

Hibiscus

Hibiscus is a member of the mallow family which encompasses over 300 species, including trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals. The beautiful exotic looking flowers are short-lived, typically blooming for only one day, closing-up, and then dropping off. Hibiscus sold at Stauffers of Kissel Hill include three types: Tropical Hibiscus, Rose of Sharon, and Giant or Rose Mallow Hibiscus.

Tropical Hibiscus

As the name describes, these hibiscus originate in tropical climates and do not tolerate freezing temperatures. They can only live outside where temperatures are above 40 degrees. These are the hibiscus we associate with Hawaii. Their flowers are often large and in bright vibrant colors, have glossy green foliage, and are sold in shrub forms or single or braided stem trees. These are usually grown in containers for summer patios, porches and decks.

Hardy Hibiscus

Hardy Hibiscus include **Rose of Sharon** (*Hibiscus syriacus*) and **Giant or Rose Mallow Hibiscus** (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)

Rose of Sharon Hibiscus

These are typically upright shrubs with medium size blooms, 3-5" in diameter. Colors are usually pastels of blue, lavender, pink and white. Many popular varieties have prominent red eyes. These shrubs or grafted tree forms lose their leaves in fall and leaf out of old wood in spring. They prefer full sun and are drought tolerant. Because of their upright habit they make great hedges or can be used as a specimen in beds and borders.

Popular varieties include:

Amplissimus – Rosy red double flowers

Aphrodite – Deep pink single flowers with red eye

Blue Chiffon – Rich blue flowers with lacy center

Blue Satin – Rich, deep blue single flowers. Absolutely the best blue!

Diana – Huge single white flowers

Helene – Large single white flowers with deep maroon feathered eye

Lavender Chiffon – Single lavender flowers with a lacy center

Lil Kim – Miniature Rose of Sharon with dainty white blooms with showy red eye

Minerva – large lavender flowers with dark eye

Red Heart – Pure white flowers with scarlet eye

Sugar Tip – Eye-catching variegated foliage and double pink flowers

White Chiffon – Single white flowers with lacy center

Giant Hibiscus / Rose Mallow

Flowers are extremely large, dinner plate size, and range in colors from red, pinks, whites, and plums. Many have beautiful burgundy or deep green maple-like contrasting foliage. Newer hybridizing has created Indeterminate varieties that form buds at nodes all the way up the flowering stems, rather than just at the top, assuring longer blooming periods. Giant Hibiscus require full sun and prefer moist well drained soils. Plants die back to the ground after a hard frost in fall. Cut them back to 4-6" above the ground and mulch at base for added winter protection. These "late sleepers" reappear in late May-early June and rapidly grow to their full size in one season.

Popular varieties include:

Cranberry Crush – Crimson red long blooming flowers with deep green dissected foliage

Jazzberry Jam – deep magenta flowers with red eyes and ruffled overlapping petals

Kopper King – White flowers with red eyes that contrast nicely with coppery-red lobed foliage

Lady Baltimore – Bright pink flowers with red eye and deeply cut foliage

Lord Baltimore – Brilliant red ruffled flowers with deeply cut foliage

Luna Blush – Compact grower with eye catching white blooms tinged pink and red eye

Luna Pink Swirl – Compact grower with large pink and white swirled flowers with red eye

Luna Red – Compact grower with large scarlet red flowers

Luna White – Compact grower with white saucer shaped flowers with red eye

Midnight Marvel – Deep wine purple dissected foliage with long blooming scarlet red flowers

Plum Crazy – Plum-mauve blooms on finely dissected foliage

Summer Storm – Deep wine purple dissected foliage with long blooming pink flowers and magenta eyes