

## SPECIAL CARE - HIBISCUS IN 4" POTS

**IMPORTANT:** If you just received hibiscus in the 4" pot size, understand that shipping is stressful for plants. Keep your new plants in their 4" pots for 1-2 weeks after they arrive. It is best to set the pots in the location where you plan to transplant them so they can get used to the conditions there before undergoing transplanting. If that location is in full direct sun, introduce them to the spot gradually so as to avoid sun burning the leaves.

**Fertilizer:** These baby plants are accustomed to regular fertilizer and it is important to continue to fertilize them using HVH Special Blend fertilizer or similar. Mix 2 teaspoons of water soluble fertilizer into 1 gallon of water and evenly wet the soil in the pot with this mixture. A little water should come out of the bottom holes of the pot. In early spring, add 1 tablespoon of iron chelate to the fertilizer mixture to help green up the plants. Fertilize with every watering for best results in growing these baby hibiscus to full, blooming size. HVH Growth Enhancer (Supernova) will also help the young plants grow faster and better.

### Pot Sizes

A 4" pot is too small for hibiscus to remain in permanently, unless you have a special growing situation and need the plant and pot to remain small. For most situations, hibiscus need to be transplanted into a larger pot, such as those sold as 6 or 8 inch pots (1 or 2 gallon pots). As a general rule, smaller pots need to be watered more often and hibiscus in small pots grow slower and stay smaller. Use a smaller pot if you have limited space, but otherwise a medium or larger pot is better.

DO NOT transplant these small hibiscus into a pot larger than 8" (or 2 gallon) this first summer. Grow it for a year in one of the sizes mentioned above, then transplant it to a larger pot the next year if you want the hibiscus to reach maximum size. Do Not transplant hibiscus during winter months.

If you intend to plant your hibiscus in the ground, it is safer to first grow it in one of the above size pots for 2 months or longer and then transplant it into the ground. This is not always necessary but avoids the potential problems of planting a small hibiscus in the ground.

### Temperature

Hibiscus in 4" pots are baby plants. They need warm temperatures at night and through the winter.

### Potting Soil

Use the best quality potting soil you can find at a local nursery or order some from us. Cheap potting mixes are often too heavy for hibiscus and will stunt their growth - or worse.

### How to Transplant

Lightly moisten the potting mix before filling the pot with it. Very gently remove the hibiscus from its current pot, letting gravity do most of the work. DO NOT yank it out by grasping the stem and pulling hard. It is important that the roots are not torn away from the stem when removing it from the pot and placing it in the new pot. Make a planting hole slightly larger than the root ball of the plant. Set the hibiscus in this hole and then gently fill in all around the root ball.

Hibiscus and most plants need to have plenty of air in the potting mix. For that reason you only want to tamp down the new mix as much as is needed to firmly hold the plant in place but no more. Do not overwater the plant after potting up. This drives too much air out of the mix and can drown the hibiscus roots. As the hibiscus grows it will need more water and in hot conditions will benefit from lots of water. While small, keep the hibiscus evenly moist, neither sopping wet nor completely dry.

### More Information

See [www.hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com](http://www.hiddenvalleyhibiscus.com) and click on "Hibiscus Care" for more information on how to grow healthy, vigorous hibiscus with lots of colorful flowers.

## GENERAL INFORMATION & HELPFUL TIPS

Healthy, well-fertilized plants are more tolerant of insect attacks. Before applying any chemical be sure you read and understand the label. Be sure your plants are well watered before applying chemicals. The best time to spray for insects is in the morning or late evening when temperature is below 80. Be sure to cover the underside of the leaves. For heavy or consistent infestations, spray every 5-7 days. Three or four applications may be needed to break the insect's life cycle. Orthene and soap will control most hibiscus pests. A honey like secretion of several insects can attract a black sooty mold. While unsightly, the mold does little damage and will disappear once you treat the cause. Check and treat other plants in the area that might re-infest your hibiscus. Rotate insecticides for the best results Liquid Malathion should not be used on hibiscus.

Orthene is a brand name of Ortho Chemical Co. The active ingredient in Orthene is "Acephate" You may not be able to find "Orthene" but be aware Hi Yield "Acephate" is the same chemical. There are many new chemicals available to control insect pest. Those mentioned here should not imply one is better than another. Please read the label.

Newly purchased plants may need to be allowed to adjust to the conditions of your yard. Plants need to be introduced to full sun over a 7-10 day period. Hibiscus like at least 50% sunlight. Keep them moist and lightly fertilized. Strong winds can burn the leaves but the plant will recover.

ORTHO FIRE ANT KILLER - main ingredient ACEPHATE

1. **APHIDS & ANTS** Aphids are green, black or brown soft-bodied sucking insects usually found on the buds and flowers. They may be controlled with chemicals recommended for sucking insects.
2. **SPIDER MITES** Spider mites are too small to be seen without the aid of magnification. Their web may or may not be noticeable. Leaves will have pale yellow splotches on top and yellow scabby looking areas on the bottom. Miticides or fine oils may need to be applied several times for control.
3. **MEALY BUGS** Mealy Bugs are white cotton like insects usually on the stems of a plant. Orthene and Soap will control these soft bodied sucking insects.
4. **WHITE FLY** White Flies are small flying insects usually found on the underside of the leaves. Several applications of spray may be needed to get them under control.
5. **SCALE** These insects are best treated in the spring when the young are moving about. The most common on hibiscus is a small white scale that starts at the base and moves up. Orthene and fine oil are recommended. Some growers use Pam and WD 40. all seem to work well.
6. **YELLOWING LEAVES** A few yellow leaves are normal for hibiscus. Excess yellowing can be caused from stress. Too much water, not enough water, too much fertilizer or not enough. Insect damage (see Spider Mites above) Try to determine the cause to correct this problem. Do not over water or let the pot set in water.
7. **Bud Drop** Bud drop can be caused by stress. In Florida most often it is caused by Gall Midge, a very small larva hatches in the bud before it opens. As it feeds on the young bud the bud turns yellow and drops. Thrip also cause buds to drop but distortion of the flower is more common. Orthene and soaps will work for both. A granular insecticide for lawn applied to the soil around your hibiscus will also help control Gall Midge.
8. **FREEZE AND WIND DAMAGE** Tropical Hibiscus do not tolerate freezing weather. Well-watered plants will fare better. If you live in an area that is prone to frost or freeze you will need to provide some protection. Do not prune until spring, and prune into living tissue.
9. **PRUNING** Hibiscus may be pruned any time except late fall and winter. New growth is more sensitive to cold damage. Heavy pruning may delay flowering for three or four months. Use a sharp clean pruning shear and prune just above an eye pointing in the direction you would like a limb to grow.
10. **CONTAINER GROWN PLANTS** Use a loose soil, do not let water stand in the saucer, re-potting every year or two will keep the soil from becoming packed and retaining too much water. When re-potting prune both the plant and the root system to promote new growth. If indoors, mist or place in a humid sunny location.
11. **SOIL AND FERTILIZER** Loose well-drained soil is best to prevent root rot. Fertilize lightly and often. For Florida soils a fertilizer higher in Nitrogen and Potassium (10-4-10) works well. Foliar feeding with a soluble fertilizer and minor elements is also helpful.

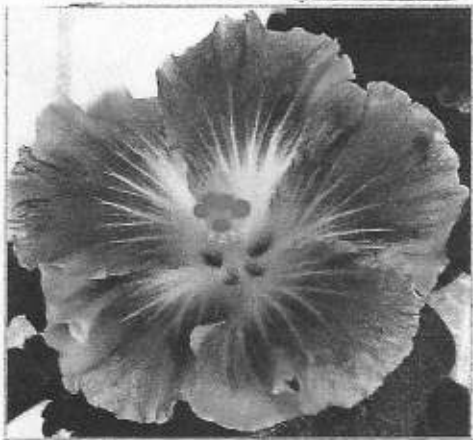
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MEETINGS 7:15pm EVERY SECOND TUESDAY

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Be sure to see us at **Annual Mother's Day Show and Plant sale at Charlotte County Event Center, Punta Gorda**

Meetings are 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:<sup>30</sup>~~00~~ PM at  
The Royal Palm Retirement Center  
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For information call Dave Wallin 941-258-4238

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