



## HOOKED ON HIBISCUS

**MEETING:** Tuesday, August 2nd at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center on Johnston St. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 pm. Refreshments will be furnished by Jean Hebert, Lu Smith & Delores Menard. Next month the food refreshments will be furnished by Stephanie & Ricky Meaux. We need someone to provide the drinks. Please volunteer and let me know at the meeting.

**WELCOME:** We have added several new members over the last couple months. I would like to welcome and thank each and every one of you for joining one of the best AHS chapters in the society. Our chapter is a strong one and growing. Currently we are up to some 41 full memberships and 6 associate memberships.

**SHOW SEASON:** The show season for Texas/Louisiana is finally over with for 2005. This was another long one with Houston hosting some 6 shows this year. I would like to thank Bobby & Bootsie Dupont, Sandra Theall, Dr. Dave Tate, Buddy Short, and Rick Landers for making at least one or more road shows this year. Next year folks, we need to do a better job. After all many members of the Houston chapters, Red Stick chapter & New Orleans chapter come to our show and support us. The very least we can do is to give up a Sunday or two and support their chapter. No matter the location, or when one has to get up, it is always a good feeling to go, meet our friends from their chapters, and take some of their ribbons from under them back to our homes. So please, next year, try to make one or more shows other than ours.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** go out to Dr. David Tate for his head table award from Lone Star show, and to Rick Landers for his head table award from the Space City show in Houston.

**MINI-SHOW:** Some chapter members have asked me to start up a mini-show each month. What we need is for you to *come to the meeting and bring some blooms with you. Everyone will go over them and we will select one single; one double; and one miniature.* In the past we tried this but it was not really taken seriously. We would like to correct that. This time everyone will be given a chip to place by one bloom in each category. The winners will be posted in next month's newsletter and have the "bragging" rights for the month.

**CONVENTION CONFUSION?:** This year's convention provided a good deal of information along with some confusion regarding whether or not a judge could or could not vote in a category in which they are showing blooms. It was suggested that a judge NOT vote in a category in which they exhibit. Say for instance, Dr. Dave is an Open-Collector. The suggestion was for him NOT to be able to vote in the Open Collector ballots if he had a gold seal in there for consideration for Best Open Collector Single or Double. However, the general membership did not like that and after much discussion it was voted to keep the rules as they are now in place. You can vote in any category if you have a gold seal with the *exception* of Seedlings. If someone has a seedling entered, then they CANNOT vote in that category only. Granted this applies to judges who exhibit blooms only, but it is an important rule.

Now another area of confusion at the convention deals with the role of judges and what they can and cannot do. Since a couple judges were unclear of the results of the discussion at the convention, we asked Randy Cox, 1<sup>st</sup> V.P. to clarify a few questions for us. Some of the questions asked of Randy were: Can a judge come into an auditorium to prepare his blooms and chat with other judges and/or exhibitors before the actual judging begins? Can a judge help another judge with his bloom preparation if one of them is pressed for time before the call for judges is made? Can a judge help an amateur who is participating in his first show? Can we give him tips like "make sure that these petals overlap properly?" Randy replied with a reference to Item 12 page 7 in the Judge's manual "Judges should not enter the gold seal areas prior to judging...and should remain apart from entry and placement tables to assure unbiased judging." Randy went on to say the intent as he understands this rule is to prevent other exhibitors from thinking you might favor another exhibitor. Everyone realizes that you have to be in the entry room if you are entering blooms. The idea here is to keep conversation with other exhibitors to a minimum. He said that he appreciates us wanting to help a new exhibitor, but try not to allow ourselves to be perceived by another exhibitor as having a favorite. Another thing that we will find is the well meaning exhibitor *that wants to show you their new seedling.* He said he always tries to get to the judges area early to avoid as much of this as possible. He concluded by saying he would try his best to get someone else to help since other exhibitors might get the wrong impression."

Editor note: This is another good reason to have mini-shows so everyone can know what to do ahead of time.

**ELECTIONS:** David Hebert and Sandra Theall should be completing the calls to the local members to see who they would like to nominate for office for next year. If you were not called or missed their call please get in touch with them as quickly as possible if you wish to nominate someone. Next month I will include with the newsletter the ballot. With luck, I will have the newsletter out earlier, so that you can vote and return it to me. At the meeting, they will be turned over to David and Sandra for counting. If you are going to be at the meeting, then you can bring them with you and turn them in at that time.

**PROFILE OF THE MONTH:** Due to technical difficulties, I am not able to do a profile of the month. I hopefully will be able to get the problem resolved and have it for next month.

**FROM THE NET:** Today's topics, mites, aphids & gall midge.....

What is the difference between mites and aphids? There is a "mitey" big difference between Mites & Aphids. Mites are in the spider family and suck juices from the leaves. They also spin very tiny webs on the plants. Aphids also suck juices from the leaves. Both can transmit viruses to the plant. Regards, Sonny.

Gnarled leaves are often due to insects such as aphids, whiteflies, mites or others attacking them when they are just first emerging. That messes up the basic structure of the leaf and as it grows it shows this deformation more and more. The insects are usually gone by the time you notice the gnarled leaves. I take such leaves off because it bugs me to look at them.

If you have not looked at your leaves, top and bottom, at 20-30 times magnification you are in for an interesting experience once you do. There is a lot going on that you cannot see with the naked eye. You can order such magnifiers from charleysgreenhouse.com and others online.

"Spider mites have a pair of needle-like structures called stylets, which are used to rupture leaf cells. A feeding spider mite pushes its mouth into the torn tissue and draws up cell sap. Small patches of cells are killed, resulting in a stippling or fine flecking on the upper surface of leaves, giving the leaves a "sandblasted" appearance. On heavily infested plants, the foliage will become bronzed, bleached, yellow, or gray. Untreated, such plants lose vigor, become progressively thinner, and may eventually die." Eric Day, director of Virginia Tech lab.

Spider mites are a mid summer problem, mostly. It is hard to get through a summer without spraying for them once or twice. Or keep blasting the undersides of the leaves with water which if done often enough will keep them away, too.

Charles

And from our own Buddy Short:

Recently I posted several questions that I thought were worthwhile but few answered so I suppose they were just dumb. I will however try again because it sounds like most of us are having the same problems.

It seems like right now, aphids are attacking everything and that has me concerned because I have about 50 seedlings that are ready to bloom for me for the first time and that tender growth seems to be an attraction to these critters.

What exactly are aphids and will they ultimately kill your plant? if you spray them with water, are you just temporarily removing them from your buds/leaves or does this spraying actually kill them? Are any of you having more success with certain products to control these pests and do any of you use a granular form of insecticide on the soil in your pots in addition to the liquid form?

Buddy, we use Marathon granular systemic (or Merit, same active ingredient - imidicloprid) once a year (early spring - February/March) in our pots. This controls aphids and white fly just about all year long. If we see signs of aphids in the fall, another spot application is used (not necessarily on EVERY plant). It will not control thrips (not taken up into the buds), but we spray the buds only with a contact spray to keep these at bay. We also watch out for a spider mite invasion about three weeks after the imidicloprid is applied in early spring. Avid and/or Triazicide for these. There has been some mention of a resistance to imidicloprid cropping up. We have not yet had this happen, we are watching out for it. Roz sprays for gall midge about once a month, rotating products. This spray also helps with any aphid outbreak (probably why the Marathon/Merit seems to last all year).

Pat

Aphids do not work alone. You will probably notice ants crawling up and down the plants. These guys are farmers milking their aphid cows of their sugary exudation. They also transport them from place to place. Consequently, you need to treat the ground and often your pots for ant infestations. As fast as you remove the beasties, the ants put more in place. They also slowly can crawl back themselves when dislodged with water.

Treat the ants and do one tip area spray with imidacloprid and you should have control success.

Wally M

Aphids are insidious little critters, born pregnant and ready to eat from day one. They are particularly attracted to the sap of new growth, so you'll see them as tiny green or black blobs on the shoots. If the infestation is severe the whole growing tip will be covered with insects. You can also find them on the back of leaves but they're less fond of the tougher, older growth. They rarely kill their host plant, stupid to destroy your food source, but they can cause serious damage and invariably they cut down your bloom count.

Water spray will NOT kill them, take it from one that knows! All you do is knock them to the ground so they have to crawl back up again. It's better to, urk!, squish them between your fingers than use plain water spray.

*In my opinion, aphids are the easiest to control pests out there. I've tried pesticides, pyrethrine based ones work great, but it's really overkill. What you need is some dish detergent and lukewarm water. Pour up the water in your sprayer then add enough detergent to make it foam a bit if you shake it gently. Spray liberally on all surfaces but especially at the growth tips. The detergent will strip off the protective waxy coating on the insects and they will die. If you can, try a product which mixes both soap and oil as it's even more effective and not just against the aphids either.*

To guard against recurring infestations, clear away all weeds, treat surrounding vegetation with the spray as well as the infested plants, and make sure your plants are not situated under an infested tree that drops new aphids down on them!

Yvonne

What products for gall midge does Roz use?

Jill, Triazicide, Bayer Tree & Shrub, Bayer Advanced Garden Spray are the three of the moment. Almost anything like them will work. Orthene, if you can still find it. Immunox is a fungicide/insecticide mix he has used.

They are fairly easy to kill, but one must keep up regular spraying until cool weather arrives. Gall Midge head for the hills when the weather gets cold. Pat

From Jill in Hawaii: I did see an article from the University of Hawai'i on Gall Midge, but as far as I can tell I don't have it and it is not widespread.

The "check" for it is to cut a fallen bud in half and wait to see if something jumps around, right? So far, I haven't seen any. Please correct me if that is not the way to check for them.

I don't have much in the way of bud drop, and when I do I attribute it to those darned thrips!

**SHOW RESULTS:** Ricky gave me a copy of the income and expenses for our show. I have reprinted them below:

**INCOME**

Plant Sales	9,792.25
Fertilizer	245.00
Handbooks	240.00
New Memberships	97.50
Donation	40.00
Total	10,414.75

**EXPENSES**

Plants – Dupont Nursery	7,344.19
Fertilizer	196.00
Awards & Ribbons	177.43
Rental of School	646.00
Cafeteria Worker	175.00
Table coverings	84.18
Soft drinks & Ice	15.65
Poster supplies	19.29
Seed Pod Ad	50.00
National Membership fees	75.00
Handbooks	128.00
Show packet	15.00
Total	8,925.74

Profit from show 1,489.01

**FUTURE EVENTS PLANNED:**

Grafting party – To be announced

Tour of Dupont Nursery – To be announced

August 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter meeting

September 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter meeting....Chapter Elections

October Chapter meeting/hybridizing party/Bar-B-Que Doug & Lou Trahan's home Date to be announced

November 1 Last regular chapter meeting of the year

December Holiday party – date and location to be announced

Talk up the chapter. Bring a friend. Invite someone to come be a part of the fun and to experience the wonderful and beautiful blooms that are hibiscus.

Remember this chapter is ***YOUR CHAPTER***. As with our flowers, you get out of it what you put into it.

**IT WILL MAKE US ALL GROW AND BLOOM!** And everyone loves beautiful blooms!