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HIBISCUS INTERNATIONAL

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PROFILE OF AN AMERICAN MASTER

Joe Ludick
1922-2013

JOSEPH E. "JOE" LUDICK

Joseph E. "Joe" Ludick, passed away peacefully at home in Port St Lucie on December 27, 2013. He was born March 16, 1922 in Kent, Ohio. He graduated from high school in 1940 and was working for the Erie Railroad when Japan attacked the United States.

He joined the U.S. Marines in 1941 and landed on Guadalcanal as a member of the 1st Marine Division August 7, 1942, where he remained until he was evacuated to New Zealand as a result of contracting malaria. Between bouts of malaria, he ran a Guard company and advanced to the rank of Sergeant.

In 1944, he was sent to Officers Training School at Oberlin College in Ohio where he married his high school sweetheart, Roberta Fitzgerald. He and Roberta moved to Miami, Florida, where he attended law school at the University of Miami and graduated in 1950. He opened a law office in North Miami and in 1951 he was elected Mayor of the city.

He served as Mayor, Judge, Commissioner and on numerous city boards for the next twenty years. In 1952, he started Little League in North Miami and managed teams in Pony League and the American Legion for 10 years. Cardinal great Steve Carlton and Red Sox Tony Torchia started out under his coaching.

TOPAZ GLORY
Currently a parent to 339 registered cultivars, 199 as pod parent & 140 as pollen parent.

While living in North Miami, he was a founding member of Holy Family School and Church, the local Knights of Columbus chapter and the Elks Club. In the mid 1970's, he started hybridizing hibiscus and during the next 40 years he and Roberta developed more than 300 varieties of hibiscus, many of which are still cultivated around the world today.

HERM GELLER
Pod parent to 41 registered cultivars
Pollen parent to 93 registered cultivars

He helped to start four new chapters of the American Hibiscus Society (AHS) in Florida and Texas. He became director of the AHS in 1976 and served as its president 1982-1984 and developed AHS nomenclature that qualified for the Royal British Horticultural Society standings. He holds a U.S. Patent on his hibiscus "JoAnne Boulin", named after his daughter, and won the Hibiscus of the Year in 1988.

An avid fisherman, he fished from Cabo San Lucas and Isla Mujeras in Mexico, the Bahamas and Tortugas and all ports in Florida with landing places in Islamorada and Chokoloskee. He won numerous fishing awards and recognition in South Florida. Mr. Ludick retired from the practice of law in 1995 and moved to Port St. Lucie, FL, where he and Roberta celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

In 1997, he became a Florida Master Gardener and was recognized as a Florida Yard Advisor for the Indian River Lagoon by the University of Florida. He started a fishing club in Port St. Lucie and was a member of the Port St. Lucie Anglers Club for 15 years and volunteered at the fishing clinic for children. His wife, Roberta, passed away in 2001.

-Published in the TC Palm on Jan. 5, 2014

PRO LEGATO
Pod parent to 31 registered cultivars
Pollen parent to 19 registered cultivars

Mr. Joe as he was fondly called.

Beth Jordan Remembers Joe

A long time ago, when I first fell in love with Hibiscus, I went to Florida with my late first husband Francisco Leite. We first met Winn Soldani and he introduced us to Mr. Joe Ludick. At that time my English was much worse than it is now. Mr. and Mrs. Ludick, received us with open arms and gave us a tour of his front and back garden. There were a lot of blooms, and being a real beginner, I was almost crazy admiring all of his plants. I had never seen anything like those hibiscus, together in one place.

Roberta & Joe Ludick

My husband Francisco, whose nick name was Chico, said to me..."diga a ele que eu gostei muito desta flor "...tell him that I love this bloom! ....so Mr. Joe as a gentleman that he always was, gave a name to the bloom ..Chico Leite. Everyone was happy!

When Joe lived in Fort Lauderdale , each year we went there to visit him. Later when visiting with Totila Jordan my husband now (25 years together), Mr. Joe showed him a little mobile with 5 drawers where he kept his seeds, all stowed in sealed envelopes, a lot of them…

After Roberta his wife passed away, he moved to Lake Worth and only once I visited him there, with Larry

SEEDLING OF THE YEAR 2013

Lillian's Cosmopolitan
Moorea Vatina x Moorea Imperial Blossom

RUNNERS UP

Tahitian Purple Passion

PM Miss Rio De Janeiro

Midnight Snow

PM Miss Sergipe

Shah Jehan's Jewel

Mattiacus Gerome

Tahitian Solar Queen Nebula

Mattiacis Solar Eclipse

Tahitian Slow Burn

My Experiences Growing Tropical Hibiscus in Turkey

By Taner Turt

As someone who has never touched soil before the age of 40, my first experience with the plants began with purchasing an estate complete with a garden of 220 square meters at Kurtköy, Sapanca District in Turkey. My first encounter with a Hibiscus was a red species that was brought home as a gift. It was inevitable for that hibiscus to come to grief before the spring of that year, when we experienced temperatures down to -18 degrees centigrade, not to mention our inexperience with plants, let alone the Hibiscus.

Then, from 2008 on, we began our adventure in the Hibiscus world by purchasing the Hibiscuses that are shown below. Meanwhile, I also purchased Hibiscus mutabilis and Hibiscus syriacus.

My first hibiscus trial from seed was with hibiscus moscheutos.

My encounter and curiosity with tropical Hibiscus started when I discovered the IHS's Yahoo Group via one of my friends in 2010. Since then my curiosity and inclination for Hibiscus has grown during my navigation of IHS's website. From an investigation of Turkey, I have found no one else involved in Hibiscus growing. Neither have I found anyone importing them. I found my way to Hidden Valley Hibiscus during my website navigations; however, there was no delivery of Hidden Valley Hibiscus from the innumerable offering internet marketing. At last I persuaded someone to provide me with Hibiscus after troublesome correspondence, but that time we did not come to an agreement on the delivery. The rates offered by the carrier were extremely high and they didn't accept the terms that I proposed. I finally persuaded a seller who took part in 2011 Istanbul Flower Show to bring me two live tropical Hibiscus plants. But alas! In a short time I lost both of them for unknown reasons. Because of trouble with the delivery of live plants, I decided to grow them from imported seed. At that stage, I tried using ebay to contact suppliers. I received my first seed in 2011. Since 2011 I have purchased seeds from French Polynesia, Hawaii, Brazil and Canada via ebay. Again in 2012, I purchased 136 different hybrid Hibiscus seeds for my friend who operates a greenhouse in Antalya, Turkey. Here, I will also share his experience as well. Prior to obtaining seeds, I purchased 10 pieces of wood from French Polynesia by accepting all the risks associated, upon my insistent requests. It took about 20 days for them to reach me but, unfortunately, none of them could be brought to life even though their tips were waxed.

At the beginning the seeds that I purchased germinated at the rate of 30. This year however I increased my performance and never fell below the rate of 70%. At first I was losing sprouts due to several reasons, and I also lost numerous sets during the development stage. By the end of 2013, I was using a mix containing 60% perlite, 20% turf and 10% coco peat mixed with 10% mould. I started with small 5.5 cm pots, transferring the seedlings into 8.0 cm square pots after they had produced 2 to 4 leaves using a mix of 20% perlite, 30% coco peat, 10% Raw Rice Hull and 40% soil and turf.

Now, I'm in search of preparing a different soil mix. What I want to do is to include Coco Fiber, Worm Castings, Carbonized Rice Hull, Raw Rice Hull and Fine River Sand into the soil mixture. But it is difficult for me to find Coco Fiber and Carbonized Rice Hull in Turkey. I received coco peat from a supplier who claimed to sell coco fiber. Now, I continue to investigate...

I used 16-6-31 + 2MgO + TE fertilizer which I purchased at the end of last year and I will continue to use it in the future. I purchased and used Epsom salts and Liquid Seaweed upon recommendation of my acquaintance that is living abroad and engaged in growing and marketing Hibiscus. He said that he reaped the benefit of it. I hope I will too. As far as I know, we are just three persons who grow tropical Hibiscuses in Turkey. One of my connections is quite busy running a greenhouse even though lacking in experience and therefore I do my best to make a contribution. We exchange our experiences in the course of time.

The efficiency rate of the woods I obtained was around 30 to 40 % at first, now this has achieved a rate of 80 to 90 %. I have the woods rooted in the soil mix that I use for germination.

I keep the Hibiscus in Kurtköy, Sapanca during the period between April and November. For the period between December and March, I bring them to Istanbul where I run my business as much as I can. I keep them in my premises since it is suitable for that. I have constructed a winter garden for those left in Kurtköy, Sapanca and provided heating via a plasma unit complete with programmable digital thermostat for winter gardening. I set the temperature to 12°C. The unit switches on when it is below 12°C. The ambient temperature in the premises doesn't fall below 4°C and, therefore, the Hibiscus continued to survive even if adversely affected. On the other hand, the Hibiscuses do lose their leaves both in my premises and in Kurtköy, Sapanca. Thereafter leafing out begins once again.

I have seen the flowers of four Hibiscuses that I grew from the seeds I purchased in 2013 and was very happy about that. I asked my upper neighbor to take pictures of the first Hibiscus flower since I had to go back to Istanbul. Then I was in Sapanca - Kurtköy when the second flower blossomed and I was very happy. I was curious about what the first flower's color, size and features would be. That made me very excited. The Hibiscus I grew in 2013 have been registered by Richard Johnson, the hybridizer, on behalf of IHS in December 2013 and published on the IHS website. I am very happy about that. The Hibiscuses are named: Tturt First Love, Tturt Pink Dreams, Tturt Salmon Pink and Tturt Ottoman Sunshine.

TTURT FIRST LOVE **TTURT PINK DREAMS**

TTURT SALMON PINK

TURT OTTOMAN SUNSHINE

In 2013, I produced my first hybrid seeds and I have germinated some of them. Now, I'm impatient about the Hibiscus that will be grown from my own hybrid seeds. I will also continue to work on hybridization in 2014.

HYBRIDIZER: TANER TURT

In 2014, I created the Turkey Hibiscus Society, a Facebook group for the purpose of promotion and popularization of tropical Hibiscus in particular, providing means for corresponding in Turkish and English. Here I make my best on behalf of those who are interested in the subject matter in Turkey by sharing my videos and articles published in IHS. Our purpose is to promote and popularise tropical Hibiscus in order to encourage its cultivation in Turkey.

Here, I narrate the experience of my connection, who runs a greenhouse in Antalya.

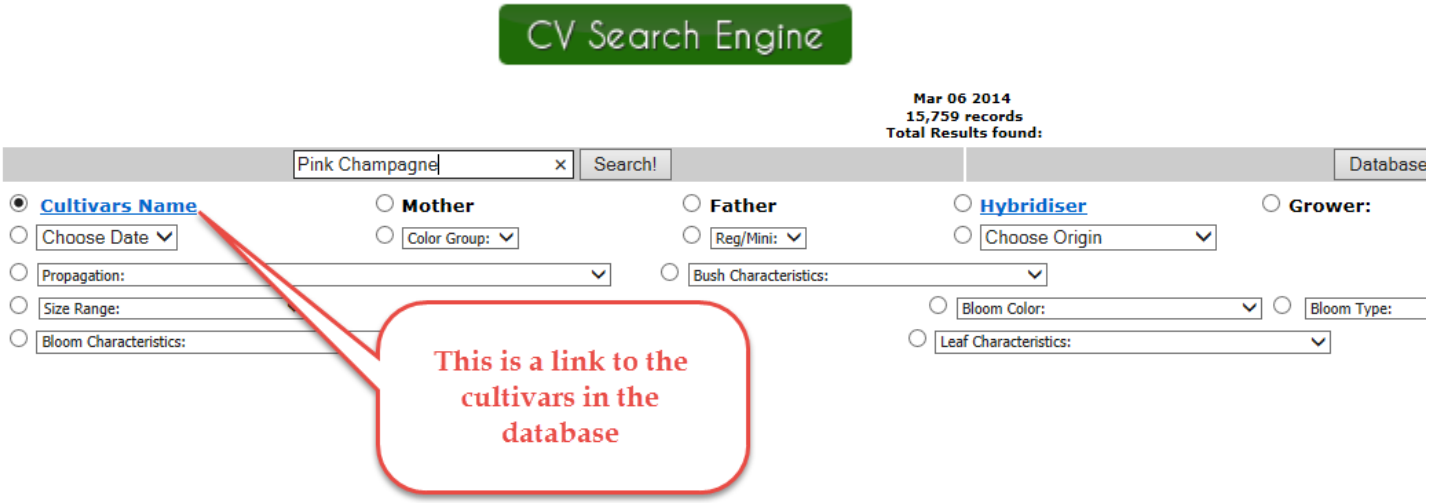
It has been about one year, upon recommendation of dear Taner Turt, that I have included 136 different tropical Hibiscus species into the adventure of growing Desert Rose and Bougainvillea. About 80% of my Hibiscus produced such delicate flowers whose colors always please me enormously. After two months it was necessary to re-pot the Hibiscuses that had developed 3 to 4 leaves. I found out, after research, that they liked a mix rich in acid, featuring good drainage. But my father insisted on using the mix that he used in growing Japanese rose (Kerria japonica) and preferred to adopt his own methods. When I tested the drainage of the mix he used, I realised that it was unacceptable. The mix contained 50% coco peat and the water ran through in about 6 - 7 seconds, whereas our mix was able to retain the water for 2 minutes. I concluded that such a mix was definitely unsuitable for tropical Hibiscus, but my opinions were once again disregarded.

When we used NPK 15:15:15 + ME to fertilize tropical Hibiscus each time we watered, the leaves would to turn pale and die in about a month. Observing the samples we provided, the agriculturalist commented that they suffered from iron-deficiency and recommended an iron-rich fertilizer. Unfortunately, we observed that the fertilizer didn't work out. Finally, we planted them in the mix that contained 50% coco peat, featuring a high degree of good drainage, and observed after 2 weeks that the plants sprouted and were recovering about 1 week after we planted them. Some of them failed short in recovering, however, the majority of them were saved and continue their recovery process. In this way, we have discovered that it is unlikely for tropical Hibiscus to grow irrespective whether you used the best fertilizer in the world, if the mix is heavy and lacking good drainage. This is mainly because, their roots become squeezed and fail to take in the nutrition in the mix, air circulation is not ensured, fertilizer is not made use of by the roots and therefore tropical Hibiscus fail to thrive. Unfortunately, we understand this with a bitter experience. Therefore, I recommend you to follow the mixture proposed.

Since I have seen the unbelievable flowers of Taner Turt, we have become very enthusiastic to see the flowers of our plants in the New Year. We have now decided to explore the wonder world of the Hibiscus by increasing our family members via obtaining further seeds and woods. This year we hope to share our enthusiasm with you when we observe blossoming of our new hibiscus. Thank you.

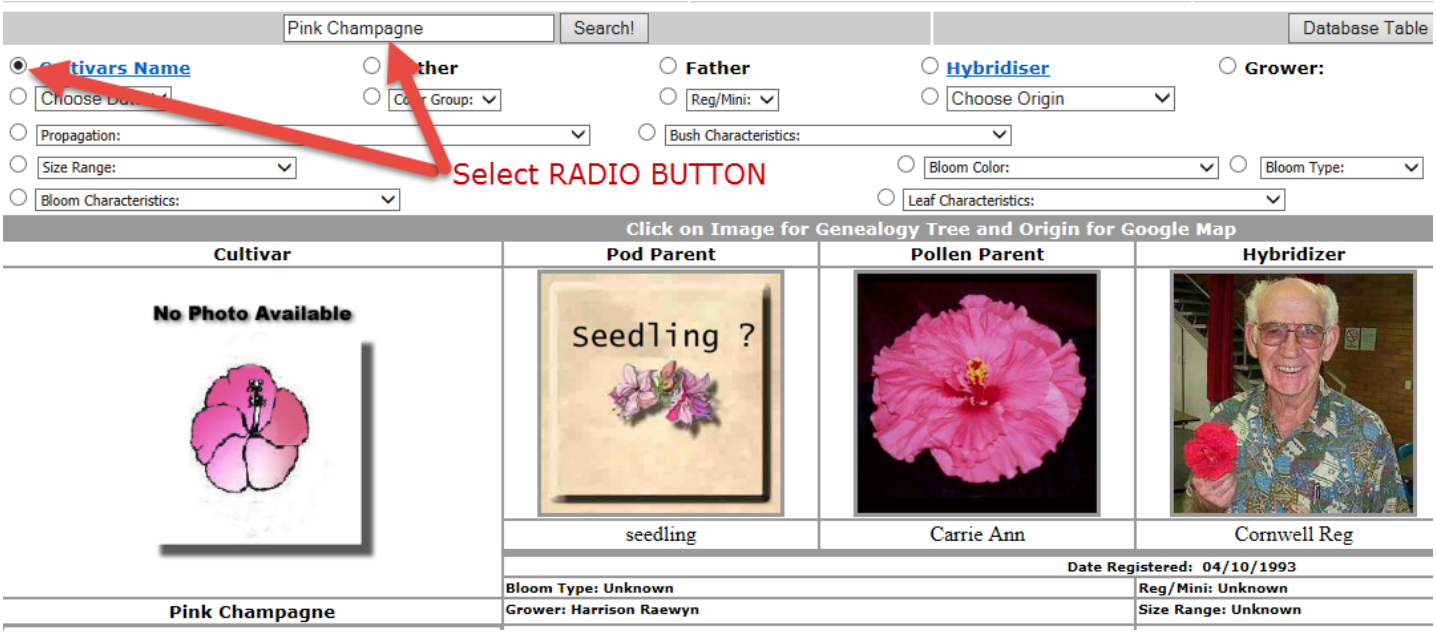
UNDERSTANDING THE DATABASE SEARCH FUNCTIONS

Suppose you wanted to see if the name 'Pink Champagne' had been used as a cultivar name in the past. By going to the search function by clicking on the search button.



When you click on this link you will get a scrollable drop down list of every cultivar in the database which you can scroll to find if the name appears. In the case of Pink Chamagne you will find it in the list (see image on left).

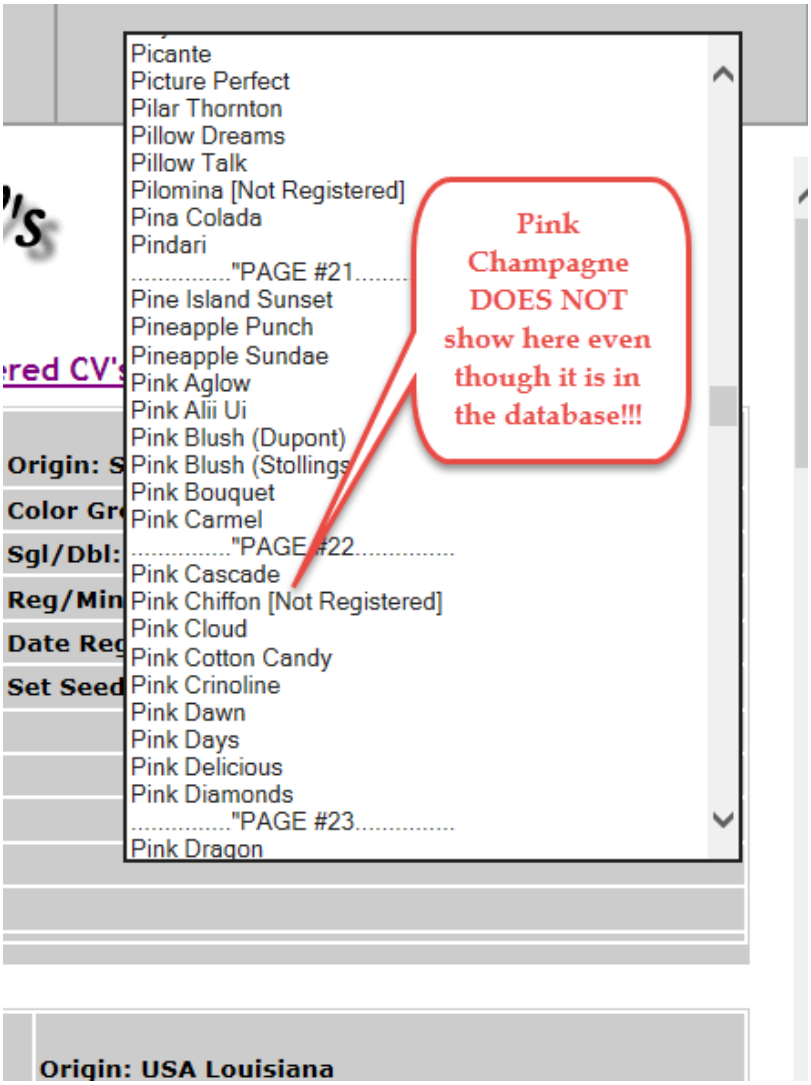
By using the selection below and clicking the search button next to the name field you will get the actual record from the database. Please note that there is no picture of the cultivar 'Pink Champagne'.



Now let us search the database by using the Registered/Non Registration button and selecting the first letter of the name of the cultivar for which you wish to search, in this case "P" for Pink Champagne.

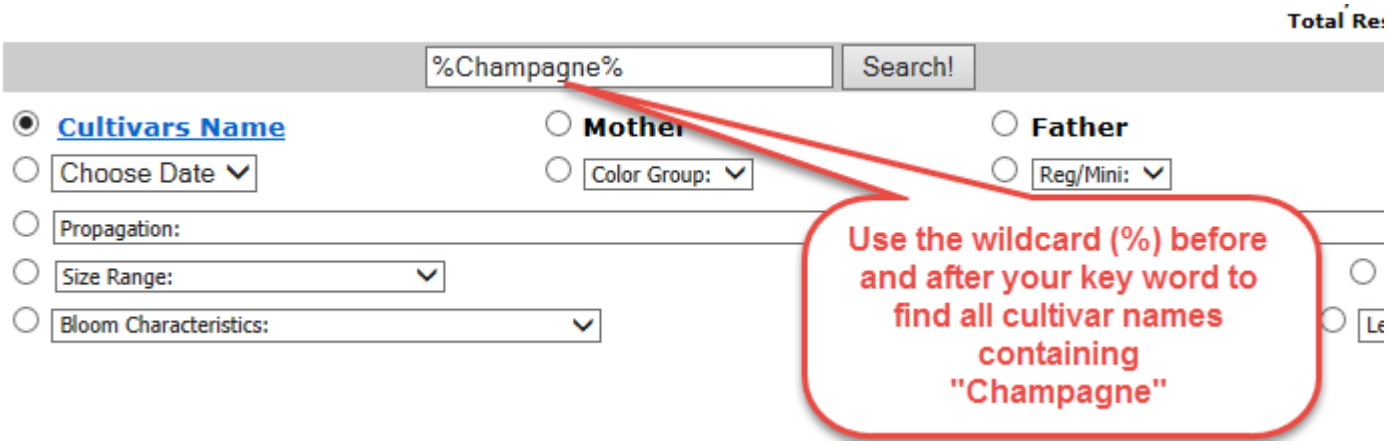
When you scroll through the drop down list of cultivars you will discover that 'Pink Champagne' DOES NOT appear in the list. We know it is in the database from our earlier search but it is not showing here. Why?

The answer is an unusual feature of the database—if there is not a picture associated with the record, then it will not appear in this list EVEN THOUGH IT IS IN THE DATABASE. For this reason, it is important that you search for a cultivar name using both methods in order to ensure it is not overlooked.



However, the search engine has a "tool" of which most people are not aware. By using this symbol—% - which is a wildcard, you have an extremely powerful method of searching the database. When you place it before a word in a search (%Champagne), it will find all cultivars with any word(s) before the search word "Champagne".

Similarly, if you place the wildcard symbol after the search word (Champagne%), the search returns all cultivars with the word "champagne" followed by any other word or phrase. However, the real power is apparent when you place the wildcard symbol before and after your key word (%Champagne%). In this instance your results will be every cultivar name in which the word "Champagne" appears.



If you search as shown above, you will receive a total of eight (8) cultivars currently in the database that contain the word "champagne" somewhere in the name. The above search finds:

Barry's Pink Champagne

Champagne

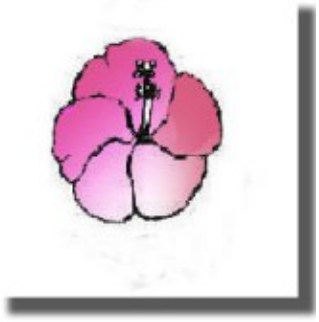
Champagne Blush

Champagne Toast

No Photo Available

Lady Champagne

No Photo Available



Pink Champagne

Taiwan Berry Champagne

Taiwan Orange Champagne

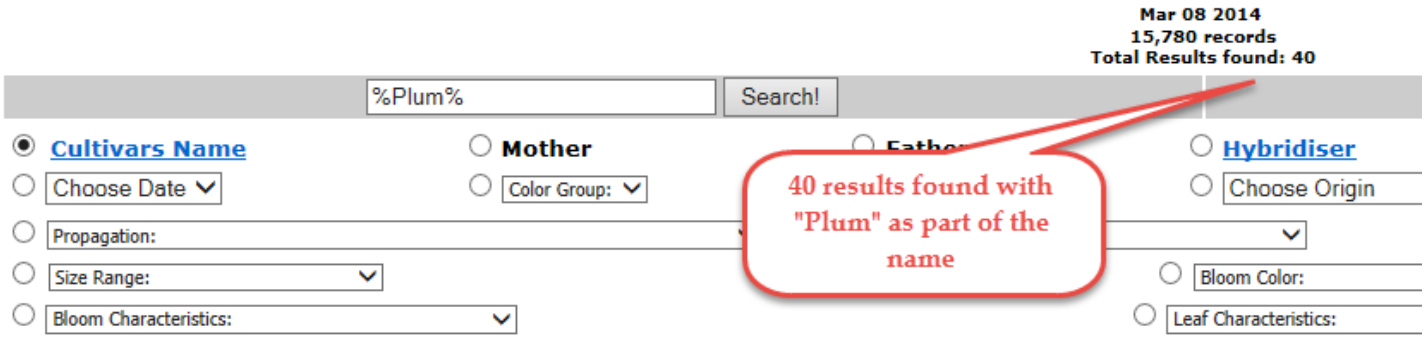
Now we want to check to see if the name we have chosen for our new purple cultivar can be used or not. There are many regulations contained within the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated plants that potentially might apply to the name you choose but the following should be kept in mind at all times.

An ideal name is both easy to spell and pronounce in the various countries in which the cultivar might be distributed. The rules for creating a new name allow you to use or make up any word or words you want but the name will not be allowed if it is likely to cause confusion with an existing name. In short these two rules are the first that must be considered.

1. Make sure your suggested name is unique – check the existing database to ensure uniqueness (see step by step illustrated instructions in this article to ensure that the name is unique).

2. Make sure that your name cannot be confused either in spelling or pronunciation with an existing cultivar.

Suppose we wish to give the name "Plumb 'n' Delicious' to our new cultivar. When we check by using the search function we discover the name has not been used before. However, when we do the following



search using the wildcard (%), we quickly discover that one of the 40 results found is 'Plum Delicious' which applying rule # 2 above would mean that our name 'Plumb 'n' Delicious' would be denied as it could easily be confused with the already registered 'Plum Delicious' .

By using a key word and combining it with the wildcard in our search, we can easily identify if our chosen name is allowable or not. Taking a few minutes to determine the validity of the name is preferable to choosing a name without a proper search and later having it denied by the ICRAR. There are other regulations that also apply and it is a wise practice to familiarize yourself with the basic set of regulations.

A condensed and simply worded outline of some but by no means all of the regulations can be found on our website as shown below or by following this link—http://www.delatorre.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148&Itemid=176 .

The Origins of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

(also known as the Shoe Flower)

By Prejith Sampath

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, one of the founding blocks on which our modern Hibiscus hybrids are built has always been a bit of a mystery. There are too many questions left unanswered. Where does this species originate from? Is it still found in the wild anywhere? Is it a single or a double?

Illustration in Hortus Malabaricus of the single form of hibiscus found in Kerala India

A little research on the net into its antiquity led me to the Hortus Malabaricus, a treatise on the medicinal plants of the erstwhile Malabar region of southern India written by the then Dutch Governor of Malabar, Hendrik Aadrian van Rheede tot Drakenstein.

Hendrik van Rheede had employed several local physicians, artists and translators to write the book. It was compiled over a period of 30 years and it was published in Latin from Amsterdam between 1678-1703. It describes over 700 plants of medicinal importance from the Malabar region which now encompasses the present day state (province) of Kerala in India.

This region is a tropical paradise wedged between the Arabian Sea to the West and the Western Ghats (hills) to the East. The coastal plains are on an average about 40- 50 kilometres wide and are crisscrossed by numerous monsoon-fed rivers originating from the hills. The South-West monsoon between June to September and to a lesser extent the North-East monsoon from October to December drench the windward side of the hills and the adjoining coastal plains keeping the humidity in the region always above 50%. Further, by mid-March soaring temperatures are brought down by convectional summer rains. All these factors ensure that temperatures are always at a comfortable level with year round humidity.

Illustration in Hortus Malabaricus of the double form of hibiscus found in Kerala India

I am from the coastal town of Calicut in Kerala, India and though the climate is ideal for growing hibiscus, a lot of people still grow the old species and hybrids. This I find is not due to the non-availability of the newer hybrids but rather because the former are acclimatized to the local climate and can outlive the newer hybrids because of a robust root system and disease resistance.

A lot of people in the rural areas and a few people in the towns still grow the five-petaled Hibiscus rosa-sinensis to use as a hair conditioner and also for religious purposes. In the distant past, this hibiscus was known as the "shoe flower" because it was used to polish shoes. In rural areas they can be found as hedges where they are used to demarcate ones property.

A few months back someone had randomly posted a picture of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis on the Facebook page of IHS and our friend Ian requested me to write an article on the subject as I come from the region where Hibiscus rosa-sinensis was first described.

Photo of the single form taken by Prejith in Kerala India. Ross Gast (Seedpod 1974-2 p9) considered this to be the same as 'President'

A little more investigation on the internet and I found that Professor Manilal had put in a lot of effort and translated the 12 volumes of the Hortus Malabaricus to English. My next stop was at the Malabar Botanical Garden where they have set up a live Hortus Malabaricus by collecting and growing most of the plants mentioned in van Rheede's work.

The library there has the English translation and I set about comparing the collected specimens of both double and single Hibiscus rosa-sinensis with the excellent drawings in the book. Each plant has an excellent drawing with the name of the plant in Malayalam (local language), Latin, Konkani and Arabic scripts.
The local name of the five-petaled form given in Malayalam is Ain-pariti meaning five-petaled Hibiscus and for the double-petaled form is Schem-pariti meaning red Hibiscus. Over the course of a few hundred years, the locals now refer to all Hibiscus as Chem-pariti. The term Ainpariti is no longer used. It was also interesting to note that the medicinal properties pertaining to both the forms were different.

Photo of the bush of the double form taken by Prejith in Kerala India

Whether or not Hibiscus rosa-sinensis originated from India or China is still in question. For one, the early Malabaris were a vibrant trading community that traded with the Arabs and the Chinese long before the Europeans set foot on Indian soil. So the Chinese could have brought the plant into India from their lands or vice versa.

Another interesting fact is that Hibiscus mutabilis is described in the Hortus Malabaricus as Hina-pariti, a corruption of Cheena-pariti literally translating to the hibiscus from China. So perhaps Hibiscus mutabilis came from China and Hibiscus rosa-sinensis from India?

During my discussion with the botanists at the Malabar

Boanical Garden, there was a hypothesis put forward by one of the senior botanists Dr. Ansari that Hibiscus rosa-sinensis might have actually originated in the Americas since Hummingbirds are found there.

The early Tamils from whose language Malayalam evolved were a seafaring people who had contact with the Mayans evidenced by the similar style of their religious structures and the presence of carvings of elephants in Mayan ruins. For the record, elephants are not native to the Americas.

Closeup photo of the flower of the double form taken by Prejith in Kerala India. These plants from India are widely considered to be the original Hibiscus rosa-sinensis that were used in the earliest modern hybrids

So does this mean that the species originated in the Americas? The answer to all this we may never know. But wherever its origins may be, Hibiscus rosa-sinensis has been a part of the culture of the people of India from time immemorial.

An old statue in Kerala commemorating the commercial trade between India and China that has been ongoing for many hundreds of years

I would like to finish this article by thanking Dr. Madhusoodhanan and Dr. Ansari for letting me access the library at the Malabar Botanical Garden and for stimulating discussion. I would also like to thank botanists Suja and Pavisha for helping me locate the discussed plants from the 12 volumes of the Hortus Malabaricus with ease. Finally, I would like to thank the Indian Hibiscus sisters Pushpa Suresh and Shyamala Madappa for introducing me to this wonderful group of plants and Ian Rabenda for encouraging me to write this article.

Grafting Hibiscus My Way

By Marvin R. (Randy) Cox—Affordable Hibiscus (formerly Tried & True Hibiscus)

Although many hibiscus will grow well on their own roots I prefer to clone wanted varieties by grafting. Grafting to a strong root system can produce a plant more tolerant to disease, as well as enhanced growth and larger blooms. Although there are many types of grafts I will discuss my preference the side graft.

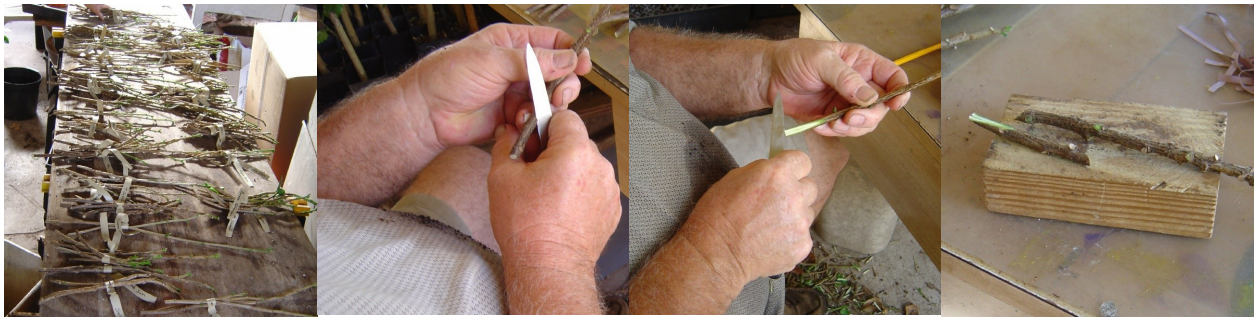
Tools

Grafting tools are very simple, a good sharp knife, alcohol for the knives, bypass pruners, rubber bands, labels and a permanent marker, a wood block for cutting, wax and a melting pot. I prefer a very thin Victorinox knife that can be purchased in the U.S. from A M Leonard Co.

Before any grafting can take place you will have to have a supply of root stock. The two most common root stock used for grafting hibiscus are Albo Lacinatus and Pride of Hankins. I prefer Pride of Hankins because it roots easily and has a very vigorous growth habit. It has a thick cambium layer. It is easier to graft because the wood is not as dense as Albo Lacinatus. The limit of how many grafts I am able to produce is how much root stock Annelle is able to grow.

We cut long canes from stock beds and remove all the leaves. The canes are cut into 6 or 7 inch sticks which Annelle inserts in an Oasis rooting media. They are placed under mist (10 seconds every 16 minutes). New leaves will appear in about two weeks and roots in 4 to 5 weeks. The newly rooted sticks are then potted in a 2 ¼ by 2 ¼ by 5 inch pot and allowed to grow another 4 or 5 weeks until roots appear out the bottom of the pot. The root stock is now ready to graft.

To prepare the root stock for grafting any sprouts are removed leaving only the top most branch which will serve as a nurse branch. The nurse branch will provide nutrition until the new graft is large enough to support the plant.



Branches cut to be grafted onto the root stock (scion wood) are prepared in much the same way. All the leaves are removed except small leaves at the tip being careful not to damage the eye on the stem at the base of the leaf. The scion is prepared by cutting a long wedge at the base. This cut can be done free hand or the cut can be made by laying the branch flat on the wood block and making the cut. After I have the wedge shape cut to the base of the scion I count up the stem about three eyes and cut the scion from the branch. With three eyes most new graft will have several branches.

A shallow cut is now made in the root stock about the same depth as the exposed area on the scion and the scion is inserted. It is not necessary for the scion to be the same diameter as the root stock but care should be taken to align the cambium layer of the root stock and the cambium layer of the scion on one side of the union. This is easily done by making the bark flush on one side of the graft. You should not be able to see light through the union after the scion is inserted. To maintain this union the new graft is wrapped with a rubber band. Mature wood can be wrapped pretty tight, however green tips need to be loosely wrapped to prevent damage. The rubber band will decompose after the graft takes.

Tip for using rubber bands

If you have not used bands before a bit of practice on a pencil is suggested. The root stock should be very well rooted or you will need to learn to hold the stem to prevent twisting off the tender roots. The first wrap around the stem traps the end of the band (figure 1) additional wraps secure the union of the scion and the root stock. I trap the wraps under a finger or thumb to prevent the band from unwrapping if the end slips out of my wrapping hand. (Figure 2) The next to last wrap go over the tip of that finger, the last wrap goes under the finger tip. (Figure 3 & 4) Turn loose of the wrap end. When the finger is pulled out the end of the band will follow and secure the graft.

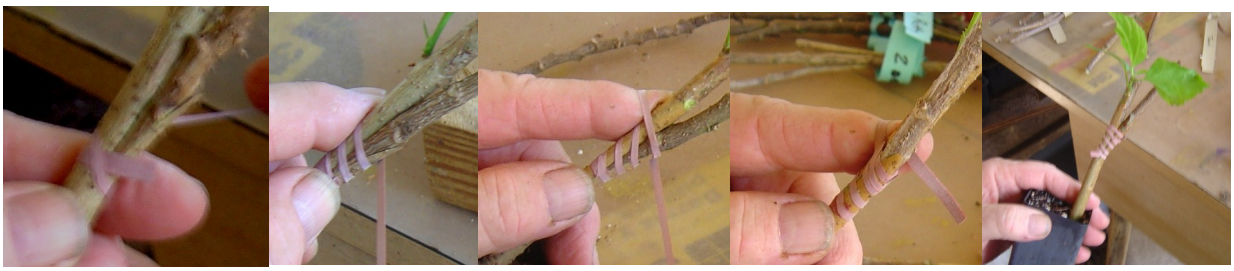


Figure 1 Figure 2 Figure 3 Figure 4 Figure 5

The graft is now ready to be waxed

I use paraffin wax, the same wax your grandmother used for canning. The wax is melted in a small slow cooker, purchased used at a thrift store. I like the wax to be very warm to the touch so that it will flow freely over the graft. The graft union and the tip of the scion should be covered with wax for a water tight seal. The new grafts are now placed under mist to provide high humidity until the scion sprouts new leaves. The purpose of the mist is to prevent the scion from drying out until the graft takes. We are able to graft all year since the mist house is also equip with bottom heat.

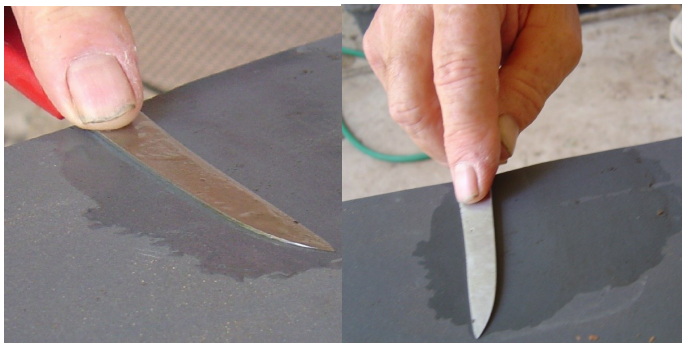
This spring I tried waxing the entire scion. The new grafts were placed directly in the growing area and were watered once day as needed. The experiment was done with mature pencil size wood. The new leaves pushed through the wax and resulted in 85 to 90% good grafts.

Time to remove the nurse branch

I like to allow the new scion leaves to get at least ¾ inch in size before I remove the nurse branch. Clip the stem of the root stock just above the graft. If the nurse branch is removed too early the graft will die. The grafts are first fertilized at this stage. Annelle transplants the finished grafts in 4 1/2 pot using Fafard # 2 (a commercial potting mix, 70% peat, 20% perlite and 10% Vermiculite). They should produce blooms in about three months. Total time graft to bloom 6 to 8 months.

Tip for using the knife

Study the position of my hands below, when cutting the scion wedge the right hand is resting against my chest and most of the cut is made by pulling the branch away with the left hand. When the cut is made in the root stock note that the stem is being held steady with both hands and that the cut is made by action of the wrist giving you total control of the knife



Tip for sharpening grafting knife

If you look closely at a grafting knife you will notice that one side is completely flat. This allows the knife to make a straight flat cut. To sharpen the knives I use a sheet of 400 grit wet/dry sandpaper on a flat surface. A bit of water on the sheet works well. The flat side of the knife is placed flat on the surface and rotated several times. The opposite side has a slight bevel as sharpened. Give the knife a few final strokes on the flat side to remove any burrs.
