



# Hibiscus

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## Plant Care

By following the care instructions provided, you can enjoy paradise in your home all year long. TradeWinds Hibiscus are ideal for patios and window boxes, even as bedding plants. The plants thrive in sunny locations and take the heat well.

## Everblooming Character

The hibiscus is everblooming, meaning it continues to flower for a long time when given the proper care. In the North, hibiscus usually stop blooming in winter when light intensity is reduced and day length is much reduced. Light is the primary factor affecting this everblooming character. The more natural light the hibiscus receives, the more frequently it flowers. Although everblooming, the individual flowers last only one day after opening. It is natural for the flowers to close (roll up) and drop right after opening. This eliminates the need to remove spent blossoms from the plants.

## Light

- Sunshine should be provided at least four hours each day.
- Plants must be placed on windowsills or sunny porches for best performance. Otherwise, flowers will not likely develop until spring or summer when natural light increases.
- Flowering will be less in winter since light is limited.

## Watering

- Hibiscus should never be allowed to dry out or wilt. This will cause leaf yellowing and flower bud drop.
- Always keep the root medium slightly moist. Water thoroughly by pouring water into the top of the pot until it runs out of the bottom. The plant should be heavier after a thorough watering. Do not let plants sit in excess water for more than one hour. Remove saucers or decorative pot covers and pour off any excess water.

## Fertilizing

- December through February: Fertilize only once with any liquid houseplant fertilizer at the lower rates given on the label. Apply as directed for a normal watering.
- March through November: In this higher light period, fertilize monthly. Use any liquid houseplant fertilizer at the higher rates as directed on the label.

## Pruning and Transplanting

- TradeWinds Hibiscus have been specially treated to keep their growth compact and in proportion to their container, but transplanting or pruning may be required after a year.
- Dramatic increases in watering frequency are a sign to repot the plant. Remove the plant from the pot and inspect the root system. Masses of encircling, intertwining roots further indicate the need to transplant.
- Transplanting to the next larger container size can be done any time of year and is often done in spring when new growth is stimulated by the longer, brighter days of summer.
- Plant into any well-drained commercial potting mix.
- Prune only in April or May so that new shoot growth will develop in the long, bright summer days.
- Cut back to shape the plant as desired, allowing three to four leaves per stem to remain after cutback.

## Outdoor Use

- For all practical purposes, TradeWinds Hibiscus should be considered a blooming houseplant. TradeWinds *Hibiscus* varieties are not winter hardy in Northern or Midwestern climates. They will thrive outdoors in locations where winter temperatures rarely drop below 35°F.
- *Hibiscus* can be moved outdoors during summer to enjoy on a patio or in a garden. The move must be done gradually. Move to a shady location for two to three weeks before placing in full sun to prevent severe leaf burn. Likewise, a gradual move must occur in the fall when returning plants indoors. Generally, plants are left in their containers to facilitate moving.

## Pest Control

The TradeWinds *Hibiscus* is pest-free, with pests more likely a problem when plants are moved outdoors. Garden centers carry a wide range of control products. The key to pest control is to first identify the pest and then apply the proper chemical.

### Some possible pests include the following:

**Aphids**—soft, plump-bodied; light to very dark in color; 1/16- to 1/8-inch long; found on growing tips, flower buds, flowers and the underside of leaves.

**Spider mites**—small and round; less than 1/16-inch long (need hand lens to see); two dark spots on bodies; will form small webs in severe cases; found on the underside of leaves.

**Whiteflies**—white insects that fly when disturbed; about 1/8-inch long; found on the underside of leaves.

**Snails, slugs**—usually only see slime trails on leaves; will eat away leaves; found on leaf surface and flower buds.

**Japanese beetles**—shiny, black and green shelled pests; 1/4- to 3/8-inch long; leave chew marks on leaves and flowers; only a pest when plants are outdoors.

