

Hibiscus

Info Sheet

Hibiscus spp.

Hibiscus, which is native to Asia, is a popular flowering shrub that is used widely throughout central and south Florida. Many of hundreds of cultivars are available from time to time. Flowers, leaves and growth habit differ with each individual variety. Leaves may be large or small, rounded or pointed and light green to dark green in color. Flowers appear in a single or double form with many colors and color combinations available.

Some hibiscus varieties attain an overall height of 15 feet, but with regular pruning can be kept as low as 5 to 6 feet. Since hibiscus are tropical, they usually receive some damage when temperatures drop below 32°F. However, new growth emerges from undamaged older growth or roots with the return of warm weather.

Hibiscus should be used in full or half-day sun with a south or east exposure in Brevard County. Plants are highly salt tolerant. In the landscape, they grow best when used as freestanding specimens in shrub or tree form, or when used as foundation plantings for large buildings. This is one of Florida's very best landscape plants for a colorful, tropical effect.

Other Species

There are several hibiscus relatives that can be grown in Brevard and which are sometimes available including: Fringe Hibiscus or Japanese Lantern Hibiscus (*H. schizopetalus*); the temperate species Rose of Sharon (*H. syriacus*); and the native species Swamp Mallow (*H. coccineus*) and Rose Mallow (*H. moscheutos*); and finally, the tropical tree Seaside Mahoe (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*).

Planting

Best growth can be expected when plants are set in well-drained, improved soil in full or half-day sun. Plants should be placed in the ground at soil level and mulch should be applied around the root area to keep soil moist. Water plants thoroughly every day for the first week. For the next two to four weeks, water at the rate of two to three thorough waterings per week.

Fertilizing

Hibiscus may be fertilized 2 to 4 times during the growing season. Use **Espoma Holly-Tone** or **Sunniland 6-6-6** in March, June and September. Apply 1/2 to 1 cup per plant and distribute lightly over the entire root zone.

Plant Problems

Aphids: small insects that attack new growth and flower buds causing distorted leaves and bud drop.

Solution: use **insecticidal soap** or **Espoma Insect Control** and apply according to directions. **Lady bugs** may also be used for aphid control.

Pink Hibiscus Mealybug Disease: a virus that is brought to the plant by insects that infest the stems of the plant, especially the upper portion of the stems, causing severely distorted leaves and decreased flowering. Consult your Rockledge Gardens experts for the latest methods for controlling this serious pest.

The logo for Rockledge Gardens features the name "Rockledge Gardens" in a large, teal, serif font. A stylized teal leaf or petal shape is positioned behind the letter "G" in "Gardens".

Naturally beautiful and fun!

2153 U.S. Hwy # 1 • Rockledge, FL 32955
321.636.7662 • www.rockledgegardens.com