

Hibiscus Care Card

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis · tropical hibiscus

Ka'ala Lush Nursery

Grown with aloha · Wai'anae, O'ahu

Quick answer: Tropical hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) blooms best with at least 6 hours of sun, consistently moist well-draining soil, and regular light feeding with a potassium-rich fertilizer (not a high-phosphorus bloom booster). Each flower lasts only a day — that's normal — but a healthy bush makes new ones almost daily.

Light	6+ hours of sun for steady blooming	Blooms	Each flower lasts one day; new buds keep coming
Water	Consistently moist; potted plants may need daily water in heat	Pruning	Blooms on new wood — pinch and prune to encourage branching
Soil	Rich, well-draining, slightly acidic	State flower	Hawaii's is the native yellow ma'ono hau hele
Feeding	Potassium-rich fertilizer (e.g., 12-4-18 or hibiscus food), light & regular	Best spot in Hawaii	Sunny spot with a little afternoon relief on the dry side

Care essentials

How much sun does hibiscus need to bloom? Six hours of direct sun is the reliable threshold for a hibiscus that blooms constantly; less light means fewer buds and a leafier, leggier shrub. In most of Hawaii, full sun all day is ideal.

What fertilizer is best for hibiscus? Hibiscus are potassium lovers. Serious growers use fertilizers like 12-4-18 or a dedicated hibiscus food — moderate nitrogen, low phosphorus, high potassium — applied lightly and often rather than in big occasional doses.

How often should I water hibiscus? Keep the soil consistently moist — hibiscus are thirsty, especially in pots, where a rootbound plant in full Hawaii sun can genuinely need water every day. Inconsistent watering is the top cause of bud drop: the plant forms buds in good times and jettisons them the moment it's drought-stressed.

Why do hibiscus buds fall off before opening? Bud drop has three usual suspects. First, water stress — even one badly dry afternoon can make a hibiscus shed every bud it's holding.

How do you prune and propagate hibiscus? Hibiscus bloom on new wood, so pruning creates flowers: cut back leggy branches by about a third in spring, and pinch soft tips through the season to force branching — every new branch is a new flower factory. Propagate from 4–6 inch softwood cuttings of new growth: strip the lower leaves, dip...

Quick FAQ

- **Why do hibiscus flowers only last one day?** That's the natural lifespan of a tropical hibiscus bloom — open at dawn, closed and dropped by night. A healthy, well-fed bush compensates by producing new flowers nearly every day.
- **What is Hawaii's state flower?** The native yellow hibiscus, ma'ono hau hele (*Hibiscus brackenridgei*) — not the common red hibiscus. Hawaii also has beautiful native white hibiscus (koki'o ke'oke'o) worth seeking out.
- **Can hibiscus grow in pots?** Yes, very well — use a large pot, rich fast-draining mix, full sun, and expect to water often, sometimes daily in summer. Potted hibiscus bloom heavily when slightly rootbound and well fed.

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Plants by appointment in Wai'anae, O'ahu — email kaalalush@gmail.com to arrange a pickup

Just a little 'ohana nursery — mahalo for growing with us!