

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

June, 2010

Editor: Gayler Boettcher: gboet@gte.net

Publisher: Gene Haugh: gene.haugh@gmail.com

Web Site: 4hibiscus.com

Christmas in July!

Our Christmas in July Chapter meeting July 11th will have three interesting facets or parts.

(1.) An open discussion will be held about “Where is Our Chapter Going – And How Do We Get There?” – along with anything else anyone would like to “toss in the pot”. We hope that all members that are in town will make it a point to attend in order to “put in their two cents.”

(2.) And, you may ask, where does the title of this article come in – Christmas in July? It’s a stretch, but it refers to the *First Annual Plant Exchange and Yankee Swap*. Each couple or single is asked to bring one plant for the plant exchange. It doesn’t have to be a hibiscus; in fact it may be better if it isn’t a hibiscus. Nor does it have to be in a fancy pot. For ease in handling, it would be best if the pots were one gallon or less. As they arrive, each plant will be assigned a number and then after the business meeting, each couple or single will draw a number – that’s the *Plant Exchange*. Then each couple or single has one chance to swap their plant for a plant that someone else has – that’s the **Yankee Swap**. (Everyone can put the “Christmas in July” wherever they would like.) Please, please, - do not **not** come if you don’t have a plant for the exchange. You may be able to get an early start on the cookies!

(3.) The third part of the meeting involves the distribution of the 1010-11 Chapter Directories. That’s another reason why it is hoped there is good attendance – we will save a bunch on postage!

We also understand that there is some research being done about changing the date of our show – to sometime in April or May. There should be something to report, one way or the other, at this meeting.

That’s Sunday, July 11th at 1:00 p.m. at Synovus Bank, 26th Street West and Manatee Avenue.

Peridia a delight

The Installation Luncheon, Sunday, June 13th, featured the buffet at Peridia Country Club. It was a delight again this year. Perhaps the number of choices was less than in past years, but if they were – who really needs so many. All in all, it appeared that our group found the

selection to their liking with some “studying” the selection several times.

It should be mentioned that 22 people had indicated they were going to attend the Installation Luncheon, but only 14 showed up. Disappointing. Thank heavens that the Chapter didn’t have to pay for those who didn’t make it!

The minutes of the short meeting tell what went on, but we thought we’d add our “voice” to several items. (1.) Outgoing president **Dave Flanders** presented a much deserved Presidential Citation to **Dave Kaplan** for his considerable planning efforts for the 2010 Show. (2.) In his last official act as President, Dave Flanders presented a Presidential Citation to **Rae Flanders** for “providing the air under his wings”. (3.) **Bob Hunter** again was outstanding as he conducted the installation service in a firm, business like manner. (4.) In the first official act of his presidency, Gayler Boettcher presented a Presidential Citation to Dave Flanders for his outstanding leadership during his **five** years as President.

Convention Presidential Report

Each year the president of each Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society is expected to make a “President’s Report” at the annual convention. Although he was not able to attend, Dave Flanders composed the following letter and it was planned that it would be read to a General Session of the convention by Kathy Grandoff, an Affiliated Member of our Chapter.

“I’m happy to report that our 46th Annual Show was another success. Though the winter’s freezes severely reduced bloom count, attendance was up due to a new publicity plan and its new emphasis put forth by chapter members personally publicizing the show. A new addition to the show, that of four 15-minute mini-presentations at 20-minute intervals was a huge success and delighted our guests. And many thanks to our show directors, exhibitors and judges who made the show run smoothly and also made it fun.

Membership continues to be our number one challenge. It is very difficult to attract and retain active, younger members. We were able to get only one new member this year and lost several due to relocation and death. We now have 45 members. Those members who

are active exhibit good morale and willingly support our chapter's efforts. Chapter life and health is good.

For its monthly programs the past year, the Chapter held seven formal meetings and retained our social meetings at four. As mentioned, we also held our Annual Show.

The chapter newsletter, "Petal Power," continues to provide an excellent resource and news source for our members. This is due to the outstanding efforts of its editor and desktop publisher who like Energizer Bunnies, keep going and going and Receipt of newsletters from other chapters is much appreciated.

It is with mixed emotions that I now turn over the duties of president to our very able Past-President, Gayler Boettcher, who has been elected to lead our membership during the coming year.

Submitted to the Second General Session, June 20, 2010.

Reflections on our Chapter's origins by Bob Hunter

We are providing installments of **Bob Hunter's** historical perspective about the origins of our Chapter which were presented at the January 10th Chapter meeting. Remember that Bob's writing was meant to be spoken, not read – so "listen as you read". Egbert, or Ebby, had made the Royal Palm Nursery a success and the family tree had been somewhat mentioned – all the way down to current Reasoners, Andy and Ward, both of whom are at least somewhat involved in the nursery business. We pick up Bob's story line in the early 1900's.

"Difficult times were rapidly descending upon Oneco, Florida, the United States and the World. WW I was looming right around the corner.

Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was assassinated in June 1914. Within a month the peaceful world was torn apart, the Germans sank an unarmed passenger ship the Lusitanian, and American hawks began demanding the United States entry into war. American industry began to pour equipment into the Allied effort resulting in huge economic growth.

Norman, in his early 20s enlisted in the Army early in 1918. He was stationed in the DuPont plant in New Jersey, representing the Army inspecting munitions provided by the firm. Within a year the war was over and Norman was offered a tempting job with DuPont, but after great thought declined the offer and returned to Bradenton to become a full partner with his father, Ebby, in the Reasoner Brothers' Royal Palm Nursery.

Perhaps this brush with the famous, powerful, and wealthy (I'm referring to the DuPont's) is prophetic because Norman went on to rub shoulders with these Titans of Industry.

Mrs. Thomas Edison wrote Norman to inquire of hiring him to remake and design some landscaping for her and Mr. Edison at their home in Fort Myers. Of course, Norman was happy to oblige and most of what you see today when visiting the Edison "cottage" was planned and planted by Norman Reasoner and his staff. It was an annual commission Norman thoroughly enjoyed for many years.

Mr. Edison was an ardent (and I might add very capable) bridge player. At one of their sit down planning sessions he mentioned to Norman how much he enjoyed the game. Coincidence or fate stepped in when Norman replied he too loved the game. He did not reveal until later he was a five-time Florida State duplicate bridge champion.

Of course, two people don't a "bridge foursome" make. So the next time Norman was invited down to tinker in Mrs. Edison's garden, her husband had two more friends lined up to play. Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone were there to round out the bridge table.

This became a regular habit thoroughly enjoyed by all over a many-year period. The Fathers of Modernity, as Edison, Ford, and Firestone were called, were well suited to Norman's intelligence and conservative manner."

More next month.....

Hibiscus gardening in July

The TV weather forecasters don't have much new to say these days and they will be able to continue that practice in July, because the weather pattern tends to be fairly consistent from day to day during most of the summer in Florida. That boring forecast tends to be "low 90's, dew point in the low to mid 70's, and a 30 or 40% chance of scattered showers with the possibility of locally heavy thunderstorms." The combination of those elements may not be the best for producing outstanding hibiscus – or many other garden plants.

When the daily rain misses your hibiscus garden you may note drooping leaves on your plants late in the day. That is very likely due to the sun drawing more moisture out of the leaves than the roots are able to supply to them. (This assumes the roots have access to water – that you did water as needed.) The leaves will recover after the sun goes down, but the droopy leaves may cause some buds to drop. Yes we are back to that subject. To limit the bud drop caused by leaves lacking water, spray the foliage with water during the heat of the day.

Bud drop is also caused by thrips – a minute insect that sucks juices from flower buds and their stems. Aphids may also cause buds to drop. (Since ants place aphids on plants in order to get the sweet honeydew aphids produce – you have to get rid of the ants to get rid of the aphids.) Both thrips and aphids can be controlled with soap or soap and oil spray. Thrips in particular will require repeated sprays – probably four or five every three or four days.

If the soap or soap and oil sprays don't result in the desired result you may want to proceed to an insecticide. Since there is thinking that systemic sprays don't get absorbed into the buds look for a contact spray that you can use on the buds only, to combat these critters. As we stated several months ago, we have heard that some folks have had good success in reducing bud drop by using Bayer's *Rose and Flower Insect Killer* on buds only. It contains Imidacloprid, a root fed systemic and, perhaps more importantly, Cyfluthrin a contact insecticide. We have only seen "Flower and Rose" for sale in a pre-mixed spray bottle, which if used only on buds isn't terribly expensive for the hibiscus hobbyist.

Maintain your regular fertilization program. This is particularly important during the rainy season when the fertilizer washes away or through the soil surrounding our plants. The fertilizer that the Chapter has been selling the last few years seems to provide good results – use monthly applications during the rainy season. Some also like to treat their plants to feedings of water soluble fertilizer, Epsom salt and perhaps some liquid minor elements mixed up in a yummy cocktail. Follow label directions for quantities of each and apply every week or two. Whether you are using granular or liquid fertilizer, always water before the application to limit damage to the feeder roots of the plant.

We could have bunches of rain in July. If this occurs, watch your in-ground plants carefully to assure they do not have water standing around them. This could be fatal for them. We have written in the past about the several steps that could be taken to limit the damage that might be caused by standing water – the simplest being the creation of a swale to direct the water to a different direction. Of course, pull back all the mulch around the plants to aid in the drying process.

Chapter Minutes: Installation Luncheon. June 13, 2010

President Flanders welcomed 14 members to the annual luncheon/installation of officers meeting held again at the lovely Peridia Country Club. He thanked Dorothy Erikson for arranging the meeting and for providing the beautiful hibiscus centerpieces, and also thanked all

members for working so hard putting on our show and continually showing the spirit of our chapter.

Jack Taaffe offered the invocation before everyone enjoyed the beautiful and bountiful brunch buffet, and fellowship.

The meeting was called to order following the meal. A motion was made and passed to approve the May minutes as printed in the Petal Power. The Treasurer's report was dispensed with today.

President Flanders awarded a special citation to Dave Kaplan, who so ably stepped in when our Chapter was faced with a new goal in show planning and led with enthusiasm. A second surprising and touching presidential citation was awarded to Rae Flanders for her many contributions in support of the chapter.

Bob Hunter was called to install our new Board member, who are as follows:

President – Gayler Boettcher
1st Vice President – Bob Haendel
Treasurer – Shirley Boettcher
Secretary – Rae Flanders
Director- Beege Hunter 2012-13
Director – Dotty Taaffe 2012-13
Director -Dave Kaplan 2010-11
Director – Janet Love 2010-11
Director – Don Waldroup 2011-12
Director – Jeri Lovett – 2011-12

As Former-President Flanders turned over the gavel to President Boettcher, our new President awarded a Presidential Citation to Dave and thanked him for his 5 years as president. President Boettcher stated that our main goal this year will be to bring in new members. We also need programs for the coming year. A discussion of several program suggestions was held. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00.

The next meeting will be at Synovus Bank on July 11 at 1:00.

Rae Flanders, Secretary

Coming Events

Tuesday, July 6, 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting, Central Library

Sunday, July 11, 1:00 p.m. Chapter Meeting:

Where is our Chapter Going – And How Do We Get There?

First Annual Plant Exchange and Yankee Swap
Receive New Directories

Synovus Bank, Manatee and 26th St. West