



# Plumeria

# Potpourri

THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

August, 1984

## NOTICE OF MEETING

- Date - Tuesday, September 11, 1984
  - Time - 7:30 PM
  - Place - St. Philip's Presbyterian Church  
San Felipe and Loop 610
  - Program - Membership Drive. Come meet prospective members, share growing experiences, hear briefing on the history of the Plumeria Society. Win the door prize of a growing plumeria!
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## The President's Message

..... "A World of Delight"

In the world of fragrance and perfection of form, the rose reigns supreme. In the world of tropical splendor, in its thousands of shapes and color combinations, the orchid takes first place. For its magnificent size, power and prolific blooms, the hibiscus crowns the world of tropical shrubs. Indeed, one could continue the list indefinitely -- and every member of every plant society offer insights into the meaning and importance of their chosen species in the collective harmony of plants and man.

For me the plumeria occupies a special place in the earth's garden and symbolizes perfection and eternity. I have seen plumerias uprooted by tropical storms lay for months in the baking sun without water, in 100 degree temperatures, and never cease for a moment their daily flower display. Then, with the onset of monsoon rains and the gentle straightening hand of man, striking roots again and continuing as if nothing had happened!

In many countries the plumeria is the symbol of eternity. If one travels through Hawaii, the Caribbean islands and even to the other side of the world, in India, one will see plumeria trees, living monuments of immortality, planted near the graves of loved ones, showering their bouquets each day, through spring and summer and into fall, honoring the departed.

My thoughts above are a preface to the things I wish to express today. I'll put aside my tale of plumeria hunting around the world for this issue so that I may share my feelings of this past month with all our members.

We have recently completed a flower show that will long be remembered. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work together with so many members of all ages and walks of life, to share with perhaps a thousand visitors our love for the plumeria and something of our experience in growing and flowering these wondrous tropicals. May I thank each of you personally for your valued contributions in planning the show, in the physical labor of planting and transporting plants, in the sharing of your expertise, for the long hours of standing and helping the public, for writing tickets, operating the projector, taking care of sales and accounting, for the most exceptional publicity work, for offering your personal contributions of plants, seeds and cuttings, for preparing demonstrations and a wonderful slide show, answering hundreds of questions and so much more. What a marvelous group!

With the new and refreshing impetus and the many friends and members we have gained, let us go forward together into the areas of research, publications, plant registration and hybridizing, unfolding ever more the secrets of our beloved plumeria.

..... Richard Eggenberger

## Why Plumerias are called Frangipani .....

One day in Rome early in the twelfth century, an Italian nobleman, taking time off from his official duties as bread-breaker of the Holy Sacrament to pursue his hobby, combined a number of volatile oils and pronounced the result his most tantalizing perfume. It proved to be a sure-fire formula and one that not only brought wealth to its makers, but fixed the inventor's name, which he had given the perfume, in the vocabularies of many nations. The man's name was Frangipani.

The noble ladies of Europe, including the formidable Catharine de Medici, whose favorite it was, used the perfume called "Frangipani" for nearly four centuries before the discovery of the Western Hemisphere. It was a popular and easily recognized scent, and one that was quickly recalled to the early European settlers in the Caribbean area by the fragrance of a tree they found growing there. That they identi-

fied the sweet smelling flowers of this particular tree with a famous perfume of their homeland is the most persistent explanation of why the Plumeria are called Frangipani.

Yet a second explanation refers to the tree itself. It is the latexlike sticky juice which exudes from cut bark of the tree. The sap will run freely and profusely from a wound in the bark or stem, a fact that was discovered by the first French settlers in the Caribbean. There is a term in the French language which means coagulated milk -- "frangipanier" -- and, by association, this word was used to refer to the Plumeria trees.

(Editors Note: From a reprint entitled "Flowering Trees of the Caribbean" sent in by our associate member in Mexico, Guillermo Perez-Salazar. Has anyone another documented explanation? Please write the Editor.)

..... Comments from our readers .....

"Be Early" More and more growers are finding that the plumeria will flourish when planted in the ground. The writer of this tidbit placed a large white plumeria in the ground last spring during late March. Leaf growth was almost immediate and the tree took on a robust appearance, however, it was not until mid-July that buds appeared. The question arises as to why such a response in leaf growth but not in flower production until so much later?

Very likely the answer would be that the plant metabolism which produces the flower, requires a longer period of adjustment to the temperature of the earth's soil. Soil in pots would be warmer much before the earth's soil could change temperature thus affecting earlier production.

Therefore if you wish to experiment with planting in the ground, "be early" in your spring gardening. Place your plants in the ground immediately after the hazard of frost or freeze has past.

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And from another writer comes the encouragement to those who plant all of their plants in the ground. Try potting one or two plants and bringing it to full bloom. What a joy to be able to set this inside, in your entertaining area, at your next social. Watch guests sniff happily as they walk by!

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(The following is a suggested method for propagating seeds and cuttings. While there are many known methods, the editor thanks the contributor and invites further comments on additional tested and proven methods) .....

..... keep the seeds moist by placing them between wet paper towels. (The writer has found Scott toweling to hold up better and last longer than other brands.) Keeping the toweling moist should encourage sprouting of seeds anywhere from 3 days to 3 weeks. Plant with sheath above soil and mist often. In two or three days remove sheath carefully. This will be easier if it is wet.

..... Cuttings should be of mature wood, not green wood. Let dry several days until cut is well sealed and there is no sign of dripping sap. These are easily rooted in well drained soil.

## \*\* PLANT SALE AND FLOWER DISPLAY EXTREME SUCCESS \*\*

Results of the recent flower display and plant sale held at the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, August 4 and 5, are indeed gratifying. So much so that this will now allow the board of directors to look optimistically into the projects of the standing committees bringing into fruition some of the much needed projects.

Success of the show is attributed to the many long hours -- before, during and after -- and it is only proper here to recognize those who made it possible . . . . .

\* Richard Eggenberger and Ken Duff for early preparation, planting and nursing all those Hawaii cuttings and seedlings

\* Dave "Kawika" Emison for the superb job in publicizing the sale through all media avenues imagineable and then manning the Information Booth at the show both Saturday and Sunday

\* To those who so generously donated plants and cuttings -- Elizabeth Thornton, Richard Eggenberger, Nancy Ames, Iris and Virgil Rock, Pili and John Oliver, Ken and Mary Duff, Kawika Emison and Daphne Sealey.

\* Seed donators: Eggenberger, Thornton, Emison, D. Sealey, Gloria Glenney, the Olivers, Iris Rock and Guillermo Perez Salazar, associate member who sent seeds from Mexico.

\* Gene Dintleman and D. Sealey for their informative displays at the "Demonstration" tables

\* For the beautiful and fragrant blossoms and greenery, and arrangements that drew many exclamations -- the Olivers, Ken and Mary Duff, Iris Rock, Ardell Broussard, Dorothy Falkenberg, D. Sealey and Lola Darby.

\* The sales staff who did a marvelous job receipt writing and keeping up with the unbelievable amount of business -- Mary Schonier, Laura Franks, D. Falkenberg, Shirley Hummell, Anna Richardson, G. Dintleman, Lee Jacobs (thanks also Lee for the use of your pickup in helping to transport plants to the scene), L. Darby, A. Broussard, Johnnie Berly, Betty Andrews, Mary Duff, D. Sealy, G. Glenney and Mary Vanya.

\* Ed Glover who directed the slide presentation which meant sitting through show after show ... after show

\* Abe Schonier for lending a much-needed helping hand during the early hours of the show and Nina Usher for manning the guest book table

\* And to our treasurer, Art Usher, who kept all accounting under control, volunteering many additional hours and smiled all the way to the bank!

\* If I overlooked anyone my deepest apologies. To those who could not be with us you missed the excitement of seeing some 1,000 people file through during the 2-day exhibit and sale. Each day crowds lined up before doors were opened. Seeds, cuttings and plants from the rare cultivars to those more common were available for sale and before the end of the day we were already making contacts to refurbish our diminished supply.

Plant Sale continued .....

It took a lot of time and effort to put this all together and make it the success it was. I thank each and everyone of you from the bottom of my heart.

..... Marvy Marciel, Chairman

Nor can success be attained without the perserverance and dedication of one assigned a task and carries the ball through its entirety. Marvy Marciel, who serves on the board of directors as program chairman, and also holds down a full-time job as travel consultant, deserves hearty congratulations for a job well done.

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FROM THE REGISTRATION COMMITTEE .....

John Oliver, chairman, reports that work on registering plumeria cultivars is getting underway. The committee would appreciate hearing from any active or associate member knowledgeable on plant taxonomy or the procedures followed by other horticultural societies in registering their cultivars that might be applicable to registering plumerias. As you well know, the Plumeria Society, headquartered in Houston, has been formally granted all rights as International Registration Authority for plumerias throughout the world. To properly form procedures for registering and to maintain a register of plumeria cultivars is one of the purposes of this organization as set forth in the by-laws of the society. You are invited to indicate your interest in the work of this committee by writing or calling its chairman before their next committee meeting, September 15, 1984. Address your inquiry to the chairman, 37 Stillforest, Houston, TX, 77024, or call (713) 781-0230. Thank you.

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..... Special hellos to our associate members in the Los Angeles area!! If you're visiting Downey and want to see a sight beholding to the eye, drive past Downey Ford Motor Company on Lakewood Blvd. at Florence and note the tri-color plumeria at the entrance of the show room. Amazing, I saw this on my last trip to Downey and couldn't believe it. Careful examination reveals it is three separate plants but you could never tell by just looking at it. .... Editor

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\*\*\*\*INTERVIEW\*\*\*\* A Visit in the Garden of Iris Rock

It was not one of the better days in Houston for visiting gardens. It meant driving through a rainstorm with streets showing signs of flooding. But braving it all and venturing to Willowbend on the south side of Houston, there on Warm Springs we found the cozy home of Iris and Virgil Rock. John and I were greeted with open arms and immediately felt welcome. Standing in the living room we could look past sliding doors into the garden. Somehow there was a sudden urge to want to rush out to touch and smell the flowers. It seemed the colors of the rainbow had settled before our eyes.

But the rain kept us under a covered patio while Iris gave us a finger-pointing tour of her garden filled with plumeria, butterfly ginger, phlox, tis, jasmine and what I thought was a Xmas tree until I learned it to be a spreading yew. A magnolia tree gracefully sets off one corner while tomato plants embrace the back fence.

Brilliant red bougainvillea are nestled around a rock garden and waterfall which in spite of the afternoon's competition with the rain, was still soothing and refreshing to the eye. Garlic chives are planted at strategic spots near the patio -- "to keep the musquitos at bay", says Iris.

Awaiting the rain to let up we settled back in the living room and with a chilled glass of Riesling, Iris related her years of gardening and interest in plumeria cultivation. She purchased her first plant back about twenty years ago at a sale at the Bulb Mart in Houston, the last sale the mart held at the Art Museum before moving to its new locale. It has been a hobby with her ever since and I would estimate she must now have at least fifteen or more various cultivars in her garden. She has raised many from seed as well as from cuttings. She and her husband have gone on long drives in search of different colors. Once they drove to the Mexican border looking for a yellow cultivar which her son, Peb, wanted for his birthday.

Iris joined the Plumeria Society the year it was chartered, in 1979, and she and Virgil were in the group that recently traveled on tour to Hawaii.

She presently has two cultivars which were included in the initial listing the society submitted to qualify as the International Authority for Registering Plumeria Cultivars. These are the 'Iris Sunset' and the 'Conch Shell'. There are two additional beauties, the 'Mango Blush' and 'Peppermint Stick' which she plans to submit for registration soon.

Her plants are now all container grown as she laughingly related her one and only experience with planting in the ground. "I just didn't get it up in time and the winter freeze showed no mercy". She is generous in her fertilization program. Having worked at gardening all her life -- she started in her dad's strawberry patch when she was knee-high to a grasshopper -- she has developed her own fertilizer mixture and needs no time table to tell her when to feed. She says, "I can tell when my children look hungry and that's when they're fed!"

As the years go by, record keeping on plant behavior is not of prime importance to her, yet you cannot help but feel if she didn't know the answer she could easily find out by talking to the "children". While loving them all, if she had to pick a favorite it would be 'Iris Sunset' and 'Aztec Gold' a close second.

Fortunately for us the rain stopped briefly so we could do what we wanted to -- touch and smell the fragrant plumeria. How sweet the day and if invited we'll do it again, even in the rain.

..... Editor, Pili Oliver, accompanied by her husband, John

An opportunity to serve . . . directed to the active membership as a plea for help --

Do you have a little time to assist on the MEMBERSHIP committee? Duties of this committee include the keeping of all membership records, answering inquiries regarding membership in the society, assembling and distributing a membership roster, collection of dues, welcoming new members at regular scheduled meetings and special occasions, and contributing articles regarding membership to the newsletter. The chairman of this standing committee serves on the board of directors. While you may hesitate in one area there may be others in which your expertise would be helpful and greatly appreciated. Current chairman, Betty Andrews, is doing her best without the help of a committee. Why not offer to lend a hand. The success of any organization depends on the contributions of its membership. Let Betty hear from you. Call her today at 965-9738. Thanks.

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Brrrrrrrrrr! As we go to press, here is a reminder to those living in areas affected by winter freeze. It is not too soon to be making preparations for winter storage. Check your supplies of frost proofing materials. Is your heat system still in working order? Does that backyard greenhouse need repair? Remember, these special plants are subject to freeze, so be kind and again, be early!

To you in the tropics . . . appreciate your good fortune and enjoy.

-END-

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Newsletter of the Plumeria  
Society of America, Inc.  
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In early June, twenty-two members and guests of the society travelled on tour to Hawaii. A pleasant surprise awaited us as we were greeted upon arrival by islanders, cousins to our member Pili Oliver, Rudolph and Ululani Duncan, with a fragrant plumeria lei for everyone. Check-in at the stately Sheraton Waikiki Hotel went smoothly as did all travel arrangements under the guidance of our experienced travel agent and member, Marvy Marciel.

David, our friendly native Hawaiian guide, greeted us as he and his air conditioned Grayliner started us on tour. First stop, the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Punchbowl Crater. A perfect morning as we grouped under clear blue skies for special dedication ceremonies arranged exclusively for the society as a tribute to those who gave their lives in service of our country. Greetings by the director, the invocation by Rev. Rudolph Duncan, a presentation of plumeria leis by president Richard Eggenberger and Secretary Mary Duff, then the Doxology sung in Hawaiian translation as a finale to this brief but heartwarming ceremony.

We continued on to Foster Botanical Gardens where we were fascinated at stories related by our guide, Mrs. Dorothy Hargreaves, well known author and lecturer on tropical plants, as we walked this 9-acre oasis of ancient trees and rare plants. This locale was once the garden of Dr. William Hillebrand who reportedly in 1860 introduced the first plumeria to the islands. On next to luncheon at The Willows, home of the cultivar 'Hausten White' aka 'Willows White'. An atmosphere of island lifestyle personified as we mingled amongst those in colorful Hawaiian attire, sipped polynesian thirst quenchers and enjoyed professional entertainment. The society was given special recognition and president Eggenberger was called to stage to briefly relate our work and purpose for being in Hawaii. While entrees offered such choices as chicken curry, tropical fruit salads, broiled fresh fish and crab sandwiches there was still another, the poi luncheon. Surprisingly once you learn that poi is never eaten alone but as an accompaniment with native dishes such as laulau, lomi salmon, pipikaula and fresh highly seasoned fish, it's not bad at all. A rather pleasant change from everyday meat and potatoes!

Leaving the city via Nuuanu Valley, cameras clicked from windows as we bussed past homes offering varieties of plumeria trees majestically tall. A brief stop at windy Nuuanu Pali for a sweeping view of windward Oahu from the steep cliffs across fields of green to the distant sea. On to the University of Hawaii's Experimental Station in Waimanalo where we were greeted by Dr. Richard Criley, professor, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, co-author of the publication "Plumeria Cultivars in Hawaii". We walked through fields of plumeria while Criley related the work of the University and its research into plumeria cultivation. We were able to identify with such cultivars as 'Lurline', 'Donald Angus', 'Princess Pauahi', the many Moragnes, 'Miller', 'Carmen', a dwarf Singapore and others. We learned that tragedy can strike and were shown first-hand the ugly results when a borer chews its way through the bark of a plant. There it lays its eggs which later hatch into larvae that feast on the pithy interior wood and cause large limbs and often entire plants to die. Dr. Criley and staff are doing a tremendous job and we came away wishing somehow we could erase the vast distance between Houston and Hawaii, so we too could participate more in this program.

(Hawaii Tour continued)

We returned to our hotel via Koko Head Crater having completed the eastern limits of the island somewhat exhausted yet anxiously awaiting the next day's adventure.

Another bright sunny day as we headed up Kalihi Valley through the Wilson Tunnel stopping first at Haiku Gardens in Kaneohe. Here we were amongst 20 acres of botanical gardens, a lily pond, flowers and tropical trees -- a photographer's haven. Difficult indeed to tear away but our tight schedule insisted. On to the Waimea Arboretum and Botanical Gardens at the north shore. Here we viewed by mini-bus this 1800-acre nature park with its archaeological ruins, a bird sanctuary, ancient hula dances and gardens of every tropical plant imaginable. Luncheon on the upstairs veranda overlooking the park and mountains beyond, then the pleasure of meeting Dr. Keith Woolliams, director, who enlightened us on the programs planned for this project. There are many, including a special garden for plumeria cultivars just being started -- a must to see when we return. We also met Gary Powell, associate member of the society and botanical horticulturist on the staff, who also reflects the enthusiasm for this bit of paradise, and Jim Little, another associate member, whose plumeria nursery we were scheduled to visit next. Previously advised against driving by bus up the rugged mountainside with its switch-back curves to Jim's in Pupukea, he and our hosts at the Arboretum arranged for the group to travel in open air pick-ups. What a delightful way to see the countryside. Jim's nursery is a bit of heaven on earth. Such luxuriant growth showing the visitor immediately the effects of tender loving care. We were shown a newly developed Singapore variety with brilliant yellow extending further into the petals rather than just its throat, and other hybrids, picture perfect, combining hues of pink, yellow, red and orange. It seemed unfair to let our host relate, in such a limited time, his many years of work in plumeria cultivation and hybridization. Saying goodbye to Jim and our friends at the Arboretum reinforced the spirit of aloha which by now was showing on all twenty-two on tour!

Back to the city via Wahiawa, pineapple and sugar cane fields, and Pearl Harbor to the statue of Kamehameha. Erected just opposite Iolani Palace, this gilded bronze statue is larger than life size and we joined the crowds in witnessing the flower lei draping ceremonies in preparation for the Kamehameha Day celebration to take place the next day, June 11. Many of the 30 ft. long leis were strung with plumeria blossoms.

It was time then to bid David farewell as our bus tours came to an end, fortunate indeed to have had such a knowledgeable and personal chap as our guide. The remaining days were spent at leisure with most of us watching the parade with its flower bedecked horses and riders and some returning to visit more extensively places we had seen on tour. Others shopped, soaked up the sun or ventured out on various sightseeing excursions offered by local tour agencies. In the evening we enjoyed informal get-togethers and when it was time to bid aloha to that tropical paradise we did so with a feeling of gratitude and a deep sense of dedication to the beloved plumeria . . . . . without whom this dream could not have become reality!