charles Black of Hidden Valley Hibiscus and Barry Schlueter, hibiscus hybridizer extraordinaire, should give you a few helpful hints on procedures you can adopt in your own technique. We must all plan ahead so get busy and make sure that your babies are smiling pretty come springtime. If you have further questions simply email or give me a call.....**Buddy**

Petaloid Culture Article for October 2010.....Winterizing

It seems to us that winter just ended, and a most memorable winter season it was. But alas, we've now endured a very hot summer and the dark side of our year is on its way back to Houston. Soon that August heat won't seem nearly so awful.

Are you ready for this coming winter? Will you be when it arrives? A November frost is not so rare here, but many years the hibiscus outside stay happy through Christmas in Houston. Surely we are due for a mild winter year after enduring last winter. But given the variables, your only hope is to stay connected to weather reports beginning November 1. And Be Prepared.

Here in October we can make the most important decisions of the winter by deciding which potted exotic hibiscus will endure the winter in which locations. Some hobbyists use colored flags in pots or a splash of spray paint on outside of pots to remind us where to put that pot when the first cold weather whistles into town. Even that minimal planning will save some plants and some anxiety.

We put our most precious plants in the warmest locations. Most of us lack huge and spacious greenhouse facilities, but we have some sort of greenhouse or porch or warm brick wall or heated garage or oak tree which can save a plant. And those plants hardest to replace will naturally get the warmest location for winter.

At the other end of the value spectrum, our big rootstock plants at best get dragged underneath an oak tree where they will benefit from the few degrees of protection the tree offers. Other, more valuable hibiscus get a spot near a covered porch where they can easily be shifted under the overhang for a few nights white frost or freeze is an issue. Making all those decisions now, during mild weather, is perfect activity for this month.

Other essential activities for October hibiscusing involve editing your collection of hibiscus. You know which ones have produced so few flowers this year; will you really keep those another year on the off chance that a Best of Show something will emerge on the perfect show date from that stingy bloomer? Even if that happens, will other hobbyists assume that the winning variety blooms

well, and struggle to acquire their own plant, helping keep in commerce an unworthy, stingy bloomer? Consider discarding such shy bloomers, for all our sakes.

Assuming your winter facilities are in good repair, your last October chore is to conquer any disease you find in your collection. Giving a clean plant a winter home makes for some delightfully carefree winter months, but spider mites, midge, mealy bugs, and fungus disease love the reduced air circulation of winter locales. IF you put diseased plants into a greenhouse, or crowd them onto a porch, disease is guaranteed to spread and give you the wintertime blues.

If you have grounded hibiscus, their chances of winter survival are best if well established, but if you intend to plant some in October, here are some guidelines. Select planting spots on the south side of your home where the house deflects north and northwest winds. Choose locations near heat retaining structures like swimming pools, brick or stone walls, or masonry floors or walkways. Hibiscus will love the heat such locations give back to them at night.

For grounded hibiscus, the more wood you can protect from cold, the sooner rebloom will occur in spring or summer. Some of us saw this happen in 2010 when hibiscus came back from freezing to the ground but didn't bloom until late summer. Using layers to insulate your grounded plant will work best, starting with coarse burlap or cotton, kept dry by a layer or two of sheet plastic pinned down to resist winds. But in warm winter days the plastic has to be removed to avoid cooking the covered plants. Likewise, greenhouses must have plentiful ventilation here, to allow escape of hot air when temperatures rise.

Oversized tomato cages can protect lots of hibiscus wood if covered with fabrics and plastic, or even if filled with leaves or pine needles. Get the cages in place in October and organize your cage-covering materials so they are ready for use when cold weather arrives. Well watered hibiscus will experience less cold damage than dry hibiscus, and spraying foliage with products like Wilt Pruf before the cold front will provide a few degrees of protection, as will lightweight row cover fabric if you can keep it in place opposing the winds.

Barry Schlueter

Hibiscus In Winter

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

Overwintering hibiscus is a huge topic for so many of us. These are the questions we get asked daily at this time of year, with answers that we hope will help others too.

Should I prune now or wait until spring?

Prune in fall only if the plants will be spending the winter in mild conditions that promote at least some growth. Fall pruning usually results in a lot of new growing points that harden up as fall moves into winter. A prolonged or very cold freeze can damage or kill these new growth shoots. But if you know your hibiscus won't be exposed to a prolonged or very cold freeze, then it is safe to prune them in fall. The short new stems won't grow more than about an inch during the winter. Then when spring warmth arrives, they will take off and produce flowers much earlier than if you had waited to prune in the spring.

If I prune in fall, some stems mold and rot starting at the site of the cut. Can I prevent that?

Yes, that does happen sometimes when pruning is done when the weather is cooler and wetter. When pruning in those conditions it is best to seal the cut with a tree wound or graft sealant immediately after making the cut. There are several products available for this purpose. Our favorite [Pruning Sealer](#) comes in a spray bottle and doesn't require painting the sealant with a brush. A good sealant prevents fungus spores from landing in the fresh cut and infecting the plant at the cut point.

Should I stop fertilizing in winter

No, this is a common myth, but it's not a good idea. Hibiscus are tropical and, if given a warm environment, will grow and bloom year-round. When healthy, they are never truly dormant, and so require a steady stream of nutrients to maintain optimal health. For those who feed every time they water or every other time, cutting back on fertilizer to an appropriate level occurs naturally. This is because instead of watering every day, as is often the case in summer heat, water is only needed once or twice a week, or even less. Less watering means you're applying less fertilizer to the hibiscus. Since hibiscus don't need as much fertilizer as when they are rapidly growing and forming big flowers, this works out well. If you fertilize once a week or on another time-oriented schedule, you should continue to do so, but cut the amount of fertilizer mixed in the water by half. Only hibiscus stored in a cold and dark garage or basement should have almost all fertilizer stopped, but we recommend this way of overwintering only as a last resort. In better conditions a reasonable amount of fertilizer should be given the hibiscus throughout the winter.

Any hibiscus fertilizer is better than none, but for hibiscus wintered indoors, the higher the level of nutrition the better. A good fertilizer will help mitigate the stress of living indoors, in a lower-light, low-humidity environment. Our [HVH Houseplant Formula](#) was designed specifically for hibiscus grown in these stressful indoor conditions, and provides everything your hibiscus could possibly need indoors in one formula. If you use it all winter, every time you water, your hibiscus will have their best chance at staying happy and healthy indoors, and be ready to burst into bloom when they go back outside in the spring. If you have sunny windows indoors, they may even continue to bloom through the winter.

My hibiscus grew so much this summer that they need to be transplanted. Should I transplant now or wait till spring?

Wait until next spring or early summer to transplant hibiscus. The exception to this is if the hibiscus will spend the winter in very warm conditions. For example, one of our fellow hibiscus lovers built a fully enclosed grow room inside his garage, complete with 1000 watt HID lights, and a heating system that keeps the room above 70°F (21°C) all winter. In conditions like this, hibiscus can continue to grow vigorously and transplanting them is no problem in fall or winter.

When should I move my hibiscus inside for winter - at the last minute before cold sets in or earlier?

Over the years, we have had better luck moving them inside before they are stressed by the increasing cold. Oftentimes people leave the plants outside until too late - until the first frosty night alerts them that it's time to move them in. The problem with this is that the hibiscus make the stressful move into the house just after being weakened by the outside cold. In our experience, it's better if they are moved when still strong and healthy. Another factor is that tip die-back disease increases once the weather cools down in fall, but does not happen nearly as often once the plants are moved inside.

I have fairly good windows inside for my hibiscus, but no direct sun in winter. Is this good enough?

Remember, the most important need for hibiscus in winter is warmth. The more the better. They also need some light so, if the windows are not able to provide enough, placing any type of lamp near the hibiscus will help them get sufficient light to stay healthy. Light is a cumulative thing for plants - what matters is the total amount of light they receive from all sources throughout the day and night. If a light can be left on all night that is a big help, or if one can be placed on a timer so that it shines 18 hours a day near the hibiscus that will make a difference, too. Growth and blooms are not that important in winter - what we are after is maintaining a healthy green plant until next spring and for that the hibiscus need mainly warmth with at least some light.

My hibiscus are planted in the ground and can't be moved during winter. What can I do to protect them?

In climates like southern California where temperatures rarely go below 30°F (-1°C), some people have reported success using frost cloth to cover their hibiscus at night. Also called *row covers*, this lightweight woven material is able to trap heat inside while still allowing water and light to penetrate. The heavier versions of it are best and claim to provide up to 10 degrees of protection if used properly. If you try these, be sure to get enough to cover the hibiscus and to hang all the way down to the ground because they work by trapping heat that comes out of the ground at night. It is also possible to place lights, such as outdoor Christmas lights, under the frost cloth and the heat that these give off adds an extra amount of protection. On very cold nights, dripping water into the root-zone throughout the night can help even more, because flowing water is always warmer than freezing and will keep the roots of the hibiscus from freezing.

Charles and Cindy Black



A little more viewing pleasure.....



Aurora



Love Song



Sgt Seth Trahan



MBAC Officers

President ~ Ann Peltier ~ 337-781-4992 ~ ann@acadianahibiscus.com

Vice President ~ Carolyn Cormier-Stoute ~ 337-962-7175 ~ carolyn.a.cormier@chase.com

Secretary ~ Jennie Marcantel ~ 337-824-5602 ~ bluesbabyj@hotmail.com

Treasurer ~ Buddy Short ~ 337-278-0946 ~ buddy@shortfinancialgroup.com