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21. © Propagation protocol for crimson-eyed rosemallow, *Hibiscus moscheutos* L. (Malvaceae). Hunter-Cario, L. Native Plants Journal 8(1):65-68. 2007.

H*ibiscus moscheutos* L. is one of the northernmost members of the primarily tropical and subtropical family Malvaceae and is the only native member of the genus occurring in Canada. It ranges throughout the eastern US north of Florida and east of the Mississippi River, with a narrowing coastal distribution evident north of Maryland to Massachusetts. Disjunct populations occur in southern Ontario, northern New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Illinois. Recently, it has expanded its range into the western states of Texas, Oklahoma, California, and Utah (COSEWIC 2004).

Hibiscus moscheutos, commonly known as crimson-eyed rose-mallow, marsh mallow, and marsh hibiscus, is a hearty perennial emergent wetland plant (Wetland Indicator Status of OBL [obligate wetland]) that is found in fresh and brackish marshes throughout the eastern and south-central US. Typically found growing at the land-water interface, these plants can tolerate standing or tidal waters up to a depth of 7.5 cm (3 in), and they prefer full sun (Thunhorst 1993). Mature plants can reach heights of 1 to 2 m (4 to 7 ft) tall (Brown and Brown 1984). The alternate, toothed leaves are 10 to 20 cm (4 to 8 in) long (Brown and Brown 1984). Before flowering, the plant blends in with other marsh species, but when it starts to flower, the most distinguishing feature of this species is the large white or pink flower (10 to 20 cm [4 to 8 in]) (Brown and Brown 1984). *Hibiscus moscheutos* is a long-flowering species, blooming from July to September, with the height of flowering during mid-August. Up to 8 blooms may be present on a stem with large clumps possessing hundreds of flowers. Single flowers arise in the axils of the upper leaves and are open for only a few days before withering (Figure 1). Flowers are diurnal and remain open for 1 to 3 d depending on whether they were successfully pollinated (COSEWIC 2004). The flowers may be spotted from quite a distance, attracting several species of butterfly and providing nectar for the ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) (Thunhorst 1993).

Figure 1. Crimson-eyed roesmallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) in bloom.

Photo by Kody X Cario



PROPAGATION PROTOCOL FOR

CRIMSONEYED ROSEMALLOW

Hibiscus moscheutos L. (Malvaceae)

Leslie Hunter-Cario

ABSTRACT

Crimson-eyed rosemallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos* L. [Malvaceae]) is a striking marsh plant found throughout the eastern and south-central US. This species is relatively easy to propagate with seeds and cuttings. Here we describe propagation methods used successfully by the native plant nursery at Environmental Concern Inc, a nonprofit wetland restoration organization on the eastern shore of Maryland.

Hunter-Cario L. 2007. Propagation protocol for crimson-eyed rosemallow *Hibiscus moscheutos* L. (Malvaceae). *Native Plants Journal* 8(1):65–68.

KEY WORDS

marsh hibiscus, seed collection, propagation, vegetative propagation

NOMENCLATURE

USDA NRCS (2006)