



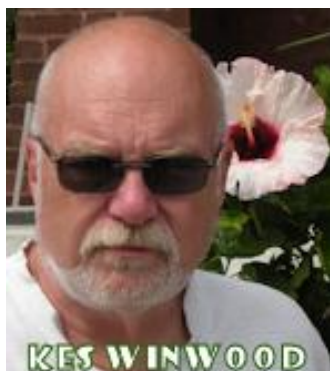
Hibiscus International

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**Tah. Trop. Splendor
2004 HOTA**



KEN WINWOOD



**Tah. Baby Bonfire
2005 HOTA**

PRESIDENTS REPORT



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As you read this we will have turned a page on the calendar and have started a new year. As we look forward to another year of challenge for the IHS in the year ahead (as well as an election for a new Board of Directors), we should pause and take stock of the year just passed and reflect on all that has happened.

The past year has been a full one with setbacks and jumps ahead for the IHS. With the loss of Jim Purdie who ran the SOTY/HOTA competitions so well for many years, we have been hard pressed to keep both the SOTY and TPC competitions running smoothly.

As well we have started the transition to a new more dynamic and interactive webpage but this is a monumental task that will take some time to complete. At the moment, the plans are to have the new site complete by the end of the winter season, which gives us approximately 3 to 4 months to realize our goal.

We now have an excellent facility on the new website for a new TPC but no volunteers to manage it. Unless someone volunteers to take on some of these tasks we will be unable to restart them. If you are not already a volunteer please consider it. Volunteers are critical to the success and well being of a vibrant and successful IHS!!!

But the greatest task of all is in the nomenclature program which is also a part of the website. We have been putting a lot of effort into improving the database which could further enhance one of our most important resources, the TGHL. We have been very fortunate to have received the cooperation and support of several major hybridizers in this regard so that we now have well over two thousand new registrations pending.

We are extremely fortunate also that we have a VP and webmaster who is passionate about improving the database. We would like to appeal to all hybridizers everywhere to submit all their cv data both old and new to Ian Rabenda so that we can ensure that there are no errors or omissions in the database. Our fondest wish for the New Year would be to finally see most of the pending registrations approved. Let us hope that Santa can deliver some good Cheer!!!

This job is ongoing and requires many man hours of time and effort. Any help that any of our members could give Ian in this task would be most helpful. Just contact him here - box1618@gmail.com and I am sure he can tell you how you might help him.

In the process of this ongoing effort, our database now contains over 13,500 registered cultivars which is an increase of over 2,000 registrations more than we reported in the previous issue of Hibiscus International newsletter. As we enlist the aid of more individual hybridizers to make sure all of their cultivars are registered we expect this total to continue to climb.

A plan of action has been proposed and has received the nod of approval from the BOD, so it is my hope that we might have some concrete action taken and an efficient and workable solution put in place at some point this year that will be of maximum benefit to all hibiscus enthusiasts the world over.

EDITORS REPORT

You may notice with this issue of Hibiscus International that we have changed the format slightly in that this issue is more heavily slanted to the use of visuals and that there is much less text. Part of this is based on the old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words”. This is true in many cases and the article on grafting by Beth Jordan which is presented entirely makes the point vividly. In this case, the information is presented clearly and with no need for any additional text.

However, a more important issue is being recognized with this more visual approach. We have a membership that spans the globe and who speak a great variety of languages as a first language. I am sure that in the past those members whose mother tongue was not English may have had some difficulty with some of the lengthy articles.

We have two choices, either to create a newsletter in a variety of different languages or try to deliver our articles with as much visual content as possible. I have a very strong feeling that in our extremely busy world that most people prefer looking at and enjoying pictures than reading a lengthy article. Written articles won't disappear and we will try and maintain a balance between the written and visual aspects of the newsletter.

Please let me know what your feelings are on this—more pictures or more text. Your comments are important in helping us create a better newsletter for all.

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SMALL IDEAS THAT MATTER: HOW TO ROOT CUTTINGS IN PLASTIC CUPS

Alan & Vera De La Torre

3 December 2011

24 February 2010 – Dr. Francisco ‘Kiko’ San Diego, a collector and commercial grower of hibiscus in the Philippines posted this photo on the mailing list of the Philippine Hibiscus Society.¹ What caught our attention was not ‘Bold Idea’ but those plastic cups in the background. It turned out we were not the only one. Other members noticed it too. When we think about rooting cuttings, we imagine having one of those insulated enclosures that hold dozens, if not, hundreds of cuttings. But when you are starting with a few cuttings, you might think twice about spending money on something you have not tried yet. So allow us to share with you what Kiko shared with us: how to root cuttings in plastic cups. A hundred of those plastic cup is not even a dollar in the Philippines. So we thought if this small idea can make a big difference, we will definitely try it.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Francisco San Diego

Transparent cups are ideal because the roots are visible and it is cheaper. These cups come in different sizes. In our case, we found 8-ounce, 12-ounce and 16-ounce cups. Which size we are going to use depend on the size of the pot where the rooted cutting will be transplanted in the future. The root ball of a an 8-ounce cup is too small for a size 4 pot. It will occupy 30% or less of the container volume; and if such were the case we are heading for disaster.

When the pot size is too big for the root ball, the roots will not be able to absorb all of the water at each watering period. Excess water will drain out but not all. Every pot, regardless of its height, width, material, number of drain holes or potting mix, has perched water table (PWT). This is located at the bottom layer of the soil that is always saturated with water and that refuse to drain out. They sure want to drain out but the capillary pull of the soil (regardless of whatever potting mix or soil we use) refuse to let them go. It is “perched”. The only way for PWT to disappear is evaporation which will happen only after the root ball has already been exposed to wet feet; or, if the root ball occupies 60% of the container volume (i.e. the volume of the pot), hungry roots will finish it off. We’ll share with you more about PWT and how to minimize PWT in another article. For now, let us just say that an 8-ounce root ball transplanted on a size 4 pot is not advisable as it may contribute to damping-off disease. So if all of our pots are size 4, we may want to root our cuttings in a 16-ounce cup. We need to take this into account when we decide in which size of plastic cups to root our cuttings. In the Philippines we have 3.5-inch pots which is a perfect match for a 12-ounce root ball, and this is what we are using.

¹ <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/philippinehibiscussociety>>



For each cutting, we need two cups. The cup that will hold the potting mix needs to have drain holes at the bottom. You can make drain holes in many ways. You can even use hot charcoal. The other cup will serve as the enclosure that will lock in the moisture. So after we are done with the drain holes, we are ready to put to potting mix.

We need a potting mix that can hold as much water as possible, because once we have planted the cutting we will leave it for six weeks without watering. During this long period, we do not want the potting mix to dry

out. Instead, we want the PWT of the potting mix to evaporate and in the process water the cuttings. For our potting mix, we prefer to use treated coco peat,¹ a mixture of coir fiber and coir dust, because of its high water-holding capacity.



All our materials should be sterilized. This includes the plastic cups, cuttings and potting mix. Even though we recycle our cups, we wash them well with liquid detergent and thereafter treat them with a good fungicide.

¹ We explained how to treat coco peat in “*Sharing Enthusiasm for Hibiscus*” which was published in Redstick Gleanings 2010 (Vol. 7, No. 5), a publication of the Red Stick Hibiscus Association.



One of the disadvantages of using plastic cups is quite obvious in the picture (left). You cannot grow a cutting to your desired length if it does not match the size of the plastic cup. Otherwise, we cannot put a top on the enclosure. Hence, the smaller the cup, the shorter the cutting.



Photo courtesy of Kes Winwood
(Picture taken from his own experiment in Canada)

After planting comes watering and after watering it is time to fit the second cup on top of the first. You can seal both cups to lock in the moisture that comes from the potting mix. We will leave the cups in a shaded area as shown on the picture (right). Do not worry about watering the plant. The PWT will attempt to evaporate which will be prevented by the enclosure from escaping and the plant will also transpire, so it drops back to the potting mix and in the process take care of watering.



In our tropical climate, the moisture contained by plastic cups is sometimes not enough when the weather is too hot and relative humidity is low. So another method is to place these cups in a big pot as shown in the picture (left). A big pot can usually hold up to seven cups with cuttings of any desired length. Now, we will cover the pot with a huge humidity bag that can cover the entire pot.



Humidity bags are efficient in containing moisture. The cuttings (below) are on their fourth week and humidity bags still show evidence of moisture. This was summer time in the Philippines.



We removed the humidity bags for their first photo shoot.





Since last year, and thanks to Kiko, we have been growing all our cuttings in plastic cups. We sterilize and recycle them so we do not have to buy small plastic flower pots to root our cuttings. Depending on the weather, we either use humidity bag as enclosure or another plastic cup. After sharing Kiko's method, Kes Winwood repeated the same experiment in Ontario, Canada between July-September 2010.

"I tried your method of starting cuttings with the plastic cups that form a mini greenhouse. Thank you again for the idea which has worked very well indeed. Those easy to root varieties have rooted with no problems whatsoever and the others are still green and seem to be flourishing but slow to root but I am hopeful that will eventually do so."

Left – this is a four-month old 'Tarantella' that was rooted in a plastic cup.

Bottom – these are some of our cuttings two months after they were weaned from their incubators.

Happy Hibiscus!■



ADDENDUM TO ALAN'S ARTICLE

There are two additional things that I do when rooting cuttings in this fashion. First the cuttings are treated with a 10% solution of hydrogen peroxide (or 10% bleach solution) to lessen the chance of fungus growth. In addition, the cutting is also dipped in rooting hormone to assist in the promotion of root growth.

As Alan pointed out in his article, he had to modify his method to deal with his tropical conditions of heat and low humidity. Here in Canada as I used this method to root cuttings, it became clear that in our climate this method was only practical during the warm summer months (June-September). As the temperature cooled in the fall, the mini greenhouses were brought inside where the success fell drastically. For a northern climate, this method seems to be most effective in the warmest months of the year.

-Kes Winwood

Alan also made reference to preparing coco coir to be used as a growing medium. This information was detailed in an article that was presented in Redstick Gleanings, a publication of the Redstick Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society. The information below outlining how the coir is prepared is from that article and is presented here with the kind permission of Damon Veach and the Redstick Chapter for those who might have not seen the original article or who perhaps did not keep the article after reading it.

Preparing Coco Peat:

The preparation of coco peat is relatively easy and fast..... there are two simple steps: first, remove unwanted acids by washing coco peat in water; and second, mix the desired nutrients with coco peat and it's ready to use.

1. As you wash coco peat with water, the water will turn brownish red as acid leaches out. Wash thoroughly until the water is clear.
2. For every sack of coco peat, mix the following nutrients:
 - 8 Tablespoons (80 grams) of ferrous sulfate (iron)
 - 4 Tablespoons (40 grams) of magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt)
 - 12 Tablespoons (120 grams) of Nutricote® 14-14-14 with micronutrients

Alan informs me that a sack of coir peat is approximately 1.76 cubic feet (0.049 cubic meters) or enough to fill 10 x 1 gallon (10 x 4.54 liter) pots. With this information you can adjust the formula above for the amount of coco coir you are using.

Pictorial Guide to Grafting

2 Methods by Beth Jordan



Method 1



Photos courtesy of Beth Jordan



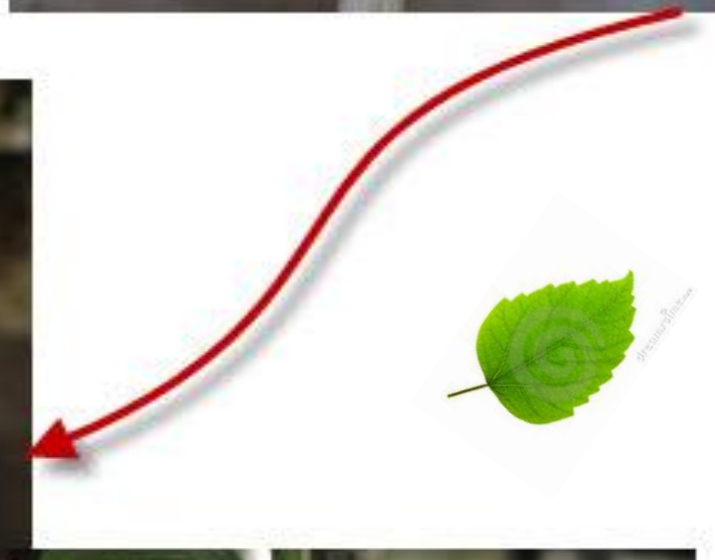
Pictorial Guide to Grafting (Method 1)



Pictorial Guide to Grafting (Method 2)



Pictorial Guide to Grafting (Method 2)



Pictorial Guide to Grafting (Method 2)



Did You Know That.....?

... in every SOTY/HOTY competition from 2003—2005, the cultivar that was chosen the SOTY winner DID NOT go on to become the HOTY winner.

2003 SOTY Winners



1st
T. Dragon

2nd
T. Princess

3rd
T. Passion



2003 HOTY

During the 3 year trialing period the candidates are evaluated on such things as bush type, floriferousness, pest and disease resistance, bloom substance, colour stability, as well as bloom form and bloom presentation.

All this data is carefully considered by the HPOJ (HOTY Panel of Judges) and a winner is chosen which to date has never been the most popular SOTY winner.

2004 SOTY Winners



1st
T. Cherry Blossom

2nd
Rainbow Sands

3rd
Topaz Glory X Fifth Dimension

4th
T Tropical Splendor



2004 HOTA

2005 SOTY Winners



1st
Miss Liberty x T. Magenta Beauty

2nd
T Baby Bonfire

3rd
T. Tau



2005 HOTA

MAY THE YEAR AHEAD BE
FILLED WITH.....

Health
Honesty

humility

Happiness
HONOUR

....and hibiscus



Happy New Year!

