



HOOKED ON HIBISCUS

MEETING: Tuesday, November 1st at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center on Johnston St. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm. **(NOTE TIME CHANGE)** Refreshments will be furnished by ????. Kevin Russo will give a talk about getting our plants ready for winter.

AUCTION: Hey gals and guys, let's have a chapter auction. Bring any of your plants or anything else for that matter, that you no longer want. We will auction it off at the meeting with the proceeds going to the chapter. If you have a plant you no longer like for whatever reason, bring it. It's a great way for someone to get a plant at a low price. It does not have to be a hibiscus or hibiscus related, it can be anything. Other chapters around the country do this and it seems to be a fun time for all. Hopefully we can make this an annual event.

REFLECTIONS: Yes, believe it or not I am finally getting back to doing the newsletter. The past several months have been unbelievable to say the least. With 2 major hurricanes hitting both sides of our state, we here in Acadiana kinda felt like an Oreo cookie. Caught in the middle. Fortunately for us here in God's Country, Acadiana, for the most part, we only sustained minor damage to our houses and homes. This is not to distract from those in Delcambre or Erath or portions of Iberia Parish that was flooded, but most of our chapter members faired fairly well. There were a few exceptions. Dr. Dave's office lost its roof forcing him to find other temporary housing for his office. Sandra had a tree fall on her carport destroying it. Ricky had some flooding on his property but it came within a foot or so from entering his home. Ricky did loose all of his hibiscus and daylilies that he had in pots at his home. I lost my 3 greenhouse structures outside as well as some of the plants took a beating. Some are having a difficult time recovering and I suspect that is from the influx of salt water that they received during Rita. *Most everyone else, from what I could determine, had minor damages to the homes but most were tree limbs falling.* It appears to be more of an aggravation than anything else. So far our part of the country has been truly blessed and lucky compared to those in the Cameron/Lake Charles area and of course the truly sad devastation in New Orleans.

At this point I am going to reprint part of an email I received from Marti Graves from Lone Star chapter. Marti sent this email out on the 17th of October, just a few weeks ago. This email is about Carol McCarol. Some of you may know her. She was the lady that came to our show from Bay St. Louis, Ms., and won a head table award. This past year she showed in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and a couple of the Houston shows where she generally took head table honors.

Here is what Marti had to say:

We heard from Carol last night. She and her family are fine but they have nothing, literally, nothing. No home, no job, just the car and few things they were able to take with them. They are in a church shelter in Panama City, FL. They are waiting for FEMA to get them a trailer or something to live in. Her husband had 12 rental properties and they are all gone, so no income. She went back to the area two weeks ago (took that long to let them in) and of the 98 plants she had she found 3 dead ones, all signs of them were gone. She said it was like Andrew. No trees, no street signs, no houses, no buildings, no way of telling what was. She almost took a seedling with her but her husband said they had to get out quick, so it is gone as well. She asked about the Barrs and other NO chapter members. Their mail is finally catching up to them as the post office was flattened as well. She got her Seed Pod and found our number in it. She said it was a twenty foot wall of water that hit the town.

It is hard to believe mother nature can be so destructive and yet create the hibiscus we so love.

Marti

To me this is something that is so shocking for someone that we know and who has supported our chapter. Carol, our thoughts and prayers are definitely with you and your husband. The same holds true for all who were adversely affected by the storms.

NEW NEWS WITH THE NATIONAL: As you know the National AHS as well as our chapter is a non profit organization. Until recently the IRS said that small groups such as ours could not assist individuals such as the McCarols with their devastation. We could give out funds to other non profit relief agencies such as The Salvation Army, Red Cross and others. We just could not give it to our own association members. However, we could give out plants, etc. Here our chapter, at the September meeting voted to donate \$2,000.00 from our funds to help out in the relief effort to the National only to be told we could not do it due to the IRS rules. Well, when I found out about this, I was livid. I contacted our Treasurer Walter Bissell, and asked him to verify this with the IRS. He called Salt Lake City and was told maybe but to call another office. He did so, and they said absolutely not, we are just too small of a group and did not have anything in place to handle this. I then sent emails to both President Bush and Vice-President Cheny asking for their assistance. In both cases I received just an automated reply but information in President Bush's reply gave me the feeling it could be done. I then emailed the Commissioner of the IRS. He had one of his assistants email us back to contact him. I asked Walter to handle the discussions with him since he is our National Treasurer. Walter called him the following business day and lo and behold we were able to have this set up for us provided we get the Board of Director's approval from the AHS. We did and so we now have a fund to assist our AHS brothers and sisters if they are the victims of a disaster such as a hurricane.

Additionally, prior to getting IRS approval, Damon Veach from the Red Stick Hibiscus Association set up a fund where people could donate to and he would make certain it would get to the right sources. Those AHS members that needed a helping hand. Damon has worked tirelessly on this for the past several months. He has mentioned to me one frustrating aspect is that after the storms, people "disappeared" and it has been a major uphill task in trying to locate members from the New Orleans group.

Major kudos go out to both Damon and Walter for their fine efforts in helping out our association members who need it the most in their time of need. At the last meeting in September, the few members who were present donated \$350.00 to this relief cause. That was added to the \$2,000.00 our chapter gave. I personally thank our chapter for the donation as well as any who have contributed. But it is not too late! Oh no...if you can, I would ask anyone and everyone to see if you can donate any funds to either the AHS relief fund or to one of the many other fine non-profit organizations. It will come back to help all of us in the long run.

To donate to the AHS relief fund, make your checks payable to the American Hibiscus Society (in the memo section, write "relief fund". Either send it to Rick or it can be mailed directly to Walter Bissell at P.O. Box 1580 Venice, Fl. 34284-1580 or contributions can be made via PayPal at paypal@americanhibiscus.org and access PayPal at <http://www.paypal.com>.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY: Recently our chapter lost another one of its founding members, Kay Dourant. She had been battling cancer for some time. Kay was always the one who so graciously volunteered to go on TV to promote our show and sale. She was truly a plant lover. Kay will be sorely missed by our chapter.

As has become our custom, our show on June 25, 2006 will be dedicated to her.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all the club members and especially Sandra for your thoughts and prayers as well as the beautiful spray of flowers that was sent due to the death of my mother this past month. I contacted Sandra and asked her to coordinate in trying to get a meeting for October. We had already canceled the bar-b-que to Hurricane Rita, and I had planned on having a meeting on October 4th. When my mom, turned for the worse is when I got in touch with Sandra. She contacted Bill and tried to get in touch with Kevin but was unable to do so. The meeting was then canceled. Again, many thanks to everyone. I know my mother would have appreciated it.

Bar-b-que: Since Hurricane Rita disrupted our plans to hold our annual bar-b-que, I would suggest we postpone it to the spring. I think it would be good to have it early in the year to get everyone fired up for the upcoming growing season. I know spring is a busy time of the year for us already, but hopefully we can work it in.

HOLIDAY PARTY: Yep, it is that time of the year. Actually we are a bit late in planning this. So all of you party animals, if you have a suggestion of a place, please contact them to see if they might be available on December 6th. That is the first Tuesday of the month, and we have generally had our parties on the first Tuesday. Let's also think of some new places so that we don't always go to the same location. Again, please call the place to see if it is available and let them know we will advise them definitely on the Wednesday after our meeting.

FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: This meeting will/was be held in Boca Raton, Fl, on November 11-13th. Late news is that the hotel is not expected to be ready after Hurricane Wilma paid them a visit. I plan on being at the meeting and will give a report on what is discussed. On the next page, is a letter sent from the National Nominating committee (which our own Sandra Theall is on). The letter is pretty much self explanatory. If anyone is interested in running for one of the

Chapter Presidents - Please make your members aware of the following-
 The national membership meeting will be held November 11-13 2005 at the Embassy suites Hotel, Boca Raton, Florida. At this meeting the candidates for the 2006 election will be finalized. We, the members of the nominating committee wish to remind any member who wishes to participate in this election to submit their names to one of the below listed members before the meeting. If you are attending this meeting the nominations will be accepted from the floor.

AHS Nominating Committee

Chairman Connie Roush	Sunset chapter
Bernard Page	Conrad Sunrise Chapter
Rae Flanders	Golby Reasoner Chapter
Victor Zeno	Central Florida Chapter
Jerry Holmes	James E. Hendry Chapter
Barbara Ray	British Virgin Island Chapter
Marti Graves	Lone Star Chapter
Sandra Theall	Mike Bernard Acadiana Chapter
Betsy LaFever	Members at Large
Audrey McCarthy	US Virgin Islands

The positions to be filled and the present declared candidates are listed below:

President:	Sam Andrews	MAL*
	Randy Cox	Harry Goulding FL*
First Vice-President:	Eddie Griffith	Sunrise FL*
	Roz Merritt	Lone Star TX*
Second Vice-President:	Rick Landers	Acadiana LA*
Recording Secretary:	Patricia Merritt	Lone Star TX*
Directors:	Wayne Cameron	TX
	Bradley Christian	St. Croix*
	Bob Philips	TX
	Barbara Ray	BVI
	Carlos Reynolds	FL
	Fred Roush	FL*
	Donna Schneider	FL*
	David Tate, M.D.	La

*Confirmed as willing to run 10/1/05

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET: No, it's not Superman. It is our fall. As I write this, it seems like fall has stepped aside and allowed winter to come early. I know this is just a bit of a tease for what is to come. We will return to our normal fall-like weather but it is a good reminder that we need to get our plants ready for the upcoming cold winter months. Take a bit of time to remove any weeds, check to see if a bit more soil is needed. Hopefully most everyone will be able to store their plants in some sort of protected area like a garage, greenhouse, or inside of one's home. When you have them stored remember to cut back a bit on watering as well as fertilizing as they do not need as much during the winter. If you have them in a good protected area it is generally okay to go ahead and prune if it is needed. Remember not to over do it. Save those prunings and plant them. Try your hand at getting the cuttings to grow. Several methods are suggested including, putting all of the cuttings of one kind together in a small pot. Keep them moist and see if you don't have a few that will put out roots. What to do with them? Well, they will make excellent gifts to welcome in spring. And if nothing else, we can always use them as giveaways and/or door prizes.

Kevin Russo our new VP (as of 2006) will give a talk about getting your plants ready for winter. This should be very interesting and informative. Don't miss it.

FROM THE NET: Here is an email that one of our members, Kevin Russo presented to the Hibiscus lists. It is an excellent question regarding bloom colors in summer months vs. winter months.

Its getting to be that time when we in the U.S. are cooling down heading into winter. With the fall and winter temperatures comes a change in the colors of hibiscus blooms. Many of my blooms go through drastic change in colors during the winter. I was thinking about that last night and wondered. When does a bloom take on its color? At what point in the blooming process is color introduced? Is it at the inception of a bud effected by cold weather or at some point when the flower is visible but not open? Also, for commercial growers maintaining plants in temperature controlled greenhouses do you continue to get the same color patterns year round or do you experience some of these drastic changes as well?

I guess what I'm wondering is, is it really temperature or some sort of internal hibiscus clock.

From Bob Carran in Florida: Hey Kevin, even in my small 12 x 30 greenhouse I learned last year that the blooms I get, even inside with 90-100 degree temps during the day in winter, won't look the same as they will in May. Even if they are rather plain and just one color in the greenhouse in January doesn't mean that "what you see is what you get".

Yes, I've noticed whether or not I have the hibs inside the greenhouse in "summer heat" they still go through the color change. I've said once before that anything I have bloom over the winter inside the greenhouse has to be saved until spring even if it doesn't look like it is a good one or not.

A good example of that is Sunshowers which even blooming inside the greenhouse in the winter will be almost a solid red/orange.

I have one seedling (Scarlet Angel) that blooms a deep red in the greenhouse in winter and if I had thrown it away because it was just "another" red I would have thrown away a bloom that eventually winds up in the summer as an 8" orange/red with yellow spots and a silver eye.

So there must be a light factor as well as a temperature factor involved. I remember Dick commenting once that even his blooms, although having an almost perfect temperature range and I guess not that far south of the equator either, go through a color variation.

From Dick Johnson in Tahiti: I can't answer all your questions but following are some comments.

In Tahiti where the temps never drop below 65 F (rarely for a few mornings a few days per years) with a more common low in the low 70's, we experience very little variation in bloom color. However, certain varieties, i.e., New Idea will go spotless in the cooler months.

Bear in mind that day length and whether the days are increasing or decreasing in duration could have an effect as well. As our temperatures are more or less within the norm of perpetual summer conditions elsewhere, it could be that these minor color variations here in Tahiti are also day length dependent. My guess is that it is a bit of both.

Regarding pigments and temperature, some of the former will vary with the latter. In that case when the temps are too low, certain pigment formation is lacking. Hence, it would seem to me that for temperature related pigments, at cooler temperatures, certain pigments simply do not form and will only occur at threshold temperatures. That's a bit of arm chair biology based on some basic principles, i.e., temperature acts as a catalyst and certain pigments are known to be

BTW, I did my master thesis on endogenous cycles "internal clocks", and it would seem improbable, but not impossible, that color change in hibiscus is related. Typically, for example, the day/night activity pattern in animals is controlled by an internal clock. For instance if one puts an nocturnal animal in conditions of continuous light, they will still remain active in what would have been hours of darkness but the onset and duration of activity will drift and eventually deteriorate to a degree. The cycle is queued daily by the solar cycle, i.e., rise and set of the sun. The endogenous clock will be reset by the new solar cycle, but generally requires several repeated cycles. This is the same problem which is often referred to as jet lag as we travel from one time zone to another, i.e., France to Tahiti with a 12 hour difference in time, it takes a few days before we can regain our regular sleep patterns. I'm still getting sleepy in late afternoon and waking up in the wee hours of the morning. When I arrive in France from Tahiti, it is the reverse, i.e, can't fall asleep at night and wake up at noon. I'm finding the older one gets, the harder it is to make these adjustments. Sorry for the digression!

From Wayne in Gilbert, Az: I have long been asking the same question. My own personal and unproven theory is as follows. Plants like people tend to lean toward the darker colors to absorb more heat in the cooler temperatures. During the summer season the colors they tend to be lighter in color to reflect heat. My other theory is based on the Soluner Table used by many fishermen, myself included, that the gravitational effects have some bearing on the plants as well. This is just a SWAG (scientific wild a** guess) but until somebody can prove different I'm going with these.

Blooms and Things -- The year 2005, for me, will go down as my best year ever as I try to become better at this magnificent hobby. When I say, "best year", I realize that many of you will think that this must have been my best bloom year. Actually that's a valid thought however, for me, it was my best year because of change and because I learned so much. Maybe some of what I learned might help you too. I hope so!

I started the year early by pruning my babies in mid February. That's what the handbook called for, so I complied. The year before, I had actually pruned in early December before I had stored my plants for the winter months. I wasn't happy with this year's results because by pruning in February I lost an entire spring of blooms on 50% of my babies. Because I have a protected area to store my plants, pruning early caused me no harm the previous year and I had early blooms to enjoy and to hybridize with. I will not prune in February again. It was not worth it.

I switched to Space City fertilizer (high in potassium) and my plants looked extremely healthy and well fed all year. In addition, I fed them more often (maybe twice a week). Some would tell you, that's too often, but Bobby told me he feeds his every time he waters. That's enough for me. Whatever the **MASTER** says, I do!

Since all of my plants are in 3 gallon pots, I am constantly looking for a pot that is better for my babies. This year I settled on one from Home Depot. I liked it because the drainage holes were bigger than the one I was previously using. I still like it. My potting mix continues to be Miracle Grow potting mix with coconut fibers for some moisture retention. I'm sure your plants suffered, just like mine, from the extreme heat we experienced. I found that I had to water every day or my babies would really suffer so this mix made sense to me. Still does!

I found a hose spray insecticide called Triazicide which allowed me to easily spray my 300 plants. I sprayed them as needed and was able to prevent most of the different insect outbreaks we could experience. It also comes in a spray bottle for individual plants. It worked for me and I will continue to use it.

The one area that I will pursue is adding a shade cloth. Watching my babies fry this past year was not fun and I will do my best to not have that happen again.

Learning something new is always fun but then to witness that change make a huge difference in your results is both rewarding and, at the same time, very satisfying. I will continue to look for better ways to do things so that I can report those results to you. Or, as Boudreaux would say, "Well done is always better than well said". We can all do better, so let's continue to share that information that proves to work best and gives each of us the best results. Let's continue to spread the message to others and to always look for new members for our fine organization. And finally, let's continue to support our own, as well as all area shows, for each of them gives each of us a chance to show to others why we are all, "Hooked on Hibiscus".

Good blooming..... Buddy

NEW YEAR: It's about time to put 2005 to bed. No arguments from me! We can look forward to a fresh start with 2006. Let's make this chapter the best it can be. I need everyone to get involved. Not just at meetings but in everything we do. Please volunteer your time, whether asked or not. We hate to beg. It will make you feel good!