



# HENDRY HERALD

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

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



**A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON TO ALL!**  
**MAY 2024 BE THE BEST YEAR**  
**EVER!**

## 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.

**IF YOU FOLLOW HY'S ADVICE, YOU CAN'T GO WRONG.**

## DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH - WINTER?

Is a frost expected? Trim plants and mulch heavily. Cover with trashcans, newspaper, blankets, etc. Be sure no plastic is touching the leaves. Do not fertilize until frost is over. Clever idea-use Christmas lights for warmth around plants.

Hibiscus Maintenance by Sandra Theall

In case of a freeze, in ground hibiscus should be cut down and a trashcan turned upside down over them, flush with the ground. If temperature dips to 32\*, water soil and leaves. Let dry. Cover and use heat lamps if available. Remember to uncover and turn off heat when temperatures rise. Cut back on fertilizer in the cool months.

Hibiscus Hints by Buddy Short

**SEEMS FAR-FETCHED WITH THE WEATHER WE'VE BEEN HAVING, BUT IT COULD FROST :(**



What a homecoming! We were away for almost 3 weeks on a road trip visiting family in the Midwest. A delightful time, wonderful folks. We returned to this stunning display in the front yard. Frank's last hybrid, appropriately named Frank's Last Hurrah. And it has at least 20 buds ready to pop. Keep in mind, it's had no individual loving care in all this time. Irrigation on timer. Lots of direct sun. Gangbusters!!!! Hey, that's a good name for another one. He is so pleased. Thank you, Valerie, for contributing and delivering it. Happy fella.  
BONNIE HALL



**A SMILE IS A CURVE THAT SETS EVERYTHING STRAIGHT.** - Phyllis Diller

### **BE PREPARED!**

Last winter we were so lucky with no hard freezes! We are hoping for the best again in this 2020-2021 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.
2. Keep sheets (cloth NOT plastic) handy along with clothespins, rocks, bricks, etc. to cover plants if freeze is imminent.
3. 34° and below can wreak havoc. Keep up a spray schedule of minor element to help your plants grow stronger and healthier. Strong and healthy plants withstand the cold better.
4. Use a soaker hose to keep plants well watered, thus able to withstand cold temperatures.
5. Fertilize regularly in moderation throughout the winter using a balanced fertilizer (slow release is recommended). **GROWING HIBISCUS, BEERS & HOWIE**
6. Prior to an onset of a cold snap give your plants a good watering. **HY LANS**
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 health 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 branches until all danger of frost/freeze has passed. **HY LANS**





## OVERWINTERING YOUR PLANTS IN CASE OF COLD WEATHER

by **BUDDY SHORT**, HIBISCUS EXPERT FROM LOUISIANA

A basic that concerns each member 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?

As a rule of thumb, temperatures will start to drop into the dangerous for hibiscus zone around Thanksgiving. (Note: we have already experienced several nights this past week in the high 40s). 40 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 overwatering 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. (Note: block your plants from the cold north wind, as it will suck the moisture out of your plants and could ultimately kill them.) 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 your 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 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 away 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 air 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. Also effective is a simple structure such as a tomato cage 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 CONSIDERATION THIS MOST IMPORTANT POINT:**

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

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

*"Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting."*

- Brian Tracy

**"If you see someone without a smile today, give 'em yours."** DOLLY PARTON

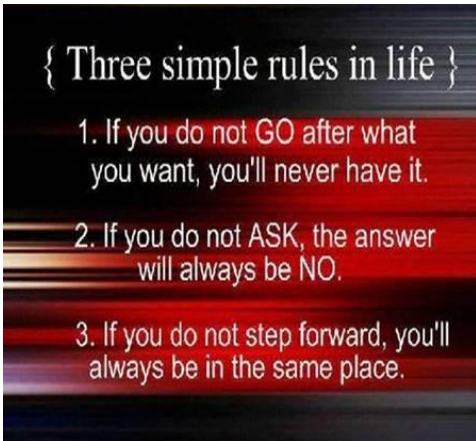
Advice from **Chase Landre** [South\_Florida\_Monthly\_Growzine@south-florida-plant-guide.com]

**Water** once a week if there's been no rain. Give things a good soaking since conditions have been so dry for most of us.

**Apply weed and feed** to your lawn.

**Plant winter annuals?** Maybe. It still may be too warm for them, so consider planting things like Geraniums in a place with a little afternoon shade...or wait a few weeks to see if cooler weather is here to stay.

**Examine your plants for bugs.** Take cuttings sealed in plastic bags to your local nursery for diagnosis and treatment options.



CAROLYN  
ESTEP    DECEMBER 1  
WAYNE  
LARSEN    DECEMBER 5  
DR HENRY POLLAK DECEMBER 13



November 10, 2023

**FORT MYERS-LEE COUNTY GARDEN COUNCIL, INC.**

JEH Hibiscus Society represented by Kay Janssen, Wanda Schmoyer, and Joyce Yates

We had a full house with many garden clubs represented. Everyone enjoyed the variety of delicious snacks. **American Hibiscus Society will be responsible for snacks and drinks for the January 12, 2024 Meeting.**

Our speaker was Christine Lindsley, also known as “The Sprout Queen” of Pine Island Botanicals. She spoke on “All About Sprouts and Microgreens”. She reported that she has a large bowl of greens every night for dinner. An interesting fact she shared was fenugreek is a good lymphatic system detoxifier.

The Strolling Flower Show will be February 15, 2024    Submitted by JOYCE YATES



### **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE: BETH MEEHAN**

Greetings!

I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy and happy. The Holidays are here and I wish all of you a happy, healthy, and safe season.

Thanks to Valerie and Micki for a great talk on hybridizing! It was perfect timing as the weather is getting cooler and it’s the time to start hybridizing your own plants. I have a couple of seedlings in my yard and it’s so much fun to see that first bloom!

In the months ahead, we will continue to talk about exhibiting our beautiful blooms in Florida shows. You will find the list of shows in our yearbook. Please note, however, that the date for our show has changed. It is now going to be held April 6.

Best wishes, Beth

## CONFESSIONS OF A NOVICE HYBRIDIZER! CATHY DUNN



Anyone with experience growing tropical hybrid hibiscus realizes that maintaining the plants is often a challenge; there are so many factors to consider for the appropriate feeding/watering/pest control to keep your plants thriving. A selection of vibrant, healthy plants is the first requirement for hybridization. I was always interested in attempting to hybridize, but I didn't have enough varieties until this past winter to even contemplate creating new varieties. But with a little experience in maintaining plants and a small but interesting selection of varieties available, I embarked on the road to hybridization this past January.

Once the temperatures cool there is usually more bloom activity and better opportunities for cross pollination. I conducted my pollination efforts from Mid-January to Mid-February 2023. I tried several ways to transfer the pollen from one bloom to another: using a Q-tip, a brush and taking one bloom to another to transfer the pollen directly. I settled on the latter method; too much pollen seemed to stay on the Q-tip and brush, and I found it easier to brush pollen directly from the stamen of one bloom to the stigma of another. I learned that you sometimes need to wait for the morning to warm up before the pollen will be available; you'll be able to see the pollen sacs 'open' and expel the grains of pollen when you brush the blooms together. About halfway through the season, I read that spraying a fine mist of water on the stigma after depositing the pollen would help 'fix' it to the stigma, so I began following this advice and I think it produced good results.

The blooms that you pollinate must be marked with both the pod and pollen parents, and I also chose to include the date of pollination as well. I took individual slats of mini blinds that I cut into 4-inch lengths and used the opening for the cord in the slats to insert green wire to tie the tag onto the plant stem below the bloom. I quickly learned that you need to twist the wire close to the stem because otherwise in the wind these tags can readily blow off the stems! (That is how I ended up with two "Unknown" pollen parents!) One of the critical requirements for hybridization is careful record keeping. I started with a handwritten log which tracked every attempted pollination; I numbered the entries and listed the pod parent and pollen parent and date of pollination. Then the wait began! I wish I had kept these logs because it would give me an accurate count of my attempts/vs. successes. I think my success rate was maybe 20% or less since I ended up with 20 seed pods at the end of February.

Some of the pods dropped off pretty quickly after the pollination attempt; I kept a spreadsheet to track the date of pollination and the 'collection date' when I removed the ripened seed pod. Seed pod development took anywhere from 4 weeks to 8 weeks. When you keep records, you can quickly identify the plants with 'hot' pollen. I had read that Black Dragon had 'hot' pollen, and it was indeed the pollen parent for 5 (or 25%) of my successful crosses. Princess Hokulani and Cool Radiance were each pollen parents for 3 seed pods. Likewise, some plants seemed to be better Pod parents; Lillian's Cosmopolitan and Kade Archer each accounted for 5 pod parents (half of the seed pods!) I checked the pods daily and it's surprising how quickly they 'ripen'; they will be green and bulging and you might see some slight discoloration for several days before they turn totally dry and brown. But sometimes the pods went straight from green to bursting open in one day! I used small mesh jewelry bags that I carefully tied on the ripening pods to avoid having them burst and scatter on the ground. But some pods escape detection; I had 2 pods on my Pink Pride of Hankins that I never noticed until they turned brown; these are the sources of my 'unknown' pollen parents.

I harvested 20 seed pods which produced a total of 201 seeds; the smallest pod produced 3 seeds, and the largest had 23! The process of soaking and planting the seeds is a topic for another article, but I eventually had 60 seedling plants that were planted in April and May. I've lost several over the past 3 months, but I have had one seedling bloom 6 times and another 2 are ready to bloom in the next few days. Seedlings can take from 6 months to several years to bloom, so the fun is just beginning!

We have several expert hybridizers in our chapter, and I hope you'll feel inspired to try your hand at creating new blooms. I know I can't wait for more blooms and cooler days and the chance to begin the hybridization process again!

CATHY DUNN, Master Gardener & Vice President of JAMES E. HENDRY CHAPTER

Our Chapter's Newsletter, The Hendry Herald, was named the best newsletter in the American Hibiscus Society at the Annual Conference in June. President Beth Meehan presented the award to Newsletter Editor Barbara Oster at the Chapter's November Board Meeting. Congratulations Barb on a job well done! We are so happy that you have received this recognition because we are confident this is the BEST newsletter in the American Hibiscus Society! Barbara has previously been honored as editor of the year's best newsletter . Submitted by CATHY DUNN



**JEH HIBISCUS CHAPTER MEETING**

November 12, 2023

President **BETH MEEHAN** led the Pledge. Everyone was welcomed. Our past presidents, Wanda Schmoyer and Kay Janssen were acknowledged.

Visitors were Richard, Debbie Messer, Vanessa, "the orchid lady" who thought it was a bromeliad meeting, stayed, and fell in love with our beautiful hibiscus, and Cathleen Dubin, a member but hasn't been to a meeting for a LONG time. All were welcomed. There were 36 in attendance.

The Minutes from October 8, 2023 stand as published.

The Treasurer's Report was given. The Christmas party will be at the Whiskey Creek Clubhouse December 9, 2023. We will have prime rib, chicken piccata, or salmon along with delicious sides. It's \$20 per person with the additional cost subsidized by JEH. November 30<sup>th</sup> is the last day to reserve/pay for your place. If you wish to take part in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift valued at \$20.

**VALERIE COSTA** and **MICKI DAUGHERTY** presented "The ABC's of Hybridizing", that's **Any Body Can**. You will need some materials: Q tips, tags, ties, #2 pencil, chiffon or netting for bags (Amazon), and small envelopes to collect seeds. The Process: apply pollen from the pollen parent to the pod parent. 60-75 degrees is the best temperature. If the pollen takes, you will see a brown pod replacing the flower bud. Place your chiffon bag over this pod, and wait for the pod to release the small seeds. On your envelope be sure to identify Pod Parent X Pollen Parent. The seeds are good for about two years.

January 20, 2024 will be our next sale of plants at Covenant Presbyterian Church, on McGregor Road. We will have 400 plants, and there will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help at the sale at the January Chapter meeting.

We need lots of volunteer help with breakfast type food for the Garden Council on January 12, 2024. Our group is responsible for ALL of the FOOD. Micki Daugherty is in Charge.

Winners in our mini show were:

Amateur Single	CATHY DUNN	Moorea Boondah Boo
Amateur Double	JULIA MURRAY	Pink Pride of Hankins
Single	BETH MEEHAN	All in Vein
Double	VALERIE COSTA	Frank's Last Hurrah
Mini Double	VALERIE COSTA	Samba Dancer
Mini Single	NANCY KOPP	PM Amritupuri
Seedling Double	JOYCE YATES	Chloe
Seedling Single	ELAINE MARTIN	Maddie's Sweet Dream

Respectfully submitted, **JOYCE YATES**, Secretary

**Get out those ugly Christmas sweaters and silly Christmas hats. It's time for our annual Christmas Party!**

Date: December 9, 2023 (cut off date for reservations, Nov. 30)

Time: 5 PM Dinner served at 6 PM

Place: Whiskey Creek Country Club

1449 Whiskey Creek Drive, Fort Myers FL 33919



Menu: Prime Rib, Chicken Piccata, Grilled Salmon. Salad, Dessert and non-alcoholic beverages. Cocktails, Beer and Wine available by credit card only.

Gift Exchange: Please bring your wrapped gift (approximate cost \$20). Couples may bring one gift or two gifts. For each gift you bring, you get a gift in return.

Send check payable to AHS to: BARB YEKEL 5541 HAMLET LANE, FORT MYERS FL 33919

Questions?: Call Barb Yekel, 412-606-7575

Deadline for reservations: NOVEMBER 30



