



# HENDRY HERALD

**JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER**

the **AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY**

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW [hendrychapterhibiscus.com](http://hendrychapterhibiscus.com) MAY 2023

**SHOW TIME IS HERE!**

THE **JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER** IS GETTING READY FOR OUR 70th ANNUAL HIBISCUS SHOW!

at **FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH** on **APRIL 29**

**BRING YOUR BLOOMS TO ENTER**

**\$625 in prize money to be awarded!**

WHEN YOU JOINED, YOU WERE WISHING TO HAVE BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS. MAKE THAT WISH COME TRUE. CHECK JEH WEBSITE FOR PICTURES OF THE MANY BLOOMS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE \*subject to change

<https://hendrychapterhibiscus.com/hibiscus/year/2023/>



ACAPULCO



BAYOU ROSE



MARIANNE CHARLTON



GATOR MAGIC



CROWN JELLYFISH

**SEE ALL THE BLOOMS, ALL THE COLORS, ALL THE SHAPES AT THE CHAPTER WEBSITE**

**MAY 13 - JEH ANNUAL PICNIC & GREET NEW MEMBERS**

Save the date! Picnic held at LAKES PARK, Pavilion A-1

Pot Luck. Chapter will supply ham, beverages and paper goods.

Bring your favorite side or dessert. Meet @ 11:00am. Several demos of great interest to hibiscus people will be presented!

# HY'S WAY FOR MAY

**HY LANS'** advice is the single MOST important thing in our newsletter. Heed his words and you will have a garden with wonderful blooms to be proud of.

## FERTILIZER FOR HIBISCUS

Florida requires a tag on the fertilizer bag listing percentage by weight of the major elements: nitrogen, phosphate and potassium. Fertilizer with a tag showing 8-2-12 means that the fertilizer has 8% by weight of NITROGEN (N), 2% by weight of PHOSPHATE (P) and 12% by weight of POTASSIUM (K). In a 100 pound bag of 8-2-12 fertilizer there are 8 pounds of N, 2 pounds of P and 12 pounds of K.

There are also secondary elements in the bag. These are Sulfur (S), Magnesium (Mg), Calcium (Ca), Chlorine (CL), Manganese (Mn), Boron (B), Zinc (Zn), Copper (Cu), Iron (Fe), and Molybdenum. The secondary elements are present in smaller percentages than the primary ones but play important roles in plant growth. All but Magnesium (Mg) are known as "trace elements". Magnesium (Mg) is a very important element for plant growth and is a secondary major element.

**NITROGEN (N)** is the growth element. It is essential for formation of protein and chlorophyll and is required for leaf and stem development.

**PHOSPHORUS (P)** is important for root formation. However, phosphorus does not leach out of the soil and remains available for long period. Too much phosphorus, especially in alkaline soil, will tie up or render unavailable some minor elements, especially iron. For this reason a fertilizer formula relatively low in phosphorus such as 8-2-12 is desirable.

**POTASSIUM (K)** is especially important in the production of good hibiscus. Muriate of potash (KCL) is the least expensive source of potassium but should be avoided because of the high chloride level which hibiscus does not tolerate).

In Florida a "complete fertilizer" is one that contains N, P and K. It is not really complete as it does not contain magnesium or any of the other essential minor elements. Also, a "balanced fertilizer" is one which has the same percentages of N and K but can have any percentage of P (6-6-6, 7,2,7). Potassium should be present in larger amounts than nitrogen to obtain more and larger **hibiscus blooms**.

**SLOW RELEASE FERTILIZERS:** it is essential that 100% on the N, K, and Mg be in slow release form. Florida's soils have low capabilities to retain these elements in the root zone during periods of heavy rainfall or irrigation. The only efficient way to keep these elements readily available to plants during intervals between fertilizer applications **is to use slow release sources**. A water-soluble source applied one day could be completely leached out of the root zone the next day by a heavy rainfall or irrigation and the hibiscus would receive no benefit from the fertilizer application (big waste of money). Controlled release fertilizers are not greatly affected by rainfall or irrigation. Since they release more slowly than soluble fertilizers, they are also less likely to burn plant roots during periods of drought. If your fertilizer has slow release N but water-soluble release K, you will have a large green plant with little or no blooms because you will have a large plant starved of K which is needed for blooms. Therefore, you need slow release for N, K, and Mg.

**USE ON THE ENTIRE LANDSCAPE:** The fertilizer developed for use on palms (8-2-12 slow release) can be used on **HIBISCUS**, lawns, trees, shrubs, fruit trees and herbaceous ornamentals besides palm trees. We carry a specialized fertilizer HIBISGAIN that fills many of the plant's needs.

"Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get tomatoes." . . . *Author Unknown*



Several of our James E. Hendry ladies attended the Berne Davis luncheon held on April 4th. It was held at the Crown Colony Country Club on Wednesday, March 29th.

**HURRICANE NAMES FOR THIS SEASON :(** ARLENE, BRET, CINDY, DON, EMILY, FRANKLIN, GERT, HAROLD, IDALIA, JOSE, KATIA, LEE, MARGOT, NIGEL, OPHELIA, PHILIPPE, RINA, SEAN, TAMMY, VINCE, WHITNEY



## Patricia Merritt

September 8, 1937 – March 29, 2023

The steady influence for the Lone Star Chapter, the Space City Chapter and the American Hibiscus Society, Pat Merritt, has passed away in her sleep. Pat was the recording secretary at "National" for more years than I can remember. She would always interject a kind but stern word when officers would get off course or when things got heated, she would remind everyone it was just a flower society. Her enthusiasm for hibiscus kept two Houston chapters running like well-oiled machines. Of course, she did most of this at the side of Roz. Together, they were influential in guiding the society in the right direction. We lost Roz to cancer several years ago but Pat was still membership chair for Lone Star. When Space City decided to break away from Lone Star, Roz & Pat worked at both chapters from creating By-Laws and Policies & Procedures to Directing shows and enrolling new members. We still miss Roz but now we have another hole in our hearts. MARTI GRAVES

NOTES: Bloom above was named PATRICIA MERRITT by hybridizers Barry & Susan Schlueter. Old timers with AHS knew and respected this lovely lady. She was so knowledgeable. If ever I had a bloom that I couldn't identify, I'd send a picture to Pat and she would immediately respond with an answer. barb

### **DID YOU KNOW?** *These are notes copies from early editions of Hibiscus newsletters*

The American Hibiscus Society was chartered on November 10, 1950 in Palm Beach County.

James E. Hendry, Jr., helped organize the AHS and attended the first Hibiscus Show in Palm Beach at that time.

Norman A. Reasoner, Bradenton, was the first President of the Society

The first Hibiscus Show in Fort Myers was held by AHS area members and sponsored by the Men's Garden Club at the Civic Center, October 21, 1951 with the theme "Know Your Hibiscus."

The James E. Hendry Chapter was officially organized on June 15, 1952.

The first officers were: President, Ralph Philo; Vice President, Mrs. Helen Sanders; Secretary, Miss Helen Johnson; Treasurer, S. L. Echelbarger; Delegate to AHS meetings, Gilbert Moore.

The first official Chapter Show was held in the Fort Myers Junior-Senior High School on September 14, 1952. Judges came from as far as Mississippi and Alabama.

In 1953, a perfume named "Hibiscus", was developed by Mrs. Delauney and a bottle was sent to Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower in the name of the Chapter.

Ross Gast, noted Hibiscus hybridizer and researcher, of California, sent 500 seedlings to the Hendry Chapter in 1955. He visited the Chapter in 1956.

The first issue of the "Seed Pod" was dated February, 1956.

The Hendry Chapter won a blue ribbon award for an exhibit of six Hibiscus plants sent to the International Horticultural Exhibit held in Haiti on May 1, 1956.

Hendry Chapter had 241 members in 1956.

Ralph Philo was elected President of the AHS in 1966.

**THESE ARE JUST A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF AHS AND J E HENDRY CHAPTER.**

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**

BILL NANCE	MAY 1
PAUL ZINSZER	MAY 2
FRANK HEFFERNAN	MAY 5
DON BALAS	MAY 5
KATHLEEN PRZYBYLSKI	MAY 12
JULIETA BRUNI	MAY 13
EUNICE BADILLO	MAY 19
DOT THON	MAY 20
TOM DiBELLA	MAY 29
DENISE MELVIN	MAY 31

## SURPRISING SPRING PLANTS by CATHY DUNN



As a new Florida gardener, I was excited to think that I had landed in a spot where everything bloomed year-round. It was quite a surprise to learn that there are many plants that are dormant or drop their leaves and appear to die during the cool winter season. I actually discovered this quite by accident! During my first summer here, I couldn't resist purchasing a curcuma plant that was lush and flowering beautifully. As the summer progressed, it began to look a little less wonderful, so I did some research and decided I had placed it in a pot in too much sun on my lanai. So off to the shaded bed it went, protected by a palm tree's shadow. But this didn't appear to be a solution – the plant looked more pathetic with each passing day. Being a total garden perfectionist, I finally lopped off the few remaining pitiful leaves and dutifully planted another specimen in its place to avoid a hole in my garden. The following spring, I was shocked to find tightly furled leaves emerging around the bromeliad I had planted in what I thought was an open spot – it was the curcuma re-emerging! The bromeliad was quickly dispatched to another location and the curcuma was beautiful all summer, and in the fall, I happily cut it back knowing that it would emerge again in the spring. I have several other plants that follow this pattern; a button ginger that is just now poking a few spikes up through the ground, a curcuma variety commonly known as 'Siam Tulip', and a fabulous Black Flamingo (*Chrysothemis Pulchella*) which is featured in the Edison Ford Gardens. These plants are so striking that I can endure an empty space for a few months while anticipating beautiful new growth each spring.

You have no doubt noticed plants and deciduous trees that go dormant and lose their leaves during the winter months. Plants such as caladium, canna, eucomis (pineapple lilies), goldenrod, plumeria and some varieties of ginger will die back in the cooler months, and emerge again when the temperatures warm, usually in early April. Deciduous shrubs and trees such as spirea, crape myrtle, beautyberry, sweetgum and red maples will lose most of their leaves, and burst back in March and April. Many of our most beautiful flowering trees begin blooming in early winter, then lose their leaves and put on a final show of spectacular blossoms when all the leaves have fallen. The Hong Kong Orchid (*Bauhinia*), Trumpet Tree (*Tabebuia*), Silk Cotton Tree (*Kapok*), Golden Rain (*Cassia*), Jacaranda, and Royal Poinciana are among our most exotic trees that drop their leaves, but the reward of long lived tropical blooms is well worth the brief leafless period.

Since we don't experience the dramatic temperature changes between seasons that we were familiar with in more northern climates, you might wonder what triggers dormancy in Florida plants. Most of our plants respond to the changing length of daylight hours, or the photoperiod, rather than a drastic change in temperatures. As the days shorten in November and December plants respond by changing color or dropping leaves; even turfgrass growth slows in response to shorter days. Many of our landscape plants slow their growth in response to the shorter daylight hours as well; 'annual' flowering plants in my mixed containers will shed many of their leaves and reduce blooming but are now filling out again in response to the longer days.

Bulbs are among the most familiar dormant plants that emerge in spring. Florida's climate is well suited for a variety of tropical and subtropical bulbs, including Agapanthus, Amaryllis, Crinum Lilies, Crocosmia, and Hurricane, Rain and Spider Lilies. Unlike bulbs such as daffodils and tulips that are planted in northern climates for spring blooms, these bulbs do not need to be prechilled. Bulbs can be divided or planted in Fall, and you can also give bulbs a head start by planting them in pots in early spring and transplanting them to your garden beds after blooming. The University of Florida has excellent detailed information on growing bulbs in Florida: <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00002886/00001>  
<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/bulbs-for-florida.html>

Gardening in SW Florida is a fascinating hobby that offers surprises and new discoveries for even seasoned gardeners! Our abundant sunshine and warmth provide a wonderful tonic for the soul, and the best news is that these ideal growing conditions are not limited to spring and summer as in northern areas. We are fortunate to have a wide variety of plants that ensure that something is always blooming in our landscape, and an excellent resource in the University of Florida to guide us as we explore the wonders of our subtropical climate!

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

Chase Landre [[South\\_Florida\\_Monthly\\_Growzine@south-florida-plant-guide.com](mailto:South_Florida_Monthly_Growzine@south-florida-plant-guide.com)]

### **Hibiscus** *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

What's a South Florida yard without a hibiscus? With a veritable rainbow of flower colors to choose from, this shrub is one of our most popular landscape plants - with some of the showiest blossoms on earth. It's one of the most commonly used Florida flowering plants, but with good reason - gorgeous blooms.

There are so many varieties to choose from...blossoming in red, pink, white, orange, yellow, and even violet and lavender, with hundreds of exotic color combinations. Flowers range from saucer-sized singles to ruffled double blooms, multi-colored ornate to strikingly simple blossoms. Some cultivars have colorful foliage, such as the beautiful green and white Snow Queen or hybrids with unusual pink-red-purple mottled leaves - all set off by deep red flowers.

These tropical shrubs make wonderful accents or flowering hedges and go well with any style landscape. You can often find many bush varieties as standards (trained to tree-form), and of course one of the most popular small flowering trees in South Florida is the [weeping hibiscus](#).

There are many hibiscus societies in Florida and around the world, as well as collectors of exotic cultivars, and nurseries who specialize in this lovely plant. This shrub flowers on and off all year (more in warm weather). For most varieties, each flower lasts only one day, but on a thriving plant you'll have buds bursting into bloom to quickly replace fallen blossoms.

#### **Plant specs**

These plants are moderately salt-tolerant. They love the sun and do best (and flower the most) in full to part sun locations. Evergreen fast growers, they can be kept 4 to 6 feet tall. This tropical plant can be hurt by cold and does best in Zone 10. A hibiscus bush can be kept about 3 feet tall when young, and 4 to 6 feet tall as it matures.

**Warning:** A fallen flower from one of these plants can be a foot traffic hazard - squishy and slippery. It can also stain surfaces like concrete, so keep this in mind when choosing a place to plant.

#### **Plant care**

Add top soil or organic peat humus, mixed with composted cow manure, to the hole before setting in the plant. Trim anytime for shape and do a hard pruning in spring (late March to early April) for size.

## **MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BETH MEEHAN**

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to help or who is planning on showing their blooms in our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show. Even though the show is the highlight of our season, it is by no means the end!

Our May "meeting" will be our picnic. This is always a fun event and I hope you are planning on being there.

The fun doesn't end there. I've scheduled the Berne Davis gardens for us to continue to get together all summer. These won't be normal "meetings." We won't be taking minutes or having reports. Instead they will just be a chance for us to stay in touch and talk about our favorite flower.

In June, we will have a "cuttings swap". Show season will be over and June is the perfect time to prune your plants. More information will be in the next newsletter, but for now mark your calendar for June 11 at the Berne Davis gardens.



**THE THREE C'S OF LIFE  
CHOICES, CHANCES, CHANGES**

**You must make a choice to take a chance or your life will never change!**

## POTASSIUM ~ THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD PLANT NUTRIENT AND THE MOST NEGLECTED!

Potassium is the least understood of all plant nutrients, plus it is expensive to put into fertilizer. So it has been the most neglected nutrient in plant fertilizers. Other plant nutrients end up forming part of the actual molecules and cells that make up plants, but potassium is not found in any molecules anywhere in plant tissues! So why is it important? We never really knew before. Only experience over time taught farmers that plants go downhill, stop producing, and eventually die without potassium. Finally now plant science is advancing, and little by little we are learning more about this unusual nutrient.

This is the beginning of a most valuable article from **HIDDEN VALLEY HIBISCUS**.

[[news@hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com](mailto:news@hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com)] Go to their site and read the rest.



### What to Plant

**Annuals/Bedding plants:** Plants that can take summer heat include coleus, salvia, torenia, wax begonia, and ornamental pepper.

**Bulbs:** Some lilies do better when their roots are crowded. Try planting Amazon, Aztec, and Clivia lilies in containers to increase blooming.

**Herbs:** Plant heat-loving herbs, including basil, Mexican tarragon, ginger, cumin, summer savory, and rosemary.

**Vegetables:** Sweet potatoes, boniato (a variety of sweet potato), hot peppers, and tropical "spinach" such as Sisso, Malabar, and New Zealand can be planted now.

### What to Do

**Pests:** Watch for thrips, scale, and mites on ornamental -**ESPECIALLY HIBISCUS**- plants because they become more active in warm weather.

**Gardenias and ixora:** Distinguish between the normal yellowing of older leaves and the yellowing of new growth, which usually indicates a micronutrient deficiency

**Oleanders:** Inspect chewed or ragged leaves for oleander caterpillars at work

**Lawns:** Watch for damage from chinch bugs in St. Augustine grass and begin scouting for newly hatched mole crickets in bahia grass lawns.

**Tomatoes:** Watch for pests, disease, and nutritional disorders on tomato plants.

**Trees:** Prepare for hurricane season by checking trees for damaged or weak branches and prune if needed. Hire an ISA-certified arborist. **See** *International Society of Arboriculture*: <http://isa-arbor.com/>



FOXY LADY



MANGO MOON



ZYDECO



MAGNIFIQUE



C'EST BON

**A FEW MORE "EYE CANDY" BLOOMS FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM**

**POT LUCK ANNUAL JEH PICNIC MAY 13 11:00am LAKES PARK A-1**  
**Demos on PLANTING SEEDS and STICKING CUTTINGS by Experts**  
**ALWAYS A GOOD TIME**

