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(54) **HIBISCUS PLANT NAMED 'LARGO BREEZE'**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of Hibiscus plant named 'Largo Breeze', characterized by its compact, upright, somewhat outwardly spreading, uniform, dense and symmetrical plant habit that is appropriate for container production; glossy dark green leaves; uniform and freely flowering habit; very large orange-colored flowers with dark red-colored throat, red venation and short peduncles; good resistance to flower bud abscission; and relative resistance to pathogens common to Hibiscus grown under Florida production conditions.

2 Drawing Sheets

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Hibiscus, botanically known as *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, and hereinafter referred to by the name 'Largo Breeze'.

The new Hibiscus is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Alva, Fla. The objective of the breeding program is to create new freely-branching Hibiscus cultivars with uniform and compact plant habit appropriate for container production, early and uniform flowering, numerous flowers per lateral branch, desirable flower color, and good postproduction longevity.

The new Hibiscus originated from a cross made by the Inventor in Alva, Fla. in early 1993, of the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivar Tangerine, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 8,166, as the female, or seed, parent with the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivar Waikiki, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,834, as the male, or pollen, parent. The cultivar Largo Breeze was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Alva, Fla., on Jul. 11, 1994.

Asexual reproduction of the new Hibiscus by vegetative terminal cuttings taken in a controlled environment in Alva, Fla. since October, 1994, has shown that the unique features of this new Hibiscus are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The cultivar Largo Breeze has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment and cultural practices such as temperature, light intensity, water status and/or fertilizer rate or type without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Largo Breeze'. These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Largo Breeze' as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Compact, upright, somewhat outwardly spreading, uniform, dense and symmetrical plant habit that is appropriate for container production.
2. Glossy dark green leaves.
3. Uniform and freely flowering habit.
4. Very large orange-colored flowers with dark red-colored throat, red venation and short peduncles.
5. Good resistance to flower bud abscission during shipping.
6. Relatively resistant to pathogens common to Hibiscus grown under Florida production conditions.

Compared to plants of the female parent, the cultivar Tangerine, plants of the new Hibiscus are larger, have stronger stems, and non-lobed foliage. In addition, flowers of plants of the new Hibiscus have red-colored throats whereas plants of the cultivar Tangerine have pink-colored throats. Compared to plants of male parent, the pink-flowered cultivar Waikiki, plants of the new Hibiscus flower more uniformly and differ in flower color.

Plants of the new Hibiscus can be compared to plants of the Hibiscus cultivar Desert Wind, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 10,941. In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Alva, Fla., plants of the new Hibiscus differ from plants of the cultivar Desert Wind in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Hibiscus have orange flowers with dark red throats whereas plants of the cultivar Desert Wind have light orange flowers with light red throats.
2. Flower petals of plants of the new Hibiscus have smoother, less undulate, margins than flower petals of plants of the cultivar Desert Wind.

Plants of the new Hibiscus can also be compared to plants of the white-flowered Hibiscus cultivar Caroline, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 11,779. In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Alva, Fla., plants of the new Hibiscus differ from plants of the cultivar Caroline in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Hibiscus are taller than plants of the cultivar Caroline.
2. Plants of the new Hibiscus have darker green and glossier foliage than plants of the cultivar Caroline.

3. Plants of the new Hibiscus have orange flowers with dark red throats whereas plants of the cultivar Caroline have solid bright orange flowers.
4. Plants of the new Hibiscus flower later than plants of the cultivar Caroline.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new Hibiscus, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new Hibiscus.

The photograph on the first sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'Largo Breeze'.

The photograph on the second sheet comprises a close-up view of typical flowers and leaves of 'Largo Breeze'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The photographs and following observations, measurements and values describe plants grown in Alva, Fla., with five plants per 15-cm container in polyethylene-covered greenhouses during the winter and spring under conditions which closely approximate commercial production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures ranged from 13 to 37° C. and night temperatures ranged from 13 and 26° C. Plants were about 7 months old when the photographs and the description were taken. In the description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivar Largo Breeze.

Parentage:

Female or seed parent.—*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivar Tangerine, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 8,166.

Male or pollen parent.—*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* cultivar Waikiki, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 7,834.

Propagation:

Type.—By vegetative terminal cuttings.

Time to initiate roots.—About 10 days at temperatures of 24° C.

Time to develop roots.—About 28 days at temperatures of 24° C.

Root description.—Thick, fibrous and white in color.

Plant description:

Plant form and growth habit.—Perennial, evergreen, upright, somewhat outwardly spreading, compact, uniform, dense and symmetrical plant habit. Vigorous growth habit.

Branching habit.—Freely branching, usually about three to four lateral branches develop after removal of terminal apex.

Plant height.—About 24 cm.

Plant diameter (*area of spread*).—About 36 cm.

Lateral branch description.—Length: About 18.5 cm. Diameter: About 7 mm. Texture: Immature, smooth; mature, woody and rough. Color: Immature: 146A overlain with dark brown, between 187A and 202A. Mature: More brown than 187A.

Foliage description.—Arrangement: Alternate, single; numerous; symmetrical. Length: About 8.7 cm. Width: About 7.4 cm. Shape: Ovate. Apex: Acuminate to narrowly acute. Base: Attenuate to obtuse. Margin: Serrate to crenate. Aspect: Concave. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Glabrous and leathery. Venation pattern: Palmate. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: Much darker than 147A; glossy. Young foliage, lower surface: Greener than 146A; glossy. Mature foliage, upper surface: Much darker than 147A; glossy. Mature foliage, lower surface: Close to 147A; glossy. Venation, upper surface: Much darker than 147A. Venation, lower surface: 146A to 147A. Petiole: Length: About 3.2 cm. Diameter: About 2.5 mm. Texture: Upper surface: Slightly pubescent. Lower surface: Smooth and glabrous. Color: Between 187A and 202A.

Flower description:

Flower arrangement.—Flowers arranged singly at terminal leaf axils. Very freely flowering with usually about four flower buds and/or open flowers per terminal apex. Flowers face mostly upright.

Flower appearance.—Rounded, orange-colored petals with dark red throat and red venation. Flowers are open for about one day. Flowers persistent.

Natural flowering season.—Usually spring and summer or during periods of warm weather.

Flower diameter.—About 13.5 cm.

Flower length (*height*).—About 5 cm.

Flower bud (*just before showing color*).—Resistance to abscission during shipping: Plants of the new Hibiscus have been observed to resist flower bud drop when stored in a closed box for 5 days at 13° C. Rate of opening: About one or two days depending on temperatures. Length: About 2.2 cm. Diameter: About 1.2 cm. Shape: Oblong. Color: Much darker than 146A.

Petals.—Arrangement: Corolla consists of five petals that are fused at base; overlapping towards apex. Length: About 8.4 cm. Width: At widest point, about 6.1 cm; at base, about 1 cm. Shape: Roughly spatulate. Apex: Rounded. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire. Texture: Upper surface: Smooth, glabrous, satiny. Lower surface: Glabrous; somewhat rugose. Color: When opening, upper surface: Closest to 28A to 32A; venation, 32A to 34A. When opening, lower surface: Closest to between 32A and 33A; venation, 32A to 34A; base, close to 52A. Fully opened, upper surface: Closest to 23A overlain with 28A to 32A; venation, 34A. Fully opened, lower surface: Closest to between 32A and 32C.; venation, 32A to 32B; base, close to 52A. Throat: Close to 46A to 53A.

Sepals.—Appearance: Five sepals fused into a tubular star-shaped calyx. Length: About 2.8 cm. Width: About 1.1 cm. Shape: Oblong. Apex: Sharply acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Inner (upper) surface: Smooth, glabrous, waxy. Outer (lower) surface: Leathery, rough; pubescent at margins. Color: Inner (upper) surface: Close to 144A; glossy. Outer (lower) surface: Much darker than 146A.

Bracts.—Appearance: About six or seven fused at base. Length: About 1.5 cm. Width: About 4 mm. Shape: Linear. Apex: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous, waxy. Color, upper and lower surfaces: 147A.

Peduncles.—Length: Short, about 1.9 cm. Diameter: About 2.5 mm. Angle: Upright. Strength: Strong, flexible. Texture: Sparsely pubescent. Color: 144A overlain with between 187A and 202A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Stamen number: Numerous, about 72. Filament length: About 6 mm.

Filament color: Close to 52A to 52B. Anther shape: Globular. Anther size: About 1 mm by 1 mm. Anther color: Close to 10A. Amount of pollen: Abundant. Pollen color: Close to 14A. Gynoecium: Pistil length: About 8.4 cm. Pistil diameter: Apex: About 4 mm. Base: About 8.5 mm. Style texture: Smooth, waxy. Style color: Towards base, 52A; towards apex, 52A to 52B. Stigma appearance: Five, rounded. Stigma diameter: About 2.5 mm. Stigma color: 45A. Ovary color: 154C to 154D.

Seed.—Seed production has not been observed.

Disease resistance: Plants of the new Hibiscus grown under Florida production conditions have shown to be relatively resistant to pathogens common to Hibiscus.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct Hibiscus plant named 'Largo Breeze', as illustrated and described.

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