



HENDRY HERALD

JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER

of the AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW hendrychapterhibiscus.com MARCH 2023

MARCH brings us

CHAPTER MEETING; Daylight Savings Time (March 12);

St. Patrick's Day (March 17);

1st DAY OF SPRING (March 20)



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.

We lost **HY LANS** in 2013 but we continue to cherish his always-timely advice. We sell his book of month-to-month advice for \$10 at chapter meetings. **BE SURE HY'S BOOK IS IN YOUR LIBRARY**

STEPHEN BROWN Q & A (News-Press)

Q. Condo has sent a crew to trim our very expensive hibiscus that we bought about 14 months ago. Most of them were about 4 feet high and were pruned several days ago to only 2 feet, making the plants lose a great deal of leaf area and making them lose their beautiful flowers and flower buds. Is this a good practice to so severely prune the hibiscus and what's more in the middle of the cold and dry season?

A. Generally one should not remove more than 1/3 of a plant when pruning. Excessive and repeated removal of foliage. A deprived the plant of its food-making organs needed for photosynthesis and no amount of fertilizer applications can make up for the loss of leaves. Also, a beautiful hibiscus is a flowering hibiscus. Frequent and excessive pruning robs a plant of this beauty. March would be the best time to prune hibiscus being assured that the cold weather has passed.



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|------------------------|----------|
| DR MARY-MARGARET SHOAF | APRIL 3 |
| BETH MEEHAN | APRIL 6 |
| ELAINE MARTIN | APRIL 13 |
| BILL BRYAN | APRIL 18 |
| MARILYN MOORE | APRIL 20 |
| LINDA FEWELL | APRIL 22 |
| SANDRA GOVE | APRIL 23 |

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER "SECRETS OF A FLOWER EATER" HEATHER GONZALEZ

March 12, 2023, JEH Chapter Meeting, 1:30 to enter blooms; 2:00 meeting



President's Message - BETH MEEHAN

It's show time!



It's spring and time for all the hibiscus chapters to hold their annual shows. If you've never been to a hibiscus show, try to attend one this year. They are a lot of fun as you can meet members from other chapters, see some awesome blooms and maybe bring home a ribbon for yourself! Remember, if you're new to showing your blooms, you are an amateur for the first two years. This is to ensure that novice growers are only competing with other novices. (Here I am in 2017 with my first two entries – gold ribbons for both of them!

Of course, the highlight of the season will be our own 70th Annual Show on April 29th. This is the biggest and the best show in Florida. I hope everyone has that date marked on their calendar! BETH

FLORIDA SHOW CALENDAR

February 11 - Sunset Chapter, Tampa, Florida State Fairground

February 18, March 11, March 25 and May 20 - Mathews-Fallman Chapter

May 14 - Harry Goulding Chapter, Punta Gorda MAY 27 - Sunset Chapter, Seminole

JEH HIBISCUS CHAPTER MINUTES

February 12, 2023

President Beth Meehan called the meeting to order at 2:00. Those in attendance stood for the Pledge. Visitors were welcomed. Virginia Lawson is from North Carolina and was visiting her daughter, Denise Helfrich. Mary Leidle and Patricia Meyers are former members.

1. Motions from the Board Meeting were read.
2. The Treasurers Report was given showing a healthy balance.
3. Marsha Crawford is the Chair Person for the April Sale. She passed around sign- up sheets for membership help. She said help will be needed on Friday and Saturday and hopes everyone will be able to help in some capacity.
4. Micki Dougherty and Nancy Kopp were showing hibiscus blooms Saturday in Tampa. They did very well and were at the Head Table. Micki talked about how to pack your blooms to travel to a show. She prefers a cone shaped container or for larger blooms a clear plastic container that some fruits come in. Marsha mentioned that you can make your own cones since buying them can be very costly. Nancy talked about picking blooms. Ideally you want to pick them before they are fully open. The cones work very well. If you are traveling to a show you will need to pick them a day or two before the show. You will need to refrigerate them.
5. Beth spoke about potential problems with aphids. They come in a variety of colors and there are over 4000 species. The female lays eggs in the Fall, they over- winter on plant leaves, in Spring the eggs hatch-all are female. When the food supply lessens, winged females are born and they fly to another plant. To treat for aphids start as soon as possible. A systemic works best. Imidacloprid works very well.
6. Our Bylaws had nothing about the President resigning, which resulted in adding Article 6 Section 6. The membership will vote on the new Article in March.
7. Beth asked for 3 volunteers for the Refreshment Committee.
8. Docents are used at Berne Davis. We need 2 Docents for Tuesday April 4, from 10:00-1:00.
9. Paul Zinszer volunteered to take over selling 50/50 tickets..

MINI SHOW Amateur Double
Amateur Seedling Single
Amateur Seedling Double
Collector Double
Collector Single

El Capitola sport
unknown x unknown
unknown x unknown
Love Pat
Stolen Kisses

CATHY DUNN
DENISE HELFRICH
DENISE HELFRICH
TERRY MARTIN
TERRY MARTIN

Meeting was adjourned at 3:11

Respectfully submitted, Joyce Yates Secretary

Perennial: any plant which, had it lived, would have bloomed year after year.

March 12, 2023, JEH Chapter Meeting

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER "SECRETS OF A FLOWER EATER" HEATHER GONZALEZ

GARDEN INSPIRATIONS by **CATHY DUNN**



It has been said that a garden is never finished, but rather is a creation that evolves from season to season and year to year. Most gardeners are cognizant of this principle and embrace the ever-changing nature of their landscape. As the seasons progress, experienced gardeners look forward to the evolution of the landscape as some plants recede and others assume more prominence. And if climatic conditions such as drought or storms alter their gardens, they relish the opportunity to start afresh with a new plant or species. Gardeners are always dreaming, improving, and tinkering with their creations. If a plant doesn't thrive or outgrows its place in the garden, the new challenge to relocate and/or replace it offers exciting new options.

Every gardener must go through a learning process to discover the best and most desirable plants, as well as the principles of design for the landscape. Most gardeners begin with plants; they fall in love with a certain variety or species and want to incorporate it in their garden. Those of us who have moved to SW Florida from a different zone may want to replicate the gardens we had in a cooler climate, or we may see new subtropical varieties that we want to incorporate into our new gardens. Without a good understanding of what plants thrive here and what conditions they require, we may not be too happy with the results!

I am a visual learner; I prefer to use images or graphics to communicate thoughts and ideas – I need to see information to learn it. So, I find that most of the ideas for my gardens come from seeing other gardens and observing how plants are incorporated into the landscape. We have three exceptional 'teaching' gardens here in SW Florida that I highly recommend as venues where you can observe plants that are suited for our climate: The Edison Ford Winter Estates in Ft. Myers, The Naples Botanical Gardens in Naples, and The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Downtown Sarasota. Each of these gardens provide a delightful retreat and are well staffed with horticulturists who can answer your questions.

The varied gardens at the Edison Ford Winter Estates provide a look back in time to the vision established by some of Florida's most famous residents. There are more than 1,700 plants representing more than 400 species from six continents on the Estates, with many unique species including tropical fruit trees and more than 60 species of palms throughout the property. Unique plants for your gardens are available for sale in the Garden Shoppe, and monthly garden talks and workshops are offered throughout the year.

www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/

The Naples Botanical Garden is a 170-acre world-class property featuring plants from around the world. There are thousands of species with striking forms, flowers and colors throughout the garden, and themed areas such as the Asian Garden, Brazilian Garden, Caribbean Garden, Children's Garden and Water Garden. A highlight is the Naples Garden Club Idea Garden which features a rotating array of the best regionally and seasonally appropriate plants, incorporating imaginative ideas and innovative techniques to aid the home gardener. The Garden also includes a wonderful outdoor café and a beautiful garden center stocked with unique treasures. Ongoing exhibits and programs provide an incentive to return to Naples again and again!

www.naplesgarden.org

The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Downtown Sarasota are a celebration of the exotic subtropical beauty of our area, and the world's only botanical garden dedicated to the display and study of orchids, bromeliads, ferns, epiphytes and tropical plants. A series of exhibitions throughout the year feature plants incorporated with art, and the Annual Orchid Show in the Fall is one of the highlights of the year, with the best scientifically documented collection of orchids in the world. And of course, there is a Garden Shop where you can purchase a gorgeous orchid or other tropical plan for your garden.

<https://selby.org/>

Plan to visit these spectacular gardens to enjoy a day outside in subtropical beauty while you gather inspiration for your gardening endeavors. As Gertrude Jekyll, one of the most influential horticulturists of the past century, wisely stated: "A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust."

CATHY DUNN, Master Gardener, Garden Club of Cape Coral Member, JEH Chapter Member

March 12, 2023, JEH Chapter Meeting

Soil Testing UF Master Gardener Volunteer Program [jsykes@ifas-ufl.ccsend.com]

With spring gardens on the horizon, now is a good time to test your soil! As of February 15, 2023 you will have two options for soil testing. The UF/IFAS Soil Testing Laboratory is still open for testing as usual, but now there is another option called SoilKit®. Both are based on the same science, but the new one is designed to be especially user-friendly with results that are easy to understand.



As of February 15, 2023, you will have two options for where to send your soil for testing. The traditional option is to send your sample to the UF/IFAS Soil Testing Laboratory. The newer option is to use the SoilKit® testing kit, which is the product of a UF/IFAS partnership with AgriTech Corp. This kit provides an easy-to-use soil testing platform with consumer-friendly results.

Both tests provide the same analysis; the main difference is that the cost of SoilKit® is all inclusive (meaning you don't have to pay additional shipping) and the results are designed to be easy to comprehend, even if you are new to soil science. It also considers your local fertilizer ordinances to help you comply with them. Both test options are available at your county Extension office and are based on UF/IFAS research. Your county Extension agents can help you select the test that will work best for your needs.

Before getting a testing kit, you need to decide how many samples to take. You should send separate samples for turf areas, vegetable gardens, and ornamental beds. If there are any specific problem areas, samples from those regions should be sent separately as well.

Once you have a number of samples in mind, visit your county Extension office for materials and to ask any questions you may have. The Extension office will provide bags for each soil sample, shipping materials, and the necessary forms. SoilKit® test kits are also available online at soilkit.com/florida.

Now you are able to begin the sampling process.

May you always have Love to share, Cash to spare, Tires with air, And friends who care



WATERING YOUR NEW PLANTS - TODD ALVIS

I bought a couple Dupont hibiscus at the show in Sunday. I've shown this before but thought it might be helpful to new members. Dupont waters their plants by flooding the tables the plants are on. Because of that the roots are only on the bottom. This becomes an issue for us because almost everyone of us waters from the top. If you don't water deep enough the soil on the top rots and the roots dry out and the plant goes into decline. This is typical for most people that get the plants at a show. Also Dupont uses a soil that is great for them but is pretty heavy for the way most of us water

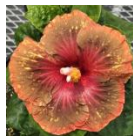
so I clean it off when I report it. It will stress it a bit for a few days but they come back strong. Todd Alvis — with Janelle Goudeau Alvis.

A

VERY SMALL SAMPLING OF THE PLANTS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE APRIL 29th SALE. 650 PLANTS



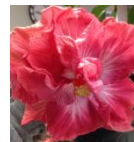
FROSTED LIPSTICK



MOOREA PRINCESS
OKSANA



NIGHTRUNNER



RUM RASCAL



SWAMP CLOUD



JUST A TEASER HERE. COME TO THE MARCH 12TH MEETING TO SEE HOW YOU CAN BUY THESE AND MANY MORE!

ACAPULCO GOLD

THE CLUB HAS 5 50# BAGS OF HIBISCUS GAIN FOR SALE AT \$55. WHEN THE PRODUCT IS REORDERED THE PRICE WILL BE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER. CALL BETH TO RESERVE YOUR

BAG (239)540-5060.

IHS tutorial plus Veiny Leaves...Avoiding the Most Common Mistakes by DARREN EMINIAN

AVOID THE MOST COMMON HIBISCUS GROWERS MISTAKE: DO NOT FEED THEM SUPPLEMENTS WHEN THE LEAVES ARE PALE AND VEINY

Here at the IHS we see a lot of posts with hibiscus plants from growers that have pale and/or veiny leaves. Some posts are asking for help as to why their plant is not doing well. For an expert Exotic/Tropical Hibiscus grower these pale/veiny leaves are the first sign that the soil doesn't have enough air in it. Expert growers are on the lookout for this which typically shows up on the top leaves first and then works it's way down the branches as the air levels in the soil continue to drop.

Hibiscus roots are tender and fragile compared to most other flowering plants. This is due to their origins from tropical regions where the soil is commonly volcanic which means it is rocky and porous. Even after very heavy rains it drains quickly and fills up with air again. Hibiscus roots have been genetically bred for this over many millenia. Our job as good growers is to find a way to emulate these same conditions in the pots and planters we now grow them in. Unfortunately a vast majority of other flowering plants are actually the opposite of this. Ironically many expert gardeners find growing hibiscus problematic as they respond negatively to all the usual remedies that work for most other plants when they are in trouble.

For most flowering plant species pale/veiny leaves are an indication that the plant is suffering from chlorosis or a nutrient deficiency from elements like magnesium or iron. But hibiscus are different as they only need most elements like magnesium, iron, phosphorus, etc...in trace amounts. So the big mistake offered as advice in this situation is to give your hibiscus plant supplements containing some variation of the elements just listed.

This is exactly what your hibiscus plant DOES NOT NEED AT THIS POINT! That just introduces more water into the soil that is already severely lacking the proper air content. Any additional water is the worst thing to do when you see the leaves like this. Many times this will create the perfect conditions for root rot to start on your hibiscus plant. Once root rot gets going it is almost always fatal over the long run. For more established hibiscus plants it might take several years but you will see the slow and steady decline especially during the cooler months when the rot has the most ideal conditions to spread.

The first action step is to stop watering your hibiscus immediately. Next you will need to analyze the water content in your soil mix. If you can use a water meter that will help especially for large pots where the top layer of soil might be very dry but deep down can still be completely saturated.

During hot stretches of weather many growers unknowingly create the prime conditions for root rot by overwatering their hibiscus. That top soil looks so dry but deep down it is very wet already with little to no air left. Perfect conditions for root rot to get started up and once the cooler months hit those rot pathogens flourish and spread throughout the soil and root system. Once they get in the main trunk it is terminal.

The next step is to repot your hibiscus with a soil mix that is light and fluffy that contains lots of air in it all the time. Many growers will use products like coco coir, peat moss, pumice stone and perlite mixed together in varying amounts with a standard potting soil mix. Avoid potting soil mixes that have a lot of worm castings, composted materials and manures as those all become very heavy and dense when wet. You might have to experiment a bit to get that right soil mix that works for your microclimate. A good starting point is 1/3 pumice or perlite, 1/3 coco coir or peat moss and 1/3 potting soil.

If your hibiscus is potted make sure you never have a saucer underneath it ever. That completely stops the pot from draining out the water and getting air back in the soil at the bottom of the pot which is crucial for those tender hibiscus roots. Also pots with just one center drainage hole tend to not offer enough proper drainage so we don't recommend those type of pots as well. Drill additional holes if you have to, the more the better for your hibiscus. The larger the pot the more this matters. Also you will be surprised how quickly the roots of your hibiscus plant will plug up the drainage holes so make sure to check every six months minimum.

What you feed your hibiscus matters. The main drivers for a thriving and healthy hibiscus plant are steady strong heat (80-95F) and ample humidity. With a well aerated soil and good drainage they will do very well just with those inputs. For the many growers around the world that don't have those conditions year round a great way to help with that is to feed your hibiscus high amounts of potassium. Being hibiscus roots are tender potassium is the best thing for root growth and development. Hibiscus seem to be able to absorb large amounts of potassium and it really helps to green up pale leaves. That combined with a lot more air in the soil will get you those beautiful waxy, green leaves that indicate your hibiscus plant is healthy and thriving. Please do not put spent banana peels or other organic matter in the soil for potassium. Anything that decays in the soil will introduce rot pathogens that will find their way to your hibiscus roots. Sadly we still have lots of people offering this advice.

Finally and what we think is the most important growing skill needed for hibiscus: PATIENCE. Hibiscus are momentum plants which means if they start to decline it will take 2-3 weeks minimum if you treat correctly for the problem for it to slow down and cease. Then it will take another 2-3 weeks for your hibiscus plant to reset and start to take things in the right direction. Then after that you will start to see all the good things like shiny green leaves, new branch growth and bud production. That right there is 2 months if not longer which is hard for a lot of growers to wait through. Many lose patience as it is really hard to see your plant not performing well and you just got to do something extra to get it in high gear. But that is the trap that many times spells doom for a hibiscus plant as the grower starts to try different inputs (many of which require additional water). Hibiscus hate changes of inputs so the more new things you throw their way the worse they tend to do. That is why patience is key. As the new leaves start to sprout from the branch nodes you will water your plant in proportion to the size of those new leaves. If in a small pot that might dry out much more quickly and you should water more in accordance to the weather and the quick dry out of the soil.

We hope this post is helpful to our members and if you have any questions please post on our group page with photos so our experts can help you get past any challenges you face with your hibiscus.

The following websites have helpful information on care and growing:

<https://www.hiddenvallyhibiscus.com/care/index.htm>

<http://www.socalhibiscussociety.org> by **DARREN EMINIAN**

This article is from a post by BUDDY SHORT, A HIBISCUS GROWER EXTRAORDINAIRE FROM LOUISIANA

JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER MEMBERS ROCK!

At the February 11th Florida State Fair, members TERRY MARTIN, VALERIE COSTA, NANCY KOPP, ELAINE MARTIN, MARSHA CRAWFORD, JILL BRESLIN, MICKI DOUGHERTY, WANDA SCHMOYER and BETH MEEHAN were winners in 11 of 15 categories. Between them, they had 3 blooms on the head table. Of special interest, VALERIE won with a bloom she has named NANCY KOPP, our very own valuable long time member (a double seedling) and also VALERIE received BEST OF SHOW DOUBLE with a bloom she has named FRANK'S LAST HURRAH (from a FRANK HEFFERNAN hybridized seed).



SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER "SECRETS OF A FLOWER EATER" HEATHER GONZALEZ

March 12, 2023, JEH Chapter Meeting

to be held at Berne Davis, 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers (next to the Edison Ford Winter Estates)

Heather Gonzalez is a Florida native and a Lee County Master Gardener. She especially loves growing her own food, and gardening for butterflies with her toddler.

Explore eating marigolds or nibbling on nasturtium ! Expand your knowledge about the edible hibiscus and learn how to take your cooking and cocktails to the next level by incorporating edible flowers that can be grown right here in Florida. In this talk, Master Gardener Heather Gonzalez will walk you through her favorite blooms that will make your next dinner party blossom. Come out and taste what's on Mother Nature's menu! *Submitted by Micki Dougherty, Speaker Chair*



PEST of the Month, "THRIPS" Presented by Master Gardener & JEH President , **BETH MEEHAN** Help, My buds are turning an off-color and are falling off before they bloom. **Learn why and what to do!**

barbara oster, editor

