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# Plant Evaluation Notes



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## Hardy Herbaceous Hibiscus

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Hardy hibiscus trial at the Chicago Botanic Garden

Few temperate perennials are as flamboyant as hardy hibiscuses or rose mallows—their brightly colorful dinner-plate-sized flowers can be up to 10 inches wide, bringing exotic vibes to northern gardens. Selections of the herbaceous perennial swamp rose mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) have been cultivated for a long time but in recent years there have been exciting developments such as new flower colors and sizes, increased flower production, enhanced leaf colors and shapes, and shorter compact plant habits. Hardy hibiscuses have fans and detractors—their gigantic flowers are exuberant and charismatic to some gardeners, while others find them outsized and garish.

Hardy hibiscuses are in the mallow family (Malvaceae) and related to recognizable garden plants such as Indian mallow (*Abutilon* spp.) and hollyhock (*Alcea* spp.), and important agricultural plants such as cotton (*Gossypium* spp.), cacao (*Theobroma cacao*), and okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*). There are 243 accepted *Hibiscus* species worldwide,

mainly from tropical and subtropical areas. Swamp rose mallow (*H. moscheutos*) is native to eastern North America and cold-hardy to USDA Zone 5. The hardy hibiscus cultivars in the market today are typically hybrids between several temperate U.S. native species such as scarlet rose mallow (*H. coccineus*) from the southeastern U.S., halberdleaf rose mallow from eastern North America (*H. laevis*), and swamp rose mallow.

Red, pink, and white are the typical flower colors of hardy hibiscuses, although selections offer up many variations in color intensity including flushed and bicolored petals. The introduction of a lilac-blue-flowered cultivar [*Hibiscus* SUMMER SPICE® BLEU BRULEE™] broadened the color range, predicting more innovations to come. The shade and intensity of the spot or bull's eye at the base of the petals varies by cultivar and may contrast with or bleed into the petal color or may be so close in color to the petals that it effectively disappears.



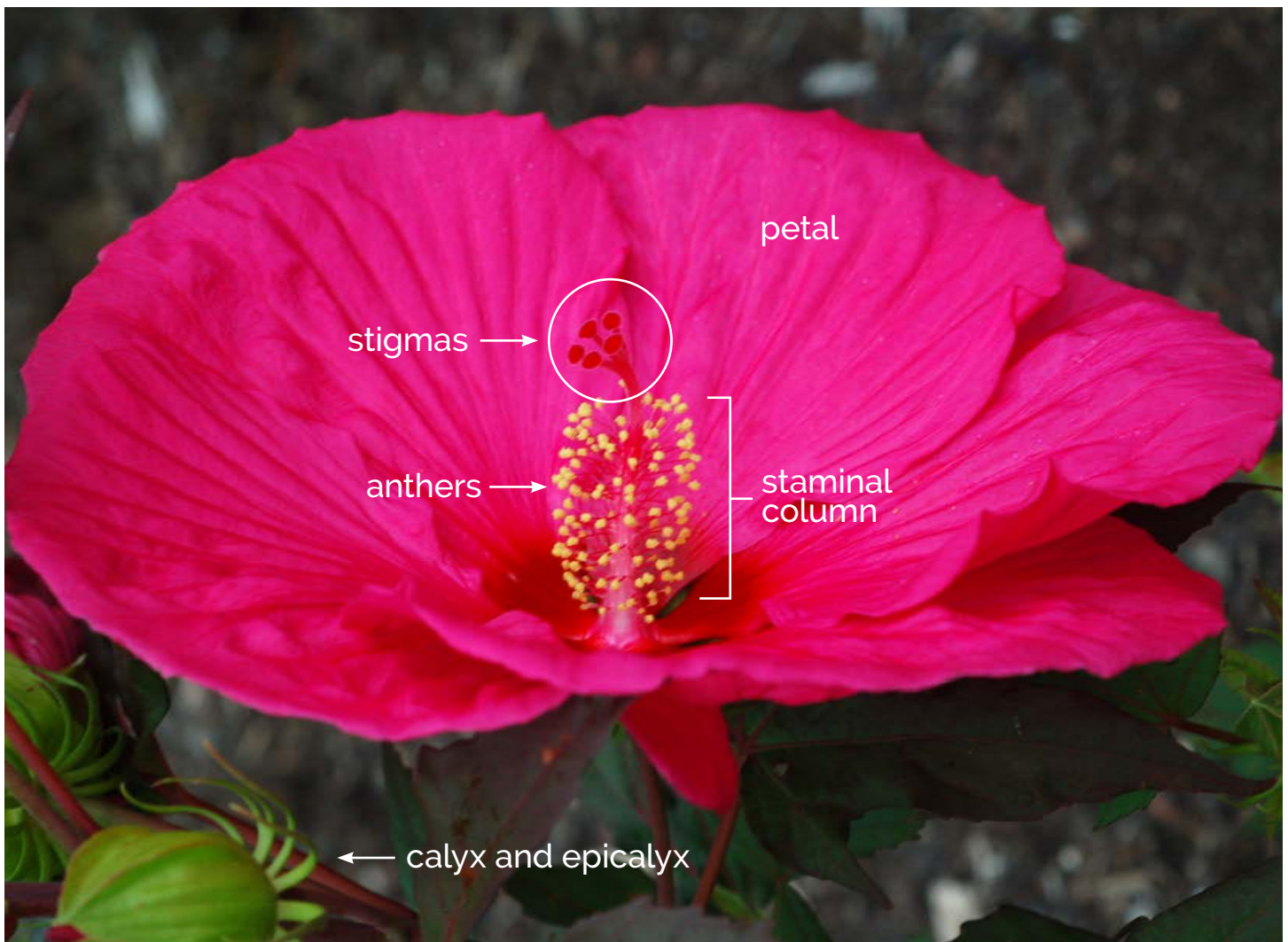


Figure 1: Hibiscus floral diagram [*Hibiscus moscheutos* 'James Fleming']

Flower forms vary from flat to slightly cupped. The five crinkled or crepey petals typically overlap and are etched with prominent veins that are sometimes suffused with a different color. Wild-occurring swamp rose mallow flowers range from 4 to 6 inches wide, but cultivars may have flowers up to 10 inches across. Flowers are held in a green, leaf-like calyx, which is subtended by a fingerlike epicalyx [whorl of bracts beneath the calyx]. The male and female reproductive parts are held on long bottlebrush columns protruding from the center of the corolla. The numerous stamens are fused into the prominent staminal column that surrounds the pistil and bristles with many white or yellow anthers; the pistil branches into five stigmas at the apex of the column [see Figure 1].

Flowers are fleeting—each blossom lasts for one to two days but flowers open in succession over many weeks in the summer and early fall. Flowers may or may not drop cleanly from the plant; if wet, flowers are prone to sticking to and drying on the leaves in an unsightly display. Fruit capsules ripen brown, remaining on the plants for an extended time, adding minor late-season interest. Some older cultivars are more plant than flower, but newer cultivars have been bred for indeterminate flowering, meaning that axillary flowers are produced along the stems and not just at the tips. Hardy hibiscuses provide nectar and pollen for bumblebees, other specialist bees, and hummingbirds. Caterpillars of several butterflies and moths feed on the foliage.



Variegated leaves and buds of 'Summer Carnival'





Figure 2: Leaf shapes a) oval, b) dissected, c) lobed

The swamp rose mallow leaf is broadly oval [figure 2a] and may be shallowly lobed, but many hybrids feature dissected leaves that are strongly lobed to deeply divided [figure 2b] or intermediate between the two types [figure 2c]. Leaves of scarlet rose mallow and halberdleaf rose mallow are palmately divided and lobed, respectively. The typical green leaves may be accented in varying shades of purple, burgundy, copper, and bronze. While these accents can fade quickly, some of the newer cultivars hold the deep burgundy coloration all summer. Leaf margins, veins, and petioles, as well as stems are often red to burgundy too. Rose mallows are herbaceous plants with bushy shrublike proportions, ranging from a few feet to over 7 feet tall. Habits can be taller than wide or as wide as tall, and stems are typically strong enough to stay upright during heavy flowering.

Hardy hibiscuses prefer consistently moist soils in full sun to light shade—the common name swamp rose mallow attests to their fondness for water, but they do not need to grow in a wetland. Cut down stems in the fall or early spring, leaving 2- to 3-inch stubs to mark the location where new shoots will emerge late in the spring. Each flower lasts for a day or two, and given their large sizes, cleaning up spent flowers might be necessary in some landscape settings. In dry weather, the withered flowers usually fall cleanly, although litter around the plants can build up because of the high quantity of flowers produced over the long bloom period. If the flowers are wet when they drop, they turn mushy and may stick to and dry on the leaves.

Flea beetles, Japanese beetles, and hibiscus sawflies are primary pests; rusts, leaf spots, and stem and crown rots can be disease problems. Flea beetles are tiny, shiny black insects that can be easily overlooked until you see little shotholes in the leaves. Damage ranges from a minor cosmetic issue to leaves riddled with holes in severe cases. Japanese beetles can do considerable damage skeletonizing leaves and flowers. Japanese beetle damage can be easily confused with flea beetle damage. Hibiscus sawfly larvae feed on the undersides of leaves—tattering the leaves with their heavy feeding.



Flea beetle damage on HEAD OVER HEELS® Blush





*Hibiscus* 'Heartthrob'

Hardy hibiscuses are shrublike in shape and size and can be used similarly in gardens and landscapes. These bold, summer-blooming perennials work as focal points, in mass, as seasonal hedging, and in mixed shrub and herbaceous borders, beds, and waterside gardens. Hardy hibiscuses combine nicely with fine-textured perennials and grasses. The large flowers are fanciful up-close and are impactful from a long distance due to their size and bold colors.

## Trial Parameters

The Chicago Botanic Garden's first hardy hibiscus trial ran from 1989 through 1992 and featured 29 cultivars that were in the marketplace at the time. The recently completed trial of 47 taxa occurred from 2009 through 2024; the trial included contemporary cultivars introduced during that timeframe. Breeding trends leading up to and during the recent trial period were the impetus for undertaking the new study. Many of the earliest cultivars were tall and flowered only at the tops of the plants, while more recent breeding and selection has developed shorter cultivars with increased floriferousness and extended bloom periods. A full list of the hardy hibiscus cultivars evaluated between 1989 and 2025 is shown in Appendix 1.

Each taxon was evaluated for four years, although some hibiscuses remained in the trial garden for up to eight years [see Appendix 1]. A minimum of three plants of each taxon were grown side-by-side for easy comparison of ornamental traits and landscape performance. The evaluation garden was openly exposed to wind in all directions and potentially received up to 10 hours of full sun daily prior to 2015.

Maturing sycamore trees in an adjacent landscape eventually cast significant shade over portions of the trial bed from 2015 onward. In recent years, a portion of the plants were only in full sun until early afternoon. The clay-loam soil had a pH of 7.4, and although typically well-drained, the site occasionally retained excess water for short periods in all seasons.



Gray-pink flowers of 'Lilac Crush'

Maintenance practices were kept to a minimum, thereby allowing the plants to thrive or fail under natural conditions. Trial beds were irrigated via overhead sprinklers as needed, mulched with composted leaves once each summer, and regularly weeded. Moreover, plants were not deadheaded, fertilized, winter mulched, or chemically treated for insects or diseases. All stems were cut back to short stubs in late winter to mark the location of the late-emerging shoots. Emergence typically occurred in late May to early June.



Shoots emerging among winter stubs



## The Evaluation Report

During their respective trial periods, all plants were regularly observed and appraised on 1) adaptability to the soil and environmental conditions; 2) disease and pest issues; 3) winter hardiness and survivability; and 4) the ornamental qualities of flowers, foliage, and habits. Final performance ratings for the 47 taxa in the trial are shown in Table 1; ratings are based on flower production and floral display quality, foliage and habit quality, plant health and vigor, and winter survivability. The final ratings reflect the 2024 change from a five-star ranking system (excellent to very poor) to a four-star ranking (excellent to poor). In Table 1, plant names are alphabetized by their cultivar or trademark names where the coded cultivar names might cause identity confusion. For example, on the table 'RutHib3' is listed by its trademark name HEAD OVER HEELS® ADORE. Conversely, plant names are alphabetized by cultivar in Appendix 1.

## Top-Rated Hardy Hibiscus

Thirteen taxa received four-star excellent ratings for their overall ornamental display related to strong flower production, foliar and habit quality, and ease of culture. Plants were generally cold-hardy in our Zone 5b/6a site, so winter injury was not a primary factor in the final ratings. The four-star hardy hibiscus included 'Berry Awesome', 'Berrylicious', 'Cranberry Crush', 'Dark Mystery', 'Evening Rose', HEAD

OVER HEELS® Adore [RutHib3], 'Heartthrob', 'Mars Madness', 'Midnight Marvel', 'Mocha Moon', 'Perfect Storm', 'Sultry Kiss', and 'Vintage Wine'.

**'Berry Awesome'** had 8-inch magenta flowers with a dark red eye. Flowers were freely produced and evenly distributed on the plant from late July to early September and were generally self-cleaning, i.e. falling freely to the ground. The dark green and burgundy dissected leaves had a unique silvery cast. 'Berry Awesome' had a uniform bushy habit to 52 inches tall and 69 inches wide with attractive purple-red stems. Years trialed: 2016 – 2021.

The light pink-purple flowers of **'Berrylicious'** were bountiful from late July to mid-September. The nearly flat, 8-inch blossoms featured ruffled petals and a bright red eye. Flowers were borne all over the dense bushy plants—50 inches tall and 60 inches wide. 'Berrylicious' was consistently recorded as having one of the best overall habits. Its bright green dissected leaves were attractive all summer, although minor cosmetic damage from flea beetles was observed periodically. Unfortunately, spent flowers hung onto the plants longer (and more consistently) than on most other cultivars and was exacerbated in wet weather. Years trialed: 2012 – 2016.



*Hibiscus* 'Berry Awesome'



*Hibiscus* 'Berrylicious'





*Hibiscus* 'Cranberry Crush'



*Hibiscus* 'Dark Mystery'

The 8-inch flowers of '**Cranberry Crush**' were deep scarlet-red—the color so intense that the red eye was barely discernible at the center of the slightly cupped petals. The color intensity was heightened as the dark blood-red flower buds ballooned before opening in late July. The dissected leaves were shiny deep bronze early on but turned dark green with purple overtones for the summer. 'Cranberry Crush' bloomed fully over dense rounded plants—50 inches tall and 56 inches wide—and consistently received high marks for habit uniformity. Years trialed: 2013 – 2017.

The oval leaves of '**Dark Mystery**' were among the darkest in the trial—rich burgundy with a chocolatey tone that set it apart from other dark-colored selections such as 'Midnight Marvel' and 'Perfect Storm'. The cherry red eye bled along the veins in a starburst pattern, giving the white flower a pink blush. The 8-inch blossoms were produced freely from mid-August to mid-September. 'Dark Mystery' was consistently noted as one of the best displays of the year due to its dark foliage, prolific bloom, and robust habits to 52 inches tall and 53 inches wide. Flea beetles were observed on the plants in most years, but the damage was deemed a minor cosmetic issue. Years trialed: 2020 – 2024.

'**Evening Rose**' featured 8-inch, hot magenta-pink flowers with red eyes. The petals were prominently puckered or ruffled and shallowly cupped. Strong burgundy dissected leaves paired nicely with the bright flowers. Leaf color was not as consistent as 'Dark Mystery'; green leaves were part of the color mix when flowers started blooming in early August. Although flowering typically ended in mid-September, a second minor bloom was occasionally noted in October. Plants had rounded, bushy habits to 53 inches tall and 56 inches wide. Years trialed: 2019 – 2023.



*Hibiscus* 'Evening Rose'





*Hibiscus moscheutos* HEAD OVER HEELS® Adore

The texture of its oval leaves set **HEAD OVER HEELS® Adore** [RutHib3] apart from most other cultivars. The green and burgundy leaves were covered in soft stellate pubescence, which gave them a silvery velvet appearance, especially lustrous in bright sunlight. The pubescence comes from one of its parents *H. moscheutos* ssp. *lasiocarpus*. Pink, 8-inch flowers were evenly distributed over the entire bushy plants from early August to mid-September. Although flea beetles were observed on the plants, minimal foliar damage was noted. Plant habits were full and robust, 60 inches tall and 70 inches wide. Years trialed: 2020 – 2024.

From nearly black buds, **'Heartthrob'** opened to deep blood red flowers with darker black-red eyes. The 9-inch-wide flowers were generously produced from late July to mid-September and were well-distributed over the entirety of the 5-foot-tall bushy plants. A touch of bronze was present on the large oval leaves in spring, but the leaves quickly turned green with green stems in summer. Years trialed: 2013 – 2019.



*Hibiscus* 'Heartthrob'



*Hibiscus* 'Mars Madness'

From early August to mid-September, **'Mars Madness'** produced an abundance of 9-inch-wide deep red flowers with slightly darker red eyes and overlapping, crinkled petals. The large lobed leaves were distinctly burgundy in spring, fading to dark coppery green for the summer. 'Mars Madness' had one of the most substantial habits at 57 inches tall and 80 inches wide. Years trialed: 2016 – 2021.

From late July to mid-September, the dark burgundy leaves of **'Midnight Marvel'** were liberally dotted with deep scarlet-red flowers. The slightly cupped 8-inch flowers were as vibrant as 'Cranberry Crush', while the large, dissected leaves were as dark as 'Summer Storm'. The leaf color held for most of the season but dimmed to bronze-purple in midsummer before turning half purple, half green in September—the base of each leaf was yellow-green throughout. 'Midnight Marvel' had dark purple-red stems and a uniformly robust bushy habit to 56 inches tall and 58 inches wide. Years trialed: 2013 – 2021.



*Hibiscus* 'Midnight Marvel'





*Hibiscus* 'Mocha Moon'

The huge white flowers of **'Mocha Moon'** to 8-9 inches wide—featured bright red eyes that bled vividly into the broad overlapping petals. Its deep bronze-green dissected leaves were held on dark purple-red stems. The bright lime green spidery floral bracts contrasted nicely against the bronze foliage during and after blooming. 'Mocha Moon' had a bushy habit to nearly 5 feet tall and 6 feet wide. Years trialed: 2016 – 2021.

The pink-blushed white flowers of **'Perfect Storm'** looked pink from afar. The slightly cupped 8-inch flowers had an especially large, vivid deep red eye at the base of the overlapping petals. The dark burgundy dissected leaves were exceptionally colorful but were mixed with green later in the season. At 4 feet tall and 6 feet wide, 'Perfect Storm' had a full bushy habit. Years trialed: 2015-2021.



*Hibiscus* 'Perfect Storm'



*Hibiscus* 'Sultry Kiss'



Ballooning buds of *Hibiscus* 'Sultry Kiss'

The floral show of **'Sultry Kiss'** was a standout in the trial. Deep red buds opened to 10-inch-wide magenta-red flowers with overlapping petals. Flowers were profusely produced from late July to mid-September. Dark green dissected leaves featured a bronze to purple cast early in the season—the uppermost leaves were purple-blushed in midsummer. 'Sultry Kiss' had a robust bushy habit reaching 5 feet tall and wide. Years trialed: 2010 – 2016.





*Hibiscus* 'Vintage Wine'

The scarlet-red flowers of '**Vintage Wine**' were comparable to 'Cranberry Crush', although a shade darker, with overlapping heavily crinkled petals. The 8-inch flowers were slightly cupped with a near black eye and were produced freely over the plant beginning in midsummer. The dark green oval leaves were purple- to bronze-tinged at the tips. 'Vintage Wine' had a full dense habit with red stems to 55 inches tall and 60 inches wide. Years trialed: 2016 – 2021.

## General Observations

Significant breeding developments related to flower production, foliar traits, and plant size have occurred since the Chicago Botanic Garden's original hardy hibiscus trial in 1989. Perhaps most noteworthy is the development of indeterminate blooming, where both terminal and axillary flowers are produced, resulting in increased bloom production over more of the plant and a prolonged bloom period. Flower coverage and peak floral displays were not easily measured on the hardy hibiscuses due to the single-day lifespan of an individual flower and the random opening of new flowers daily over the long flowering cycle. Conversely, flower production was generally high on all hibiscuses and increased correspondingly with age as the number of stems per plant increased.

The shapes and colors of hardy hibiscus leaves have also changed significantly from the cultivars in the earlier trial. Oval [ovate to heart-shaped] leaves were predominant on older selections, whereas the leaves of modern hybrid cultivars are more commonly lobed [oval with shallow lobes] or dissected [deeply divided or incised]. Furthermore, cultivars with burgundy or bronze leaves are now more prevalent too. Only three of the 29 cultivars—about 10 percent—in the 1989 trial exhibited some reddish coloration on dissected leaves. The final report on this trial noted that "red petioles, veins, and leaf margins were most prominent on 'Anna J. Hemming' and 'Red Cutleaf', and less so on 'Lord Baltimore'. The intensity of red was deepest as the leaves emerged and markedly dissipated as the season progressed. These three cultivars were also the only plants with dissected leaves". Conversely, 31 taxa or almost 70 percent of the cultivars in the current trial had dissected leaves—of these, 55 percent were green, while 45 percent were partially to fully burgundy or bronze. And nine cultivars in the trial held the dark burgundy foliage color throughout the growing season.



*Hibiscus* 'Midnight Marvel'





*Hibiscus* 'Dark Mystery'

Most cultivars were spindly-stemmed in the first year or two in the ground. By the third year, the hibiscuses generally had bushy multi-stemmed habits. Consistently loose, open, or uneven habits during the trial period factored into lower overall ratings for several cultivars such as 'Dave Fleming', 'Robert Fleming', and the SUMMER SPICE® series—CRÈME DE LA CRÈME™, RASPBERRY FLAMBE™, and VINCOTTO™.

The hibiscuses were generally adaptable to the clay soil of the trial garden. The periodic and sometimes protracted wetness of the site was not problematic for established hibiscus. However, fluctuations in soil moisture from wet to dry occasionally caused small plants to struggle during their first year. Plants in one-gallon production pots were most common at planting; however, occasionally a few smaller and weaker plants in 4-inch pots were planted, resulting in less successful establishment in year one and sometimes into the second year too. A grove of sycamore trees planted near the hibiscus plot in 2012 gradually created more shade on the hibiscus as the trees grew taller. Sun exposure began gradually decreasing in 2015, eventually averaging about four hours per day for half the plants by 2025. The increased shade adversely impacted habit quality, resulting in stretching and openness on some plants.

Most taxa fully survived all winters during the trial. However, several exceptions were noted: all plants of 'Stardust' suffered 50-80% crown loss in 2012, two plants died in 2013, and one plant died in 2015; one plant of 'Strawberry Swirl' died in 2012 and minor crown injury on all remaining plants was noted in all years of its trial; all plants of 'My Valentine' died during the final winter of its trial (2016); and one plant each of RASPBERRY GLACE™ (2024), VINCOTTO™ (2022), and 'Tie Dye' (2013) died during their respective winters.

The hibiscuses were disease-free during the trial periods, but damage from Japanese beetles and flea beetles was commonly observed. Shotholes caused by one or both beetles feeding on the leaves were considered cosmetic, which impacted the habit quality rating rather than plant health. Flea beetles were more commonly observed on the hibiscus than were Japanese beetles, likely in part due to local populations of Japanese beetles declining over the last ten years. Beetle damage varied by year and by degree, from minor to severe—in severe cases leaves and flowers were occasionally skeletonized. Hibiscus sawfly was not observed in the trials.

## Summary

Hardy hibiscuses are charismatic garden perennials with decidedly shrubby habits due to their generous proportions. The ornamental evolution of hardy hibiscus is demonstrated by the 90 cultivars evaluated at the Chicago Botanic Garden between 1989 and 2025. Breeding developments over this period resulted in significant ornamental changes in appearance—tall cultivars with terminal flowers were replaced by shorter cultivars with increased floriferousness, novel flower colors, and extended bloom periods. The introduction of enhanced leaf colors and shapes in the past 15 years has further increased their ornamental appeal. Visitors evinced the popularity and draw of hardy hibiscus by their frequent stops in the trial garden for selfies with these boldly exotic flowers.

Thirteen hardy hibiscus cultivars received excellent ratings for their heavy flower production, foliage and habit quality, ease of culture, and winter hardiness. Top-rated cultivars included 'Berry Awesome', 'Berrylicious', 'Cranberry Crush', 'Dark Mystery', 'Evening Rose', HEAD OVER HEELS® Adore, 'Heartthrob', 'Mars Madness', 'Midnight Marvel', 'Mocha Moon', 'Perfect Storm', 'Sultry Kiss', and 'Vintage Wine'.



Japanese beetle damage [*Hibiscus* 'Mars Madness']





*Hibiscus* 'Jazzberry Jam'

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Cover photo: *Hibiscus moscheutos* 'James Fleming' [photo by Ellie Cashen]

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Table 1: Overall Ratings and Observational Data

Overall Rating	Hibiscus	Flower Color	Flower Size	Bloom Period	Leaf Color and Shape	Plant Height	Plant Width
★★★★	'Airbrush Effect'	dark pink, red eye	8½ in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark green, oval	42 in.	50 in.
★★★★	'Angel Eyes'	white, red eye	7 in.	late Jul-mid-Aug	dark green, oval	36 in.	38 in.
★★★★	'Ballet Slippers'	white, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark green, dissected	54 in.	65 in.
★★★★	'Berry Awesome'	magenta, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-early Sep	burgundy and green, dissected	52 in.	69 in.
★★★★	'Berrylicious'	light pink-purple, dark red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	bright green, dissected	50 in.	60 in.
★★★★	'Blackberry Merlot'	deep red, deeper eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark green, dissected	47 in.	45 in.
★★★★	'Brandy Punch'	pink, darker veins, red eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark green, dissected	55 in.	60 in.
★★★★	'Candy Crush'	deep pink, dark red eye	7 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	bright green, dissected	45 in.	50 in.
★★★★	'Cherry Cheesecake'	white with pink, red eye	7 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green, dissected	63 in.	67 in.
★★★★	'Cherry Choco Latte'	white and pink, red eye	9 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark olive green and bronze, dissected	48 in.	54 in.
★★★★	'Cranberry Crush'	deep red, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	deep green, dissected	50 in.	56 in.
★★★★	'Dark Mystery'	white, red eye	8 in.	mid-Aug-mid-Sep	dark burgundy, oval	52 in.	53 in.
★★	'Edge of Night'	pink, red eye	7 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark burgundy, oval	26 in.	26 in.
★★★★	'Evening Rose'	hot pink, red eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark burgundy, dissected	53 in.	56 in.
★★	'French Vanilla'	creamy yellow, raspberry eye	6 in.	mid-Aug-mid-Sep	deep green, dissected	45 in.	45 in.
★★★★	'Heartthrob'	deep blackish red, darker eye	9 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green, oval	60 in.	52 in.
★★★★	'Holy Grail'	deep red, similar eye	9 in.	mid-Aug-mid-Sep	deep burgundy, dissected	48 in.	65 in.
★★★★	'Inner Glow'	rosy pink, lavender halo, dark red eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	olive green and burgundy, dissected	42 in.	36 in.
★★★★	'Jazzberry Jam'	magenta, red eye	9 in.	early Aug-late Sep	green, dissected	50 in.	62 in.
★★★★	'Lilac Crush'	gray-pink, dark red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green, dissected	47 in.	48 in.
★★★★	'Mars Madness'	deep red, darker eye	9 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark olive green and copper, lobed	57 in.	80 in.
★★★★	'Midnight Marvel'	deep scarlet-red, similar eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark burgundy, dissected	56 in.	58 in.
★★★★	'Mocha Moon'	white, red eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	bronze-green, dissected	58 in.	68 in.
★★	moscheutos 'Dave Fleming'	bright pink, red eye	8½ in.	early Aug-late Sep	green and maroon, dissected	42 in.	42 in.
★★★★	moscheutos 'James Fleming'	bright pink, dark red eye	9½ in.	late Jul-early Sep	dark green, dissected	50 in.	52 in.
★★	moscheutos 'Robert Fleming'	dark red, darker eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	deep green, oval	38 in.	44 in.
★★★★	moscheutos HEAD OVER HEELS® Adore [RuthHib3]	pink, dark red eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	burgundy-green, oval	60 in.	70 in.
★★★★	moscheutos HEAD OVER HEELS® Blush [RuthHib1]	white with pink blush, dark red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	burgundy, dissected	43 in.	58 in.
★★★★	moscheutos 'Snowflake'	bright red, white backside, darker eye	10 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green, lobed	40 in.	54 in.
★★	moscheutos 'Stardust'	bright pink, red eye	9 in.	early Aug-late Sep	green, dissected	40 in.	42 in.

Overall Ratings: ★★★★★ excellent, ★★★★ good, ★★★ fair, ★ poor



Table 1: Overall Ratings and Observational Data (continued)

Overall Rating	Hibiscus	Flower Color	Flower Size	Bloom Period	Leaf Color and Shape	Plant Height	Plant Width
★★	moscheutos 'Strawberry Swirl'	light and dark pink, ddark red eye	9 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark green, lobed	45 in.	48 in.
★★	'My Valentine'	deep red, darker eye	8 in.	late Aug-mid-Sep	bright green, dissected	47 in.	45 in.
★★★	'Party Favor'	bright pink, red eye	9 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green, dissected	51 in.	60 in.
★★★	'Perfect Storm'	white with pink blush, red eye	8 in.	mid-Aug-mid-Sep	dark burgundy, dissected	46 in.	70 in.
★★★	'Plum Fantasy'	deep magenta-red, dark red eye	9 in.	late Jul-late Sep	dark green, dissected	60 in.	68 in.
★★★	'Spinderella'	pink and white, dark red eye	7 in.	mid-Jul-mid-Sep	dark green, lobed	50 in.	55 in.
★★★	'Starry Starry Night'	pink, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	near-black, dissected	48 in.	58 in.
★★★★	'Sultry Kiss'	magenta-red, darker eye	10 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark green, dissected	55 in.	60 in.
★★★	'Summer Carnival'	dark magenta-pink, dark eye	7 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	green with cream margins, dissected	46 in.	56 in.
★★★	SUMMER SPICE® CRÈME DE LA CRÈME™ [4400]	white, magenta eye	8 in.	mid-Aug-mid-Sep	green, lobed	48 in.	45 in.
★★★	SUMMER SPICE® PLUM FLAMBE™ [4385]	magenta, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	dark green, dissected	56 in.	52 in.
★★	SUMMER SPICE® RASPBERRY GLACE™ [161020C-4SLW]	red, darker eye	8 in.	mid-Aug-late Sep	green, dissected	33 in.	50 in.
★★	SUMMER SPICE® VINCOTTO™ [171658W]	pink, red eye	7 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	bronze, dissected	33 in.	33 in.
★★★	'Summer Storm'	pink, red eye	8 in.	early Aug-late Sep	dark burgundy, dissected	48 in.	48 in.
★★	'Tie Dye'	pink and white, cherry red eye	9 in.	early Aug-late Sep	green, dissected	50 in.	52 in.
★★	'Valentine's Crush'	bright red, red eye	8 in.	late Jul-mid-Sep	green with bronze cast, oval	46 in.	40 in.
★★★★	'Vintage Wine'	scarlet-red, darker eye	8 in.	early Aug-mid-Sep	dark green, oval	55 in.	60 in.

Overall Ratings: ★★★★★ excellent, ★★★ good, ★★ fair, ★ poor



## Appendix 1: Hibiscus evaluated at the Chicago Botanic Garden

<i>Hibiscus</i>	Trial Period
'Anna J. Hemming'	1989-1992
'Bright Eyes'	1989-1992
'Airbrush Effect'	2018-2024
'All Eyes On Me'	2022-2025
'Angel Eyes'	2021-2025
'Ballet Slippers'	2017-2021
'Berry Awesome'	2016-2021
'Berrylicious'	2012-2016
'Big Red'	1989-1992
'Blackberry Merlot'	2020-2024
'Bordeaux'	2006-2009
'Brandy Punch'	2019-2023
'Brilliant Cerise'	1989-1992
'Candy Apple'	1989-1992
'Candy Crush'	2020-2024
'Candy Stick'	1989-1992
'Chablis'	2006-2009
'Cherry Brandy'	2006-2009
'Cherry Cheesecake'	2014-2021
'Cherry Choco Latte'	2017-2021
'Cinnamon Grappa'	2006-2009
'Cookies and Cream'	2023-2025★
'Cranberry Crush'	2013-2021
'Dark Mystery'	2020-2024
'Edge of Night'	2022-2025
'Evening Rose'	2019-2023
'Forbidden Pleasure' [unreleased]	2012-2015
'French Vanilla'	2020-2024
'Grenache'	2006-2009
'Heartthrob'	2013-2019
'Holy Grail'	2019-2023
'Inner Glow'	2021-2024
'Intense Pink'	1989-1992
'It's My Party' [unreleased]	2012-2015
'Jazzberry Jam'	2009-2016
'Lewis Beck'	1989-1992
'Lilac Crush'	2021-2024
'Mars Madness'	2016-2021
'Marshmallow Moon'	2023-2025★
'Midnight Marvel'	2013-2021
'Mocha Moon'	2016-2021
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Blue River II'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Clown'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Crimson Wonder'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Dave Fleming'	2011-2016
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Giant Maroon'	1989-1992

<i>Hibiscus</i>	Trial Period
<i>moscheutos</i> 'James Fleming'	2011-2016
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Lester Riegel'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Lord Baltimore'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Lord's Pink'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Lou Emmonds'	2009-2012
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Pink Elephant'	2010-2013
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Pink Giant'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Poinsettia'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Radiation'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Robert Fleming'	2017-2021
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Ruby Dot'	1989-1992
<i>moscheutos</i> 'RutHib1' HEAD OVER HEELS® Blush	2020-2024
<i>moscheutos</i> 'RutHib3' HEAD OVER HEELS® Adore	2020-2024
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Snowflake'	2011-2016
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Stardust'	2011-2016
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Strawberry Swirl'	2011-2016
<i>moscheutos</i> 'Super Rose'	1989-1992
'My Valentine'	2012-2016
'Party Favor'	2010-2016
'Peppermint Schnapps'	2006-2009
'Perfect Storm'	2015-2021
'Pinot Grigio'	2006-2009
'Pinot Noir'	2006-2009
'Plum Fantasy'	2014-2021
'Red Cutleaf'	1989-1992
'Royal Rose'	1989-1992
'Sleeping Beauty'	1989-1992
'Snow Queen'	1989-1992
'Spinderella'	2020-2024
'Starry Starry Night'	2017-2021
'Strawberries 'n' Cream'	1989-1992
'Strawberry Swirl'	1989-1992
'Sultry Kiss'	2010-2016
'Summer Carnival'	2019-2023
'Summer Storm'	2013-2016
'Tie Dye'	2012-2016
'Turn of the Century'	1998-2001
'Valentine's Crush'	2021-2024
'Vintage Wine'	2016-2021
'Watermelon Ruffles'	2023-2025★
'161020C-4SLW' SUMMER SPICE® RASPBERRY GLACE™	2021-2024
'171658W' SUMMER SPICE® VINCOTTO™	2021-2024
'4385' SUMMER SPICE® PLUM FLAMBE™	2019-2023
'4400' SUMMER SPICE® CRÈME DE LA CRÈME™	2019-2023

★trial incomplete at time of publication





## chicago botanic garden

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