

Winter-Hardy Hibiscus Breeding Program



This project is a cooperative effort of Dr. Dariusz Malinowski and Dr. William E. Pinchak (Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center, Vernon), and Steve Brown (Texas Foundation Seed Service).

Rationale

Hibiscus moscheutos L. (crimson-eyed rose mallow, swamp rose mallow) is a winter-hardy plant native to the north-east, south-east, south and south-west USA and south-east Canada. Its wonderful, tropical-looking flowers and high tolerance to drought make winter-hardy hibiscus a highly desirable plant in regions with periods of low temperatures in winter, required for initiation of a dormancy stage and blooming next season. The flowers last 1 day and colors range from white through pink to red, depending on species, with a dark red or brown center eye. Recently developed cultivars such as 'Fantasia' (PP11,853) and 'Plum Crazy' (PP11,854) have lavender flowers. Cultivars with dual-color flowers are still rare but include 'Peppermint Schnapps' (PP18,939) and 'Turn of the Century'. Once established, winter-hardy hibiscuses are drought resistant.

Objectives

The breeding program was initiated in 2007. The objective of this research program is to develop new cultivars of winter-hardy hibiscus with unique flower and foliage color and shape. Dr. Malinowski, in collaboration with Dr. W.E. Pinchak (Texas AgriLife Research – Vernon) and R.S. Brown (Texas Foundation Seed Service – Vernon) have created and evaluated over 6,000 hibiscus hybrids during 2009–2012. Eighty breeding lines with exceptional characteristics have been disclosed to the TAMU Office of Technology Commercialization. About forty lines are currently subjects of evaluation agreements with national and international industry partners.

Impact

To date, we disclosed 80 breeding lines to the Office of Technology Commercialization of the Texas A&M University. The first blue-flowering winter-hardy hibiscus “Blue Angel” and a cultivar with dual-color flowers “Robert Brown” were released by Texas AgriLife Research in 2011.



Blue Angel winter-hardy hibiscus



Robert Brown winter-hardy hibiscus

Funding Sources

Texas AgriLife Research

Texas Foundation Seed Service

Popular Press Articles About The Winter-Hardy Hibiscus Breeding Program

- 2012 [Researchers take hibiscus efforts to commercialization.](#) By Kay Ledbetter. AgriLife Communications.
- 2010 [AgriLife Research hibiscus breeder comes up with the blue. Rare hibiscus color is achieved after four years.](#)
By Kay Ledbetter. AgriLife Communications.
- 2010 [White eyes, foot-wide flowers, maroon plants. AgriLife Research creating unique winter-hardy hibiscuses.](#)
By Kay Ledbetter. AgriLife Communications.
- 2009 [Unique Winter-Hardy Hibiscus Has Roots with AgriLife Research Scientist in Vernon.](#) By Kay Ledbetter.
AgriLife Communications.



Examples of breeding lines selected for unique flower color



Examples of breeding lines selected for "spider-like" petals



Examples of breeding lines selected for unique flower shape

[Dariusz Malinowski's Homepage](#)