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Fleming et al.

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(54) **HIBISCUS PLANT NAMED ‘TORCHY’**
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of winter hardy Hibiscus plant
named, ‘Torchy’ is the result of a unique hybridization. This
new and distinct cultivar is characterized primarily as to
novelty by its extreme cold hardiness to Zone 4, its bright
green, deeply-lobed leaves, its large, campanulate, red flow-
ers with ruffled petal edged, its vigorous and uniform growth
habit, and its floriferous nature from midsummer until frost.

2 Drawing Sheets

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**LATIN NAME OF THE GENUS AND SPECIES
OF THE PLANT CLAIMED**

Hibiscus hybrid.

VARIETY DENOMINATION

‘Torchy’.

BACKGROUND OF THE NEW PLANT

The new plant of this invention is the result of a unique
hybridization, with the breeding achievement being evi-
denced in the outstanding combination of characteristics
exhibited by this new and distinct Hibiscus plant, which
include:
(a) Refined and uniquely colored 3-lobed leaves which are
severely cut with slightly serrated margins and some
entire margins along the sinuses and the leaves have a
bright green color that compliments the landscape;
(b) Shimmering dark red buds that open into large ruffled
flowers that are well-posed on the plant and outstanding
for their medium-to dark red, thick-textured petals rich
in effect;
(c) The plant being very floriferous with flowers that stay
open at least one full day;
(d) The plant being medium-sized, but vigorous, with
compact and uniform breaking action which gives it
unique landscape utility; and
(e) The plant being so hardy that it can consistently
withstand winter temperatures of at least –30 degrees
Fahrenheit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

‘Torchy’ a *Hibiscus moscheutos* was the result of a
40-year breeding program. Its ancestry includes *Hibiscus*
Militaris (nonpatented, *Hibiscus moscheutos* (nonpatented),
and *Hibiscus coccineus* (nonpatented). More specifically,
the plant resulted from a selected seedling of the Fleming
‘Avalon’ hybrids (nonpatented), which included crosses

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between the above-mentioned species. The seedling which
most nearly met all above named standards was selected.
This new plant first bloomed in the summer of 1978 and
was selected by David Fleming and Gretchen Zwetzig on
David Fleming’s property in Lincoln, Nebr. The plant was
observed here under typical conditions for NE, at approxi-
mately 3 years of age. Asexual propagation of the plant by
cuttings and root division in Lincoln, Nebr., has shown that
the unique and distinguishing features of the plant are
faithfully transmitted from generation to generation and
appear to be fixed.
Since its origin, the plant has bloomed from midsummer
until frost, while exhibiting the above-mentioned distinctive
characteristics. This hardy hibiscus plant contributes to the
market with its shear beauty, its compact Growth habit, its
great resistance to disease and insects, its stability through
extremes in rain and drought, and its Extreme hardiness.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The flower, bud, foliage, and growth habit of the plant are
shown in the attached illustrations.
More specifically, Sheet 1 shows a close-up of the bloom
and foliage.
Sheet 2 shows a close-up of the foliage and the growth
habit of The cultivar, from the ground up to the apex of the
plant. The colors are as true as is reasonably possible to
attain in photographic illustrations of this type. The colors
illustrated may be slightly off due to light reflectance.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW PLANT

What follows is a detailed description of the new cultivar.
The specific color designations set forth by PLATE and
number designations are in accordance with the *Dictionary*
of Color (Maers and Paul) , while general color recitations
are consistent with ordinary American color terminology.
‘Torchy’ as not been observed under all possible environ-
mental conditions. It is to be understood that the phenotype
may vary significantly with variations in environment such
as temperature, light intensity, and day length, without,

however any difference in genotype of the plant. The following botanical characteristics and observations are taken from the plant when grown under normal outdoors conditions in Lincoln, Nebr.

THE PLANT

Parentage:

Seed Parent.—*Hibiscus militaris*×*Hibiscus coccineus*×*Hibiscus moscheutos*, 'Avalon', an unpatented Fleming seedling.

Pollen parent.—*Hibiscus militaris*×*Hibiscus coccineus*×*Hibiscus moscheutos*, 'Avalon', an unpatented Fleming seedling.

Origin: A selected seedling from stated crosses.

Type of plant: Hardy herbaceous perennial.

Classification: Hybrid Hibiscus plant.

Propagation: Relatively easy to propagate; holds its distinguishing characteristics through successive propagations by cuttings and division.

Size: About 3 feet, 3 inches tall; about 2 feet, 6 inches wide.

Form: Symmetrical annual growth from perennial roots.

Habit: Upright and uniformly branched.

Growth: Vigorous; medium and compact, Full-grown (3½') in two years.

Hardiness: Hardy to at least −30 degrees Fahrenheit.

General health: Plant is very disease resistant to rot, aphids, spidermites, scale, whitefly, etc. They are sturdy through excessive drought or water.

Propagations: Relatively easy; fast rooting.

Foliage:

1. *Arrangement.*—Alternate.

2. *Shape.*—Juvenile-variable, 3-lobed, deeply-cut leaf with margins having some serrations with entire margin along the sinuses, acute apices, rounded base-shape.

3. *Size.*—Mature leaf — (petiole base to apex) length is about 8½ inches (21.5 cm), width is about 8 inches (21 cm), rounded base-shape.

4. *Color.*—Young leaves — (upper side) — 6-L, page 67, PLATE 22. Mature leaves — (upper side) — 5-L, page 69, PLATE 23. Veins — Slightly darker than 5-L, page 69, PLATE 23. Underside of leaves — 4-E, page 67, PLATE 22.

5. *Surface texture.*—Glabrous (to very glabrous on lower leaves).

6. *Petiole length.*—About 1¾ inches (4.5 cm).

7. *Petiole color.*—Green; 5-L, page 53, PLATE 15; Pink: 1-H, page 53, PLATE 15.

Stems: The stems are stout at the base, becoming more slender toward the apices; Green: 5-L, page 53, PLATE 15; Pink: 1-H, page 53, PLATE 15.

Blooming period: Profuse from July until frost. Average number of blooms per plant: 10–25 daily; approximately 600 per season.

Flower diameter: Large; about 7¼ inches (18.5 cm).

Borne: Singly in leaf axils, from midpoint of stems upward.

Bloom duration: Individual bloom lasts at least one full day. Form: Campanulate; petals are also very overlapping and ruffled.

Bud:

1. *Length.*—About 1¾ inches (4.5 cm), on day before opening.

2. *Color.*—12-A, page 135, PLATE 56.

3. *Surface texture.*—Glabrous.

4. *Duration.*—1 to 2 weeks.

Corolla:

1. *Petal character and dimensions.*—Campanulate, very overlapping and ruffled. Length: About 3½ inches (9.5 cm). Width: About 4¾ inches (12.5 cm).

2. *Coloration.*—Medium red with an eye of equivalent color, except for base of petals having white coloring. (a) Red petals — 6-C, page 37, PLATE 7; Base of petals — White: 1-A, page 25, PLATE 1. (b) Venation in petals — 12-C, page 135, PLATE 56. (c) Eye zone — 12-C, page 135, PLATE 56.

3. *Texture.*—Smooth.

4. *Substance.*—Thick.

5. *Shape.*—Campanulate, very overlapping and ruffled.

Reproductive organs:

1. *Staminal column.*—Stamen along basal two-thirds. Stamen length — About 2½ inches (5.5 cm). Stamen color — 3-G, page 29, PLATE 3. Pollen color — 2-L, page 43, PLATE 10.

2. *Style.*—Terminates upper one-third of staminal column. Stigmatic lobe color — 7-A, page 43, PLATE 10. Calyx: Connate at the base; about 1½ inches (3 cm) in length. Stipules: None. Epicalyx: Whorl of bracts. 1. Shape: 7–10 slender, sword shaped bractlets. 2. Length: About 1⅜ inches (3.5 cm). 3. Color: 6-K, page 67, PLATE 22. Peduncle: 1. Length: About 3¾ inches (9.5 cm). 2. Strength: Stiff and sturdy. 3. Color: 3-L, page 53, PLATE 15. Seeds: 1 cm. Diameter: 1 cm. 2. Shape: Round. 3. Color: Brown: 8-A, page 33, PLATE 15.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This plant, as a hybridized hardy Hibiscus, is valuable to the landscape market for its improvements in thicker-textured and uniquely colored and shaped flowers, refined, deeply-lobed light green leaves, all-around vigor, good breaking action, and adaptation to extreme environments, including the ability to consistently survive winter temperatures of at least −30 degrees Fahrenheit.

We claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of Hibiscus plant, as herein shown and described, characterized by its bright green, refined and deeply lobed foliage, its large, overlapping velvety red flowers with ruffling at the petal edges, its more compact size, its vigor, and its hardiness.

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