



HENDRY HERALD

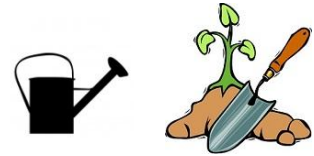
JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER
of the AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW hendrychapterhibiscus.com MARCH 2022
May your troubles be less, may your blessings be more, and may nothing but happiness come through your door.

HAPPY ST PATRICK'S DAY



FIRST DAY OF SPRING!



HY'S WAY FOR MARCH

When you prune, be sure to prune away branches that are broken but still hanging onto the plant. Keep dead wood pruned off your hibiscus plants. To tell if wood is dead, scratch the surface of branch with a fingernail. If the wood under the bark is bright green, it is still alive. If it is any other color (usually brown), it is dead. Prune it off the plant.

Do not be concerned if you have to prune flower buds – the plant will form three new branches for every branch pruned. Blooms appear on new shoots, not on old wood. Purpose of pruning is to shape plant and to open the center of the bush to allow sunlight and air into the center of the bush. Pruning is used to shape future growth, invigorate old plants, manage plant size and get rid of diseased and damaged wood.*

It is important to apply at least a **three inch layer** of mulch to the hibiscus bed. This helps keep a more constant temperature and a more constant level of moisture. Mulch prevents weeds and it provides a constant source for renewal of organic matter, as it disintegrates into the soil. **You should add enough mulch each March to keep a three inch layer.** When you apply mulch, keep several inches around plant trunk free of mulch so as to avoid root rot. Root rot occurs if the area where the trunk meets the soil is kept always wet. If mulch becomes compacted in the bed, break it apart with a pitchfork.

Hy's advice was given to the chapter several years ago before he passed away. All his sage advice is contained in his wonderful book **HIBISCUS FOR YOUR GARDEN, IN-GROUND AND CONTAINER, MONTH-BY-MONTH HIBISCUS CARE.** Book is available at Chapter meetings for \$10.

OUR 69th ANNUAL SHOW IS APRIL 30!

It is written that it takes 3 months from pruning to blooming. So you must take care that you don't prune all your blooms away!

A WORD ABOUT PRUNING from Robert Gerlich, S.J.

The trick is to cut the plant back early enough so that it has the maximum amount of time to recover before the show season begins. If one waits too long, it could be mid-summer before the plant starts producing blooms and then the heat becomes a problem. If one prunes too early, the new growth can be easily damaged by a late frost or a sudden cold snap.

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW!

If you have the name of a hibiscus and want to know what it looks like, this is a web site just for you. Be aware that the site is very fussy about spelling, so the name must be spelled correctly.

www.internationalhibiscus.org

If you are interested in our mother organization, the American Hibiscus Society check out americanhibiscus.org

If you want to know more about our chapter, we have an interesting website.

www.hendrychapterhibiscus.com

Seedling of the Year Process for 2022

Robert Price, president of the New Orleans chapter, has clearly outlined the requirements for this year's Seedling of the Year competition. If you are interested in competing, take note:



At the AHS convention last June, it was decided that since there were so few chapter shows last year, there would be insufficient Best of Show seedling entries for Seedling of the Year class of 2021. Therefore, the competition has been opened up to any AHS member who can fulfill all of the following requirements:

- the variety must still be classified as a seedling;
- you must have hybridized and grown the seedling personally;
- you must contact Todd Alvis (todd.alvis@gmail.com) with the name and picture of the bloom by March 15th;
- you must be able to prove that you have at least 9 plants (I highly recommend more) growing by March 15th;
- you must supply the 9 plants to the Seedling Evaluation Committee at or before the AHS convention in Lafayette in July.

Todd invites you to contact him at the email address above for any questions you may have.

Also:

Some people have asked about obtaining a permanent number for show entries in the Collector, Open Collector, and Commercial categories. Frank Sullivan is in charge of assigning a number that can be used for all of the shows, every year. You can contact Frank at f.sully@comcast.net to get your permanent number

STROLLING FLOWER SHOW - February 4th - Garden Council Contest



KAY JANSSEN and JIM DOUGHERTY assisted MICKI DOUGHERTY AND NANCY KOPP in decorating a manikin with hibiscus flowers for the Strolling Flower show sponsored by the Garden Council. The window assigned to James E. Hendry Chapter won FIRST PLACE! The decorating group also won the award for most colorful blooms.



Nancy and Micki decorated manikin with hibiscus flowers donated by our members!

Kay, Micki and Jill receive PEOPLE'S CHOICE award from Garden Council

An Introduction to the Vanilla Orchid



When something is described as ‘vanilla’ it is usually meant to denote a plain item without a lot of pizzazz. That descriptor, however, is very misleading! The Vanilla Orchid, or *Vanilla planifolia*, is the plant that provides natural vanilla flavor, and the vanilla



bean is the only edible fruit in the orchid family. This exotic plant produces the world’s most popular flavor, with demand increasing every year for natural vanilla. Vanilla is not only popular, but also quite valuable; only saffron is more expensive. As consumers demand natural vanilla over vanillin, the synthetic version of vanilla, many food companies are moving to reduce the use of vanillin in their products. And vanilla extract has uses beyond the food industry; it is used medically as a natural anti-microbial remedy and is being evaluated as a treatment for sickle cell anemia. Perfumers also use vanilla to impart a sweet fragrance to their signature scents.

The vanilla orchid is native to Mexico, and the Spanish explorer Hernan Cortes first took vanilla plants to Europe in 1519. Without a suitable tropical climate and bees to pollinate the flowers, vanilla orchids could not be cultivated successfully in Europe for almost 300 years. Once greenhouses became available to support the plants and manual pollination techniques were developed, it was finally possible in the mid nineteenth century to propagate the plants in Europe. While Europe struggled to produce vanilla orchids, the plants first spread from their native range to the Caribbean Islands and other tropical climates around the globe, particularly in European colonies in Africa and Asia. Since the early 1900s vanilla orchids have been cultivated in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Florida. The vanilla industry grew in Puerto Rico throughout the 1950s but declined as the post-war economy favored industrial development over agriculture. Hawaii faced a similar decline in vanilla production, as tourism rapidly grew to be the state’s major economic sector. Today Madagascar produces more than 80% of the world’s vanilla, with Indonesia, Uganda, India, and Mexico supplying most of the remaining product. The U.S. is the largest importer of vanilla beans, with most of those beans processed as vanilla extract.

The vanilla orchid is a thick, fleshy perennial vine that lives for many years, and can reach lengths of over 200 feet. The orchid is considered ‘semi-epiphytic’, which means that the stem can be planted in soil forming terrestrial roots and can also grow on other plants as an epiphyte, or air plant, using aerial roots to support its climbing habit. The flowers are large and fragrant, and depending on the variety range in color from a creamy green to light green with purple accents. Flowers form in clusters 2-3 years after planting when the vines reach a thickness of .25 to .50 inches; usually a single flower will open early in the morning, but up to 3 flowers can bloom at once. The bloom on the *Vanilla planifolia* lasts only one day, but blooms on other vanilla species may remain viable longer. Once the orchid begins to bloom, it will continue to flower for about 2 months. When the bloom is pollinated, it produces a ‘bean’ or seed capsule that can reach 8 inches in length and takes between 8 to 9 months to ripen. This bean is then ‘cured’ for 3-4 weeks in a 4-step process before shipping.

You can grow vanilla in your home garden by purchasing a potted plant or obtaining a cutting of *Vanilla planifolia*; a large cutting (24- 36 inches in length) can root and flower in 2-3 years. Smaller cuttings will take longer, approximately 3-4 years. The vine should be planted at the base of a support structure such as a tree or trellis; vanilla orchids prefer good air flow and bright, indirect light. When I recently planted a cutting, I used the same method of tying the vine to a tree with green plastic stretch tape that I use with other orchids; this will train the orchid to produce aerial roots that will secure it to the tree in several months. Vanilla orchids require little care – once they are established you won’t need to water, prune or fertilize your plant!

Next month I will discuss the value of vanilla as an exotic crop, and the efforts underway here in South Florida by the University of Florida/IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) to establish vanilla as a successful crop for commercial growers.

CATHY DUNN, Lee County Master Gardener Volunteer
Garden Club of Cape Coral Member

Picture Credits:

Vanilla planifolia Bloom – UF/IFAS Vanilla planifolia Vines – UF/IFAS



DID YOU KNOW?

Blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.) – Did you know blueberries were native to Florida? Rabbiteye (*Vaccinium virgatum*) and southern highbush (hybrids of *V. darrowii*, *V. virgatum*, and *V. corymbosum*) blueberries are the to [add blueberries to your landscape](#) choose at least two different varieties. Plant them close together for cross-pollination or fruit will not set.

Edible Ginger The leafy, grassy foliage of edible ginger adds a tropical backdrop for more colorful plants, but is best known for its underground stems, or rhizomes. This is the part of the plant that produces the "ginger" spice we love. It grows well throughout the state, too, as long as the soil is amended with organic matter. And for gardeners with tree-covered landscapes, ginger is one of the few crops that loves some shade.

You never need to buy ginger again after you get a crop growing!

THESE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF GARDEN VARIETIES THAT YOU SEE ABOUT TOWN.

A: A garden variety is the term that is used to indicate older varieties and often found in the gene pool of new varieties. These hibiscus are less prone to diseases and insects - a pleasure for an amateur gardener!



WHITE VERSACOLOR HAS YELLOW STIGMA PADS. (WHITE WINGS HAS RED PADS!)

MARCH 12th is the annual Garden Club of Cape Coral's **MARCH IN THE PARK!**

Outside vendors plus many Florida grown plants at really good prices. **MARCH** is held at Jaycee Park in Cape Coral from 9-3. Free parking. Go early to get choice plants. Location is at the end of Beach Parkway off Del Prado.

Hibiscus Myths - Soap is the Best Pesticide for Hibiscus **NOT!!!!!!**

Every month we get email from someone who has a pest infestation that they can't rid of. They usually tell us they have tried "everything" and nothing will work. When questioned further, the "everything" is almost always soap treatments they have used all over all their hibiscus leaves. Somewhere in the gardening world, the word is out that soap should be a gardener's treatment of choice for leaf-invading pests. But for hibiscus, and probably for most other plants too, soap should never be used as a pest control or cleaning product on leaves. To understand why, you need to understand a little bit about leaves and pests.

Hibiscus leaves are coated with a waxy substance, called a *cuticle*. The cuticle functions for leaves like skin functions for animals - it keeps water in the leaves and protects them from wind, dirt, pests, microbes, and sun. If a leaf loses its cuticle, it loses water, and its tender cells are wide open to pests and microbes of every kind. The cuticle is remarkably tough and resists all kinds of onslaughts. Rain doesn't wash it off, sun doesn't melt it off, and even physical bruising just cracks it a little bit. Nothing in nature harms the leaf cuticle. But one thing humans can do completely destroys the cuticle. You guessed it: soap! Every kind of soap, including horticultural or insecticidal soap, will strip away the cuticle. Imagine having your skin peeled off in order to get rid of head lice! Is it worth it? Sure, you want to get rid of the lice, but not at the expense of your skin! Using soap to kill pests has a similar effect.

Of course you need to get rid of your hibiscus pests. Just use something other than soap on your plant's leaves! There are both organic and non-organic products and methods for every pest that invade hibiscus leaves. For more information, go to the [Pests Page](#) of our website. **Save your soap for washing dishes.** from the [HIDDEN VALLEY HIBISCUS SITE](#). news@hiddenvalleyhibiscus.ccsend.com

2-13-2022 GENERAL MEETING of the JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER of the AHS

Meeting was called to order by WANDA SCHMOYER at 2:00. There were 35 people in attendance. Group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Member DENISE HELFRICH was introduced as she was attending her first meeting. The Helfrichs purchased FRANK HEFFERNAN and BONNIE HALL'S home when Frank and Bonnie moved.

MICKI DOUGHERTY was asked to tell about the Chapter's participation in the Garden Council's "Strolling Flower Show" which she did. She announced that the chapter had won the People's Choice Award.

Secretary: BARBARA OSTER said the minutes had been published in the Chapter Newsletter and asked for corrections or additions. There were none.

Treasurer: BARB YEKEL had a beginning balance of \$13,760 and a closing balance of \$13,256. There were no questions.

WANDA announced that 6 chapter members attended the Florida State Fair Hibiscus Show. The six came away with 14 top table awards.

The members were reminded that Punta Gorda Chapter was having their Mother's Day Show and were encouraged to attend.

The Program for the day was a mock show and was led by NANCY KOPP as show director.

The judges for the mock show were WANDA SCHMOYER, JILL BRESLIN, MICKI DOUGHERTY, BETH MEEHAN, VALERIE COSTA and TERRY MARTIN.

The clerk was BETTY, Beth and Valerie's mom.

The runners were CORY & EMILIA MAITZ and DIANNE ZINSZER

The many blooms were judged by 3:00. The winners were RICHARD WALTER, amateur single; DENISE HELFRICH, amateur double; NANCY KOPP, collector single and double, MICKI DOUGHERTY, open collector double; KIM HANIE, miniature single; KAREN BOWEN, mini double; BETTY (Valerie and Beth's mom) seedling regular single.

BEST OF SHOW: VALERIE COSTA, single; TERRY MARTIN, double; WANDA SCHMOYER, miniature, MICKI DOUGHERTY, seedling.

Several people gave advice to would-be exhibitors. MICKI showed how to open partially open blooms by cutting off calyx and blowing gently on them. JILL suggested bringing 3-4 of the same blooms to show and picking the best one to enter. She also showed how to wave bloom to open. VALERIE mentioned that the judges cannot look under the bloom and you should pick blooms with no holes in the petals. WANDA said that each judging table uses different colored pens so when you see your bloom after judging and are unsatisfied with their judgment, you can find the judge and ask what was wrong.

With that the meeting was over and the 50-50 was won by CORY MAITZ.

Submitted by barbara oster, secretary for the day



SANDY M. TROY PENNINGTON - OUR MARCH MEETING SPEAKER

Sandy belongs to two garden clubs, Royal Palm and Poinciana, and publishes both clubs' Yearbooks. She is the Membership Chair for Royal Palm Garden Club and the Administrator for The Poinciana Garden Club's Facebook page. Sandy has her own YouTube Channel (sandy STP) with over 100 videos mostly on gardening topics. Sandy has a Facebook page on Garden Art and Hypertufa. Sandy loves meeting other gardeners by donating plants thru the Facebook Group "Southwest Florida Plant Swap." Since 2018, Sandy has volunteered doing Public Relations for the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council. Sandy gardens on 2.5 acres in the Buckingham area of Fort Myers. She does a variety of presentations to garden clubs in Lee County and loves making and teaching friends how to make homemade sourdough bread, Roselle Hibiscus jam, sauerkraut and pickles.

PRESIDENT JACK BERNATZ'S MARCH MESSAGE

Hello to all,

Our February General Meeting which included a Mock Show was extremely successful. Filled the Garden Council Building with curious, eager, participating Bloom Enterers. The interest was rewarding, having everyone participate, helped with our overall appreciation of the bloom presentation, and rewards according to the value perceived by an unbiased judge and their critiquing said blooms. Good way to bring the whole picture of our vision and mission as a Hibiscus Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society.



Our March Board Meeting will be held at the location of our 69th Annual JEH Hibiscus Chapter Show and Plant Sale, this 30th of April, 2022. The site is the First Assembly Of God Church, Colonial & Summerlin, in Fort Myers. Our purpose is to lay out our floor plan and prepare our request of the maintenance people and floor set up people regarding placement of tables and just general use of the facility. First time at a new venue requires preparation. We are preparing for this 69th Annual Show and Plant Sale, to be our best yet. In the near future, there will be information sheets requesting volunteers to fill positions. Please be available and generous in volunteering your time. We hope to make this event an enjoyable stroll through a maze of beautiful blooms and a wide variety of 500 Gorgeous Plants available to purchase.

We are in the process of updating and refreshing our Web site. (hendrychapterhibiscus.com) Pull it up and keep an eye on the progress.

We hope all of You (Irish or Not) have a very enjoyable St. Patrick's Day.
Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, hope to see you all soon. JACK

OUR MEMBERS ON THE GO!

On February 12, 2022, the Sunset Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society held a hibiscus show at the Tampa State Fair. The James Hendry chapter of Fort Myers was well represented at the head table including: Best of Show Single (Dream Catcher / Madeleine Dougherty), Best of Show Double (Indian Bride / Madeleine Dougherty), Best of Show Miniature (Pink Pride of Hankins / Nancy Kopp) and Best of Show Seedling (A Touch of Velvet / Madeleine Dougherty). Also winning ribbons were Wanda Schmoyer, Beth Meehan and Valerie Costa. Member Jill Breslin observed the Show Director position in preparation for becoming a Show Director.

ANNOUNCEMENT: BARB YEKEL is in charge of enlisting our help with the upcoming 69th Annual Show to be held at First Assembly of God located at 4701 Summerlin Road, Fort Myers on April 30, 2022. There are many people needed to put on a show and there are jobs for all no matter your physical ability. Please call or email BARB to offer your services. Don't forget, members get \$5 discount off plants and first choice of the inventory once the show is set up on April 29th. A pizza lunch will be served on set-up day and breakfast and lunch are served on show day!

BARB YEKEL (239) 887-3088 or byby1313@gmail.com

MARCH MEETING - MARCH 13th - 1:30 Garden Council Building, 2166 Virginia Avenue, Fort Myers. Refreshing refreshments served. Bring blooms for mini show. Learn how to make hibiscus jam!

barbara oster, editor



