

HOOKED ON HIBISCUS

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADIANA CHAPTER,
AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER 2002**

Greetings!!

Starting with this newsletter I will serve as editor of Hooked On Hibiscus. I thought I would start by giving a background on myself. I am a long-time garden lover. I think I inherited this from my grandmother. She could put a plastic plant in the ground and make it grow. I don't have quite that ability. I developed a love of tropical plants after going to Hawaii a few years ago. I started with orchids, plumeria and gingers. After going to Festival de Fleurs and meeting Mike Bernard and Mr. Dupont, I was truly "hooked on hibiscus", and became a charter member of our club. I love all hibiscus but usually go more for a "showy" bloom, although I have all sizes and colors. I don't think I could choose a favorite. I plan to remain in the collector division, keeping my collection below 75 varieties. More on this for you new members further on. As most of us do, I grow my exotics in pots, preferring clay to plastic. I bring blooms to work and have "snagged" a few new members. On a personal note, I have lived in Lafayette for 30 years, am married to Raymond (who puts up with my hobbies, and even lends a hand); we have 3 grown daughters and 3 grandchildren. I work at Lourdes Hospital as a nurse in the Admissions Department, specializing in Preoperative Preparation

HIBISCUS HISTORY

The hibiscus we generally grow belong to the group known as *rosa-sinensis*. A single hibiscus flower has 5 petals, 5 stigma pads, a 5-celled ovary, 5 teeth on the calyx and 5-10 bracts. Double hibiscus blooms have more petals, but the 5 base petals will be consistent, with the additional petals filling out above them. The same holds true for crested varieties, with the additional petals attached to the staminal column.

The American Hibiscus society was formed in 1950 in Palm Beach Florida. The goal of the new society was to provide solutions to the problems of identification and naming varieties, as well as promoting interest in the cultivation of *H. rosa sinensis*. I would say that they have succeeded quite well.

SHOWING HIBISCUS

Flowers are exhibited in the following categories: amateur, collector, open collector, commercial, seedlings and miniatures. In addition, plants are judged as singles and doubles. As a new member, you can exhibit as an amateur for the first 2 years, no matter how many plants you have. Then you move into the collector class, having between 25 and 75 varieties. You can have more than one of a variety. For instance, I have 2 Sweethearts, 2 Capistranos and 2 Merci Beaucou. These count as 3 varieties. When you

Miniatures, single or double, must be bred as a miniature, and be smaller than 5 inches. A bloom larger than 5", even though it is bred as a miniature, will be disqualified as being too big. On the other hand, if your bloom was not bred as a miniature, but is 5" or smaller, it cannot be judged as a miniature. The judges have a listing of all registered miniatures in case a question arises.

CREATING NEW PLANTS

A grafting party is planned for September. Opinions differ as to the ease of grafting, as well as the success rate. If you can keep your grafted plants evenly moist, provide strong light, but not direct sunlight, you have a good chance of getting some of the grafts to take. We are fortunate to have several gifted grafters in our group. They can usually be prevailed upon to provide assistance. The Hibiscus Handbook has excellent information about grafting.

Many growers prefer to take cuttings to propagate hibiscus. Unfortunately, not all plants will grow on their own roots. For these, the best way to get new plants is to graft. Oh well.

INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

The American Hibiscus Society has a web site where you can get information on many subjects. The address is <<http://americanhibiscus.org>>

Other sites are: <<http://www.trop-hibiscus.com>>

To subscribe to the hibiscus mail list, send a blank e-mail to:

THML-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Put **subscribe hibiscus** in subject or body of the message. To unsubscribe, use the same address, with **unsubscribe hibiscus** in the subject or body of the message. The AHS web page has an area to click on for the mail list.

NEWS FROM AUGUST MEETING

At the last meeting, officers and a board of directors was selected. The new officers and Board of Directors are:

President.....Mike Bernard
Vice President.....Sandra Theall
Secretary.....Candy Walker
Treasurer.....Ricky Meaux
Board of Directors

Rick Landers
Dorothy Jowers
Vickie Tate

Show Chair.....Rick Landers

The door prize was won by Kirk Crain. Raffle winners were Candy, Rick and Delores.

Our Annual Show and Sale has again been successful, from a growers prospective as well as from a financial prospective. Our treasury is healthy.

encourage members to submit items for the next newsletter. I wonder if hibiscus grow in Alaska? I'll let you know in the next issue. There is a botanical garden in Anchorage that I plan to see.

LONE STAR RESULTS

Again, the Acadiana Chapter showed well at the Lone Star Show in Houston. Sandra captured head table for best collector single (her second in a row at Lone Star) with Blueberry Hill. David Tate had 4 blooms on the head table: best open collector single, High Voltage; best miniature double, Persephone; best of show miniature, Blue Mist; and sweepstakes, open, Rio Grande. Congratulations. This is the last show of the year in our region. If anyone wants to exhibit before next spring, it would have to be in Florida or the Islands. Speaking of the Islands, I understand our member, Ron, has moved. Maybe we could get together a group package and go visit him, when there would be a show, of course. Ron you will be missed.

Contributions and subject matter are always welcome. You can e-mail me at gdwilliams@cox-internet.com, snail mail at 133 Pembroke, Lafayette, 70508. I can be reached by phone most evenings after 6 at 984-7046. Until next time.....