

Punta Gorda National Hibiscus Festival

PROVIDED BY THE PUNTA GORDA NATIONAL HIBISCUS FESTIVAL, INC.

The 6th Annual Punta Gorda National Hibiscus Festival is Friday and Saturday at Gilchrist Park in Punta Gorda.

To kick off the event, the Hibiscus themed Gallery Walk in downtown Punta Gorda will be from 5p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday. Enjoy what the downtown merchants have to offer. Plan to have a nice dinner at one of Punta Gorda's restaurants and spend the early evening enjoying the shops downtown. A great kickoff for the Festival. Follow up dinner with Music in the Park, a regular Thursday event in Punta Gorda. As the sun begins to set head over to Gilchrist Park. This event, fondly known as the Gilchrist Park Guitar Army started as a small impromptu gathering of friends and is now nationally known drawing musicians from all over the world. Bring a lawn chair and plan to stay a while.

On Friday, The Hibiscus Music Festival runs from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday in Gilchrist Park.

It is free and open to all. Picnic baskets and coolers are allowed.

There will also be food and drink available for purchase provided by Smuggler's Enterprises and Big John's BBQ.

The music is Southwest Florida homegrown: Michael's Hibiscus Band, Mac Martin and the Groove Daddies, Grits & Gravy and Still Friends.

On Saturday, The Hibiscus Festival runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Gilchrist Park.

Tour the Secret Gardens by bicycle or trolley or walking - tickets available at Gilchrist Park day of the event. Master gardeners will be at several locations to answer any questions you may have.

A free trolley will tour downtown Punta Gorda - see the historic district, tour the city or visit the Secret Gardens and the History Park.

Ride on marked routes through Punta Gorda and Charlotte County on the The Hibiscus Bicycle Tour. Rides of 62 and 30, 15, and the City Managers Ride around town. All adult riders receive lunch catered by Sky View Cafe, water bottle, schwag bag and bicycling socks. Rides start and end in Gilchrist Park. Entry forms and more details call: 941-637-8326 or visit www.CharlotteCHD.com, or www.teampunta.gorda.org.

View dozens of restored antique cars provided by our local residents, members of The Veteran Motor Car Club of America – come early and enjoy. Don Royston and his gang always put on a first class show.

Dennis Peck from the Punta Gorda Sailing Club is arranging very exciting Hibiscus Sailboat Regatta plans for this year. Many divisions and additional awards for each division are planned for this event. For more information, call Dennis at 941-627-6650. The sailing Club Web site is www.pgscweb.com.

Kid's Entertainment area includes the City of Punta Gorda Firefighter's Safety House to walk through and to encourage children to learn safety procedures.

The Visual Arts Center will have art in the park with local artists. People's Choice Award will be presented on the stage - theme, of course, is Punta Gorda and Hibiscus.

The Harry Goulding Hibiscus Exhibit will be open for viewing of the fantastic flowers at the Punta Gorda Historical Society's History Park on Shreve Street. While in the History Park visit the Trabue Land Office, The Cigar Makers Cottage and the newly restored Price House adorned with beautiful Punta Gorda Hibiscus blooms.

There will also be native and exotic plant vendors from all over Florida, Charlotte Harbor boat tours, Charlotte Harbor Seaplane Tours, Hibiscus Single Man Redfish Tournament, L'il Miss Hibiscus Pageant, hybrid exotic hibiscus, special activities at the History Park.

There is no entry fee.

Food and drink vendors are Smuggler's Enterprises, Big John's BBQ, Carriage Concessions, Hot Dog Day, Slick and Harry's Double Decker Edy's Ice Cream Bus, Joan LeBeau's cotton candy and sno cones.

The festival began to celebrate Punta Gorda's history and it's people. Punta Gorda has been the City of Hibiscus since 1926.