



HENDRY HERALD

JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER

of the AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW hendrychapterhibiscus.com DECEMBER 2022

MERRY CHRISTMAS



HAPPY HANUKKAH

HY'S WAY for DECEMBER

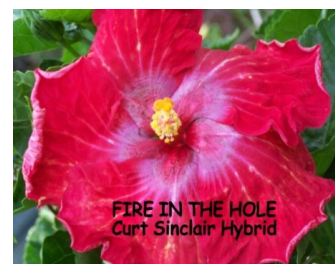
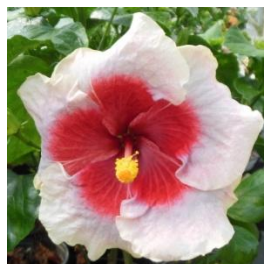
Break up any mulch that has become hard and caked. If needed, sprinkle dish detergent in a snakelike manner on the caked mulch which will allow water to enter the mulch. Add more mulch where depth is less than 3 inches thick. Use melaleuca mulch not cypress. You can buy it at your local garden center. It is termite resistant, brown color and the melaleuca tree is invasive and should be removed thus using it as mulch is a great idea. It also is better looking than cypress.

With cold weather in December and January it is important to remember that wind damage to plants usually precedes a cold front and can be more damaging to plants than a drop in temperature because the dehydrating action of the dry wind results in typical leaf burn or marginal browning. The damaged leaves fall off and are replaced by new leaves. After a cold snap it is a good idea to give the plants foliage fertilizing with a liquid fertilizer. Prior to an onset of a cold snap give your plants a good watering.

DECEMBER and JANUARY

December: Keep fertilizing your hibiscus with the usual amounts of fertilizer. **DO NOT PRUNE** although broken and dead branches can be removed at any time.

January: Cut fertilizer amount in half as you continue to fertilize. **DO NOT PRUNE.** If a cold freeze is expected, be sure to give plants lots of water prior to the freeze.



DON'T FORGET-HOLIDAY PARTY DECEMBER 3

The Festive Poinsettia by CATHY DUNN



What plant makes you think immediately of Christmas? I'm confident that you answered the poinsettia, which adorns our homes, holiday cards, wrapping paper and even our postage stamps during the holiday season. The poinsettia is the second largest-selling flowering plant in the country (orchids are the number one seller), with annual sales of 70 million plants per year and total sales revenues of \$250 million. How did this beautiful plant that originated in Mexico come to be so closely associated with Christmas? The story is fascinating!



The botanical name for poinsettias is *Euphorbia pulcherrima* which translates to 'very beautiful.' According to an old Mexican legend, a young girl named Pepita was saddened because she was too poor to purchase a gift to donate for the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve services. Her cousin stated that any gift would be appreciated, and an angel instructed Pepita to pick some weeds along the roadside as an offering. As Pepita left the weeds at the manger, they were transformed into the beautiful red blooms we enjoy today. In Mexico, the poinsettia is still known as the "*Flor de Nochebuena*" or Christmas Eve Flower.

The plant is named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was a botanist and the first U.S. Minister to Mexico. He sent plants that were known as "Mexican Flame Flowers" from Mexico to his greenhouses in South Carolina, where they gained popularity in the U.S. In 2001 Congress created National Poinsettia Day on December 12 to honor Poinsett, who passed away on December 12, 1851.

Today most poinsettias are grown in Latin America, using grafting techniques to make the plants fuller and more compact that were developed in the early 1900s in Los Angeles by Albert Ecke, a German immigrant. The third generation of Eckes are probably most responsible for the popularity of poinsettias at Christmas; they provided free plants at Thanksgiving to television stations for display through Christmas and appeared on popular television shows such as The Tonight Show and Bob Hope's Christmas specials to promote their plants.

Poinsettias are no longer strictly red; more than 100 varieties of poinsettias are available today in pink, white, yellow, purple, salmon, and multi-colors. The colorful 'petals' we consider as the flower of the poinsettia are actually modified leaves called 'bracts,' designed to attract pollinators to the small and inconspicuous actual flower at the center of the bracts. In the past poinsettia bracts dropped off if the plant was kept indoors for more than a few days, but new cultivars retain their foliage indoors. You should keep poinsettias in an area with bright, indirect for 6 hours per day, away from drafts or excessive heat. The plant should be watered only when the soil surface is dry to the touch; avoid watering too frequently or allowing the plant to sit in water.

Here in SW Florida, we don't have to hurry home as we did in northern climates with our poinsettias carefully shielded from cold temperatures and wind by plastic sleeves – we can actually place these beautiful plants outdoors in our gardens! Once you have enjoyed your poinsettia indoors during the holiday season, plants that have retained some green healthy leaves can be planted in well-drained soil in a sunny spot in your garden that does not receive artificial light at night (even brief exposure to artificial light sources at night can delay or prevent flowering). Cut off any fading bracts and leave 4-6 inches of stem with as many green leaves attached as possible. The plant should be placed in the ground at the same depth it was growing in the pot. You should fertilize your poinsettias monthly from March to October, using a fertilizer with balanced amounts of nitrogen and potassium (the first and third numbers in the formula) and low phosphorus (the middle number). If you don't prune your plant regularly during the growing season, it can become "leggy" and produce less flowerheads; you can prune as often as monthly, making sure to leave at least 4 leaves on each shoot. Discontinue pruning in early September, as flower buds begin development in October in response to shorter days and lower temperatures. If you decide to keep your poinsettia in a pot outdoors, you should follow the same directions but bring your plant inside around Labor Day. Keep the plant in complete darkness (i.e. in a closet) for at least 13-14 hours each day and in bright light for the remainder of the day. In about 2 months your poinsettia will be in colorful bloom and ready for the holiday season!

Poinsettias are a beautiful expression of the holiday season, and in SW Florida they can be a year-round part of your landscape. If treated properly outdoors, you can enjoy the Christmas cheer of these festive plants in your gardens for many years. You can find more information on poinsettias and their care on the University of Florida website: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/poinsettias/>

Cathy Dunn, Lee County Master Gardener Volunteer, Garden Club of Cape Coral Member, JEH CHAPTER MEMBER





THIS ARTICLE IS WRITTEN BY BUDDY SHORT from LOUISIANA.
They have colder weather in the winter than we do. His lessons are full of good ideas if we expect a cold snap.

In December a basic concern each member has is whether you have 3 or 300 plants: “What do I do with my plants this winter?”
Before we explore this topic, let me state that what you ultimately do with your collection depends on several key questions that you must answer before you decide on your best method.

1. How many plants do you have?
2. Are they garden variety or tropicals?
3. Are they in ground or in pots?

Forty degrees for one night is not a problem, but several nights in a row at 40 degrees can damage your plants. Winds will increase, and increased winds and lower temperatures will dry out your plants. This can be a good thing, as over watering is harmful to hibiscus in cooler temperatures. Wind chill can decrease the temperatures drastically, causing leaf burn, defoliation, and even death. City locations can get protection from winds with buildings and lots of concrete. The concrete retains the heat from the day, and buildings block or channel the wind.

Wind protection may be more important than protection from the cold temperatures in your winterizing plan. It is my personal belief that in South Louisiana we lose more plants to excess moisture than we do to temperature.

Before you start moving and covering plants, it is time to prune, especially if you have a greenhouse or place where you plants will remain warm. Do not, however, prune too early and leave those plants unprotected during a cold snap. Pruning promotes new growth, and that fresh young growth will be susceptible to frost or cold damage should we experience a sudden cold snap, so pay attention. If you prune, then try rooting your cuttings especially on garden varieties. These may become replacement plants if you lose the plant and if not, it is always good to have gifts for fellow hibiscus nuts, raffles, or just give aways to friends. Remember: free plants are contagious.

A “southern” porch can provide a good deal of protection depending on the winds. Wind breaks can be as simple as attaching a tarp or plastic to the eaves of the porch and rolling it up during the day to allow circulation and sunlight.

Another plan if you have few plants is to put them on a small rolling cart, move the cart in and out of the garage to water and allow sun during the day, and return to the garage at night. (That has really worked well for me.) This daily chore will get old as well, but it can work to protect your plants. Expect leaf and bud drop, as hybrids are much more susceptible to cold and winds than garden varieties. Remember this when pruning.

Here are a few “quick hit” comments on “in ground” plants:

Freeze cloth is a worthwhile investment if your plants are protected by trees or even fences. Covering with blankets or cloth is essential. A simple structure such as a tomato cage can be placed over the plant and filled with dry leaves and covered with a freeze cloth or garbage can. This can provide enough protection if the temperatures stay around 40. Any colder and you may have trouble. Some people dig up their plants to place in pots for the winter. Again, this is a lot of work and stresses your plants.

WHATEVER METHOD YOU CHOSE, YOU SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDER THIS MOST IMPORTANT POINT:

PROTECT YOUR MOST VALUABLE AND HARDEST TO REPLACE PLANTS FIRST AND WITH YOUR BEST METHOD!!!!!!

As you can see, winterizing your plants requires some thought and planning. So as the old Cub Scout motto would teach us, “BE PREPARED”.

BUDDY SHORT

Hybridized by BUDDY SHORT

BUDDY WITH CONNIE ROUSH

SGT SETH TRAHAN





Mother Nature Job Requirements By Clint Oster ASLA

If mother nature is advertising for an assistant I think I would be a shoo-in. I understand most of her principals. My garden "Clint's Homegrown Park" is living proof.

I have followed the tried & true adage of being 70% native plants, for the birds & bees & health of our environment, 20% edible plants to cut down on the grocery bill, and 10% comfort plants like Gardenia & Hibiscus, flowering annuals in highly visible places, or plants with sentimental value. I follow the 9 rules to having a 'Florida Friendly Landscape' and have been given a plaque saying so! I compost, have working swales & a rain barrel, rely on hose water not automatic irrigation, and am busy recreating nature in my urban habitat. What I don't yet have are solar cells or an electric vehicle which would definitely help with my application!

After studying Landscape Architecture in the 1980's I have applied all the 'Land Stewardship' concepts that help nature (some ideas weren't so good like draining the water off the site as fast as possible and specifying plants that bugs wouldn't bother). But the real boost to my garden came after reading Douglas Tallamy's book "Natures Best Hope"! I have in fact noted how few insects are around today than in days past. I do realize that insects are on the bottom of the fauna pyramid and thus a foundation to a healthy environment. The variety of birds in my neighborhood is at an all time low so I decided to do something about it!

I replaced half of my backyard lawn with a babbling brook and two ponds. Around them are nothing but native plants and a tranquil brick patio. The birds did come and other animals too. Although I am far from being done I'm letting nature take over and encouraging the native plants that she sees fit to thrive and forever introducing new natives to see if they can take a foot hold in my home grown park. **CLINT OSTER, Landscape Architect in Boca Raton, FL.** (JEH Member & Barbara's son)



CAROLYN ESTEP
GEORGE MOORE
ROBERT WINDFIELD
KAREN BROWN
DR HENRY POLLAK
LISA BAXTER
JULIE REED

DECEMBER 1
DECEMBER 3
DECEMBER 8
DECEMBER 12
DECEMBER 13
DECEMBER 19
DECEMBER 22

DEFINITION OF SPELL-CHECK: It helps if you imagine spell-check as a tiny little elf in your phone who's trying so hard to be helpful but is in fact quite drunk.

PLUG INTO HOLIDAY SAFETY

Did you know more than one hundred fires happen per year due to issues with decorative and holiday lights? Here are some tips to stay safe from our local electric company.

INSPECT ELECTRICAL DECORATIONS FOR DAMAGE BEFORE USE.

DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS.

NEVER CONNECT MORE THAN THREE STRINGS OF INCANDESCENT LIGHTS.

PROTECT CORDS FROM DAMAGE (a chair leg on a cord can cause exposed wires that can blow a fuse)

UNPLUG WHEN NOT IN USE (never leave holiday lights on when sleeping or not at home.



Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years. Sent in by **BONNIE HALL**

BE PREPARED! SOME TRIED AND TRUE ADVICE FROM SEASONED PROFESSIONALS!

Last winter we were so lucky with no hard freezes! We are hoping for the best again in this 2022-2023 winter season but if not, BE PREPARED. Some tips from professional growers:

1. A dry plant will receive the most damage in frosts and freezes. Maintain a good watering schedule. **JO CONRAD** (Ms. Conrad was a nursery owner, hybridizer and president of the Conrad-Sunrise Chapter in West Palm Beach. She passed away several years ago)
2. Keep sheets (cloth NOT plastic) handy along with clothespins, rocks, bricks, etc. to cover plants if freeze is imminent. **JO CONRAD**
3. 34° and below can wreak havoc. Keep up a spray schedule of minor elements to help your plants grow stronger and healthier. Strong and healthy plants withstand the cold better. **JO CONRAD**
4. Use a soaker hose to keep plants well watered, thus able to withstand cold temperatures. **CURT SINCLAIR** (Curt was the owner of Exotic Hibiscus in La Belle, FL)
5. Fertilize regularly in moderation throughout the winter using a balanced fertilizer (slow release is recommended). **GROWING HIBISCUS, BEERS & HOWIE** (Beers & Howie have written a very respected handbook on hibiscus)
6. Prior to an onset of a cold snap give your plants a good watering. **HY LANS** (Dr. Hy Lans was a member of our chapter, a master gardener in FL specializing in hibiscus. He wrote our handbook of hibiscus care for local gardeners and gave the rights to his book to the James E Hendry Chapter before he passed away)
7. Cover the hibiscus to take advantage of heat stored in the soil and plant. Chicken wire makes a good frame. Use newspapers, cardboard, burlap or old blankets or sheets (check your Salvation Army or Goodwill stores for blankets then you can donate them back when winter has passed if you don't have room to store them). **GROWING HIBISCUS, BEERS & HOWIE**
8. AFTER the cold spell has passed give plants a light fertilizing with a quick-acting fertilizer to return them to a good healthy growing condition. This fertilization should be done following a thorough watering of the plant. **GROWING HIBISCUS, BEERS & HOWIE**
9. After a cold snap it is a good idea to give the plants foliage fertilizing with a liquid fertilizer. **HY LANS**
10. Do NOT trim any dead branches until all danger of frost/freeze has passed. **HY LANS**



Remember this is Hybridizing Season

Cooler weather perfect time to hybridize

Now that the heat of summer has waned and before temperatures become too cool for vigorous growth and flowering, we have the perfect season to hybridize. New cultivars of hibiscus are produced only through seed, and seeds are produced by pollinating flowers. The last few weeks have been ideal for hybridizing, and if one has a protected greenhouse, it will be possible to continue hybridizing until temperatures become too hot for flowers to produce reliable pollen -- generally mid-May in the New Orleans area.

The process of hybridizing is quite simple. Place the pollen of one flower on the stigma pads of another. The pollen grows down a tube into the ovary where the ovules (unfertilized seed) are fertilized. A pod forms and ripens. When after 9 weeks or so it turns brown, harvest the small seeds inside. Although one can plant the seeds after collecting them, I generally wait until the Spring. This gives the young plants more reliable growing conditions. If you save the seed, keep them in a dry location. Be sure and mark the name of the both the pod and pollen parent for future reference.

Father Robert Gerlich of the New Orleans Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society.

HYBRIDIZING

Q First attempt was a failure. The father was an old flower and it was a long shot. So when I do get a pod, forgive my newness, if am I reading it right that every seed is a different genetic make up? So I really need plant them all if I want to see the true result of the hybridization? If that is true... Then the seeds in eBay they are marketing as this or that (particularly the Voodoo) is really a crap shoot on what you'll have in a year?
Dave Vander Stelt

A Some of the really common varieties like Brilliant, President, etc. are probably genetically much closer to the original species than the newest hybrids are. If you use one of these as a parent, the offspring will generally favor it more than the newer, more exotic parent. It can be disappointing to wait a year or two for the first bloom and have that bloom look so much like that common, more dominant parent.

Tom Miller

A Aloha Dave and List,

You are correct. Let's say you make a cross of "American Maid" X "Sans Souci". (You always list the mother/pod parent first, followed by an X which means crossed by, followed by the father/pollen parent.) If the conditions are good and you are lucky your seed pod will grow, mature, and pop open in 6-7 weeks (here in Hawai'i anyway.) Then let's say you have 20 seeds from that cross. Just like people, each seed will be a genetic combination of the genes from both parents, some traits being more dominant than others, some traits being recessive.

In my 16 years of hybridizing I've never gotten "twins". I.E. every seed from the same seed pod has produced a different flower, with some similarities between them. For example, last week I had 3 "first bloom" plants from the same seed pod. Parents were my "34-07" X "Kaliponi 'Ekahi" (which is scented). 2 of the 3 were scented. All were 4 3/4". All were double (both parents are doubles). One was a mixture of oranges. One was a mixture of pinks. And the 3rd was white with pink edging to each petal.

Mass hybridizing first took place here in Hawai'i around 1909 & a little earlier. By 1909 about 1,000 unique hybrids had bloomed and 230 of these were recorded in something called Bulletin 29 of the Hawaii Agricultural Experiment Station. Many of these plants and their descendants were sent out around the world (among other places Florida, Rhode Island (go figure), Fiji, India, Australia, Mauritius Islands, Spain, etc., etc. Many folks here in Hawai'i and elsewhere used these plants as parents in creating other new hybrids.

Therefore, you can assume that any cross that you make has up to 50 or more generations before you get to the original species cross done over 100 years ago. That being the case, there are a huge number of possibilities of which genes will present themselves in the resulting seedling. We normally keep 2-10% of the seedlings that we create each year and we compost the rest because they are "ordinary". We aim to only keep and reproduce extraordinary!

Even if you put pollen from "Plant A" onto the pollen pads of "Plant A", the resulting seedling will never be an exact reproduction of "Plant A".

Here at Hibiscus Lady Nursery, I put botanic information about each plant that we keep into a database. That way I can see if a particular parent often passes along a particular trait (fragrance, blue, double, or whatever). There still would be no guarantee that I would get what I'm aiming for.

I hope the above is helpful! Aloha, Jill www.hibiscusladynursery.com

DECEMBER UF MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WHAT TO PLANT

Annuals/Bedding plants: To add color to the winter garden, plant masses of begonia, impatiens, and geranium.

Bulbs: Amaryllis is a popular plant for the holiday season. It can be forced to bloom now or planted outdoors for spring blooms.

Herbs: Plant herbs that thrive in cool weather. Some examples include parsley, thyme, sage, dill, fennel, and cilantro. **PARSLEY, THYME, SAGE, DILL, FENNEL & CILANTRO do well. BASIL is not cold tolerant.**

Vegetables: Reliable cool-season vegetables to plant this month include broccoli, carrots, kale, green onions, and others



WHAT TO DO

Poinsettias: Enjoy one of the most popular holiday plants. Protect it from cold until spring, and then plant it in the garden for next year.

Irrigation: Irrigate if the weather has been warm and dry. Monitor plants for signs of stress and water only as needed.

Lawns: Continue monitoring for brown patch and large patch fungal disease until May. Proper cultural practices are key for control.

Houseplants: Inspect regularly for pests on indoor plants. Keep in mind that plant-specific temperature, light, and humidity are key to ensuring that indoor plants thrive.

Soil test: Consider performing a soil test if plants do not perform as desired or if new plantings are planned.

Compost/mulch: Use fallen leaves and other plant debris to provide the carbon ingredient needed for successful composting and also to make a good mulch.

Landscape and garden pests: Continue monitoring and treat as needed. While cooler weather generally means fewer pests, some populations actually increase at this time of year.

Holiday trees: Consider enjoying a live southern red cedar and then plant it in the landscape when the holidays are over.

Protect: Protect tender orchid, impatiens, and tomato from falling temperatures.



Hello All,

It's that time of the year to give thanks for all of our blessings including updating and improving our homes, and help with our landscape issues. It is always a startling revelation when we see all of our stuff brought to light, and how its importance is brought to task with the decisions, replace, renew, or thanks for help in clearing the clutter. In all cases, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

I would also ask all of you to share issues you are aware of with members, so we can make others aware, and if possible, we may be able to help one another.

The most apparent thing I have noticed is that the levels of storm havoc varied, and the way the issues were dealt with by those involved coincides with a level of understanding that I'm not alone in this.

I hope that all of you think about everyone and their issues, keeping three things in mind, be kind, be just, and be humble.

I find it very helpful in my search for peace of mind in tough times.

Hopefully we all come to the understanding that we are rooted and grounded in love. With that our rejuvenation will be peacefully successful.

Wish all of you a very Happy and Merry Christmas/Holiday celebration.

Hope to see you all at the Party. **JACK**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 by **BETH MEEHAN**. There were no visitors and 27 members were present. The Treasurer's Report reflected a healthy balance and acknowledged a \$2000 donation to Community Cooperative.

***MICKI DOUGHERTY** introduced our speaker, Sandy Troy Pennington. Sandy introduced us to another of her interesting activities, hypertufa, which looks like limestone, lasts for years, and is lightweight. It's made from one part of either white or gray Portland cement, one part perlite (vermiculite), and one part peat moss. If you use coir it will absorb water immediately (instead of having to wait). Portland cement degrades quickly, so when buying in 100-pound bags you will want to re-package it in smaller Ziploc bags. After selecting the mold, line it with thin plastic, spray with cooking spray (Pam), use a wheelbarrow or large bin to mix completely and let it rest ten minutes. You will need to drill a hole for drainage after 24 hours, let it rest for 24 hours, and cure it for 28 days in the shade.

***BETH** spoke about "What's Wrong With My Plant?" My plant has lots of buds, they turn yellow, and fall off. It's the Hibiscus Gall Midge. It's a small bug about the size of a gnat, it lives in the bud for four days, the bud falls off and the bug burrows into the ground, it will hatch and the cycle starts over. Imidacloprid is a good systemic and it will kill larva in the soil. The whole area where the buds drop will need to be treated.

*Good sources of information are Hidden Valley Hibiscus and Hibiscus Doctor.

* **TERRY & ELAINE MARTIN** organized the Mini Show

Double	Callie's Volcano	MICKI DOUGHERTY
Single	Sacred Fire	MICKI
Mini Double	Chi's Garden Magic Crystal Ball	VALERIE COSTA
Mini Single (tie)	Bahama Blue	MICKI
	Sparkling Waters	WANDA SCHMOYER
Amateur Double	Bon Ami	RICHARD WALTER
Amateur Single	T. Ultrabright	CATHY DUNN
Double Seedling	FRANK HEFFERNAN hybridizer, Byron Metts, x Golden Rain	DENISE HELFRICH

*Barb Y spoke about the Christmas party: December 3, 1449 Whiskey Creek Drive, Fort Myers, arrive 5:00-5:30 with a wrapped \$20 gift. Cost is \$20 per person. Cash bar-only credit cards accepted.

*Jill Breslin spoke about the importance of signing the petition supporting the Caloosa Water Keepers

* the meeting was adjourned at 3:15. 50/50 was won by Jill Breslin and free plants were given out.

Respectfully submitted, **JOYCE YATES**, Secretary

God's Plan for Aging

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom, God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

HOPE TO SEE YOU DECEMBER 3 AT THE 2022 HOLIDAY PARTY

barbara oster, editor

