

# Hibiscus

Info

## *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

Hibiscus, which is native to Asia, is a popular flowering shrub that is used widely throughout central and south Florida. Many of the 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 of the 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 32F. However, new growth emerges from undamaged older growth or roots with the return of warm weather. The hibiscus should be planted in full or half-day sun with a south or east exposure in Brevard County. Plants are highly salt tolerant. In the landscape, hibiscus are 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 a 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 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. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** to soil when planting for strong healthy root growth.

### FERTILIZING

Hibiscus may be fertilized 2 to 4 times during the growing season. Use **Espoma Holly-Tone** in early spring and several times throughout the summer. 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 and apply according to proper application rate. Lady bugs may also be used for aphid control.

Pink Hibiscus Mealybug-insects that infest the stems of the plant, especially the upper portion of the stems, causing severely distorted leaves and preventing flowering. Consult your Rockledge Gardens experts for the latest methods for controlling this serious pest.

# Rockledge Gardens



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