



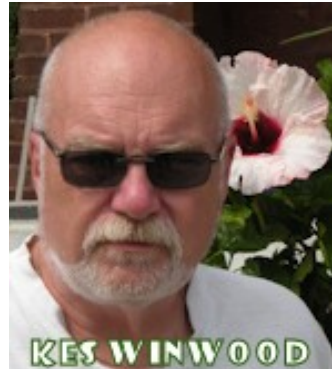
# Hibiscus International

July Aug Sept 2010

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Tah. Princess  
2003 HOTY



KES WINWOOD



Tah. Trop. Splendor  
2004 HOTY

## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hello hibiscus friends around the world,

When I first received the request to stand for the office of the president, my initial reaction was – “You must be joking!” But here it is a couple of months later and I find myself in the position of president of the IHS – me, a relative newcomer to the joys and frustrations of growing hibiscus and in a northern climate to boot! There are a great many other members who have far more knowledge about growing hibiscus than I do but sometimes things work out in strange ways. The job ahead is both daunting and exhilarating at the same time.

As the new Board of Directors took office, I wondered if anyone else had made note of the fact that on June 22<sup>nd</sup> the IHS marked a full ten years of activity and that we are now into our second decade. There were no celebrations of this fact and it passed quietly. But I can’t help asking myself this question – Would the original founding fathers (and mothers) recognize the IHS as it is today? I would hazard a guess that, never in their wildest dreams, could they have envisaged what their society has become.

Ten years after its inception the IHS has grown from simple beginnings into the FIRST and ONLY online registration program catering to the needs of hibiscus growers worldwide. As well as providing a simple and effective method of registering new cultivars and having them officially recognized by the International Cultivar Registration Authority Registrar (ICRAR), currently, Mr. Brian Cheers of Australia, it also provides extensive search capabilities too numerous to mention here.

The fact that the online registration and database capabilities exist is the result of countless hours of a labour of love freely given by one dedicated individual, Joseph Dimino. What makes this achievement even more astounding is the fact that it was written singlehandedly by Joseph when he was extremely ill. For this the IHS owes Joseph a debt of gratitude that will be impossible to repay.

In order that the legacy that Joseph has given the IHS will be remembered by all members both old and new, the BOD has voted to have a webpage or pages created that outline the history of The Global Hibiscus Library (TGHL) and the online registration program. As well, the webpage provides a glimpse of the human side of the man who gave us so much. Hopefully, this permanent record of Joseph’s accomplishments will stand as an example of what can be achieved by one person who gives of themselves unstintingly.

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As you read this, there should be a link on the home page of the website that leads to these pages. I encourage all, both old and new, to become familiar with the development of this momentous legacy. In conjunction with this commendation to Joseph, the BOD is considering developing one or more award programs to honour individuals, both IHS members and beyond, for the unselfish donation of their time, expertise and knowledge to better the global hibiscus community. These awards, if created, will transcend national boundaries and agendas and be truly global in nature, honouring those individuals for their contribution to the growth and development of the worldwide hibiscus community as a whole. In order to prevent these awards from becoming a popularity contest, they will be awarded solely at the discretion of the BOD, when and if a suitable candidate is identified.

One thing is apparent from the inception of the IHS to now – constant change. And that constant change is the challenge for the future. If we let ourselves become complacent, we run the risk of becoming outdated and redundant and we will be swept aside. Our challenge is learning how to be relevant in a rapidly changing world and staying relevant. That is the task that confronts this BOD and all future ones. I know that the current BOD is up to the challenge that we face and with your help, support and comments we will succeed.

Warmest regards to all & may all your blooms be winners,

Kes Winwood, IHS President

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### EDITORS REPORT

In this issue we are visiting Ursula Lengdabler's home in Germany and she describes how she grows hibiscus at her place and the procedures she uses to produce the beautiful flowers which are shown in the pages following her story.

Also I am repeating my article on pruning your bushes which is a necessary procedure if you want to keep your plants flowering well and also even if you are an expert it does not hurt to read what you should be doing in spring, whether you are in the Southern Hemisphere or if you alter the procedure to suit the Northern Hemisphere.

I have included some different photos to the last time on pruning. Also there are photos of the winning blooms in the SOTY 2010-3 competition and also photos of the TPC 2010-3 winners in each section.

Next issue we will be visiting Jill Coryell's home in Hawaii to see how she grows our favourite flower.

Kind Regards JIM PURDIE [Editor]

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**I.H.S. PATRON**— DAVID FRANZMAN

# HOW HIBISCUS ARE GROWN IN GERMANY

Written by Ursula Lengdobler

It all started 47 years ago when my parents and I spent a holiday in Israel. We saw those big hibiscus bushes full of glowing red flowers, hardly any green showing and we fell immediately in love with them.

A year later relatives came visiting from Israel and brought a tiny plant from "our" hibiscus. From then on my first hibiscus love in red keeps on haunting me, and I still have beside many, many other colours at least 10 red flowering hibiscus.

Ever since hibiscus belongs to my life and has stayed throughout the years my favourite plant.

In the seventies one could find in Germany already different hibiscus varieties in nurseries and plant shops, small and very expensive. They were all growing on their own roots and at this time weren't treated with growth retardants. Beside the red, white and pink multicoloured blooms like purple with white and red or even brown with yellow and pink could be bought. None of them had name tags so it wasn't possible to identify them. It was then that I started collecting hibiscus and even crossing them.

Many years later more and more hibiscus showed up in the nurseries, plant shops and even supermarkets. Those plants came from Denmark and the Netherlands. They normally filled the shops in May, getting very inexpensive through the summer and then vanished till next spring. All hibiscus were treated with growth retardants, this way staying small and showing lots of buds and flowers. They came in ordinary colours, mostly single but sometimes nice doubles. None of those plants were meant to survive the year, they were grown and handled by the producers as annuals.

During my 13 years in Bahrain I collected hibiscus in my big garden, loved to see them growing how they should grow - into big shrubs. I had taken many varieties with me from Germany and found even more on the island itself. Coming back to Germany 1990 I had taken lots of wood with me and tried to grow them but most didn't even survive our first winter, the climatically difference was just too big. I found a nursery in Germany whose Lady owner was as crazy about hibiscus as I. Leaving her nursery meant having my car full of new varieties. We had long talks about the different methods of growing hibiscus, she in her greenhouses I just on the window sills. It was always a fight about the right fertilizer and the right way to over winter these sensitive plants. By then I met more and more people who liked hibiscus but were unhappy about the plants they could obtain in the nurseries and plant shops as they always died on them in the winter.

At this time I connected to the Internet and found addresses of nurseries and international groups all related to hibiscus. It was/is fun to meet people this way and share the enthusiasm, becoming friends and learning from others. Meeting these specialists, the real hybridizers and professional growers on the net I learned a lot and I'm still thankful for this possibility. Whatever I learned through the years I pass on, any questions about growing hibiscus in Germany was/is gladly answered by me either in the groups or privately. I love sharing my knowledge, my plants and seeds of my crosses throughout the world.

In 2001 my first small book about hibiscus and successfully growing them in Germany was published followed by a much bigger and better one in 2008.

Several TV appearances and publications brought attention to the "Queen of the Tropics" and by now it isn't a great problem anymore to get the most beautiful hibiscus varieties in Germany.

Growing hibiscus in Germany means it is an every day "work", and needs dedication!

As we have for this delicate plant a very uncomfortable climate it needs a lot of extra care. Hibiscus can be only kept in pots, placed outside, either on the balcony, the terrace or the garden from mid May till end of September. So it has to stay indoors 7 long months, with less light and short days, still it needs at least 15°C/59°F to get through the winter comfortably.

A collection of hibiscus needs to be checked every day for pests and diseases as pests spread very fast between the plants and root rot or tip dying can sometimes be solved when detected in an early stage. As the hibiscus have a very short period of growing in our climate they need a lot of fertilizer to bring them into full bloom and maybe even harvest seed pods.

The fertilizer must vary depending on the time of the year and as hibiscus are very sensitive to phosphorous in the soil I foliar feed them with an extra portion of phosphorous.

To bring out even more colour KNO<sub>3</sub> is applied and to strengthen them they get Superthrive and other plant activators.

Let me start in January, when none of my plants are flowering and mostly looking a bit on the sad side. They have very often lost a lot of leaves, sometimes nearly all but the crown ones and I'm longing for longer days and sunshine for a new start. By Mid-February I can normally detect the first sprouting of tiny leaves and I start to fertilize the hibiscus with normal strength and give them as a push every week a plant stimulator/activator. In March I see the first blooms which is a great delight and the hibiscus gets fertilized with every watering and double strength. April and May means re-potting, I use a mix of ready bought container soil, mixed 2:1 with perlite to keep it airy. .



.. All my hibiscus, root bound or not get fresh soil and washed and sterilized pots. As the fertilizer and water has left over the months crusts along the inside of the plastic pot and the drainage holes they need thorough cleaning. All of the plants, get after being re-potted, watered with a seaweed-mixture to help them grow new roots a bit faster. This seaweed treatment is done again during the late summer.

Now is as well the time to cut wood to graft. It is the growing season accompanied by an endless stream of blooms which slows down when they are placed outside. I keep my plants along the conservatory and in my garden beds where they get sunshine from morning till late afternoon. Yellow leaves and often bud dropping follow for a short time but the growing of new branches and finally giving me blooms again continue. The heat in the summer months produce less flowers but as soon as there is a cold front cooling down the hot days the hibiscus explode in colours again. I keep all my plants in light brown plastic pots. The pots of the hibiscus placed in the garden beds are shaded by the surrounding plants this way staying cool. The pots of the hibiscus placed along the conservatory get the full heat so I use the pot in clay pot method to keep the roots cooler. From August onwards a change in the fertilizer combination towards more potassium is important so the young branches can mature and the plants can withstand the coming cooler temperatures. Mid-September sees me spraying all of my plants against pests, which I do two to three times within 10 to 14 days with Neem oil. It takes care of the worst pests, the white flies and spider mites. I do have to start that early as I have very often experienced that frost hit suddenly by the end of September and I had to take the hibiscus inside quickly. After all plants have been treated they come inside, the big ones in my heated conservatory, the smaller ones and the seedlings sown in spring on the window sills. I manage to keep around 300 plants in my house, thanks to broader sills where smaller plants can be placed in double or even triple rows. The hibiscus get watered every week with a fungicide to prevent root rot and tip dying over the winter. The plants still get fertilizer but in a normal dosage and only twice a week., slowing down to once a week and then only once in a fortnight.

The flower explosion starts in October with the most magnificent colours one can imagine. Well fed plants bring out bright green and sometimes glossy leaves and just wonderful blooms in size and colour. Visitors can often not believe that those flowers are real and ask or touch them for confirmation. Most hibiscus will give me blooms till December, less but still a few.

During my years in Bahrain I was more of a "pollen-duster" but over the years I got keener and keener on crossing the varieties more seriously. I started to change from being just a collector of hibiscus to serious hybridizing.

When buying new hibiscus I look first for the ancestors, what has/d been already used in hybridizing and the resulting new blooms.

End of February I start my sowing in small pots on a tray covered then by a dome which keeps the moisture and I place the tray on a heating mat. Keeping the temperature between 21°C to 24°C the seeds show within 5 to 8 days. As I sow several, up to 4, seeds in one pot they need separating when they show their true second pair of leaves. They are transplanted in my normal soil-perlite mix and get fertilized from the very beginning. They get as well the seaweed mixture and the foliar spraying to bring them into top shape over the summer. Till autumn the size varies between 10cm and 20cm but they're strong enough to make it over autumn and the winter. It takes between 12 and 18 months, sometimes even longer from planting the seed to seeing the first flower on a seedling which seems a rather long time, but by now I learned patience.

Over the years I have seen a lot of seedling blooms which were not worth to be noticed but there are already a few which are good enough and have been registered.

My goal is to produce new varieties to make Germany a "hibiscus place" to be acknowledged.



**Midnight Serenade**



**Key Largo**





**Neely Davis**



**Always True**



**Black Jack**



**Born to be Wild**



**Chartreuse Rose**



**Cloudy Days**





**Turkey Tracks**



**Plants Outside the Conservatory**





**Dreamboat**



**Gudrun Reichert**



**Han's My Love**



**Irish Eyes**



**Katie Jones [Evening Bloom]**



**Real Hot [Ursula Seedling]**





**Gator Pride**



**Saving Grace**



**Summer Blooms in Conservatory**





**Temptress**



**Timeless Treasure**



**Tirey**



**Voodoo Queen**



**Yuletide**



**Zoey**

# PRUNING

By Jim Purdie

I wrote this article in the same issue at this time last year, but as it is most important if you want to grow and get nice bushes especially for the newer members to have joined since this time last year and if you are an old member it will refresh your memory to think about pruning your bushes to get nice blooms on fresh new growth.

In this magazine we will look at the subject of pruning your plants, as this is advisable here in the Southern Hemisphere seeing that this is the month that spring arrives and the plants begin to wake from their winter sleep, the sap begins to flow causing the plants to start getting new shoots and if you prune the bush at this time you will get a good shaped bush and better flowers. If you are in the Southern Hemisphere you should wait until the danger of frosts has passed and in the Northern Hemisphere you will have to adjust the month to coincide with your spring.

This condition is brought about by a few things. The most important being that the daylight hours begin to get longer as the sun on its journey begins to get closer to your country, where ever you may live, be it in the northern or southern hemisphere, and as the sun gets closer, the weather begins to warm up and this causes the sap to flow and in so doing it causes the roots to start drawing more nourishment from the surrounding soil, and the plant goes into growing mode and new shoots begin to appear at the eyes, as opposed to the bare sticks we have been looking at during the winter.

We prune our plants for a variety of reasons, and I have listed the most important reasons to get a better bush.

1 To train into a desired shape.

2 To maintain the bush to a manageable size, and open up the bush to the sun by pruning away the middle branches which have grown into the middle thus blocking out the air and light.

3 It helps in the control and to be able to see any attacks of insects.

4 It will encourage stronger growth, as when you shorten the branches when you prune them, it will cause the plant to send out more branches, and as I always say more branches, more flowers.

5 It will get rid of old and weak branches, and those which grown in a criss cross fashion causing a cluttered plant, as well as those that have grown out of shape.

6 If you prune your plants in the spring you help the bush to promote larger and better blooms of good shape and size. Hibiscus thrive on being pruned in the spring, and you do not have to get a step ladder to see the flowers as the branches get too long. When you prune the tops of the branches, it causes the plant to start shooting down lower and instead of bare sticks you will see a plant covered in nice green leaves, and more branches, and "more branches more flowers".

This happens because when you prune the tops off, it stops the growing cycle from the tip. Whenever I start to prune I try to think how the bush grows, and prune the plant according to the way it grows, by that I mean if the plant is an average grower, I will prune off about a third of the bush, if the bush is a tall fast grower I will prune off about a half, and if the plant is a slow low grower, I will just prune off the tips, otherwise it takes too long to recover if you give it a hard prune, and you will miss out on the flowers for the season and have to wait until next year to see some blooms.

I always cut off the low lying branches, usually leaving a 12 inch space under the bush, which allows you to keep under the bush clean and also if there are low lying branches, and a flower appears it drags in the dirt and there is a danger of snails causing damage to the petals.

I prune just above an outward pointing eye, using a slanting cut away from the eye, so any water will run away from the eye, and also encourages the new shoot to grow outwards instead of into the middle of the plant, and as I always try to end up with a pruned bush which is in the shape of a vase.

Make sure your secateurs are kept clean and sharp, so that they will give a clean cut, and I like to dip my secateurs into some alcohol or methylated spirits between bushes to prevent spreading disease.

Some members do not prune all the branches at one time so they are able to have blooms while they wait for the new growth to flower. These remaining branches can be pruned once the new growth commences flowering.

If you are growing in pots this is a good time to think about a root prune at the same time as you prune the top of the plant, and repot into some fresh potting mix, with some slow release fertilizer included in the mix, either into the same size pot if it is the biggest you want to go to, or the next size pot if it is in a small pot. Do not make the pot size too big, When the bush is putting out a lot of new growth this is when I apply a fertilizer high in nitrogen to promote the new growth, and apply this until you see new buds starting to form and then I use a fertilizer higher in potash than nitrogen to promote flowers instead of nice green leaves.

A fertilizer I recommend after you have pruned the plants in the ground is as follows; 2 ice cream [2 litre] cans of Blood & Bone, 2 of Super Phosphate, 1 of Sulphate of Potash, 1/2 can of Magnesium Sulphate [Epsom Salts] , 1/4 can Sulphate of Iron, mix all this all together and apply a good handful around each bush. Then I cover this with a good mulch about 2 to 3 inches thick to keep the roots cool in the hot weather to come and also to prevent the loss of moisture. Later when the blooms appear I use Cultiplex Gold [or any fertilizer you can get as long as the K for potash is the higher number] with my fertigator and apply it from the hose attached to the 5000 litre tank with an electric pump.

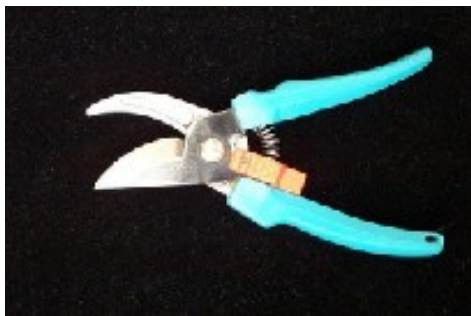
If you follow these instructions you will be well on your way to seeing a healthy bush and plenty of flowers.



branches?  
branches.

branches.

with either the secateurs or  
loppers.



These are the 3 tools I use to do my pruning, the first is my Secateurs, used for the thinner branches. The second is of my large loppers which I use to cut the thicker branches. And this is my pruning saw for the very thick trunks or branches, that you cannot cut with either the secateurs or loppers.



This is one of the bushes we are going to prune it by one third.



This picture shows pruning above an eye on the younger plant, with the cut sloping away from the eye.



Photo at the left is the above bush after pruning back by one third and the other photo shows the garden after it has re-grown after it has been pruned in the spring and the plants have been fertilized and mulched



# **SOTY WINNERS 2010-3**



**Tah. Superb 1st with 46 votes**



**Tah. Dragon's Lair 2nd with 45 votes**



**Tah. Passion Flower 3rd with 40 votes**



**Tah. Magenta King 4th with 38 votes**



**Tah. Udi's Sunset 5th with 36 votes**



**Senenne 6th with 30 votes**



# CHAMPION WINNERS OF TPC 2010-3



Single- Voodoo Queen



Double- Early Times



Miniature- Infinity



Multi Bloom- Nightfire



Computer Art- Esenica de mar