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Hibiscus

Malvaceae

Hibiscus is a Greek name *ibiskos* for ‘mallow’ but there is debate as to the plant to which this name was applied. Some say it is the name used by the 1st Century Greek physician Dioscorides and that it may have referred specifically to least mallow (*Malva parviflora*). In India, where the general name for ‘hibiscus’ is *jaba*, members of this family are said to be a symbol of delicate beauty – and this symbolism seems to have spread to the West where a similar meaning is attributed to it in the language of flowers.