

Luna Hibiscus

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Hibiscus moscheutos

- **Recommended Use:** Warm-season deciduous perennial
- **Exposure:** Full sun
- **Size:** Height: 24 to 36 inches tall, 24 inches wide
- **Habit:** Upright, bushy, well-branched
- **Bloom Time:** Summer, late summer
- **Maintenance Category:** Easy
- **Water Use:** Low to high; very adaptable
- **Highlights:** Produces bushy, well-branched plants with numerous 6-8-inch flowers; heat-tolerant; tolerates wet soil; ideal for large containers or in perennial gardens; higher germination than other seed varieties; and great for pollinators.



Close-up of a red Luna hibiscus.

Summary

Hibiscus is a large family of plants that includes okra, cotton, tropical hibiscus, althea, rose mallow and many more. Among this large group, several have ornamental potential in the landscape. One of those is the hardy rose mallow-type hibiscus. Luna is one of the outstanding series in this group. These hibiscuses are seed-propagated and provide growers a seed-source option, as opposed to plants that are only available through cuttings or vegetative propagation. Plant any time from mid-spring through mid-to-late summer and they will begin to bloom in late spring and continue until mid-September. The Luna hibiscus grows best in full sun in a wide range of soils. In fact, this native marshland plant can handle wet conditions quite well — so much in fact that buds typically become yellow and drop after just two cycles of wilt. However, once planted outside and when the plants have developed vigorous root systems, Lunas can tolerate drier conditions. Luna hibiscuses branch naturally without pinching; in fact, pinching can cause poor branching if done too early. The Luna series hibiscus has proven to be a great performer in the landscape since its induction into the Louisiana Super Plants program in spring of 2014. We encourage you to try some of these terrific Luna series hibiscuses in your gardens this year.

Requirements

- Performs best in full sun.
- Drainage is not important, as Luna hibiscuses can survive under wet and waterlogged conditions and are sensitive to drought. However, once planted outside, established plants with vigorous root systems can tolerate drier conditions.
- Prefers warm average daily temperatures. Growing below 68 degrees Fahrenheit results in foliage chlorosis or bronzing.
- The Luna hibiscus is a long-day plant and requires a minimum of a 12-hour photoperiod under high light

intensity. Plants become dormant at 10 hours of light or less. High light intensity promotes branching and reduces plant height, keeping plants more compact and less leggy. So, plan your plantings to control plant form.

- Appropriate spacing of 24 to 36 inches for plants is recommended to allow light penetration across canopy.

Growth Habit

- The Luna hibiscus has an upright, branching growth habit that reaches about 2 feet in height and width.
- Space plants 24 to 36 inches apart.
- The Luna hibiscus likes warm growing conditions. Hardy in zones 5 through 9.

Care and Maintenance

- Plant in an area that receives at least six hours of sun.
- Can plant in wetter areas of the garden.
- Make sure to thoroughly water plant in fall to prepare for over-wintering. Cut back to the ground once the foliage has completely died in the fall or in early spring before they emerge.
- Can be lightly deadheaded (old flowers and seed pods removed) to encourage a longer bloom into fall.



Close-up of a white Luna hibiscus.

- Plants will benefit from fertilization during the growing season. A light-to-medium rate in late spring to early summer will promote superior blooms.

Varieties for Louisiana Landscapes

The Luna hibiscus is available in four different colors, including white, rose, red and pink swirl. However, if you have a difficult time choosing which color to grow, the Luna hibiscus is available as a mix to bring the colors together in a fun and remarkable blend. All colors in the Luna series are designated as Super Plants.

For more information on Luna hibiscus and other Louisiana Super Plants, contact your local LSU AgCenter Extension office or visit LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants..



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