



HIBISCUS INTERNATIONAL

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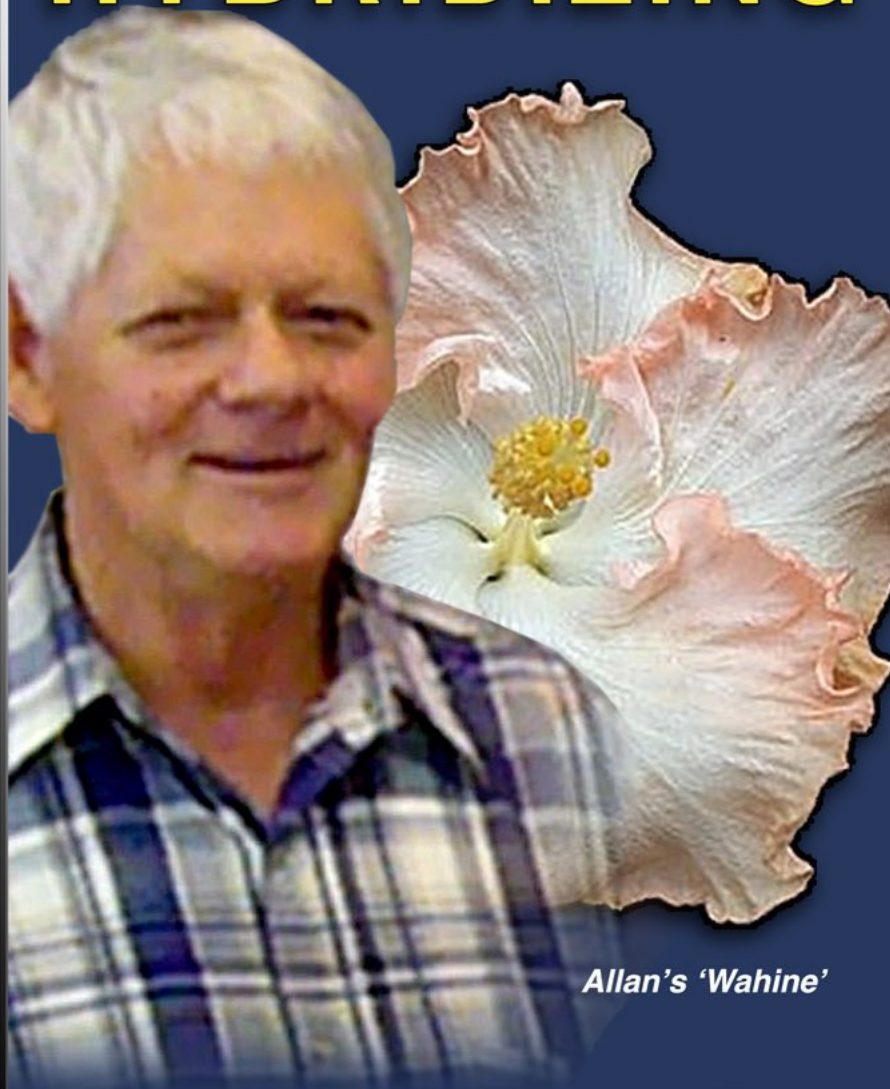


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Celebrating the outstanding work of Allan Little

HYBRIDIZING



Allan's 'Wahine'

DOWN UNDER

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RUSS SCOBEY

The Hibiscus World loses another great Hybridizer



Caramel Kisses
(Oyster Pearl x Tahitian Princess)



Rebekah Linden
(Georgia's Pearl X Jason Blue)



Pink Bouquet
(Pro Legato X Rosalind)



Shelley
(Oyster Pearl x Byron Metts)



Allan and Elaine Little receiving a trophy in 2008

A Hibiscus International
'Thank You!'
to
ALLAN LITTLE

One of Australia's best
hybridizers who has gifted the world
with so many superb cultivars



Wahine
(Harvest Moon x Hot Mustard)



Vanity Fair
(High Voltage X Bali Sunset)



Devil's Eye
(Tigerama X Hot Mustard)



Broderick
(Rosalind X Marjory Brown)



Jim Purdie
(Emerald Isle X Tigerama)

A Master Hybridizer

ALLAN LITTLE

by John Marshall

One of Australia's best hybridizers over the past few years is Allan Little, previously of Boolarong in the Glasshouse Mountains and who now lives in the Brisbane area of Queensland. Allan and his wife, Elaine, have achieved international acclaim for their work with Hibiscus.

Allan became interested in hybridizing shortly after joining the Australian Hibiscus Society in 1995. Since then he has created many new cultivars. The official International Hibiscus Register shows in excess of 150 registered with Allan as hybridizer.

Two of Allan's cultivars (PINK BOUQUET and BRODERICK) have been winners of

the Australian Hibiscus HOTY competition, but probably one of his best creations is DEVIL'S EYE which was grown from seed donated to the International Hibiscus Society Seed Auction, by Sonny Stollings (U.S.A.). Thanks to Sonny's generosity in sending out wood, it is now widely grown around the world.

Allan has produced many thousands of seeds and sold them on eBay throughout the world. One wonders how many of his wonderful blooms Australia will never see, or be able to grow. Sadly for us, due to ill health Allan is no longer involved in hybridizing. He remains, however, one of the most respected Australian Hibiscus Society members.

My Treasures from Oz

by Wendy Williams

When I first stumbled across the astonishing Hibiscus rosa-sinensis hybrids in 2010, I quickly discovered that they were as rare as hen's teeth here in Britain. In fact, the only way of getting my hands on one of these mouth-watering beauties seemed to be to import them from mainland Europe - a costly affair. Another avenue I explored was to grow them from seed and it was this route that eventually led me to Allan Little and his auctions on ebay.



Allan's carefully packaged seeds eventually turned up in my mail box along with a very helpful sheet of planting instructions - essential reading for the newbie I then was. He also included the following note:

*"Dear Wendy,
I hope you have some success with these seeds. I would appreciate getting some feedback on your results especially if you get some really nice blooms. Please keep a record of the seeds' parents as this information is essential if you want to*

Left: AZOUMA (Mountain Mist x Ipswich Centenary) - a lovely 7" 2-day bloom



Above: *SHAH JEHAN'S JEWEL* (Mountain Mist x Ipswich Centenary) - a 2-day bloom which can reach 8.5" on a good day.

So, Allan, how can I ever thank you enough for these wonderful Australian treasures and for introducing me to the magical world of hybridizing. How proud I am to say that there is a bit of Allan Little's Australian magic flourishing here in England's Kentish countryside.

register and name your new cultivar. Although you own the seedling plants outright, if any new cultivars are officially registered with the International Cultivar Registration Authority, you are to be listed as the 'grower' and I am to be listed as the 'hybridizer' on the registration form. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future if you need some help in registering a bloom name."

It all suddenly made sense. The seedlings I was about to grow were unique and precious and it was my responsibility to nurture them on his behalf. What an awesome challenge!



Above: *CAYENNE SPICE* (Who's Ya Daddy x Magic Pudding). Can reach up to a whopping 9".



Left: *HARISSA* (Who's Ya Daddy x Magic Pudding). Long-lasting, floriferous, sometimes spotty, always eye-catching. Blooms up to 8.5" and never fails to delight.

WHY HAS MY SEEDLING GROWN SO TALL?

A recent thread on the Yahoo International Hibiscus Society Group discussed this interesting question

You may be interested to know that Hibiscus seedlings have quite an unusual growth habit, compared to many other horticultural plants.

To some this is all quite obvious, observed by growing the seedlings to flowering.

Horticulturalists would say the following:

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis plant growth is often defined as having prolonged seedling juvenility. This means they will grow in their seedling stage for some time, or to some size before flowering. Then when they flower, the physiology changes and the plant tissues become mature.

If cuttings are taken from these 'now flowering seedlings' they will flower as much smaller plants. They do not need to get to the same size as before.

So, in fact, you have two types of growth. All flowering Hibiscus by definition are being grown on 'mature growth'. They do not show juvenility.

It is a trait observed in some other plants. Notably in flowering woody Lilac (*Syringa* spp). The breeding of these plants is a slow process which takes many years. Often with seedlings becoming huge before they flower. Flowering, like Hibiscus, is often on the terminal shoots at the top of the shrub.

For Hibiscus, it does mean that flowering can be frustratingly slow. Often with the need to grow a seedling large before it flowers. It is why there can be some advantages of simply letting the terminal shoot develop as quickly and as large as possible.

Hope this is of some interest as an explanation why we need to grow our seedlings into big plants before they flower.

by Alan Winthrop (UK)



**Pro Legato x Georgia's Pearl
The first bloom!**

Further comment from Dick Johnson ...

Although I have never tried it, I've seen it in print that an unbloomed seedling scion grafted onto root stock will speed up first blooms, i.e., the grafted plant blooms before the original seedling. In one respect this would seem counter to what you have said, i.e., immature grafted scion wood reaching maturity first. On the other hand the root stock would likely be from mature plants, but normally it is thought [some exceptions] that the root stock does not affect the scion, or at least the flower it produces.

Another interesting aspect of seedlings is that they have a tap root while cloned plants [marcotte, cutting or grafted] have diffuse roots. They also often [but not always] have very changed growth habits, frequently shorter and more bushy than the seedling plant.

I have had some interesting observations lately, as I gave a lot of wood to a local propagator who grafts all his plants. He has let me pick from those the ones I would like back. I have found several to be as above, i.e., shorter, bushier, larger bloomed and even more floriferous. However, I don't know if this is due to grafting onto a root stock with robust root system or if the cultural conditions account for some of this, i.e., the latter two characteristics of bloom size and floriferousness. I do know that I have found some cutting grown plants to be inferior to the grafted plant, Grand Hyatt, being an example. However,



this was based on just one cutting grown plant which flowered rarely and grew very slowly by comparison to the same variety grown as a grafted plant.

Because of these experiences, I'm becoming more prone to prefer my seedlings grafted onto root stock where they seem to shine by comparison to the original seedling bush. Of course there are exceptions as I have another, Tahitian Orange Rainbow, that grows very well as a cutting.



The American Hibiscus Society once, possibly still does, recommend that Hibiscus be grafted, but the trend in the last decade has been to propagate plants that grow well on their own root. Even some of the former pro-graft propagators have changed to propagating on their own root, which is obviously a lot easier. Virtually all mass producers grow exclusively from varieties that propagate at nearly 100% as cuttings.

Otherwise, I have to say my observations confirm what you have explained about the changes in the bush form of a seedling once it matures. I gave a number of seedlings to a friend which were typical, i.e., essentially vertical with few branches. He planted them in the ground and once they started to bloom they branched out well on their own without being pruned. I have another friend who breeds for mass production and the criteria for same is to select seedlings which branch early, typically producing several new branches per pinch or prune, and which above all mature rapidly. They select for bright, mostly mono or bicolored flowers

of small to medium size. It seems most of the flowers that Hibiscus enthusiasts or collectors seem to prefer are shunned by mass propagators, i.e., browns, greens, bluish, spotted, etc. Even the leaf has to correspond to a set standard.

As to root stocks, I used to use *H. Albo Lacinatus*, but found that *H. Archerii* rooted easier. However, I have found some varieties very difficult to graft onto *H. Archerii*, i.e., *Midnight Frolic*. I have also found that *H. Archerii* root stock diameter does in some cases not keep up with the diameter of the scion growth, same for *H. Schizopetalus*. This doesn't seem to do the plant any harm, but it is odd to see a thinner root stock with a larger diameter scion.



Some root stocks are also reported to have incompatibilities with some scions. I've seen *Brilliant* mentioned in this regard. I may have a case of this [or possibly a virus] with *Secret Mission* grafted onto *H. Archerii*. The root stock had normal foliage but the grafted *Secret Mission* has small abnormal foliage. I may graft it onto *H. Albo Lacinatus* to see if the foliage changes. If it does it is likely to be due to incompatibility and, if not, it may be a virus or something in the scion wood itself. Unrelated but Interesting, Coline Keena in Australia, has reported that *H. arnottianus* is cold tolerant, which seems strange for a Hawaiian endemic [the genes of which are in most modern hybrids due to early Hawaiian hybridizing], although it gets cold but not freezing at the higher altitudes where it grows. She has a few trees of this one, and it routinely endures -5C temperatures where she lives.

We are sad to announce the recent passing of Russ Scobey, a major American hybridizer. Russ gave us such beauties as *Dark Charm*, *Fantasy Charm*, *June's Dragon* and the much loved *High Voltage*. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time.



High Voltage

Like Wow

Dark Charm

June's Dragon

Fantasy Charm

WHAT WORKS FOR ME

ROOTING TROPICAL HIBISCUS

By Wendy Cheney



The first time I rooted cuttings I used this Biomix product. Now I use the same soil that I plant my Hibiscus in and I root all hybrid Hibiscus this way.

(Note - Wendy lives in Brazil where this Biomix product is available. It consists of milled and composted pine bark, vermiculite and Biomix formula compost. It also contains both macro and micro nutrients. The PH value is 6.2)

- 1 - Water the soil to be used.
- 2 - Make holes 2 cm deep and wait for all the excess water to drain out (10 minutes).
- 3 - Cut the green (not woody) Hibiscus tips and trim the leaves, as shown in the photo.





4 - Cut the ends diagonally. If you do not have rooting hormone you can place the scion directly into the soil. If you do have rooting hormone, dip the cut ends. The first time I used 'Hormodin', now I do not bother.



5 - Put the ends of the stems into the holes you have prepared.



Here is the finished work - a pot containing several cuttings. It should not be necessary to water the plant for two days.

Keep the soil moist and provide plenty of sunshine - but never direct sun.





The Weather is everything! The more heat there is, the faster rooting takes place. Here in Brazil in summer the temperatures reach 40°-50°C. In autumn 25°-35°C. In winter 15°-25°C.

The problem for me is the salt laden wind because I live near the beach.

Spring temperatures are 20°-35°C which is very good and not too hot. In this climate rooting works well in all seasons.



WHAT WORKS FOR ME

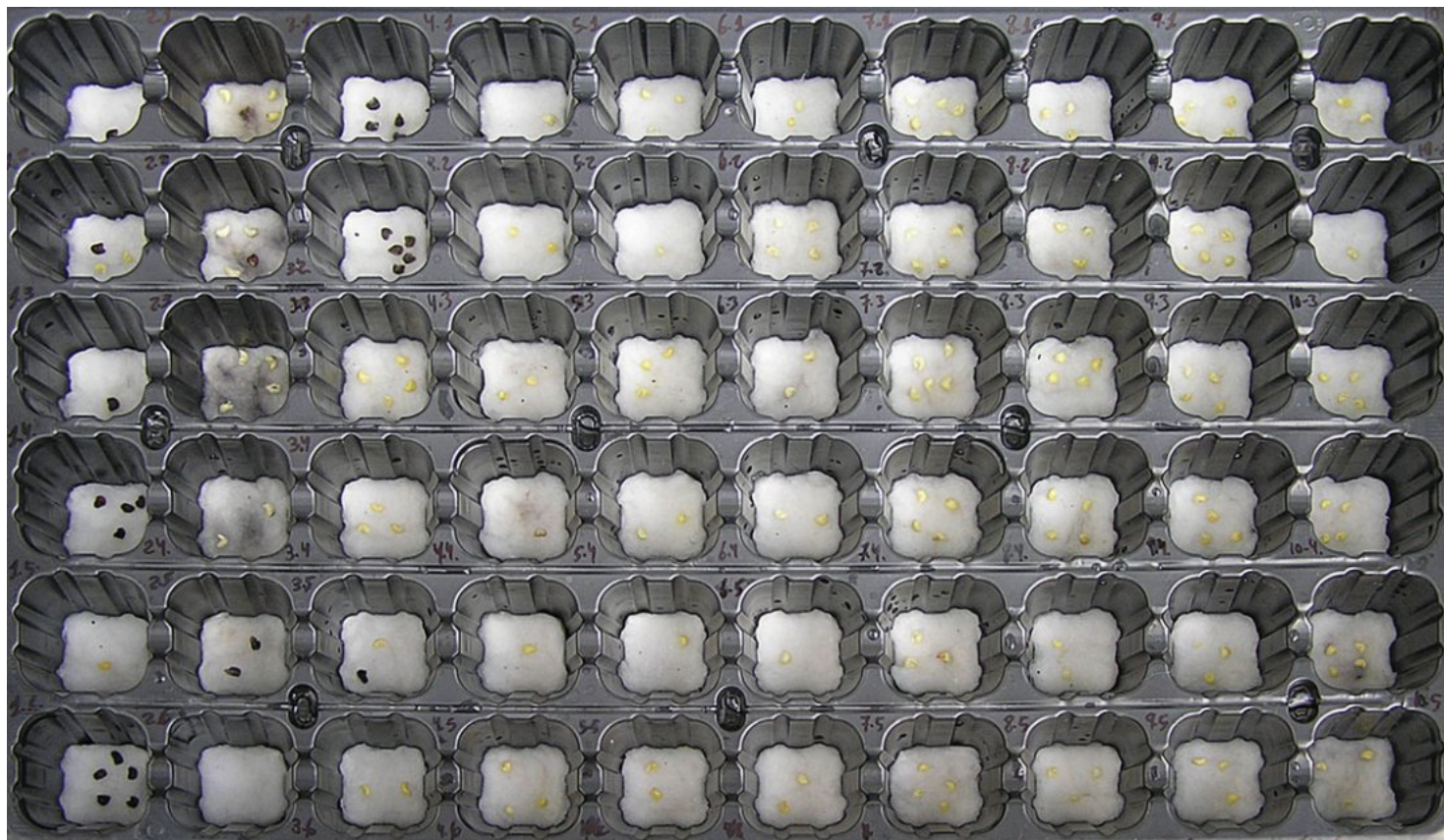
HOW I GERMINATE SEEDS

By Diego J. Dominguez

I live in the south of Spain in a mountainous area and I began to grow tropical Hibiscus in 2012. In my area it is not easy to grow tropical Hibiscus, so I need to help them to germinate.

I am going to share the method I use to grow seeds and cuttings.

This is the best method for those who grow just a few seeds, but it is also good for those who grow many seeds, too, because you can see the progress of the seeds and if something is wrong, you can solve it.



- 1 - I use a seed tray and I put cotton wool into each cell
- 2 - Over the cotton wool I put a piece of paper napkin (kitchen paper)
- 3 - I moisten the cotton wool and the paper napkin with water containing a few drops of hydrogen peroxide
- 4 - I scarify (nick) the seeds (only a small cut in the seed coat without damaging the embryo)
- 5 - I place the scarified seeds on the paper napkins. I put four seeds into each cell, one in every corner with the part that is scarified in contact with the moist paper napkin).



- 6 - I put another piece of paper napkin over the seeds and moisten this paper napkin too.
- 7 - I put the seed tray into a plastic gravel tray and cover with plastic wrap to keep moisture in. Seeds only need moisture and warmth in this situation. I check the condition of the seeds every day to avoid fungus or other problems.
- 8 - After two days, I remove the external seed coat

(this is the most delicate moment). You need to do it without damaging the embryo using your fingernails for example.

- 9 - Then I put the embryo (with the seed coat removed) into the moist paper napkin again (but I remove the old paper napkin and I put another clean one under the seeds and also on top of the seeds).
- 10 - You need to keep the cotton wool and the paper napkin always moist with water and hydrogen peroxide, but not waterlogged.
- 11 - You can see how the seeds grow and how the roots grow (I use a small brush to moisten the seeds in order to avoid damaging them).





12 - When the seed leaves are green and a nice root has developed, you can put the seedling into soil in a seed tray (this time one seed in each hole).





13 - You need to put the seedling into soil before it grows too big and the root reaches the cotton wool (because the root can become entangled in the cotton wool fibres).





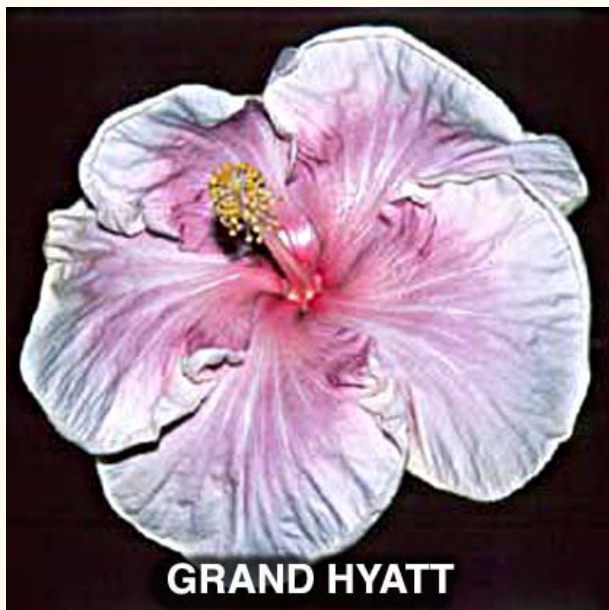
HIBISCUS BY DESIGN

Excerpt from an unpublished manuscript *Hibiscus Magic*, © 2005 by Richard Johnson
Photos: various authors from the International Hibiscus Society database

In hybridizing there are at least two basic approaches. One is to cross most everything available and select from the results what one wants. The other is to have some basic goals and, using the knowledge that is available, create a hibiscus by design. This basically involves developing knowledge of what characteristic might be passed on by certain hybrids or those in ones collections – the latter requiring experience based on good record keeping. Below is a starting point and guide to deriving certain characteristics by increasing the design possibilities and minimizing having to rely on pure chance combinations.

Double Makers:

Most any double crossed with another double will produce a good number of progeny that are doubles. Rosalind is a famous parent and a good one from which to get both singles and doubles. It additionally tends to produce progeny with blooms in sunset tones and with good bushes.



White Rim Makers:

Byron Metts and Grand Hyatt, often produce progeny with white rims. The former often produces mostly white blooms with hues of pink, while the latter often produce hues in the pink/lavender/gray spectrum.

Dark Eye Makers:

Herm Geller will often pass on a large dark eye as well as a number of brown progeny. Depending upon the other parent it can produce different colors and interesting color variations often with fancy form like ruffles and tufts.





White Eye Makers:

Hot Paprika, The Path on occasion pass on white eyes to their progeny.



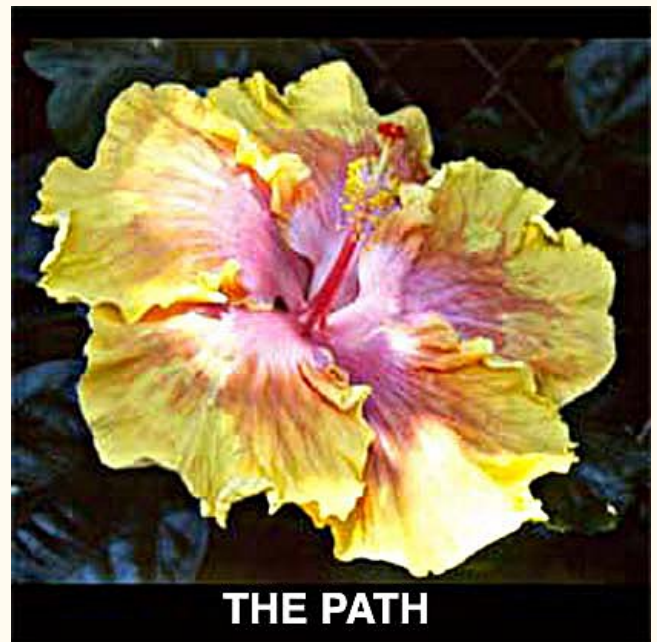
Exotic Eye Zone Makers:

Jazz, Lunar Dust, Ruby N Pearl are just a few that can produce exotic or metallic looking eye zones.



Vein and Spiral Pattern Makers:

Oliver, Georgia's Pearl and Dragon's Breath often produce progeny with veins in varying degrees, and the latter two often with a spiraled pattern.



Spot and Splash Makers:

Critical Mass, Sun Shower and The Path are among a number of parents that often pass splashed and spotted patterns to their progeny.

Blue/Brown Makers:

There seems to be a relationship between the two, i.e., browns will often produce blue spectrum progeny and visa versa, blue spectrum plants can produce brown spectrum progeny. However, crosses of the same color are more likely to produce progeny with colors in the same spectrum.

White Makers:

White although often thought of as the absence of color is actually quite the opposite, i.e., the presence of all colors. Hence, white tends to dominate in their progeny, but often with blending and, of course, as always with a good deal of exceptions. Crossing any two whites is a good method for getting other whites.

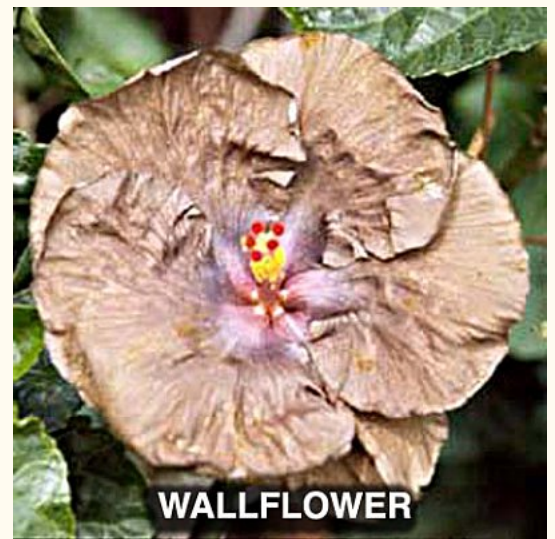


Long Bloom Duration Makers:

Certain varieties, tend to have blooms that last more than a day. This is a trait often passed on to progeny. Parents notable for passing on this trait are Fourth Of July, Melody Morace and Santana.

Own Root Growers:

The ability of a variety to grow well on its own root or the necessity to be grafted, are traits that tend to get passed on to offspring, as always with a liberal amount of exceptions. Most garden varieties root and grow well on their own root. Wallflower, a more modern variety, is a good own root grower and many of its offspring such as Georgia's Pearl are as well. Remember the ability of hibiscus hybrids to grow on their own roots is a relative thing. Some will grow on their own root with a high percentage of cuttings growing successfully, while others may only produce a few successful plants from many trials. Too, even though a plant will initiate roots on its own, doesn't mean that it will perform optimally on them. Some just persist without producing up to their potential, i.e., the potential they might attain if grafted onto stronger root stock.



Good Bush Makers:

Rosalind and Romeo are two that are noted as often producing progeny with good bushes.

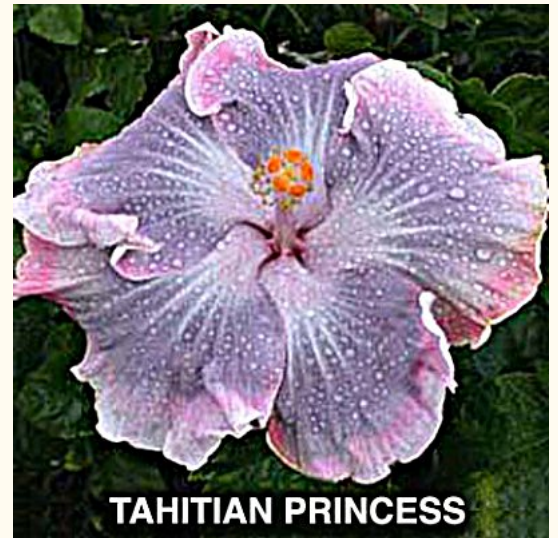


Multicolor Makers:

Romeo, Fifth Dimension and its progeny often produce multiple colors in their offspring, while Fifth Dimension can also produce a lot of light pastels with varying color hues.

Dominant Color Makers:

Cheo, Midnight Blue, Silver Memories, Tamibon, Twilight Glow, Tylene often produce progeny with similar colors. This can be used to ones advantage by crossing with parents that might introduce a interesting variation to the basic them. A good example is Tahitian Princess, which has the white rim and pink/lavender hue of Grand Hyatt overlaid on the basic theme of Silver Memories.



Color Shift Makers:

Fifth Dimension progeny generally exhibit color change or fade, sometimes gracefully as in Fifth Dimension and sometimes not.

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