



HENDRY HERALD

JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER
of the **AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY**

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW hendrychapterhibiscus.com AUGUST 2022

SEPTEMBER 11 1:30

JEH Chapter Meeting, ABC'S of growing hibiscus

SOTY - American Hibiscus Society
Seedling of the Year
HEART OF DARKNESS -Dupont/Gerlich

- 1 Heart of Darkness. Dupont/Gerlich
2. Old Fashion Romance. Dupont/Gerlich
3. Texas Storm The Hibiscus Place/Martindale
- 4 Grande Dame Dupont/Gerlich



Nancy Kopp here reporting from convention! First of all, many thanks to the Michael Bernard chapter for such a good time!

We had so many activities to attend, we were never bored.

Traveling with the "Jersey Girls" , Jill and Micki was the best. We had so many laughs and stories! Even crammed in one room with a rollaway and all our plants we did fine!

Please try to attend next year in FI! Some pictures!

NANCY



AWARDS GIVEN OUT AT THE CONVENTION-CONGRATULATIONS TO WINNERS

Michael Bernard Acadiana Chapter for Best Newsletter

Krista Mathews for having 5 shows for the Mathews-Fallman Chapter

Dupont Nursery for supplying plants for Louisiana and Texas Chapters

Lifetime Membership for Father Bob Gerlich for his many contributions to propagating hibiscus

The youngest person in attendance was age 30

The oldest was 85

Joanna Schimek for being Executive Secretary

Janelle Alvis for her support

Outstanding Facebook page to Andrea Contreras of Space City Chapter

Harry Goulding grafting award to Rod Hendrick

Paul Felsberg best bloom to Electric Pizzazz

The Brubaker Judge's Favorite bloom to Dancing Fire

Reasoner award for most Amateur Exhibitors to Michael Bernard Acadiana Chapter

The A. B. Morrison Award for most Best of Show Seedlings to Todd and Janelle Alvis

Best dressed male and female to the Graves

The Nola Reynolds – Ann Mitchell Lifetime Achievement Award to Marti and Greg Graves

Valerie Costa amateur sweepstakes Florida - Micki Dougherty open collector sweepstakes Florida

Hibiscus Plant Care

Potting & Planting Hibiscus

You just got your first exotic hibiscus plants, and now your first decision is whether to keep the hibiscus potted or to plant them in the ground. Hibiscus are tropical plants, so if you live in a place that freezes in the winter, the answer is an easy one - keep your hibiscus in pots that can be moved to a warm spot during winter freezes. If you live in a warm place that rarely freezes, and just barely hits 32°F (0°C) one or two nights per year at the most, then you have the option of planting your hibiscus in the ground. There are good reasons to keep them potted, such as being able to move them around, but we have also found that hibiscus do very well when planted in the ground in warm climates.

Planting Hibiscus in the Ground

Before you plunk your hibiscus in the ground, it is important to spend a little time selecting and preparing the planting hole. Never forget the gardening wisdom of the ages, "It's better to place a \$5 plant in a \$20 hole than a \$20 plant in a \$5 hole." Here are two simple tests you can do to make sure you are planting into a hibiscus-safe spot:

Test your Drainage: Test the hole to be sure it drains by pouring a gallon or so of water into it. If the water disappears within an hour that is good enough. If it is still standing there after an hour you are probably planting into clay or over some other impermeable material, and may end up drowning the hibiscus roots. Alternatives are to build up a raised planting bed or to amend the soil with "clay-busting" material available at most nurseries. If the hole drains well, plant the hibiscus fairly deep, covering the original root ball with a couple of inches of soil as you fill in the hole.



In Warm Areas Hibiscus Thrive in the Ground

Test Water Permeation: Test to see how well water soaks into your soil by digging a small well into the top of the ground. Fill the well with water 2 or 3 times and let it drain away for half an hour or so. Then dig into the soil, and look at the water line to see how far down the water has soaked. If the water is moist 8-10" down, then your soil has good permeability and it's safe to plant hibiscus in it. If only the top inch or two of the ground is moist, your soil does not have good water permeability, and your hibiscus could die of drought, no matter how much you water, because the soil resists soaking up any water you pour onto it. Before you plant your hibiscus, you will need to dig a very large hole that you fill with a high quality planting mix, allowing plenty of extra room for the hibiscus to grow roots into.

Super Sandy Soil: If your soil is very sandy, you will probably have problems growing hibiscus in it. Very sandy soil does not absorb much water or hold fertilizer. Most of the water applied to sand flows down past plant roots, and the water that is absorbed evaporates quickly. If you have very sandy soil either grow your hibiscus in pots, or be prepared to water often and use timed-release fertilizers on the surface of the soil. You can also try amending the sandy soil with good compost and other organic ingredients so that it will hold more water and fertilizer. Check with your local Department of Agriculture and the Master Gardeners group in your area for more advice.

Digging the Hole: The hole you dig for your hibiscus needs to be a few inches wider than the plant pot, on all sides, if your soil is good. If you are amending your soil, make the hole much wider than the size of the pot. If you live in a dry place where your hibiscus could get brushed with frost and where water retention is important, plant your hibiscus deeper into the ground, with the crown of the plant, where the roots meet the trunk, right at the surface. If you live in a soggy, warm place, dig a more shallow hole to keep the crown and the tops of the roots above the surface level of the ground around the hole. The more you break up and work the ground around the hole, the more easily your hibiscus will be able to grow longer, deeper roots. So take your time, and dig a \$20 hole!

Ready to Plant: Once your hole is prepared, water the hole to moisten the soil all through it before putting the hibiscus in it. Gently remove your hibiscus from its pot, being careful not to rip the roots away from the base of the plant. As tempting as it may be to pull on the plant trunk to get the plant out of the pot, resist the temptation. Instead, put your hands on the soil, and gently turn the plant upside down up in the air. Then hug the pot, and let gravity drop the plant out of the pot into your hands. Use your hands to break up the roots around the rootball a little bit on all sides, then position the plant in the prepared hole.

Look at your plant before you finalize the position. Look which way branches grow, and make sure you position it in the direction that looks best from what will be the viewer's vantage point. If the plant has listed to one side in the pot, use this replanting opportunity to make it stand up straight again in the hole in the ground. It won't hurt the plant a bit for the roots to be put a bit sideways into the hole. Take one last look at the position of the plant, then fill it in with soil somewhat firmly, but without heavily packing or tamping it down. Water very well - deeply, 2 or 3 times to make sure it completely saturates all parts of the hole and rootball. Et voilà! You're done! Wait a week or two before beginning your fertilizing regime, then fertilize away. Hibiscus rarely experience transplant shock. They love to have room to spread out their roots, and you will often see a recently planted hibiscus stand up taller and look happier than it did in its pot!

Growing Hibiscus in Pots

Is it possible to keep hibiscus in small pots forever?

Many of us live in places where we can never put our hibiscus into the ground, and for us, the question is, "Can we keep hibiscus in manageable pots forever?" This is a question we are getting asked more and more, and the answer is, yes, you can keep hibiscus in small pots indefinitely. This is exactly what we do in our greenhouse with our own hibiscus collection. We have to keep our plants in pots that we can easily move around and fit close together in the always-limited space in a greenhouse. There are some tricks to making it work, but none of them are difficult.

How Small Can the Pots Be?

In our greenhouse, we have found that hibiscus will grow large and stay happy for many years in pots as small as 10" (25 cm) in diameter. A 10" (25 cm) pot is convenient because it is easy to pick up and move around, and can be put in almost any location. Any size larger than 10" (25 cm) is of course fine too! In our houseplant testing, we are

currently experimenting with keeping hibiscus in very small pots and keeping them pruned to a very compact size. So far we have been successful with smaller pots, but it is too early to tell for sure how long our plants will be happy in smaller pots. But 10" (25 cm) pots have worked for us for years, and we can recommend that size with certainty.

[Hibiscus 'Chariots of Fire' Growing in a 10" Pot](#)



First, Potting Medium...

If you plan to keep your hibiscus in a pot, the potting mix is very important. There are inexpensive products out there offered by mass-market sellers, but in our experience this type of mix dooms hibiscus to a short life and poor performance. These mixes are often too heavy and hold too much water for hibiscus. They can also contain ingredients that are toxic to hibiscus. Recycled sewage sludge is often used in inexpensive mixes, and although it is sterilized, the trace mineral content is unknown and can be quite detrimental to hibiscus. Instead, what is needed is a soilless potting mix (contains no real soil) like the [HVH Potting Mix](#). A good mix is made of coco coir, peat moss, or composted bark to hold moisture and nutrients, along with sand and/or perlite to provide more drainage. Added organic ingredients that support beneficial microbial life in the pot, such as worm castings, bat quano, or other fully composted organic material, are very beneficial in the potting mix. If you are unsure, we suggest going to the best nursery or garden center in your area and asking for a high quality potting mix that drains well and contains some organic materials. You can always add the organic material yourself, such as [HVH Worm Castings](#), and should ideally do so once a year in order to maintain the beneficial microbial life in the potting mix. Using high quality potting soil for your hibiscus is a crucial step in keeping them healthy and blooming for a long time to come!

Second, Nutrition...



[Hibiscus 'Simple Pleasures' in a 10" Pot](#)

Anytime we keep hibiscus in less-than-perfect conditions, we need to maximize nutrition to help reduce the stress the plant experiences. Start with a good quality [hibiscus fertilizer](#) that has all the nutrients hibiscus need with as few contaminants as possible. Anything you put in your hibiscus pot is going to stay there for a very long time, unlike hibiscus planted in the ground. So be careful not to put anything into the pot that could possibly contaminate your hibiscus. Hibiscus prefer a light fertilizing on a frequent schedule, so if you have time to fertilize every time you water, this is the best possible way to keep hibiscus in small pots happy. Use 1/2 the dose on the fertilizer label each time you water, and watch carefully for signs of fertilizer burn - brown edges on otherwise healthy leaves. If you see signs of fertilizer burn, or "nitrogen burn," stop fertilizing for 2-3 weeks, then use an even weaker dose of fertilizer in your regular watering. The idea is to use as much fertilizer as you can without causing fertilizer burn.

If you can afford it, a [Growth Enhancer](#) is another option you can add to your nutritional program for your hibiscus. Growth enhancers provide different types of nutrition than fertilizers. They are loaded with the hormones and anti-stress proteins that plants themselves produce, but a plant that is stressed by a small pot may have difficulty making enough of these hormones and proteins. Supplementing with these nutrients helps keep hibiscus at optimum health levels, and gives them a break from having to produce all these proteins themselves.



[Hibiscus 'Belle du Jour' in a 10" Pot](#)

One other nutritional product you may want to add to your arsenal is extra potassium, such as is found in our [Hibiscus Booster](#). Hibiscus are voracious users of potassium, and if they become deficient in this element, their flowers will slowly diminish in size, number, and color intensity until they eventually stop blooming all together. The more stressful the conditions a hibiscus lives in, the more potassium it needs. Tiny amounts of this inexpensive nutrient will keep your hibiscus blooming with lots of big, colorful flowers year after year.



Fertilizer Burn ~
Burnt Edges on
Otherwise Healthy Leaves

Third, Pruning...

Pruning becomes extremely important when you keep a hibiscus in a small pot. The shape of the plant will be determined completely by how well you prune it. The more branches you encourage your plant to grow, the more it will flower, since hibiscus tend to produce one flower at a time on each branch. In a small pot, you need to think about which direction the branches are growing and what kind of overall shape each branch you leave on will give your plant. If you want a branch to grow up to fill a space near the top of the plant, look for a node that is on the top side of the branch you're pruning, and prune just above that node. This will force a branch to grow from that node up into the space you

need filled. Try to look at each node, and imagine where a branch growing from that node will shoot out, then pick the node that looks like it will create a branch in the shape you want. It's more of an art than a science, since we constantly turn our plants in their pots and cause sunlight to shift each time we turn them, but learning to think about these things when you prune will help you shape your potted hibiscus in ways that make it more beautiful while still keeping it more compact.

The final step in keeping potted hibiscus happy is to prune their roots every couple of years. To check your plant's roots, gently ease the pot off the rootball. If the roots are circling the bottom of the pot and form a solid mass at the bottom, it is time to prune them. Root pruning is easy: Using a very sharp knife that you have sterilized with alcohol or hand sanitizer, slice off the bottom 2 inches of the rootball. Then add 2 inches of fresh, good quality potting mix into the bottom of the pot, pop the plant back into the pot, water, and voilà! You're done! As the plant grows new roots down into the fresh soil, the new roots will stimulate growth hormones throughout the plant, and the plant will produce more top growth too.

These are the basics of keeping hibiscus happy in small pots. Our greenhouse is full of very old, very happy potted hibiscus, so we know this works! Good luck to all of you with yours!

Fourth, Root Pruning...

The final step in keeping potted hibiscus happy is to prune their roots every couple of years. To check your plant's roots, gently ease the pot off the rootball. If the roots are circling the bottom of the pot and form a solid mass at the bottom, it is time to prune them. Root pruning is easy: Using a very sharp knife that you have sterilized with alcohol or hand sanitizer, slice off the bottom 2 inches of the rootball. Then add 2 inches of fresh, good quality potting mix into the bottom of the pot, pop the plant back into the pot, water, and voilà! You're done! As the plant grows new roots down into the fresh soil, the new roots will stimulate growth hormones throughout the plant, and the plant will produce more top growth too.

These are the basics of keeping hibiscus happy in small pots. Our greenhouse is full of very old, very happy potted hibiscus, so we know this works! Good luck to all of you with yours!

This is just one of the informative articles found on the Hidden Valley website.



OVER THE YEARS, HIDDEN VALLEY HIBISCUS HAS PROVIDED HIBISCUS GROWERS WITH BEAUTIFUL PLANTS, USEFUL PRODUCTS AND WONDERFUL ADVICE. SADLY, CHARLES AND CINDY BLACK, OWNERS, ARE RETIRING AT THE END OF THIS YEAR. THEY DEFINITELY WILL BE MISSED BY THE HIBISCUS WORLD.

MICKI DOUGHERTY, OUR PROGRAM CHAIR SENDS THE FOLLOWING:

MEMBERS TAKE NOTE !Action Suggested

*It is anticipated that guest speaker Matt Martindale , (HibiscusPlaceLLC.com) will return as the **October 9, 2022** guest speaker, details to follow at the usual meeting place at Berne Davis, 2166 Virginia Avenue, Fort Myers. Members will receive advance notice of what cultivars Matt will have available for sale prior to the meeting.*

*The anticipated guest speaker for the **November 13th meeting** (B2 pavillon) at Lakes Park, Fort Myers will be Sue & Ed Austin. The story of their involvement in hybrid hibiscus is fascinating and various propagation methods will be discussed with emphasis on performing , “ top grafts” along with other topics. It is recommended that AHS members start concentrating on developing root stock from **Pride of Hankins** or the **El Capitolo** cultivar as both have strong root systems. Root stock is required for grafting. Other details and supplies needed to follow. Interested chapter members should attempt to contact senior members directly or Barbara Oster who can put you in touch with members having either plant. Both of these cultivars root well as cuttings but should be started soon.*



EARLY MORNING

MIDNIGHT TRYST



“ MIRACLE OF SHAUN ” IS THE 2022 NATIONAL CULTIVAR ENTRY FROM A MEMBER OF THE JEH CHAPTER

Micki (Madeleine) Dougherty entered the sole 2022 entry for the National AHS Competition from the JEH Chapter. Micki named the bloom from the cross of Early Morning X Midnight Tryst after her grandson, Shaun, who will be 1 year old in mid-August. The 2022 competition was open to all members of the American Hibiscus Society and was not limited to those that won a Best of Show Seedling.

The criteria for submitting a cultivar for the 2022 AHS National Competition was based on several factors. The entrant had to have hybridized and grown the cultivar from seed, the entrant had to be an AHS member in good standing, provided a photograph of at least ten (10) grafted or rooted plants from the mother plant to Nationals by the March 15, 2022 cut-off date. Additionally, the entrant was also responsible to provide the ten (10) plants for the National 2022 Convention that was just held in Lafayette, Louisiana (July 7 –July 10, 2022) for distribution to members of the Seedling Evaluation Committee, who will study the plant over the course of approximately three and a half years.

Micki is believed to be the only Florida AHS member to have met the above requirements. Entries from Texas and Louisiana were also submitted. Look for results in the years ahead!

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY MICKI DOUGHERTY



**SEPTEMBER 11 1:30
JEH Chapter Meeting, ABC'S of growing
hibiscus**

**QUESTIONS YOU HAVE WANTED TO
ASK BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHERE OR WHO**

Save October 22 for our plant sale at Rotary Park in Cape Coral. This will be an opportunity to get new VARIETIES! 350 plants will be available.

Q and A Time

Q Good morning Jack .. I purchased my first Kilimanjaro hibiscus at the show in Fort Myers April of this year .. It was doing beautifully and has almost tripled in size .. now it's **leaves are yellowing**.. I bought the fertilizer you were selling at the show and used it once .. I have it in a western exposure on my lanai .. gets lots of sun ..HELP please!! DEBBIE



A Your plant looks great. The leaves (other than your yellow ones) are a deep rich green, plant looks well cared for. Pick the yellow leaves off the plant. That is normal attrition. Find me a Hibiscus grower that walks through their garden and does not have a handful of yellow leaves. Our plants have been through a mini drought and now are basking in our daily monsoons. We, the keepers, just keep an eye on things like insects, molds, and if the plant likes the location we've chosen, it will flourish. Sure looks like the plant in the pic is happy. It is about time for another fertilizer feed, end of July. Thanks for sharing.

JACK

JACK BERNATZ, PRESIDENT, HAS THE MONTH OFF. CHECK YOUR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER FOR A TASTE OF HIS WISDOM!



THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

Growing up in Southern Virginia, I remember hearing my grandmother and mother talk about a magical plant – the Night Blooming Cereus. The plant took on a mysterious aura for me, especially since I never saw one either at a friend’s home or for sale in a garden center. But recently a friend acquired a cutting from a fellow garden club member, and when she was giving away plants before moving back North, she asked if I wanted any of her plants. I excitedly said “I’d love a piece of the night blooming cereus!” I inherited the entire plant, which I promptly put into a very large pot to keep on my lanai. Then I added a trellis to the pot because the plant seemed to be growing overnight and it appeared intent on climbing. I knew the plants usually flower after several years in a pot, so I somewhat ignored my new treasure, other than watering it regularly.



Imagine my surprise when 5 buds appeared! The buds were tiny at first, then seemed to grow exponentially. Three buds didn’t progress very well and dropped off, so I was left with 2 buds to observe. Each day I was amazed at how much the buds grew overnight; pale pink ‘tendrils’ embraced the growing white inner flower. After about 3 weeks, the buds were 6 inches long and one morning I noted a slight ‘opening’ of the buds. I wasn’t sure how long it would take the buds to fully open, but I suspected that it would be within a day or two. During the day I marked the progress of the buds and decided that they would open that night. At dusk, the flowers were beginning to swell and open, and by 9 PM they had opened. The scent was intoxicating! By midnight the flowers were fully opened, and when I walked through the sliding door to the lanai the sweet scent from those two blooms was overwhelming. The next morning, the flowers were closed and over the following days they slowly wilted and fell off the plant. (I have since learned that you can pick the flower at night and store it in the refrigerator so you can admire it the next morning!) Since I had seen the beautiful ‘show’, which I believed was an annual event, I decided that I would place the rapidly growing plant in the garden so it could expand at will. Then I noticed more emerging buds! I now have 3 buds that should probably flower in the next 10 days and I’m looking forward to another spectacular evening performance.

The Night Blooming Cereus is a type of orchid cactus native to rain forests, where it grows high in the trees. As it grows in a riot of tangled ‘leaves’ the plant can reach 10 feet, which is why a trellis is often recommended. As a member of the cactus family, the cereus plant does not have true leaves. The plant produces pencil shaped stems that allow the plant to climb, and flattened stems that resemble and function as leaves. ‘Leaves’ that have been on the plant for 2 active seasons produce the flower buds, which form on the indentations of the notched ‘leaves.’ In most areas the cereus is a houseplant that enjoys summers outside, but here in SW FL it thrives year-round in our subtropical climate. The plant requires bright light, preferably morning sun as the stronger afternoon rays can burn the ‘leaves’. The cereus should be planted in well-draining soil and allowed to dry between regular watering. A water-soluble fertilizer is recommended during the spring, although I have never applied fertilizer and my plant is growing at warp speed. The cereus is a classic ‘pass-a-long plant’ and can be propagated by easy to root cuttings.

The Night Blooming Cereus has proven to be a highlight of my gardening adventures here in SW FL. After hearing of this mystical plant for my entire life, I am elated to have finally acquired a cereus plant and to be rewarded with blooms so quickly. I hope that you will ask for a cutting if you know of a fellow gardener with a Night Blooming Cereus; you will undoubtedly be as fascinated as I have been watching the progression of this magical plant!

CATHY DUNN is a member of the Garden Club of Cape Coral, James E. Hendry Chapter of the AHS and a Lee County Master Gardener Volunteer.

KAY JANSSEN	8/7
RUTH DiPACE	8/19
DOT MOHR	8/29

editor, barbara oster

