

President's Message by Bob Arend page 2

PSA Speaker Recap—5/12/15 page 3

In the News page 4

Grafting Gets No Respect by George Hadjigeorge page 5

Photos— PSA Seabrook/Clear Lake Sale page 12

Back Page—2nd International Plumeria Conference page 12

Back Page—Yard Tours page 12

Plumeria Potpourri

Come to the July 14th meeting!

Tuesday, July 14, 2015, 7:30 p.m. Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas ... anyone with an interest in plumeria is invited to attend ...

Speaker: Rick Stone Drip Irrigation

Rick will be talking about drip irrigation for plumeria and any other plants a person would like to water regularly. He will discuss the benefits of drip irrigation and the way his yard is set up. Rick will be showing some drip irrigation materials and explaining why he uses specific items. There will also be some hands-on time, and he will share some sources to get the materials he uses.

At Rick Stone's yard tour on August 1st people will have a chance to see how he has set up his yard using the materials talked about at the meeting.



July 2015

President's Corner

Our May 12th meeting had a very good turnout of members and guests. Before the meeting started, we had time to visit with everyone and enjoy the great food provided by Diego and Vicky Tristan. George Hadjigeorge gave a great and thorough presentation with excellent photos on how to deal with stem rot. George's presentations are always extremely thorough, just like the research and in-depth data that George provides in his plumeria articles. The presentation was very well received by the members, and George was able to answer all the questions from our members.

Rick Stone will be our speaker for the July 14th meeting. Rick will discuss the irrigation system that he is currently using to water his plumerias and other plants.

I was very pleased to present a lifetime membership to Emerson and Nancy Willis. They embody the purpose of The Plumeria Society of America. For years they have traveled the world planting plumerias and promoting the love of plumerias.

Saturday, June 13th was our first plant sale for the year. We have had a lot of rain in the Houston area the months of May and June, and June 13th was no exception. Unfortunately, we had pouring rain as we were setting up for the plant sale, and it affected the number of customers that turned out for the sale. In spite of this, we had a very successful sale. There were 26 PSA members selling 228 varieties of plumerias, and we sold a total of 1,021 plants. Our plant sales are so successful thanks to the committee chairmen German Collazos and David Holloway, and all our PSA members who volunteer to make our plant sales run as smoothly as they do. Our second plant sale will be July 25th at Fort Bend County Fairgrounds—and hopefully without rain.

We have two yard tours scheduled to date (see back page). They are August 1st at Rick Stone's home and August 15th at Bryan Holland's home. I have had several other members tell me that they would like to have a yard tour this year, and we are currently working on finalizing dates.



GROWERS

Please contact German Collazos with any questions at (713) 670-4064 or german.collazos@ tic.toshiba.com.

The growers' meeting will be held after the July 14th general meeting in order to allow time for people to arrive.

Important Dates

July 7—Commitment to sell at Fort Bend

July 14—Sellers' meeting (after general meeting)

July 15—Cultivar list submission for Fort Bend sale

PSA Speaker Recap—5/12/15

George Hadjigeorge gave a presentation on preventing plumeria stem rot in winter storage. He first discussed **black tip** which can happen at any time during the year. These points are relevant:

- Black tip is not caused by fungus (studies at universities show this).
- Spraying with fungicides will not prevent black tip.
- Grafting vulnerable varieties on other rootstocks does not help (experiments in 2013).
- Spraying tips with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide does not prevent black tip.
- Black tip will not infect branches with rot and does not kill a plant.
- Nobody has any idea how to prevent black tip, so we live with it.

Action for black tip: Do nothing (only a few varieties are affected). The black tip will separate from the tip and fall off.

Stem rot:

- Rotting leaf stems and little leaves at the branch tips are the source of most stem rotting infections early in the winter storage season.
- Very rarely is there stem rotting from leaf node infections when plumerias are in the sun in greenhouses.
- Cool conditions in garages and absence of sunlight lead to rotting leaf stems and inflos.
- Stem rotting is preventable by letting leaf stems fall off outside before moving the plants into storage and by spraying them with CONSAN-20 which is an algaecide, fungicide, and bactericide (2 tablespoons per gallon of water).
- Stem rotting also happens to cuttings in humidity boxes. Let leaf stubs fall off on the plants before putting cuttings to be callused in humidity boxes. Spraying cuttings with CONSAN-20 to disinfect them is recommended.
- Inspect stored plants often. Do whatever it

takes to stop the rot from spreading.

 Remove small rots with a sharp knife (sterilized with alcohol).
Coat cuts with sulfur+fungicide powder. Spray again branch with CONSAN-20.



• Cut off rotting branches immediately and coat with sulfur+fungicide.

Bark rot:

 Bark rotting is the most serious rot of all (most branches are lost). Spray all branches with CONSAN-20 before moving plants to storage to prevent it. Spot spray CONSAN-20 on suspicious spots in storage.

To read George's presentation in its entirety, go to the PSA's Facebook page and locate *PreventingStemRot.pdf* in the "Files" section

Joining the PSA ...

To join online, go to: www.theplumeriasociety.org Click on "Join the PSA" tab at the top of the home page Join by mail (PDF) or online (pay with Paypal)

or

To join by mail, send a check to: The Plumeria Society of America, Inc. P.O. Box 22791 Houston, TX 77227-2791, USA

Dues are \$25 per year

In the News



The PSA recognized Emerson Willis with a lifetime PSA membership for his decades-long contributions as an ambassador for growing and promoting plumerias. The presentation was made by PSA president Bob Arend at the May meeting. Don Doerfler, vice president of the Southern California Plumeria Society, was holidaying recently on Oahu and was delighted to find Don Ho Street in Honolulu. He happens to have a *JL Don Ho* plumeria ... such a coincidence!





Emerson Willis was able to very quickly root and bloom the lovely *Hanalei* plumeria which was originally found on the Nawiliwili Road on Kauai. Of course, coming from Bud Guillot's backyard, the healthiness of the cutting may have had something to do with the quick success. Or, was it Emerson's secret rooting technique?

Grafting Gets No Respect

People are under the impression that grafted plants are inferior to rooted plants; they could not be more wrong. Their impression is based mainly on misinformation and not facts. I want to present some facts about grafting to help educate those people into making a more informed decision.

Tap Roots. It is commonly thought that seedlings produce a long tap root which circles within a pot, and, therefore, are not suitable for grafting. However, with all the seedlings I have grown, both in pots and in the ground, I have not found that they develop a tap root. A tap root is something that pecan trees and citrus trees develop, and that is why they are sold in tall pots.

Plumeria seeds germinate by developing a tap

root as shown in the picture to the right. These seeds were germinated by floating on styrofoam in water. However,



the original tap root from when the seed germinated stops growing within inches from the soil line and develops a lot of primary roots from the side of the tap root as shown in the three pictures below of 8-week old seedlings. The side primary roots anchor the plant well and give it vigor.





As the plants grow older, no tap root grows beyond 4"-6". The picture on the left below shows



a 6-month old seedling grown in the ground. Lots of side roots, but there is no tap root even though the plant was not bounded by a pot wall. The picture on the right below shows a 3-year old seedling

grown in a pot. There is no tap root circling around the pot. The original tap root tapered down to nothing within 4"–6"



from the soil line. All the primary roots come from the side of this tapered down main root. I have grown thousands of seedlings. I have never seen one with a long tap root that circles around the pot.

Rooted plants on the other hand have a totally different root structure. All the roots emanate from the cambium line around the bottom cut. Very rarely will a rooted cutting develop roots from the side of the trunk. The picture below on the left shows a newly rooted cutting. The picture below on the right shows a 7-year old rooted cutting (the



roots were cut in order to get a clear picture). These two pictures show how all the roots are on a single plane (the cambium line of the cut plane), and no roots emanate from the side of the trunk. A tree from a cutting is not anchored as well as one grown from a seed. If a tree from a cutting swings in the wind, it is at risk of being uprooted. Seedlings are anchored much better than rooted cuttings, because the primary roots are spread over a distance of 4"–6" along the trunk and are less likely to swing and be uprooted in the wind.

All seedlings, independent of which variety or which particular pod they came from, form a root system that is better and different from rooted cuttings. Granted, seedlings from the same seed pod initially grow at different rates, but that is not a problem because the rootstocks used for grafting are two-year old plants with fully developed root systems. Seedlings of pinks, yellows, and whites are preferred for grafting rootstock because of their higher grafting success rate.

The Basics. If the rootstock is bigger in diameter than the scion, the graft is not impeding the growth of the plant. This just shows that the

rootstock the plant is grafted onto is more vigorous and grew at a faster rate than the scion. This is very common in grafting plumerias, especially the ones grafted onto seedlings, just like the picture to the right shows.



The flow of nutrients from the roots to the plant goes through the cambium line (the surface between the wood and the bark) and not through the graft union. Thus, since a 10-year old graft union has a fully developed cambium line, the graft union cannot restrict the flow of nutrients and hinder the development of the plant. On the contrary, the above picture shows that the rootstock is more vigorous than the scion plant itself, and thus the scion plant has reached its best possible potential. Had the scion plant been grown on its own roots, it would not be as big or as vigorous, because it would not have as good a root system as the one grafted onto a seedling.

The flow of nutrients via the cambium line is so slow that the diameter of the rootstock and scion do not make much difference as it would in a fast moving system. The diameter of the rootstock is larger and should not restrict the flow of nutrients into the smaller diameter scion anyway. But even if it were reversed, it would not matter because of slow moving nutrients. About 15 years ago, I tried to make a smaller pear tree by using a standard rootstock and inserting sections of a dwarf variety in between the rootstock and the desired variety. The theory was that the smaller diameter of the dwarf sections hopefully would limit the flow of sap and limit the size of the tree. Here is what the pear

tree looks like today. The inserted dwarf pear sections are smaller in diameter than the rootstock and the scion, as expected. The tree grew to the same height and width as the mother tree. Thus, those smaller diameter, dwarf sections do not restrict the



flow of nutrients to the tree. What matters is the rootstock the pear tree is grafted onto, that is, how much nutrient the roots are pumping up. Similarly in plumerias, variations in diameter size do not make any difference because of the slow moving sap.

The pictures below show the cut-away view of an 8-week old graft union. The picture on the right shows the surface of the cambium line (bark was removed). The scion and rootstock have fully fused together (both at the pith and at the wood), and a cambium line between the rootstock and scion has fully been established in just eight weeks. A union like this cannot restrict the flow of nutrients and hinder plant growth, independent of its age.



What about incompatibility of scion and rootstock? You get the worse incompatibility when you graft a young, green scion onto very old wood, because the old wood cannot grow as fast as the green scion. The next three photos show an example of a young scion (six months old) that was grafted onto a branch about ten years old (on a 15-year old tree). The graft was successful. However, the scion grew at a faster rate than the old rootstock, and after a year it had a bigger diameter than the rootstock (opposite effect you normally get by grafting onto vigorous seedlings).

The picture to the right shows the cut-away view. The difference in age is very apparent from the thickness of the rootstock and scion woods. When a plumeria branch is cut, a small part of the end wood dies and appears as dark spots in the picture. You



can see this in rooted cuttings, pruned branches, and grafting. So, the dead ends of the scion and rootstock cannot grow to connect together. New wood grows at the cambium line and encapsulates the scion and rootstock, and a new cambium surface is formed over this new wood.

In this particular graft, because the graft scion was large (over three feet long with three tips), it formed a big callus at the pith when the graft was made, which pushed the scion and rootstock apart. As a result, the cambium wood that connected the scion to the rootstock spilled underneath into this gap and filled it with solid wood. The graft is cross braised with solid wood about 1/8" thick. As a result, this graft union is super strong, much stronger than the previous graft with a thin graft scar, which had pure pith and no wood at the graft line over the two piths.

The second picture shows the cambium surface at the graft union. Clearly the cambium



edge of the rootstock, with the scion just above it. I ook at how massive the new wood that encapsulates the graft union is. The strongest part on the whole branch is the graft union. Granted, the graft union looks a little odd because of the mismatch in age of the



The last picture shows

scion and rootstock, but in no way does this make a weak graft union or does the graft union hinder the growth of the branch.

Advantages. Is there a difference in flower size and regularity of quality, seasonable blooms between a grafted plant and rooted cutting? Grafted plants typically grow much more vigorously the first few years because the root system of the scion (1–2 year old seedling) is fully developed compared to cuttings which take years to build a comparable root system from scratch. In fact, this is one of the main advantages of grafting versus rooting.

On the other hand, a lot of red varieties do not develop a good root system when rooted and would not do as well if they were rooted. Some are extremely difficult to root (i.e., Bill Moragne, Katie *Moragne*, etc.). As an example, here are three photos of *Rare Hilo Beauty* (a dark red variety). The cuttings were purchased from Hawai'i in the spring of 2013. A few were grafted onto rainbow trees (rooted 3-year old *Slaughter Pink* plants). Some cuttings were rooted. The next picture shows what



the rooted plants look like in the fall of 2014. All of them lack vigor, have not grown much,

have branches that are shriveled, and have never bloomed. The root system is very weak; visual inspection has shown few roots.

The picture on the left below shows a grafted cutting blooming in just two months after grafting.



The picture on the right shows



the blooms, all full size flowers and not hindered by grafting.

These are the cuttings as grafted plants in the fall of 2014. They are very vigorous and healthy and have grown to more than twice as tall since being grafted. There is just no comparison of how much better and healthier these grafted plants look compared to the rooted plants of the same age.



You can make successful plumeria grafts without matching any part of the cambium line, because a plumeria graft can take by the piths fusing, by the cambium fusing, or by both the pith and cambium fusing. The graft works by the sap stored in the scion and not by sap flow from the rootstock to the scion (unlike fruit trees).

Here is an example of a pencil thin, 4" long, *Corona Surprise* scion (broken off by a water hose) that was grafted onto a much bigger in diameter seedling, without any part of the cambium

touching. In six months the scion grew to over two feet long. A valuable cutting was saved, and I have all kinds of options of what to do with the grown scion. I could even let it grow as is, and it will make a tree that will be fine and will not be hindered by the graft union in any way.



Saving tips of expensive cuttings that are rotting and failed to root is also very valuable. Here is an example of tiny tips of expensive cuttings that were salvaged by grafting. These have grown into nice healthy plants. No way could tiny tips like this ever be rooted.





Another Misconception. People consider the stretch marks on older grafts as a sign of weakness. Stretch marks are a sign of strength. Typically the grafting scar gets bigger with age (as in the picture to the right) because the graft union grows stronger.





The picture on the left shows an 18-month old square graft. The original scion and rootstock have been pushed apart. The picture below shows a cut-away view. The scion and rootstock are held together by new wood that

grew in the cambium line and encapsulated the two pieces. The gap that formed between the scion and the rootstock is filled with solid wood that cross braises the wood structure. This picture shows that the strongest part on this branch is the graft union, and the stretch marks show how



thick the cross braising wood is. The next picture



below shows the graft union with the bark removed, so we can see the cambium line. Clearly the scion has fused to the rootstock with new solid wood, the cambium line is fully established, and the graft union cannot possibly in any way hinder nutrient flow from the roots.

Sometimes the graft unions appear weak and look like they can easily be broken apart. In the following two pictures, a tape that could stretch was used on purpose to tape a newly-made graft union. The result was a large graft mark, because the pressure of the growth at the graft union pushed the scion and rootstock apart. As a result of this movement, the scion shifted in relationship to the rootstock. This graft is about one year old, and on the surface it looks like it could easily be broken apart. However, the picture on the right shows that



the cut is lined with thick, solid wood. The lower end of the graft is encapsulated with thick, solid wood. The solid wood in the middle normally comes all the way to end perpendicular to the cut-away view, so about 95% of the cut would be lined with solid wood (of about the same thickness as the stretch mark). Only the very tip of the cut is not encapsulated in solid wood but will be, given more time. Given enough pressure, the branch would break somewhere else but not at the graft union. Large stretch marks like this can be avoided by using a tape that does not stretch.

Practice Makes Perfect. When the grafter acquires enough experience in grafting plumerias, beautiful hairline grafting scars can be achieved like in the pictures below. The key is to use non-stretching tape to wrap the graft. Grafts like this grow very strong very quickly. A fully functional cambium surface is established in just a few months.



Here is what a typical graft union, done with a non-stretching tape, looks like after a year. The left picture (cut-away view) shows that the scion and



rootstock woods are still touching, and new wood has grown at the cambium line and encapsulated both pieces. There is no wood in the center cut cross braising the graft union. The piths have fused together. The cut-away view picture shows

that the new wood that encapsulates the scion and rootstock is the thickest at the seam of the graft union, and that the graft cut contains only pith and no wood (pith was scooped out at graft line in the picture on the right).



The picture below on the left shows the graft union when all the pith is scooped out. The ends of



both the rootstock and scion woods are dead and appear dark. They are both still touching, and there is no gap between them. New wood grew over them and connected

the rootstock to the scion

wood on the outside of the graft union at the cambium line. This new wood is the thickest at the seam. However, a smooth cambium surface has been established, and the seam cannot hinder nutrient flow. Still, even though this type of graft union is



not as strong as the ones that contain crossbraising wood at the seam, they are still much stronger than any other part of the branch because the massive cambium wood that encapsulates the graft union is thicker than the branch wood.

Preventing Problems. Unfortunately, sometimes grafts are made that connect at the pith only and break apart during transit and give grafting a bad name. These are characterized by large grafting scars, and the cambium lines of the scion and rootstock are pushed apart by the swelling piths, as in these pictures. The more the





wrapping tape stretches, the bigger the graft scar becomes. I use nylon ties to hold the graft together until it fully heals. Grafts like this heal slowly because there is no flow of sap at the cambium line. Sap only flows at the pith at reduced rates. It takes about six months to establish a fully functional cambium surface. Cambium wood spills between the rootstock and scion and cross braises the graft union. So, even though this type of graft starts out weak and remains weak for some time, eventually it makes the strongest possible graft union.

More techniques. Down grafting is a powerful technique used to make compact plants of desired heighth out of tall, leggy plants. The plant in the left picture below has grown lanky. The photo on the right shows a section was removed in the





middle, and the top was grafted onto the bottom to make a shorter plant. The picture on the right shows another example of down grafting with a much larger scion (three long tips).

Another useful technique is to replace a long branch with a

shorter multi-tipped scion from another tree (same or different variety) as an alternative to pruning the branch. When a branch is pruned, you cannot control how many tips you are going to get and in what direction. Many times pruned branches do not give aesthetically pleasing results as the branches grow crooked and lanky. The picture on the right





shows a long branch was replaced by a 5-tip scion. You can control how many tips to put there, along with their direction, as well as the heighth of the branch. In addition, the graft will heal much quicker (in a matter of a few months) versus the cut branch that will take more than 10 years to fully heal.

Grafting could also be used to make compact pot plants. It is desirable to have the blooms near eye level so one can see and smell them better. In pot plants, we start at about 18"-24" elevation for large pots. Unfortunately, the first branches of plumeria plants after they first flower, grow 2'-3' in length, and this results in relatively tall plants for pots. One technique that can be used to achieve more compact pot plants is to down graft all branches of the young plants to 8"-12" long. In the next example, the picture on the left shows a plant with three primary branches of about 18" long



spread was achieved. The next set of branches could be grafted with different varieties to



each. The picture on the

same plant in a year's time after the three branches

about 8" long each. A nice

compact plant with a good

right below shows the

were down grafted to

make a nice compact rainbow pot plant.



On the left below is an example of a plant with crooked branches. The picture on the right below shows the same plant six months later



after the three branches were down

grafted to about 10"–12" each. The plant has a nice compact shape, and the tips have a good orientation (not running into each other).

Slaughter Pink. Some varieties do not tolerate wet soil in winter storage. I have found that *Slaughter Pink* has a strong root system that tolerates wet soil in winter storage very well. The roots do not rot, whereas the roots of most varieties will rot in wet conditions. The plant grows medium in height and has robust branches. For these reasons, I graft a lot of my rainbow trees onto *Slaughter Pink* bases. The above two examples of compact plants are *Slaughter Pink* bases prepared for making rainbow trees. **Conclusion.** Grafting is a very powerful technique which could be used to enhance the shape of plumerias and make compact plants and rainbow trees. Grafting could also be used to make more vigorous plants by grafting onto seedlings. Grafting is the best option to grow hard to root cultivars or cultivars having weak root systems. Grafting is the best option to save rotting plants. Grafting does not hinder plant development as many people think. Graft unions are very strong, much stronger than any other part of the plant. Every serious plumeria grower should master grafting and should not be reluctant to buy grafted plants.

Photos—PSA Seabrook/Clear Lake Sale



PSA past presidents, Mark Wright and Paula Furtwangler



Mary Jane Fortney and George Hadjigeorge



Emerson Willis



Karen Babb and Diego Tristan



Roger Galle, Paula Furtwangler, and Laurie Galle



Elizabeth Warren Theut, Allie, and Paula Furtwangler











Virginia McClosky, German Collazos, and Diego Tristan



Fred Yoder and Paula Furtwangler



Liz Dethloff, Paula Furtwangler, and Vicki Jenkins



The Awesome Cooks: Vicky Tristan, Delia Mejia, and Martha Martinez



Liz Dethloff



Allen Caldwell and Tamara Caldwell



Eulas Stafford



Paula Furtwangler and John Carroll



John Brownlee

Emerson Willis

Tex Norwood



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http://www.theplumeriasociety.org

Our new website is easier to navigate and to find information about plumeria care, cultivar registration, society news, events, and much more! Since the website is new, please refer back often to check for updates and to see updated added features such as the flower identification database and a members only newsletter archive! See below for the current MEMBERS ONLY login and password information that will be needed to access the website's newsletter archive.

Log in: psamember

Password: Scottpratt93

Twitter feed: **@plumeriasociety**

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Purpose of The Plumeria Society of America

- Promote interest in and increase knowledge of plumeria hybridization, propagation and culture of plumerias.
- (2) Share this knowledge with hobbyists interested in plumerias.
- (3) Provide a register for recording, identifying and classifying by name new types and varieties of plumerias.
- (4) Encourage and unite plumeria enthusiasts around the globe, throughout America and across the seas.

PSA Calendar — 2015

| January 13meeting |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| March 10 meeting |
| May 12 meeting |
| June 13 Show & Sale I (Seabrook/Clear Lake) |
| July 14 meeting |
| July 25Show & Sale II (Fort Bend County Fairgrounds) |
| October 13 meeting |
| October 17 Fall Social and Luau |

- Currently, meetings are held at Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas 77030.
- Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. Please feel welcome to come 30–45 minutes before the meeting for snacks and chat.
- We have a raffle, guest speakers, and more. Please join us for the evening to learn more about plumeria care and collecting.
- Non-members are always welcome!
- Bring your blooms. Bring your friends.
- Bring plants, cuttings, etc. for door prizes! These can be anything, not just plumerias.

The Plumeria Society of America, Inc. P.O. Box 22791 Houston, TX 77227-2791, USA Dues are \$25 per year

PSA Officers/Committee Members—2015

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2nd International Plumeria Conference Brought to you by Plumeria Society of America & Naples Botanical Garden

Plumerians Worldwide Are to Gather at the 2nd International Plumeria Conference

The Plumeria Society of America (PSA) and Naples Botanical Garden are pleased to announce the 2nd International Plumeria Conference (IPC), tentatively scheduled for May 18–22, 2016.

The site of the 2016 IPC is the renowned Naples Botanical Garden in Naples, Florida (www. naplesgarden.org). The Garden hosts the National Plumeria Collection, with over 500 plumeria trees. Field trips to other notable plumeria sites in the area are in the planning stages. More information coming soon!

Since the first conference in Galveston, almost 10 years ago, advances in plumeria cultivation and cultivar development have come fast and furious. The conference will gather the best minds in the plumeria world to share their knowledge and experience with plumeria enthusiasts—from hobbyists to vendors. The conference steering committee (Eulas Stafford, Hetty Ford, Tex Norwood, Karen Babb, and Mike Atkinson) is working closely with the PSA to craft an innovative, stimulating mix of workshops and presenters.

The conference will also feature a closing luau, and other fun surprises, including the introduction and auction of a new variety named in honor of the conference.

Make your plans to attend now! Go to the beginning of the conference website (www.2016IPC.com) and sign up for our email list for future news and notifications, including special conference rates at nearby hotels.

We hope to see you in Naples next year!



Yard Tours

Rick Stone's Yard Tour August 1st 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 4010 Indian Point Missouri City, Texas 77459 cell phone: 832 630 5334 Bryan Holland's Yard Tour August 15th 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 1172 Rustling Wind Lane League City, TX 77573 phone: 281 538 0989