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(12) **United States Plant Patent**
Morrison

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(54) **ORNAMENTAL WINTER *HIBISCUS***
***MOSCHEUTOS* NAMED**
‘MORRISON-GILBERG (VIII)’

(50) Latin Name: *Hibiscus moscheutos*
Varietal Denomination: ‘Morrison-Gilberg (VIII)’

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(US)

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(58) **Field of Search** **Plt./257**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct hybrid variety *Hibiscus moscheutos* cultivar, particularly distinguished by having flowers of from ten to twelve inches in diameter that are white, with medium pink (Red-Purple Group 68A) at the margins extending into the petal about one to two inches before fading out, with deeper red eye (Red Group 45A). The length of the blooming cycle is about four to five weeks. The flowers, which have completely overlapping petals, retain their flat shape for two full days, except when temperatures are exceptionally warm. Distinguishing characteristics are constant and stable in asexually reproduced plants.

1 Drawing Sheet

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of herbaceous perennial, more particularly to a hybrid variety of hibiscus.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new cultivar was developed by William L. Morrison as a progeny by cross-pollination in a garden in Park Ridge, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. The plant was originally produced as a seedling and has been successfully asexually reproduced by root crown division in a greenhouse located in the backyard of William Morrison, 1023 West Crescent Avenue, Park Ridge, Ill. 60068. The plant has also been reproduced by vegetative reproduction, i.e., by tip and stem cuttings. The original seedling had parentage of ‘Little Pink Riding Hood’ (unpatented) pollen parent and ‘Red, White & Pink’ (unpatented) seed parent, both of which are cultivars of *Hibiscus moscheutos* grown and named by William L. Morrison. The present cultivar is a herbaceous perennial; the stalks die back to ground level every winter and new stalks emerge in late spring. The trade name “MATTERHORN” has been coined for this cultivar, although the cultivar was neither marketed nor was its existence made public prior to the filing of the present plant patent application.

The present cultivar is distinguished by having flowers of from ten to twelve inches in diameter. These unusually large flowers can be cut and used for centerpiece displays. By comparison, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (Chinese Hibiscus Rose of China) flowers are two to six inches in diameter, and *Hibiscus syriacus* (Rose-of-Sharon or Althea) flowers are three to six inches in diameter.

The large tricolor flowers of the present cultivar are distinguishable from the large solid pink flowers of its pollen parent and the small red, white and pink flowers of its seed parent. The present cultivar blooms about 2 weeks earlier, and its blooming cycle lasts 2–3 weeks longer, than its

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parents. The flowers of the present cultivar retain their flat shape for 1–2 days longer than either of its parents.

The greatest number of flowers for the present cultivar was obtained in environments of half to full sun. The largest flowers were obtained at summer temperatures from 70 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Smaller flowers were observed to bloom at temperatures as low as 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Reproduction by root crown division consistently produces plants with identical, stable characteristics. A further botanical description of the new variety follows below. In the following descriptions, color references are made to The R.H.S. Colour Chart (1995, The Royal Horticultural Society), except where general terms of ordinary significance are used. Distinguishing color characteristics are listed on the attached Plant Color Coding Sheet. The distinguishing characteristics listed thereon should not necessarily be assumed to be exhaustive. Although the listed characteristics are believed to be the primary distinguishing color characteristics of the cultivar, it is possible that others may become evident upon further observation and comparison with other cultivars. These descriptions were made from specimens reproduced and grown under greenhouse and outdoor gardening conditions in suburban St. Louis, Mo.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawing clearly depicts the new variety, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in a colored reproduction of this type. Actual flower, leaf, sepal, and bud colors may differ from flower, leaf, sepal, and bud colors in the photograph due to light reflectance.

The drawing is a close-up view of freshly cut portions of the *Hibiscus moscheutos* named ‘Morrison-Gilberg (VIII)’ cultivar of the present invention, showing the flower, leaves and sepal surrounding the flower bud in great detail.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

Form: Numerous stalks grow upright from perennial roots.
Habit: Individual stalks with many leaves uniformly distributed on the stalk and numerous flowers bloom continuously. Rapid and strong stalk growth have flowers facing outward.

Productivity: Produces continuous new flower displays, vigorous and profuse.

Precocity: Elegant displays of flowers, each stalk displaying one new flower after another. On each stalk, as one flower closes and its petals fall off, a flower next to it and closer to the top of the stalk blooms, so that the displays appear to be continuous. The display periods may vary depending upon climate and the vigor of particular specimens.

Stalks: Mature presentations occur the first year. Strong and smooth skin covered, and hold many leaves and flowers securely. Staking is typically not required under normal full sun growing conditions. However, specimens grown in shaded sunlight produce stalks that are softer and that may require staking. New stalks emerge in May.

Temperature: Winter hardy during freezing winters. On 100 degree (Fahrenheit) days, the flowers bloom equally as they do on a mild day.

Insects and mollusks: Negligible insect damage has occurred to date in any individual plant, even though no pesticides have been used, and no slugs have been observed on the plants.

Animals: Rodents, rabbits and squirrels have not been observed to bother the stalks or roots.

Rooting: The plants root easily without fertilizer and send out their roots quickly and securely.

Foliage: Large leaves evenly distributed vertically and horizontally on the stalks.

Leaves: Abundant and decorative in alternate order. Dark green leaves with margin lengths of from three to eight inches in elongated ovate form. Typical leaves are eight inches long by about three and one-half to four and one-half inches wide at the widest part. Top color is Green Group 136A, bottom color is Green Group 137C. Shape is generally obtuse, with somewhat irregular dentate margins. Leaf tips are apiculate, bases are frequently oblique, and the venation is pinnate. Texture is matte. Petioles are from two to four and one-half inches. No stipules.

Stem: Green Group 138B.

Petiole color: Lighter green (Green Group 138C) than the leaves.

Height: Mature plants are from three to five and one-half feet in height.

Shape of plant at maturity: Rounded, almost globe-shaped.

THE FLOWERS

Buds: Shaped like a pointed egg and very large one to two days before blooming. Orange-White Group 159B. Very large, can be over three inches in length. A typical bud measures about three inches in length by about one and one-quarter inches at its widest point.

Blooming habit: Continuous and free blooming.

Petals: Five to six inches long, five per flower. Petal width is five inches.

Diameter of flower: A distinguishing feature of the variety, flowers are from ten to twelve inches in diameter.

Number of flowers: Approximately 12 to 15 flowers per stalk in mature plants, with essentially flat appearance.

Shape: Circular and relatively flat with overlapping petals.

Filament: Each of the approximately 15 filaments attaches to the large style projecting from the center of the flower.

Approximately one-eighth to one-quarter inches in length.

Stamens: White Group 155D; very numerous, extending from the style. Stamens are three-eighths of an inch long.

Pistil: Three and one-eighths inch long with the stamen and stigma attached; White Group 155D.

Stigma: There are five stigmas, White Group 155D in color.

Style: White. Long and supports the stigma.

Pollen: Yellow Group 4C.

Shape of petal: Completely overlapping at time of bloom and broadly obovate (almost reniform), recurves at the base to form a small green star of revealed calyx, with overall circular shape. Begin to curl on the edges as they begin to wilt.

Texture: Central one-fourth satiny; outer three-fourths velvety.

Aspect: Like fine kidskin in appearance and strongly self-supporting.

Color: White, with medium pink (Red-Purple Group 68A) at the margins extending into the petal about one to two inches before fading out, with deeper red eye (Red Group 45A). The eye is two and one-half inches wide. Constant and stable in asexually reproduced plants.

Calyx: Six sepals. Sepal length is one and one-half inches long and one inch wide. Sepals are colored Green Group 137B.

Bractlets: There are twelve bractlets, one and one-half inches long, three-sixteenths inch wide at the base, medium green (Green Group 136C).

Blooming period: Mid summer to frost with continuous color presentation. In suburban St. Louis, the blooming period typically lasts from late July through August. Blooms can occur into October, depending on weather conditions. Container plants produce flowers longer, on lateral stems, as the main stems are cut back and laterals emerge.

Lastingness of the bloom: Individual blooms allowed to remain on the plant last approximately one to three days per bloom.

Peduncle: One and one-half to three inch extremely stiff pedicels, Green Group 136C, to support the flower during blooming and the seed pod formation later.

Fruit: One inch long and three-quarter inch wide. Twelve to twenty seeds, light golden in color.

Fragrance: Minimal.

Disease resistance: No disease problems have been noted on stalks, leaves or flowers.

Environmental conditions: The plants can stand drought or up to two inches of rainwater without adverse effects.

Winter dormancy: The plants lose their leaves at frost and stems die back to ground level.

Fertility: Midwest topsoil provides adequate nutrients without additional fertilizer.

Regularity of bearing: Consistent year-to-year flowering has been observed.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of *Hibiscus moscheutos* plant, as herein shown and described.

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