



LOUISIANA SOCIETY FOR HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH

WINTER 2015

COMPOST PILE

LSHR Supported Hardy Hibiscus Trial – Final Report

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The LSU AgCenter implemented a landscape evaluation trial of over 40 cultivars of hardy hibiscus, primarily *Hibiscus moscheutos* at the Hammond Research Station in the spring of 2013 with some financial support provided by the Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research.

The project includes a field planting of cultivars from the hibiscus breeding program at Walters Gardens. Some of their hibiscuses are in the Summerific Hibiscus program at Proven Winners.

In addition, all four colors in the Luna seeded line (Louisiana Super Plant) of perennial type hibiscus from PanAmerican Seed were included. The Luna series has been on the market for a number of years now and provides growers with a seed source option, as opposed to the majority of plant material in this group being available only via vegetative propagation.

Industry standard cultivars – such as the popular Flare series, Moy Grande (a previous LSHR release plant), TX star red hibiscus, Lord Baltimore and Lady Baltimore were included in the study. Also planted was the Red River cultivar that is gaining in popularity in Texas for large blooms. Another group includes cultivars from Fleming Flower Fields. These hibiscuses are known for their reddish and purple foliage colors, maple, palm and hydrangea leaf shaped foliage and improved compactness.

Data was taken periodically and included date of first bloom, length of bloom, length of peak bloom, plant height, flower diameter, susceptibility to hibiscus sawfly larvae damage and more. Some of the plants in our LSU AgCenter trial are also being evaluated by horticulturist Geoff Denny at the Mississippi State University trial gardens in Starkville.

There is some slightly renewed interest in hardy hibiscus cultivars and landscape use in the south. Hardy hibiscuses have previously been primarily seed propagated. Old seed propagated cultivars include Disco Bell and Southern Belle.

New cultivar development is focusing on plants with earlier spring emergence, leaf spot resistance, dark foliage colors, earlier bloom, larger blooms, improved length of bloom, size reduction, branching habit, new flower colors and unique foliage shape.

Factors limiting sales of hardy hibiscus at garden centers are (1) difficulty in wholesale production due to “tall, lanky, lack of branching” growth habit (making shipping difficult), (2) higher price of vegetatively produced liners, (3) plants being “retail ready” early summer (when the spring garden center season has concluded), (4) poor shelf life at retail due to root bound plants and high irrigation demand.

Research observations, summary:

- Luna Pink Swirl is the best performing of the Luna series cultivars. Plants of this cultivar bloom early, bloom longer and typically have slightly better bloom quality. Consumer appeal is also higher for the pink swirl flower color as compared to the red, white and rose.
- In the Walters Gardens cultivars, Berrylicious, Jazzberry Jam, Party Favor, Midnight Marvel, Summer Storm and Sultry Kiss received the highest visual quality ratings in 2013 and 2014. Cranberry Crush and My Valentine are two of the most sold, grown of these cultivars in Louisiana and they each performed poorer than the other cultivars.
- Pink Elephant, a Walters Gardens cultivar, produced the largest plant in this collection and also had the largest flowers (11 inches in diameter). These characteristics made it popular with master gardeners and home gardener audiences viewing the trial but the plant would have limitations in the retail marketplace.
- Flare (aka Red Flare) hibiscus has been previously named a Mississippi Medallion plant and a Texas Superstar. Peppermint Flare and Pink Flare had quality ratings slightly better than Flare. Peppermint Flare was one of the top plants in the 2013-2014 evaluations.
- Lord Baltimore, Lady Baltimore and Moy Grande have been previously named Texas Superstar plants. In LSU AgCenter trials, Moy Grande was very slow to flower and had split petals. Lord Baltimore and Lady Baltimore

Hibiscus continued on Page 5

President's Message

Wow! A very wet spring indeed! Hopefully you all put your releases in early, to take advantage of the free watering from above. The late birds have found the heat of summer to deal with, along with supplemental watering to get their babies started. My beauties were set in early and have established themselves nicely. Many rewards of color and bloom have been enjoyed already. Remember to record the progress of your little ones, for our research tallies.

We had a lot of issues trying to keep the Compost Pile going smooth as Ann Justice had. Billy Welsh and Kristy have, out of passion and necessity, volunteered to bring you this issue to culmination. They are combining the summer and fall/winter edition of the Compost Pile. Hopefully everyone sent in any new member request to Dr. Jean Kreamer or Dr. Ellis Fletcher, before November 1st. This allows the board time to decide whether to vote them in or not, at our Fall board meeting. Billy is constantly searching and accumulating material for the release, so if you have ideas or extras of a cool plant to introduce to the society, give him a call as early in the season as possible. Membership participation is essential to the survival of our society, so write in to our editor or myself with photos or stories of experiences you think readers would like. Please kindly send in your annual dues to continue your membership benefits.

Albert Durio

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From the treasurer's desk

What a great day we had in the spring with auction and luncheon with attendance of 100 members. It is always great to see so many plant lovers at our functions. I am continually amazed by the new releases and the auctions. The silent auction of 34 items brought in \$370 and the live auction of 165 plants purchased by 44 members brought in \$5,182. Grand total for the day was \$5,552. The funds will support horticultural research projects, scholarships for horticultural college students and purchases for next releases. Next annual meeting and auction, March 19, 2016.

Now for serious business! Yep, it is that time of year to pay dues! This is third year that membership dues notice appears in THE COMPOST PILE. NO NOTICE OF DUES will be mailed out. The membership renewal form is printed in this issue and can be cut out, copied, or hand written with all information to send with your payment BEFORE JANUARY 31, 2016 (extended). Please include email address to be used only for society needs.

NO MEMBERSHIP CARDS will be mailed. Members will use their spring issue of THE COMPOST PILE with mailing label as proof of membership when registering for new release plants. Much easier to find your COMPOST PILE with all the information of dates and times than a lost card!

I will be so happy to accept your payment as early as possible. A great New Year's resolution to take care of business early, it is a great feeling too! Love all my plant folks and I appreciate having more time to enjoy my plants when everyone pays soon!

JoAnn Pugh, Treasurer
joannpugh@hotmail.com

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joannpugh@hotmail.com*

LOUISIANA SOCIETY OF HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH

DUE BY JANUARY 31, 2016

**MEMBERSHIP DUE NOTICE
FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016**

___ACTIVE \$15 ___Sustaining ___Donor \$100 and up

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Please mail this form and payment to:

LSHR, PO Box 51366, Lafayette, LA 70505

2014 Plant Release Information

By Glenda Balliviero

And the Top Performers are:

#1 --- Pentas lanceolata 'Nova RUBIACEAE (Nova Pentas)



Which received a 2.51 score out of 3.

Not only loved by us for the beautiful colorful pink flowers but by the butterflies

#2 --- Portulaca oleracea 'Florida Dwarf Rose' PORTULACAEAE
(Florida Dwarf Rose Purslane)



Which received a 2.24 score out of 3.

The beautiful bright rose - colored flowers were able to make a show

In so many different types of planters/plantings

Both of these top 2 plants received 58 – 3's for ratings

Another year of watching our release plants grow and reporting information has been fun. Even though the winter was a harsh one the number of young perennial plants lost from freezes was not as great as usual. The new Plant Release Report Form has certainly been very beneficial to the members reporting their information, as well as to my tallying the results. Thanks to Kristy Thompson of Ira Nelson for coming up with this reporting system. In reviewing the reports I felt that the great majority of the members reviewed and followed instructions provided on the information sheet in reference to planting location. A pat on the back to our membership.

Ratings for all of the 2014 Releases

1. **Acalypha wilkesiana 'Kapiolani Bronze' EUPHORBIACEAE (Kapiolani Bronze Copper Plant) – 2.03** – This dense shrub with small, finely textured, reddish-bronze leaves grew 5' for several members. Most had the greatest success when planted in full sun or part shade. It was considered to have a wonderful, showy, unique, beautiful and great color foliage. A few reported small white flowers. Insects/Disease: None
2. **Amsonia tabernaemontana APOCYNACEAE (Blue Star) – 2.04** – This native clumping herbaceous perennial with erect stems with 2-4" lance-shaped leaves was reported to have produced beautiful, soft blue star shaped flowers. One classified as a 10/10 plant. Several reported that it had frozen having not read the info sheet which indicated that it goes dormant. One did realize and said it was still 'sleeping' and hoped it would awaken with blooms. Most had success when planted in part shade or full sun. A few indicated it did best in a bog area. Insects/Disease: White flies
3. **Caesalpinia Mexicana FABACEAE (Mexican Caesalpinia) – 2.22** – This shrub to multi-stemmed tree with finely textured foliage placed 3rd in the ratings. Some reached 6-8' for several in a one year's growth. Many produced pretty spikes of bright-yellow flowers appearing to be double. Several indicated it bloomed from summer through fall and a few in winter. Most said it was very hardy and several indicated it was drought tolerant. Some reports indicated that the plant lacked vigor while others said fast growing. Full sun plantings had the greatest success. Insects/Disease: Mealy bug
4. **Camellia sasanqua "Susy Dirr" THEACEAE (Susy Dirr Sasanqua) – 2.15** – This shrub which produces large, bright-pink double flowers was reported to be compact with only one reporting a 3' plant. Very few reported blooms. Plantings in part shade were most successful; however, a few in morning sun or full sun also did well. Several felt it had a disease when receiving since leaves were reddish brown and covered with spots. Insects/Disease: None

5. **Echeandia chandleri** LILIACEAE (**Lila de los Llanos**) – **2.00** – This hardy perennial herb with narrow basal foliage resembling a spider plant produced yellow, star-shaped flowers along a tall stalk for about half of the members. They were described as delicate, pretty and showy. One felt a good Ensemble plant. A couple indicated they had empty containers in their boxes. Reading the information sheet would have explained why the plant couldn't be seen at release time. Most left in pots and those that were most successful were in full sun and a few in part shade. Insects/Disease: Root rot
6. **Indigofera amblyantha** FABACEAE (**Chinese Indigo**) – **2.09** – This deciduous shrub producing upright racemes of soft-pink flowers was considered to be a tough and cold hardy plant. Some described as leggy while others said they had an interesting vase shaped habit. Many had flowers for over a month. One indicated that it was thrown away because all indigos are invasive. Most successful were planted in part shade while a few plants in full sun were successful, too. Insects/Disease: None
7. **Loropetalum chinense** 'Carolina Moonlight' HAMAMELIDACEAE (**Carolina Moonlight Loropetalum**) – **2.08** – This compact evergreen shrub with spreading growth habit and olive green foliage received a great variety of responses. Many said specimens were very poor and died almost immediately while others grew rapidly or very slowly. Some produced beautiful creamy-white colored flowers in early spring. Showy flowers combined well with the nice foliage. One member planted in a small pot to get a bonsai look. Results showed full sun was the most successful while a few in part shade also did well. Insects/Disease: None
8. **Melia azedarach** 'Jade Snowflake' MELIACEAE (**Variegated Chinaberry**) – **1.80** – This fast growing deciduous tree with stable, white mottled variegated foliage was a WOW plant for one and a great performer and fast growing beautiful tree for many. One indicated it was 15' by fall. The great delicate looking foliage with great variegation was a plus for most. Full sun plantings were most successful while others planted in varying sights also did well. One took to Grand Isle to plant by camp, another said it didn't do anything for them, while another killed because on the USDA and Texas Invasive and Noxious weed list. One said the foliage turned green in fall but when coming back out in early spring it was variegated again. Full sun plantings were most successful while others planted in varying sights also did well. Insects/Disease: None
9. **Pentas lanceolata** 'Nova' RUBIACEAE (**Nova Pentas**) – **2.51** – This perennial with dark-green leaves and large clusters of 3-4" diameter rose-pink, star-shaped flowers was chosen the TOP RELEASE PLANT for 2014. A few reported that it grew vigorously to 4' in summer. The beautiful color and showy flowers won the heart of 2/3 on reports. It was by far the favorite of many blooming the entire summer into fall. The way it stood out in gardens was another highlight. Many reported that the butterflies loved it. One brought inside for winter and it bloomed the entire time. Several took cuttings to have plants in spring. Although reported to be the most hardy of all Penta varieties, more than half said they lost to cold; however, a few said it appeared to be coming back from the roots. We must also remember that the past winter was an extremely cold and unusual one for our area. On the negative side one indicated that it was a poorly compound to standard flower and like 1000's of other pentas. Of course, this was certainly over ruled by the other 100 plus reporters. Full sun plantings were most successful and a few in other locations were successful, too. Insects/Disease: Mealy bugs
10. **Phlebodium aureum** 'Blue Star' POLYPODIACEAE (**Blue Star Fern**) – **1.93** – This epiphytic fern with deeply lobed, chalky, blue-green erect fronds was considered a unique plant with great fronds and an eye catcher for ferns. Some described the fronds as cool and sword like and very unusual. It was an interesting plant desirable for several types of plantings. Some put in hanging baskets which was attractive and became super full and others in large pots on the patio. Several also took inside for attraction. One considered an easy fern that acted like plastic since it was so easy to care for. A variety of planting locations were all successful from full sun to part shade which is definitely a big plus. Insects/Disease: None
11. **Portulaca oleracea** 'Florida Dwarf Rose' PORTULACAEAE (**Florida Dwarf Rose Purslane**) – **2.24** – This trailing annual with beautiful bright flowers rated # 2 for top 2014 release plant. It was a #1 favorite of almost half of members. It's beautiful bright rose-colored flowers made it an awesome plant that was absolutely stunning when in bloom. It was considered the best bloomer of all releases blooming profusely the entire summer. Drought tolerant preferring full sun and well-drained soil certainly was great for many areas. It was considered almost ever blooming. It dangled down from many hanging baskets and pots, spreading like a blanket of color in the garden, attractive display on decks and great in a succulent garden.

One considered still a weed in her book and nothing special.– how I don't know. Several took cuttings before winter, two indicated it tolerated outdoors during freeze but I am sure they had to be in the very south or in a protected area. One said too aggressive but I'm sure they could have given pieces away with ease. Those that did not bloom well were due to not having in full sun. Most planted in full sun; however, other areas seemed somewhat successful.
12. **Rosa sp.** ROSACEAE (**Carlos Smith Miniature Rose**) – **1.44** – This supposedly tough miniature rose found at an old home site in West Monroe, LA didn't prove tough for most of the members. Although some indicated it was hardy and carefree, most were not impressed and had lost almost immediately. One said it had 'turned up toes and left her'. It was considered a weak plant and in poor condition when approximately one dozen received. Some said pitiful and not impressed while others said they liked the compact mini bush with the unusual small leaves and wonderful blooms. The tiny leaves along with tiny buds which opened to double light pink flowers were a plus. And yet another said 'Love, love, love so cute.' Full sun plantings were most successful in addition to some in morning sun. Insects/Disease: Spider mites, aphids and black spot.

Some of the reports are hilarious to read. Especially in reference to what happened to plants that were lost. Animals unfortunately are the blame for many. One said attacked by an unknown animal, another ants killed, another a mole pushed out of the ground and another the dog enjoyed eating. Of course, a weed eater often gets the blame plus the husband or yard man.

Remember now is the time to check your 2015 release plants and to get them in the ground or larger pots if you have not done so before the heat of summer. With all the rain most should surely be Thriving. Make a final check on your information sheet for location of planting which will make a difference in the performance of your plants.

**#3 Caesalpinia
Mexicana
FABACEAE
(Mexican
Caesalpinia)
Rating 2.22 out of 3.**



Hibiscus continued from Page 1

produced nice plants but were only average in terms of visual quality ratings and flowering time. All three colors in the Flare hibiscus produced better blooms and better plant habits.

- There were no major landscape performance differences in the Fleming cultivars. The best observations were for Robert Fleming, Dave Fleming, Crown Jewels, Aquarian, Plum Crazy, Royal Gems, Pink Comet, Fireball and Cherub.
- In the Fleming cultivars, cold damage (two nights of 14 degrees winter 2013/2014) was most significant on Torchy, Satellite, Angelique, Little Prince and Kui Nuku.

New hardy hibiscus cultivars that have been released in the past couple years that deserve attention and evaluation include Jackie Grant (new 12 inch flowering pink from Greg Grant at Stephen F. Austin State University) and the Lufkin series (Red and White from Cecil Pounders, USDA – ARS in Poplarville, MS).

Walters Gardens Cultivars

- Berrylicious
- My Valentine
- Pink Elephant
- Jazzberry Jam
- Party Favor
- Midnight Marvel
- Cranberry Crush
- Tie Dye
- Summer Storm
- Sultry Kiss

PanAmerican Seed Luna Series Cultivars

- Luna Red
- Luna Rose
- Luna Pink Swirl
- Luna White

Industry Standard Cultivars

- Disco Bell
- Flare
- Pink Flare
- Peppermint Flare
- Moy Grande
- Lady Baltimore
- Lord Baltimore
- Red River
- Texas Red Star

Fleming Flower Fields Cultivars

- Kopper King
- Snowflake
- New Old Yella
- Royal Gems
- Aquarian
- Torchy
- Satellite
- Fireball
- Pink Comet
- Dave Fleming
- Fantasia
- Copper Queen
- Plum Crazy
- Eruption
- Strawberry Swirl
- Robert Fleming
- Cherub
- Kui Nuku
- Crown Jewels
- Angelique
- Little Prince
- Old Yella

Pink Flare (below)



Peppermint Flare (below)



Flare aka Red Flare (below)



**PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THE NEW
LSHR MAIL, EMAIL ADDRESS and WEBSITE**

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Lafayette, LA 70505

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IMPORTANT DATE FOR 2016

Mark your calendar for the Spring 2016 LSHR
Annual Meeting and Plant Release at the
Ira Nelson Hort. Center:
SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016

Another of My Favorite LSHR Plant Releases

By Glenda Balliviero

Choosing a favorite plant isn’t easy especially when you have as many as I do. In previous issues I wrote about other favorite releases including the Chalice Vine, Solandra grandiflora and the Tahitian Hat, Karomia tettensis. The one I have chosen to write about this time is the Pink Powderpuff, Calliandra emarginata, released in 2004. It is also referred to as Mexican Powderpuff and Honduran Powderpuff tree.

It is a low branching tropical shrub which is native to Suriname and whose flowers resemble those of the invasive mimosa species. This tropical plant is very susceptible to cold but can be grown outdoors in plant hardiness zones 10 and higher. Since it is not hardy in Lafayette, I have it planted in a large pot which I put in the greenhouse in the winter. Then in spring I put it out into the garden in partial shade among other plants in a flower bed. Here it blooms non-stop through late fall with long lasting flowers. It certainly adds a beautiful splash of color to my gardens as the bright pink flowers resemble exploding fireworks yet they resemble a ‘powder puff’ delicacy. It receives very little fertilizer and I maintain the size by pruning it to keep it in a manageable size.



Festival des Fleurs Announces Dates for 2016



Saturday & Sunday • April 2-3, 2016

Blackham Coliseum

2330 Johnston Street • Lafayette, LA

LSHR Plant Release Report Form 2015

You must complete and present this form to receive your 2016 Plant Release box.

Plant	Location (circle one) 1 = am sun 2 = pm sun 3 = full sun 4 = part shade 5 = full shade	Insects/Diseases	Living (yes/no)	Rating (circle one) 1 = poor 2 = good 3 = excellent	Comments
1. <i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i> 'Musaica'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
2. <i>Alstroemeria psittacina</i> 'Variegata'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
3. <i>Camellia sasanqua</i> 'October Magic Inspiration'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
4. <i>Clerodendrum wallichii</i>	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
5. <i>Hibiscus hamabo</i>	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
6. <i>Pelargonium</i> 'Mary Helen'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	

Plant	Location (circle one)	Insects/Diseases	Living (yes/no)	Rating (circle one)	Comments *
	1 = am sun 2 = pm sun 3 = full sun 4 = part shade 5 = full shade			1 = poor 2 = good 3 = excellent	
7. <i>Prunus</i> x 'Purple Pride'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
8. <i>Salvia</i> 'Silke's Dream'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
9. <i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i>	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
10. <i>Taxodium</i> x LaNana	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	
11. <i>Turnera ulmifolia</i> 'Trailing Yellow'	1 2 3 4 5			1 2 3	

* Please use the comments column to note additional information, e.g. fragrant, showy, colorful, froze etc.