



HENDRY HERALD

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

WHEN YOU GARDEN, YOU GROW hendrychapterhibiscus.com MARCH 2024

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!



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.

A WORD ABOUT PRUNING from Robert Gerlich, S.J., NEW ORLEANS

The trick is to cut the plant back early enough so that it has the maximum amount of time to recover before the show season begins. If one waits too long, it could be mid-summer before the plant starts producing blooms and then the heat becomes a problem. If one prunes too early, the new growth can be easily damaged by a late frost or a sudden cold snap.

THE LAST WORD ON PRUNING Hibiscus Care **Hidden Valley Hibiscus** [\[news@hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com\]](mailto:news@hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com)

Here in Southern California and across most of the southern states, pruning time is here. If danger of frost has passed for your area, now is the best time to prune. If you are still in danger of frost, wait until it's a bit warmer. Frost falling on newly pruned branches really slows down their regrowth, and can actually make the tips start to die back and set up an infection.

Ideally, we will all prune just as soon as the frost danger is past, just before the spring warm-up begins. This way, our hibiscus plants can get the full benefit of all the spring warming phase to grow the maximum number of new branches. Remember, the more branches your hibiscus have, the more flowers you'll get, since each branch tends to produce 1-2 flowers at a time on its growing tip

For beginners, or for hibiscus that are growing in places with shorter summers, the basic rule is to try not to prune off more than 1/3 of each branch. Make sure you leave several green leaves on each branch. You don't want to kill any branches by starving them too much

MAGICAL MONARCHS

by CATHY DUNN



The Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) is perhaps the most widely recognized butterfly in the world. Many people are familiar with the migration of West Coast Monarchs to California and East Coast Monarchs to Mexico; Monarchs are the only butterfly species in the world that undertakes such a long-distance roundtrip migration. Most people, however, are not aware that Florida has a Monarch population that does not migrate. Attracted by our warm climate and continuously available host plants, Monarchs that usually migrated from Canada and the northeast settled in South Florida and decided to stay. This Florida population now stays in the state year-round and continuously breeds; scientists speculate that the warm climate stimulates their reproductive behavior, which then disrupts their hormonal balance and results in the loss of their ability to migrate north.

Monarch larvae feed almost exclusively on milkweed plants, and the butterfly's range depends on the availability of host plants for larvae and nectar plants for adults. Florida has about 20 milkweed species; all are native except the tropical milkweed, *Asclepias curassavica*. The tropical milkweed has attractive red and yellow blooms, and is the variety most readily available in garden centers; however it poses some problems for butterflies, and native varieties are recommended. I have both native and tropical milkweed species in my gardens and I have noted that the Monarchs have a distinct preference for the tropical variety! In addition to the milkweed host plant, nectar plants to sustain the adult Monarchs are a must for the butterfly garden; native nectar plants include Mist Flower, Cat's Tongue, Goldenrod, Spanish Needles, and Liatris. A full list of milkweed and nectar plants can be found on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw311>

Monarchs weigh less than one gram, with adults averaging about half a gram. Typically, Monarchs live between 2 and 6 weeks; the butterflies that undertake the long migration to California or Mexico do not become sexually mature because of the cooler temperatures, which also conserves their energy. When spring arrives the Monarchs become mature and reproduce, beginning the first new generation that will migrate north. As these Monarchs make their way north, their offspring continue the journey and will reproduce over the summer; the Monarchs that travel south in the Fall have never been south before! Monarchs can lay over 1,000 eggs in their lifetime, but most probably average 400-500 eggs. The progression from egg to adult takes about one month. Eggs are laid on the milkweed plant; each individual egg is about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Once the eggs hatch, the familiar black, white and yellow striped Monarch larva (caterpillar) emerges to feed on milkweed and grow very rapidly – in fact they grow so fast that they shed their skin five times before they pupate! The larvae then transform into pupa, also known as a chrysalis. The chrysalis is a jade color with gold marking, suspended from the underside of leaves by a silk button that the larva spins. The larva forms its body into a J-shape and the skin splits and falls away; underneath the old skin is the jade green chrysalis. Monarchs remain in the chrysalis for 8-12 days, and just prior to emergence the chrysalis becomes clear. The front of the chrysalis splits open and the butterfly emerges with folded wings. The Monarch must pump up its wings using fluid stored in its abdomen; once the wings are extended the Monarch is ready to fly.

It is such a joy to observe the Monarchs in my garden! Since I have an abundance of nectar plants and milkweed, my butterfly garden is full of activity, and I delight in watching the progression of these beautiful creatures. Establishing a butterfly garden is one of the easiest ways I can recommend for you to enjoy nature in your own backyard!

CATHY DUNN is a Master Gardener in Lee County and the Vice President of JEH Chapter of AHS

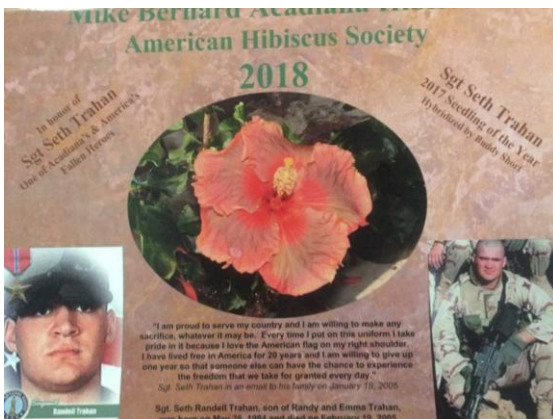
HAVE YOU JOINED OUR FACEBOOK PAGE?

Are you a Facebook member? If so, have you checked out the JEH Chapter page? We now have more than 1,000 members! This is a great location to post pictures of your blooms, ask questions of the other chapter members, and to observe the many beautiful pictures of blooms that our page members from around the world post. An added bonus is that other chapters of the American Hibiscus Society often share their growing tips and information on our page. The Red Stick Chapter posts valuable information on all aspects of growing and caring for hibiscus – they have more than 50,000 members on their Facebook page! You can also refer your friends who are interested in hibiscus to both our Facebook page AND our website. Both sites have useful information on the propagation and care of hibiscus, as well as pictures from all our events and information on the next plant sale.

"I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination." Jimmy Dean

GOLDEN RULES FOR LIVING from ANNIE'S MAILBOX

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it up.
4. If you break it, admit it.
5. If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
6. If you borrow it, return it.
7. If you value it, take care of it.
8. If you make a mess, clean it up.
9. If you move it, put it back.
10. If it belongs to someone else, get permission to use it.
11. If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
12. If it's none of your business, don't ask questions.



One of the plants we have for sale is SGT SETH TRAHAN. This hibiscus was hybridized by Buddy Short and named in honor of one of our fallen heroes, Sgt. Trahan. A beautiful bloom that you will probably want in your collection.

NANCY KOPP

GET READY FOR OUR
APRIL 6 ANNUAL SHOW AND

SALE held this year at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Over 400 beautiful and healthy hibiscus plants will be for sale. Check out our web site for pictures of blooms for sale.

<https://hendrychapterhibiscus.com>

ONCE AGAIN WE ARE COPYING BUDDY SHORT'S NEWSLETTER TO OFFER GREAT ADVICE WRITTEN BY FATHER GERLICH.

Several years back we included a piece in our chapter newsletter on dealing with getting your plants off to a fast start. That piece was written and suggested by our friend and former President of the New Orleans chapter Father Robert Gerlich. I hope you read his words. They are always exceptional.

Since we learn by repetition, here are those suggestions again. Follow his lead:

1. Pruning branches and roots in the Spring before growing season to encourage branching and new growth. (Hibiscus bloom only on new growth.)
2. If repotting in the Spring, you may wish to cut back both the root system and prune the plant at the same time.
3. Keep plants slightly root bound for best blooming and pot up only when the plant becomes seriously root bound.
4. Do not plant a small plant into a large pot. Move plants up into the next size container.
5. Remove two to three inches of soil from older potted plants and replace with a fresh mixture of bone meal and compost.
6. During hot days plants need some protection from the hottest sun but require 6 to 8 hours of sunlight for blooming. Morning sun is best in our coastal climate.
7. Overwatering will cause buds to drop off. Container-grown plants require daily watering in the summer. Be sure that the soil drains well and moisten the entire root ball. Plants should not be left to stand in water.
8. Watering in the mornings is generally best. Plants that are too wet overnight are more prone to develop fungal problems.
9. If most of the leaves on the plant turn yellow, the plant has gotten too much or too little water. Massive and rapid leaf loss is a sign of stress However, one must expect older leaves to yellow and fall off periodically as the plant must replace leaves. This is a normal and necessary process that allows the plant to renew itself.
10. PH should be between 5.5 to 6.5. Kits that measure pH are available at garden centers. Excessively high or low pH will hinder uptake of nutrients. Add some white vinegar (about 2 tablespoons) to a gallon of water to help bring the pH down if necessary. Wait a couple of weeks to see if the treatment helps, as one does not want to make the soil too acidic.
11. Watch for insects, especially aphids, mites, and mealybugs, as they literally suck the life out of the plants. Control with neem oil or appropriate spray.
12. Follow label directions or recipes carefully when spraying as over-spraying can damage the plant and retard blooming.
13. Spray leaves once or twice a month with 1 teaspoon to a liter of water with Epsom Salt for added magnesium.
14. Avoid high nitrogen fertilizers during the blooming season as they will encourage foliage growth and not blooming.
15. Deadhead flowers if necessary and eliminate false pods.

Note: Remember, even if one does everything "right" plants may be slow to bloom during the hottest time of the year. Flower production slows as the plants cope with the excessive heat. They will start blooming again more abundantly when the weather cools

THE STRUGGLES WE ENDURE TODAY WILL BE THE 'good old days' WE LAUGH ABOUT TOMORROW. Aaron Lauritsen

LIFE ALWAYS OFFERS YOU A SECOND CHANCE. IT'S CALLED TOMORROW. Stephen King

EACH DAY COMES BEARING ITS GIFTS. UNTIE THE RIBBON! Ann Ruth Schabacker

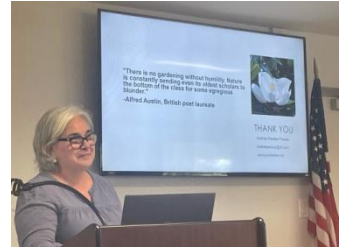
JAMES E. HENDRY Chapter Meeting Minutes Feb 11, 2024

Held at Garden Council Headquarters

Our speaker was Andrea Pandazi Psnas, a Lee County Master Gardener. She spoke on Flowering Plants of SWFL.

Beth Meehan reported on the results of the January 20th plant sale at the Covenant Presbyterian Church. We are pleased with the results and the chapter has made a nice profit on the sale. Some of the remaining plants were sold at the meeting. The rest will be up potted and brought to the April 6 sale. We will then be able to charge more for them since they will be larger plants by that time.

Beth Meehan reported on the results of the first show of the season hosted by the Sunset chapter and held at the Tampa State Fair. Our chapter took 8 of the head table ribbons. An outstanding performance for our chapter.



The results of the mini show are as follows:

Amateur single	CATHY DUNN	Sacred Fire
Amateur double	DENISE HELFRICH	Sweet Pink
Collector Double	NANCY KOPP	Indian Bride tied with Love Pat
Collector Single	VALERIE COSTA	My Darlin'
Mini Single	WANDA SCHMOYER	Sparkling Water tied with
	NANCY KOPP	Fiji Island
Regular seedling	VALERIE COSTA	Nicole's Rainbow
Double seedling	DENISE HELFRICH	Roslyn
Mini double seed	VALERIE COSTA	My Blue Heaven x Yoda

SUBMITTED BY BETH MEEHAN

FLORIDA STATE FAIR



The Sunset chapter hosted the first show of the 2024 season in Florida. Six members of our chapter attended and won 8 head table ribbons!

Best of Show Double	Valerie Costa	Frank's Last Hurrah
Collector Single	Nancy Kopp	Angel Wings
Collector Double	Terry Martin	Moonlight Madness
Collector Mini double	Nancy Kopp	Pride of Hankins
Regular Seedling Single	Valerie Costa	Crystal Elegance x Russian Princess
Regular Seedling Double	Valerie Costa	Nancy Kopp
Mini Seedling Double	Valerie Costa	Janelle's Autumn Topaz
Collector Sweepstakes	Valerie Costa	Amber Suzanne

"If you want light to come into your life, you need to stand where it is shining" GUY FINLEY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BETH MEEHAN

Congratulations to all the winners at the first show of the season at the Tampa State Fair. It was a fun day for everyone and many thanks to the Sunset Chapter for hosting the event.

Our own show is fast approaching and we have many people working behind the scenes to prepare. Please mark your calendar for the date – April 6 – as we will need many, many volunteers to help out.

In the meantime, I hope everyone is enjoying their own beautiful blooms.

Best wishes, Beth



JOYCE YATES	MARCH 2
MICKI DOUGHERTY	MARCH 3
JIM DOUGHERTY	MARCH 6
NANCY KOPP	MARCH 9
BONNIE HALL	MARCH 19
ELLIOTT MASCOOP	MARCH 25
HOLLY LOTT	MARCH 28
PAT BOONE	MARCH 31



REMEMBERING DALE DUBIN

Our long-time member DALE DUBIN passed away in December 2023. DALE will be fondly remembered by hibiscus lovers throughout the world for his many hybrids. Below are several of his creations.



BYRON METTS



DRAGON'S BREATH



RUTH WATSON

ANOTHER CHAPTER ACTIVITY

On Feb 13, we participated in the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Strolling Flower show at the Sidney and Berne Davis Art Center. We had an awesome "Christmas tree" display plus lots of blooms on our tables. People were amazed at our display and many asked "are these real?" Thanks to Cathy Dunn, Denise Helfrich, Nancy Kopp and Beth Meehan who provided blooms. Nancy and Beth set up the display and Cathy took it down at the end of the day.



MARCH 10 CHAPTER MEETING AT 2:00. SET UP BLOOMS FOR MINI SHOW 1:30. An interesting meeting planned. 2166 Virginia Avenue.

