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(54) ***HIBISCUS* PLANT NAMED 'PINK KAI'**

(50) Latin Name: ***Hibiscus rosa-sinensis***
Varietal Denomination: **Pink Kai**

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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Hibiscus* plant named 'Pink Kai', characterized by its compact, upright, outwardly spreading and dense plant habit that is appropriate for container production; glossy medium green-colored leaves; uniform, freely and early flowering habit; large dark pink-colored flowers; and good postproduction and garden performance.

1 Drawing Sheet

Botanical designation: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis.*
Cultivar denomination: 'Pink Kai'.

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 'Pink Kai'.

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 a dense, uniform and compact plant habit appropriate for container production, early and uniform flowering, numerous flowers per lateral branch, desirable flower color and good garden performance.

The new *Hibiscus* originated from a cross-pollination made by the Inventor in Alva, Fla. in February, 2004, of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Cajun Wind', disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 17,589, as the female, or seed, parent with *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Casa Grande Soft Pink', not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The new *Hibiscus* was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross-pollination in a controlled greenhouse environment in Alva, Fla. on Aug. 22, 2005.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Hibiscus* by vegetative terminal cuttings in a controlled greenhouse environment in Alva, Fla. since February, 2006, has shown that the unique features of this new *Hibiscus* are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Plants of the new *Hibiscus* have not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment and cultural practices such as temperature and light intensity without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Pink Kai'.

These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Pink Kai' as a new and distinct cultivar of *Hibiscus:*

1. Compact, upright, outwardly spreading and dense plant habit that is appropriate for container production.
2. Glossy medium green-colored leaves.
3. Uniform, freely and early flowering habit.
4. Large dark pink-colored flowers.
5. Good postproduction and garden performance.

Plants of the new *Hibiscus* can be compared to plants of the female parent, 'Cajun Wind'. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* differ primarily from plants of 'Cajun Wind' in flower color as plants of 'Cajun Wind' have red-colored flowers.

Plants of the new *Hibiscus* can be compared to plants of the male parent, 'Casa Grande Soft Pink'. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* differ from plants of 'Casa Grande Soft Pink' in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* have smaller flowers than plants of 'Casa Grande Soft Pink'.
2. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* and 'Casa Grande Soft Pink' differ in flower color as plants of 'Casa Grande Soft Pink' have light pink-colored flowers.

Plants of the new *Hibiscus* can be compared to plants of the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Maui Wind', disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 17,569. In side-by-side comparisons conducted in Alva, Fla., plants of the new *Hibiscus* differed from plants of 'Maui Wind' in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* were denser than and not as open as plants of 'Maui Wind'.
2. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* had lighter green-colored leaves than plants of 'Maui Wind'.
3. Flowers of plants of the new *Hibiscus* and 'Maui Wind' differed in flower color as plants of 'Maui Wind' had light pink-colored flowers.

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 repro-

ductions 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 at the bottom of the sheet comprises a side perspective view of typical flowering plants of 'Pink Kai' grown in a container.

The photograph at the top of the sheet comprises a close-up view of a typical flower of 'Pink Kai'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The aforementioned photographs and following observations, measurements and values describe plants grown in Bonsall, Calif. in one-gallon containers in polyethylene-covered greenhouses during the spring under conditions which closely approximate commercial production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures ranged from about 18° C. to about 38° C. and night temperatures ranged from about 16° C. to about 21° C. Plants had been growing for 18 weeks when the photographs and the description were taken. In the description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2001 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Pink Kai'.

Parentage:

Female, or seed, parent.—*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Cajun Wind', disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 17,589.

Male or pollen parent.—*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* 'Casa Grande Soft Pink', not patented.

Propagation:

Type.—By vegetative terminal cuttings.

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

Time to develop roots.—About four weeks at temperatures of 24° C.

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

Rooting habit.—Moderate branching; moderately dense.

Plant description:

Plant form and growth habit.—Perennial, evergreen, upright, outwardly spreading and dense. Moderately vigorous growth habit.

Branching habit.—Freely branching, usually about five to six lateral branches develop.

Plant height.—About 38 cm.

Plant diameter (*area of spread*).—About 47 cm.

Lateral branch description:

Length.—About 24 cm.

Diameter.—About 6 mm.

Internode length.—About 2.5 cm.

Texture.—Immature, sparsely pubescent; mature, woody and rough.

Color, immature.—Close to 146C.

Color, mature.—Close to 199A to 199B.

Foliage description:

Arrangement.—Alternate, single; numerous; symmetrical.

Length.—About 9.7 cm.

Width.—About 6.5 cm.

Shape.—Ovate.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Obtuse.

Margin.—Broadly serrate to crenate.

Texture, upper and lower surfaces.—Smooth, glabrous; leathery and tough.

Luster, upper surface.—Glossy.

Luster, lower surface.—Somewhat glossy.

Venation pattern.—Pinnate; arcuate.

Color.—Developing leaves, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 146A. Fully expanded leaves, upper surface: Close to N137A; venation, close to 146B. Fully expanded leaves, lower surface: Close to 146A; venation, close to 146C.

Petiole.—Length: About 3.6 cm. Diameter: About 2.5 mm. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Slightly pubescent. Color, upper surface: Close to 146B. Color, lower surface: Close to 146C.

Flower description:

Flower arrangement.—Flowers arranged singly at terminal leaf axils. Uniform and freely flowering habit with usually about 18 flower buds and/or open flowers per plant at one time. Flowers face upright to outwardly.

Flower appearance.—Rounded, dark pink-colored flowers. Flowers are open for one or two days. Flowers not persistent.

Natural flowering season.—Usually spring and summer or during periods of warm weather; plants flower year-round in the greenhouse.

Flower diameter.—About 12.2 cm.

Flower length (*height*).—About 7.5 cm.

Flower bud.—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 five days at 13° C. Rate of opening: About five to seven days depending on temperatures. Length: About 3.1 cm. Diameter: About 1.4 cm. Shape: Ovate. Color: Close to 185C.

Petals.—Arrangement: Corolla consists of five petals that are fused at base; petals imbricate. Length: About 7.5 cm. Width: About 5.5 cm. Shape: Obovate. Apex: Rounded. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire; slightly sinuate. Texture: Smooth, glabrous; velvety; veins prominent on the lower surface. Color: When opening, upper surface: Close to 58B. When opening, lower surface: Close to 63B. Fully opened, upper surface: Close to 61C; towards the base, close to 46A. Color does not fade with development. Fully opened, lower surface: Close to 63B. Color does not fade with development.

Sepals.—Appearance: Five sepals fused into a tubular star-shaped calyx. Length: About 1.6 cm. Width: About 9 mm. Shape: Elliptical. Apex: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Slightly pubescent. Color, upper surface: Close to 146D. Color, lower surface: Close to 146B.

Bracts.—Appearance: About six fused at base. Length: About 1.2 cm. Width: About 2.5 mm. Shape: Lanceolate. Apex: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper surface: Smooth, glabrous. Texture, lower surface: Sparsely pubescent. Color, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 146A to 146B.

Peduncles.—Length: About 3.2 cm. Diameter: About 2.5 mm. Angle: About 45° from the lateral branch axis. Strength: Strong, flexible. Texture: Sparsely pubescent. Color: Close to 146B.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Stamen number: Numerous, about 84. Filament length: About 3 mm.

Filament color: Close to 58B. Anther shape: Oval. Anther length: About 1 mm. Anther color: Close to 58A. Amount of pollen: Scarce. Pollen color: Close to 17A. Gynoecium: Pistil length: About 8.5 cm. Style length: About 6.3 cm. Style texture: Smooth, waxy. Style color: Close to NN155A. Stigma appearance: Five-parted, rounded. Stigma color: Close to 46A. Ovary color: Close to 158B.

Seed/fruit: Seed and fruit production has not been observed.

Garden performance: Plants of the new *Hibiscus* have been observed to have good garden performance and to tolerate wind, rain and temperatures from about 0° C. to about 38° C.

Pathogen/pest resistance: Plants of the new *Hibiscus* grown under Florida production conditions have not been shown to be susceptible to pathogens common to *Hibiscus* such as Pseudomonas, Pythium and Phytophthora. Plants of the new *Hibiscus* have not been observed to be tolerant to pests and other pathogens.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Hibiscus* plant named 'Pink Kai' as illustrated and described.

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