



Hibiscus International

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Tahitian Flamingo



Richard Johnson



Tahitian Topaz

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hi Hibiscus Friends:

Well! my two year term as IHS President is coming to a close. I feel comfortable in that most all of the things I had hoped to accomplish have been completed or should be by the time the new President takes over with a new Board Of Directors mid 2010. Those accomplishments include:

1) Having gotten Hibiscus International back on track after a couple of years of not having been done. I applaud Jim Purdie for having done an excellent job since he has taken over the post of H.I. editor. He is always on time and has include a diverse amount of material that should be of interest to everyone, be they beginners, advanced hobbyists or even professionals.

2) We have resumed the IHS Auctions, again after several years of its having been neglected. Kes Winward has been doing an excellent job of setting the auctions up on eBay, with the contributions of seed from numerous persons. It has become our principal source of revenue and now allows us to support things we could not afford in the past.

3) Since Joseph Dimino has for years been suffering severe health problems, he has not been able to continue as the IHS Nomenclature Officer. That post has been taken over by Ian Rabenda, who again has been doing a very good job of taking over where Joseph left off. We are thankful to both, especially Joseph for the years of development he has undertaken on the IHS web site, particularly the section "The Global Hibiscus Library". Included in TGHL was the development of the IHS online nomenclature system in both English and French. This system remains one of the easiest and most rapid means of registering new cvs, under the auspices of the Australian Hibiscus Society as the ICRA (International Cultivar Registration Authority) and more specifically headed by Brian Cheers as the ICR (International Cultivar Registrar) for hibiscus.

4) Our web site maintenance became a critical problem in the absence of Joseph and had remained essentially unsolved. This work is now spread across several persons, under Ian Rabenda as the chairman of the Web Site committee forum. Jim Purdie does all the layout work for the TPC (Trimestral Photo Competitions) and the SOTY/HOTY program. Dave Cheney has taken on updating of the home page, Kes Winward is uploading H.I. and maintaining the index. We still have a number of updates to complete that should be done by time my term is finished.

5) The IHS Seed Bank was reorganized toward the end of my predecessors' term, and was finalized when I took over. It is now running smoothly with Peter Moll serving as the IHS Seed Bank officer. For those interested in contributing seed to the IHS Seed Bank or in receiving seed, please contact Peter at pelimo01@yahoo.com.br

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6) We are currently undertaking an update of the statutes, and members have been invited to provide their input. The revisions will be presented to the BOD for the approval shortly and eventually to you the members to vote on.

7) The Election committee has been formed in a timely manner and is headed by Kes Winward assisted by Clay McGee. For those wishing to participate or wanting to nominate others in the formation of the new IHS Board Of Directors, Please contact them at <keswin@wightman.ca> or <vocalcoach_esq@yahoo.com>.

Of course all of the above requires the assistance of others, not the least of which has been a very responsive Board Of Directors. With a few exceptions, they have promptly responded to all propositions, been active in providing their input, and have voted to reach a consensus on the issues at hand.

No civic organization can exist or make progress without the active participation of the few, i.e., those that provide their time gratis on the IHS BOD, Committee forums, and facilitate our various programs), and the overall support of the many, i.e. our membership which at this writing is more than 800 strong between the English and Spanish/Portuguese member forums. If we include our affiliates, we are possibly the largest hibiscus organization on the planet. I extend a heart felt thanks to all that have helped make the IHS what it is today.

Happy Hibiscus Growing To All

Dick Johnson Tahiti

<http://www.hibiscus-of-tahiti.com>

EDITORS REPORT

My thanks to Bob Rivers-Smith for his article on how he grows hibiscus at his place in New Zealand and for his photos of the blooms and gardens which he looks after at his house. I hope his advice is of some use to you in growing better blooms at your place where ever you may be in this wide world.

Also there are other great articles from Ursula of Germany and Dick Johnson of Tahiti and Brian Kerr in Australia, and 4 pages of beautiful bloom photos.

The next issue is due out in July 2010 and will contain an article from Esteban McGrath from South America and it will interesting to see how he grows our hibiscus at his place.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Hibiscus International —

Kind Regards,

Jim Purdie [Editor]

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GROWING HIBISCUS IN NEW ZEALAND

Article by Bob Rivers-Smith

What follows is a record of my attempt to grow hibiscus in Green Bay, West Auckland. The first hibiscus I bought succumbed to root and collar rot. Looking for the cause started my challenge to grow these tropical plants here in Green Bay. A library search revealed that a D.J. Lynch had written a thesis entitled "Culture of Hawaiian and Fijian hybrids of Hibiscus" in the Auckland area for his Diploma in Horticulture in 1981. I ordered a copy from my local library but on receipt found that I could only read it and was not permitted to borrow it or photocopy any of it. It was quite interesting in that because of the undulating country side there were huge differences in temperature and specific conditions applied to different parts of the Auckland Region. Thus started my research and trials to find the right conditions for my area which had not featured in the thesis "Research and Answers". In looking at ways hibiscus were being grown I decided to concentrate on growing hibiscus that would grow on their own roots. Plants depend on their environment for healthy growth and development. I noticed several plants were growing in yards around the area so decided I had the right environment so needed to look at the other requirements such as soil conditions, nutrients and moisture etc needed to produce healthy roots to let them look after the plants. My soil was a heavy yellow clay so my first step was to produce the right soil by raising the beds rotary hoeing the soil and incorporating gypsum, compost, pine bark and sand. The benefit of gypsum cannot be over emphasised. It loosens the soil, aerates it, provides nutrition and is PH neutral. Further information can be found at www.gypsum.nz. I received valuable advice from Patrice Dreckmann on collar and root rot and this was the reason I started using pine bark in the soil and using it as a mulch. His reports were published by the AmHS With my focus on growing hibiscus on their own roots I decided to start my seedlings in pots standing in trays of water to ensure they could survive the wet winter conditions.

Some Observations and Growing Tips——

The leaves of plants provide the first signs that there is a root problem.eg Soils and mixtures that are too wet [in pots and in ground] and plants that are root bound in pots. I make sure that I check all my pots and if they are root bound repot in early autumn so that the plants establish before winter. To allow the roots to perform their function you have to give them the tools by mulching and fertilising.

T h e B e n e f i t s o f M u l c h i n g I n c l u d e ——

[a] Conserves moisture and reduces fluctuations between wet & dry

[b] Encourages friendly bacteria that breaks down the fertiliser components and thus making them available to the roots.

[c] Prevents weeds that rob the plants of moisture and food.

d] Helps withstand minor frosts .I have found pine bark the best and apply it twice a year being careful to keep it away from the trunk.

Fertilising——

Hibiscus are very hungry when it come to fertiliser so I feed them little and often with a fertiliser with a N.P.K. rating of N.12 P.5.2 K 15 with minors of Mg 1.6 S 8 Ca 2.5 Generally I find that this results in a low PH so to raise the level to between 6 and 6.5 I give the plants a side dressing of lime. Each spring I give the plants a dressing used by Jim Purdie made up of 5 buckets of compost, 1/2 a bucket of sheep pellets, 2 handfuls of sulphate of potash and 1/2 a 2litre ice cream container of blood and bone . During winter I dress my beds with gypsum. This breaks down the compost and pine bark mulch and helps the plant survive the winter. Early spring I mulch with pine bark to retain the moisture during summer.

Pruning——

Here in New Zealand most growers recommend that pruning be withheld until spring to avoid frost damage to the new growth. In my experience I have found that by pruning late winter the new growth starts earlier in spring and hence blooming starts earlier. I prune one side of the plant first and when new blooms open I prune the other side. This gives me a longer flowering season.

Seed Raising ———

I germinate all my seeds using a heat box I have made out of plywood lined with galvanised sheet metal. Heat is provided by 2x 40 watt bulbs installed at the bottom of the inside. A galvanised sheet tray large enough to hold 3 mini propagators is placed on top. As a result of early root rot problems I pot up the seedlings and place them in trays of water in poly houses. This is to ensure that those that survive are able to withstand the wet conditions when they are eventually planted in the ground .

Favourites———

Everyone asks me to name a favourite, I have no specific favourite however the following are special———

- [a] Kel's Choice, [My late wife 's pick]
- [b] Salota [A friend's daughter pick].
- [c] Isa Bella [Grand Daughter of an old friend who took a liking to it.
- [d] Judy Pye [to recognize her efforts in organizing the Suva Grammar ex pupils picnic for over 10 years.

Bob Rivers-Smith



Judy Pye



Matai Multi Blooms on its bush



Back Garden



Front Garden



Lavender Lady



Vanda Orchid growing in Bob's Garden



Kel's Choice [Lavender Lady X Mollie Cummings]



Isa Bella [Fifth Dimension X Unk.]



New Seedlings



Salota [Anvil Sparks X Kiwi Glow]

Hibiscus International



Isa Bella Showing more of the Plant

ARTICLE BY URSULA LENGDOBLER ON HER FERTILIZING PROCEDURE IN GERMANY

Here is how my hibiscus (all in pots) get fertilized:

From March (start of new growth) till August I give them double strength with every watering a fertilizer with 14-7-14 with minors, once a week they get a foliate feeding with a fertilizer 4-16-12 (with minors). August/ September they get double strength fertilizer with every watering with 12-5-24 plus minors. This I found let them get ready for the colder temperatures and the young growth is hardening. The plants with buds get an extra foliate feeding with KNO₃ once or twice a week. In October they get fertilized once a week, normal strength with a 6-6-6 plus minors, only the plants with buds get twice a week this fertilizer. November/December only once per fortnight. In January/February once a week again. The seedlings get fertilized as soon as they have their second pair of true leaves with 14-7-14 together Superthrive with every watering. They as well get foliate feedings with a 4-16-12 fertilizer. From October till March they get once a fortnight a 6-6-6 fertilizer. I have all my plants in pots, they are in the heated conservatory and on my sills from end of September till mid May, they are outside in the garden beds and along the conservatory.

I don't use the Osmocote fertilizer due to the fact that it needs higher temperatures to break up and be of use for the plants. That's very seldom in my climate (hardly a week with real heat, means 28°C) and therefore I rather use the other fertilizers. As we very often have a rainy period of a few days they get also washed nicely free of the salt up build from the fertilizing. I hope this helps warm regards.

Ursula

www.hibiscusweb.de

THOUGHTS ON CHOOSING PLANTS TO KEEP

Written by Richard Johnson

For me the selection process is a balance between "gut" appreciation and analytical evaluation. But in the end, it is a very slippery yard stick that I use to measure the worth of a given seedling. On one hand we have the ideal, i.e. excellent form, substance, bloom orientation on the bush, floriferousness, pest and stress tolerance, the bush itself including form, foliage, growth rate, etc., etc. On the other hand, very few, indeed, have all the desirable characteristics so it is a matter of selecting a favorable compromise that in the overall consideration makes the seedling under consideration of value.

Moreover, there are different reasons for considering a plant a potential keeper. I might do so for the specific characteristics of a given seedling, i.e., has the potential to be either unique or if similar to something already in existence potentially better in some major aspect. I may consider a seedling a potential keeper as a breeder, meaning I believe it has the genetic potential to pass on a characteristics in which I'm interested, in spite some failing. Hence, breeders are evaluated by a different standard. I may keep one even if I know it to be similar to and not as good as something like it, simply because I cannot get the more desirable one.

With few exceptions, most of my evaluations are done on pot grown original, i.e., unpropagated, seedlings. Contrary to comments by some, my growing conditions are not ideal, i.e. plants are grown unprotected in pots in full tropical sun. Being grown on the roof of my house on the side of a mountain, they are exposed to high velocity winds. They are too hot and dry on sunny days, but conversely must survive weeks on end of saturated potting mix from torrential rains. This stress translates into pest and disease problems. The intense sun fades all but the most colorfast cvs and seedlings. Moreover, I have far too many plants to grow each to perfection. Accordingly, I simply cannot, i.e. am not set up to, do proper trialing, which in my experience, as per the below, has limitations and is not gospel but just an additional guide to plant performance.

For example, I've come to find from others growing many of my seedlings elsewhere that what I or the hybridizer observes is not written in stone. This is an aspect most do not take into consideration. I can find a seedling that performs marvelously in the majority of the important characteristics with only minor short comings, but when grown elsewhere what I have observed is not necessarily the case. This works equally as much in reverse, i.e. I can have a seedling with a major flaw, e.g., opens poorly for me, while elsewhere this is not the case. Most often it is a blend of the two, i.e., there are cases where some aspects are worse while others improve. An example is T. Prince. The seedling bush is nice, the flowers are medium to large size, have good substance, are upward facing and the bloom has good color contrast, but its only an average bloomer.

However, when propagated the flowers are larger causing them to face more lateral, are somewhat thinner in substance and paler in color, but can be much more floriferous than the original seedling bush.

Hence, the reason I refer to most all my seedlings as potential keepers for I only get an approximation of their potential, mostly based on the flower and seedling bush, so they remain to earn their worth through the test of time as to how they perform for others. For all of these reasons, I tend to be more tolerant of some short comings, knowing from past experience, they many may not exist under different growing conditions.

Most import for me is the attractiveness of the bloom. I tend to like complex flowers with multi colors, accessory features like interesting eye zones, veins, spotting or splashing, ruffling and tufting, etc. Also of considerable importance to me is bloom form and presentation on the bush. If they have those basics, yes I may keep a shy bloomer, again believing what I observe in this respect is not necessary going to be representative of its performance as a propagated plant elsewhere. I may keep one with less than an ideal bush, since I know my seedling bushes may not be representative of propagated plants.

So in the end, it comes down to what I said in the beginning, i.e., a balance between a "gut" feeling for the plant and a analytical analysis of its characteristics. I should add that the "gut" feeling includes some personal preferences, i.e., the vast majority of what I consider to be potential keepers are larger flowers 7" and above, or occasionally mini's. Percentage wise, I keep very few in the range of 5 to 7" that I consider potential keepers, simply because I find them less appealing. Remember there is no justifying personal taste, i.e., we like what we like. I normally won't give them a name (some exceptions with unknown parentage so as to have a handle to refer to them by) unless they please me, as above, and prove to have the potential to fair favorably with what is being offered to growers.

Happy Hibiscus Growing to All,

Dick Johnson, Tahiti.

<http://www.hibiscus-of-tahiti.com>

(Note from Dick: with the passage of time our preference tend to change, and in regards to the above article, I have to say that I am now keeping and registering some smaller seedlings. However, I would like them better if they were larger.)

ANSWER FROM BRIAN KERR RE - RICHARD JOHNSON'S ARTICLE

Good Morning Richard and Friends, Thank you for such an excellent read. Your perspective looks to me to be a realistic approach to getting maximum enjoyment out of the queen of the flowers.

To have a gut experience, use evaluation standards and combine this with each seedling's genetic breeding potential, seems to be an realistic yard stick to use as a guide to know which ones to select.

You know, I've never considered how a seedling could perform so differently in someone else's environment, ie improve or show undesirable traits. When differences in performance were talked about, it was generally been put down to cultural conditions or the piece of wood itself was either poor or must have been a good piece. However, given your experiences it would seem reasonable to say that many factors could be contributing to varied performance and that a new seedlings performance should never be discounted or relied upon as the true general norm that most would achieve. I must admit I do recall experiences with Lady Cilento where I once had a grafted plant that just grew to well and never bloomed enough, but when it died and I replaced it with a cutting grown one, it grew with less vigour and bloomed much more, so with that in mind, when LC was released as a mostly grafted variety, no wonder people said that it was a poor bloomer.

I agree compromise is needed and that beauty and potential is in eye of beholder ... and hibiscus have much potential on offer.

Thank you for enlightening us and I think I see why you derive so much ongoing pleasure and motivation out of your hibiscus.

Cheers, Brian Kerr.

SOME OF RICHARD JOHNSON'S BLOOMS



Tahitian Purple Galaxy [8 inches]



Tahitian Lavender Ice [7.5 inches]



Tahitian Golden Brown [9 inches]



Tahitian Lilac Queen X Tahitian Queen [8 inches]



Tahitian Hanatea [8 inches]



Chantal Johnson X Susan Schlueter [8 inches]

SOME BLOOMS FROM JIM & RUTH PURDIE



Akane



Barbara Glasgow



Gloria Kathleen



Sue



Jennifer Utz



Lucy Margaret

Winners TPC 2010-1



**Winner Single Night Runner with 52 votes
Entered by Martin Sembries**



**Second Place, Miniature Early American 36
votes Entered by Beth Jordan**



**Third Place, Multi Bloom Creole Belle 18 votes
Entered by Richard Johnson**



**Fourth Place Double Magic Mission 14 votes
Entered by Martin Sembries**

2004 HOTY WINNERS



**Hibiscus of the Year [HOTY] 2004
Tahitian Purple Splendor with 53.94 votes
Entered and bred by Richard Johnson**



**Second in the HOTY 2004
Tahitian Cherry Blossom with 53.23 votes
Entered and bred by Richard Johnson**



**Third in the HOTY 2004
Jolanda Gommer with 52.26 votes
Entered and bred by Hendrik Gommer**



**Fourth in the HOTY 2004
Early American with 52.04 votes
Entered by Bob Carran, bred Larry Johnson**