



Plumeria

Potpourri

THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

May, 1984

Notice: Change of Meeting Date

Due to the scheduled "Hawaii Tour", it is the decision of the board of directors to change the summer meeting to:

Date - Tuesday, July 10, 1984
Time - 7:30 PM
Place - St. Philip's Presbyterian Church
Program- The Hawaii Tour. See slides
and hear reports first hand!

Newly Elected Officers, 1984-85:

President: Richard Eggenberger
Vice Pres.: Betty Andrews
Secretary: Mary Duff
Treasurer: Arthur Usher

Confirmed appointments: Standing Committee Chairmen

Publicity - Dave Emison
Registration - John Oliver
Research - Ken Duff
Program - Marvy Marciel
Newsletter - Pili Oliver

The officers and standing committee chairmen comprise the board of directors for the ensuing year. Congratulations to these dedicated members who are volunteering their time and effort to make this year an interesting one. Let's give them our whole-hearted support.

The President's Message

..... "Speaking of Honors"

Many years ago I had the honor of being chosen by a Plumeria! What does that mean, one may ask? There are hundreds of thousands of flowers adorning our earth, many of them so beautiful and so loved that plant societies are formed throughout the world to share collective experiences in propagation, cultivation, hybridizations, etc. What then makes a person interested in one flower over all others?

It is my feeling that every flower has an inner meaning and if we are receptive to its unique message we respond by "choosing" it, or perhaps we could say being "chosen" by it. The great modern Indian sage, Sri Aurobindo, has written: "Flowers are the moments representation of things that are in themselves eternal".

The first prerequisite to understanding flowers is, of course, to love them. We may shy away a bit from the word love, but whatever term we use -- interest, fascination, etc., it all leads to that deeper understanding where the secrets of plant life are unfolded.

My love for the plumeria began more than 15 years ago when I had the honor of being chosen to build twelve distinctive gardens at the center of a new international city, Auroville, in South India, whose social aim and ideal is an experiment in human unity. Each of the gardens symbolizes one of the highest attributes of life. For the Garden of Perfection the plumeria was selected.

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Looking back over those years and the more than 2000 species introduced into the gardens, the plumeria stands out as my flower. In subsequent issues of our newsletter I hope to relate some of the extraordinary adventures and experiences I have had collecting plumerias throughout the tropical world, introducing them into the gardens, observing their myriad habits, their splendid kaleidoscope of colors and their unforgettable perfumes.

This year you have chosen me as president of the Plumeria Society of America
. speaking of honors!

Richard Eggenberger

REMINDER: Annual dues of the society are due and payable in March of each year. If you have not sent in your dues and wish to remain a member in good standing, please do so before June 15, 1984. Regular members: individual \$10; husband/wife \$15. Associate members: \$7.50. Make check payable to the Plumeria Society and mail to same, c/o 3733 Meadow Lake Ln., 77027.

A bouquet of plumerias to Betty Andrews, chairman, and members Marvy Marciel, Roberta Burns, Mary Schonier, Pili and John Oliver, Richard Eggenberger, Eugene and Dorothy Hannusch and Joe and Jane Minahan who helped man the society's booth at the recent Houston Flower and Garden Show. It was a 4-day event and these members did double duty to make it a success. Tables in the booth were covered with batik and a display was attractively set up with posters, including the history of the plumeria, sample cuttings, plants, fresh greenery, photos, and there was a slide presentation throughout. Thanks also to Jim Little, associate member in Hawaii, who sent fresh flowers and leis for the display. Much enthusiasm and interest was generated amongst those in attendance. More oohs and aahs over the fragrant blossoms and endless questions on cultivation and the society itself. All worth the effort!

A RECENT VISITOR to Houston was Guillermo Perez-Salazar, associate member from Mexico City. Reports indicate he is not only an avid gardner with a host of plumeria and other tropical plants but is also doing much in researching the history of the plumeria.

PLUMERIA PLANT SALE AND FLOWER DISPLAY PLANNED: Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 4, 10 am to 4 pm, and Sunday, August 5, 11 am to 3pm, at the Houston Arboretum on Woodway. Here is an opportunity once again to show the general public what the Plumeria Society is all about, remembering that all profits of the sale go to further the endeavors of the society. We need all hands to assist. Not only during the hours of the show but we need donations of seeds, cuttings and plants. Flower arrangements or just a basket of flowers are needed and are welcome on both Saturday and Sunday so we will have some fresh each day. Identifying whatever you contribute will be an asset. Label your cuttings, plants and seed packets. Marvy Marciel has been named chairman and would appreciate your calling her so she can place your name on the work chart with the hours you can volunteer. Phone: (eves.) 955-7124 or Betty Andrews 965-9738. We need to have some idea as to what is available in the way of contributions so please call Marvy or Betty today. This is an every member canvass to do your share. Come to the July meeting to hear more of the details of this big event.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Your contribution would also be appreciated. Please send any seeds or cuttings, carefully labeled (if you do not have a name, at least identify by color) to: Marvy Marciel, c/o 37 Stillforest, Houston, Texas, 77024

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:
We are delighted with your response to our questionnaire, and we thank you all for taking the time to provide us with such interesting information. It will be of assistance in planning future projects and perhaps we can answer some of your questions in future issues of the newsletter. Your interest in the work of the Plumeria Society is appreciated.

SUMMER DOLDRUMS?

Not for the lovely plumeria! During the late spring and early summer the plumeria bursts forth into leaf and bloom when most of the spring flowering plants are fading with the onset of hot days and warm nights. How can we keep our plumerias strong and vibrant throughout the hot weather? Well, it's really not that difficult. Let us study some of the natural habitats where the plumeria is found and see how it fares.

On the mountainsides of Guatemala plumerias grow in poor soil and tolerate a hot dry climate. I have travelled through miles of thorny scrub jungle in South India to suddenly come upon a large specimen of plumeria acutifolia rooted in the crevices of rocks and thriving in 100+ degrees where there is often no rain from January through July! We are fortunate to be working with such a tough plant. In fact, I have never seen plumerias in Asia severely attacked by insects or disease.

As we transport our plants from the wild or semi-wild state to our gardens in cities and towns, we drastically change the ground rules our plants have grown accustomed to for centuries.

Firstly, most of us will grow our plants in containers, thereby severely limiting the roots and their ability to find food and moisture. Secondly, we will use soil that may or may not be to their liking. In the examples we have studied, on a mountainside, in the crevices of rocks, or even along miles of beaches, the one key lesson nature has given us is perfect drainage. Plumerias must have friable soil with excellent drainage, preferably rich in organic nutrients such as bone meal or potash.

Plumerias appreciate a regular diet of fertilizer during the growing and flowering season. No matter how rich the initial soil mix may be, the fleshy roots of the plumeria will fill the container before long, taking all the nutrients they can get in order to continue

producing their magnificent floral bouquets month after month and supporting the growth of their large, thick green leaves. So, be generous with the fertilizer but remember that a little food regularly will make your plants happier than a large feast once every month or two after a long fast! I like to add a time release fertilizer to my soil mix along with bone meal and other amendments so that I am assured that for the first few months of the growing season they have all the food they need. Even then I'll give them an occasional treat of a water soluble fertilizer.

Lastly, a note about watering. Plumerias may have adapted well to the drought conditions mentioned earlier. They will, however, grow much faster and perform exceptionally well with regular watering - especially in containers where our well-drained soil will dry out rapidly.

One final thought. For good flowering adapt your plants to as much sunlight as they will take, and do it early in the year. Even among plumeria cultivars the sun requirements vary. Not all your plants will want full sun. But, give them as much as they can take without burning the leaves. The general rule of thumb is the more sun, the better flowering.

As I look out the window into the courtyard and gaze on the living rainbow of color so generously offered by the plumeria my cares and tensions of the day dissipate and the spirit is uplifted.

RICHARD M. EGGENBERGER
Houston, Texas
May 1984

BY-LAWS CHANGE: Due to increase in costs the board of directors have voted to amend Article VI, Sec. 6.6 to read: Annual dues shall be \$15.00 for regular membership (regardless of single or husband/wf); and \$10.00 for associate membership. This is to become effective March, 1985, and represents the first increase since the founding of the society in 1979. The voting body present will be requested to ratify the action of the board at the general meeting in July.

BON VOYAGE! We cannot let this issue go to press without wishing those members and guests departing on the society's sponsored tour to Hawaii on June 6, a pleasant and enjoyable journey. You are our ambassadors of good will. The image of the Plumeria Society rests on your shoulders. Wear it proudly! We look forward to hearing about your trip at the July meeting.

A L O H A !

