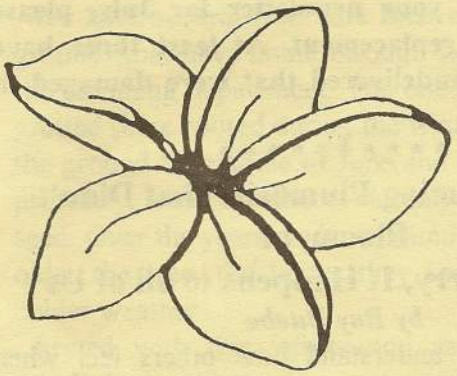

Plumeria Potpourri

THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC. OCTOBER 1996

Notice of Meeting:

DATE: *Tuesday October 8, 1996*
TIME: *7:30 p.m.*
PLACE: *Hermann Park Garden Center*
1500 Hermann Park Drive
PROGRAM: "How to Put Your Plumeria to Bed"
"Fragrances of Plumeria"

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Message from the President

by Lee Jacobs

Yes, Plumeria do have a mind of their own, always unpredictable. When I think it is time for some to bloom, they don't, and sometimes they bloom when we least expect it. This has been a good year for rebloom on some of the larger plants, but it has also been a year when many bracts have simply fallen off, shortening the bloom season. Unfortunately, some of these were special plants that had seed pods started. This drop could be due to not enough water during the summer drought or too much water during the torrential rains of September. It has been an unusual weather year on the Texas gulf coast.

"Aztec Gold" still has blossoms as well as "Rose Red", "Kimo", "Hilo Beauty" and many other reds. The reds have always bloomed later in the season in my garden, which is nice because some of the earlier bloomers have stopped by now.

All things considered, it has been a good year for Plumeria in my garden here in Houston, Texas.

Winterizing Your Plumeria

Another season is coming to a close for our beautiful Plumerias. It is time again to think about protecting these plants from a possible freeze in areas where frost and freeze could damage their tender growth. It is wise for those who have a number of plants to start drying them out in October. This allows the leaves to fall outside and not in storage rooms. If leaf drop does not occur in time, clip each leaf off 1/2 inch from the stems a week before bringing the plants into storage. Be careful to place the plants on paper or some other material that keeps them off the bare concrete floors of your storage facility.

Plants that are grown in pots can be winter stored directly after leaves and roots growing out of the drainage holes in the pots have been removed. The procedure for preparing plants in the ground for winter is simple. Dig them up and place the roots in paper bags, pots or cardboard boxes. Some soil left on the roots is helpful in keeping the root system from drying completely out, but is not necessary.

Check to make sure you know the average first frost date for your area. This is usually November in Houston, but there have been years when October has seen some severe cold weather. The beauty of these plants is that they can remain dormant for 4 to 6 months without water, light or fertilizer and then come alive again when watered in the spring.

Plants should not be brought out of winter storage until all danger of frost is past. After bringing them out in the spring, start watering and giving light to get them ready for another blooming season.

Plumeria Society Social

The Plumeria Society's South of the Border social will be held October 6, 1996 at the Golfcrest Country Club. The social begins at 6:00 PM followed by dinner at 7:00 PM. There will be entertainment and door prizes. Tickets are $12.50 per person and can be obtained from Eileen Hill at 15723 Cavendish, Houston Texas 77059, or call at 713-488-3760

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Notes from the Membership

Rust Damage

Mr. James Van Artsdalen from Titusville, Florida reports that he uses @Plantvax 75W for rust problems. It is manufactured by Uniroyal Chemical Company, Middlebury Conn. 06749. He mixes 1 tablespoon per 3 gallons of water, and adds a little @Ivory soap as a spreader/sticker. Be sure to cover both sides of the leaves. He reports good success with no side effect problems

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Becky Johnson from Carrollton, Texas

I fell in love with Plumerias on my first visit to Hawaii in 1985, so I brought some seeds home with me. Three survived my first attempt at germination. Then I acquired cuttings at the Houston Livestock show. At this time I knew nothing about the Plumeria Society of America or that there were registered varieties. A friend shared his copy of the Handbook on Plumeria Culture with me. This opened a whole new world on Plumerias.

Once I found out about the different places to order, I began ordering the registered plants with the goal to have at least one of each of the color types. I've kept the seedlings with beautiful blossoms and have even submitted a variety for registration.

I know the attempt to publish a directory of members was canceled due to some members not wanting their information available. For me it would have been a big boon. I have lots to talk about and no one to talk to.

I would like to know if anyone has seen a 2 to 3 inch brownish growth on the trunk surface area of their Plumeria trees. It does not seem to hurt the trees, but it is unsightly. Anyone with an answer, or if there are other Plumeria fanatics near Carrollton, Texas, give me a call and we can share information. 214-492-4159

You can reach the newsletter editor at the following address Tom SoRelle, 734 20th Ave. North, Texas City, TX 77590, 409-948-4243. If you did not receive your newsletter for July, please write us for a replacement. At least three have been returned undelivered that were damaged in the mail.

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Those Blooming Plumeria That Didn't Bloom, or Not to Worry, It Happens to all of Us

by Ray Buebe

Now we really understand how others feel when their Plumeria don't bloom. Yes, we have had off blooming years, but never anything like this! So the search for the mystery of why the Plumeria aren't blooming this year goes on. Is it the weather? Fertilizer? Were they put out to late in the year? Our plants are lush, and green and healthy, the only problem is the lack of blooms.

After talking to people who live farther south this year, their plants aren't blooming much more than ours. Normally their plants always seem to bloom well. Their cuttings always seem to root more quickly and earlier. Their plants come out of storage much earlier than ours. Some have told me they take their plants out in late February or early March, if they put them in storage at all during a mild winter. Ours never come out before April 18th. I have mentioned "Bob's Rule" on occasions before! For those of you who are new... One year, we put all of the plants out about the middle of March, after all freezes were supposed to be over. (Wrong, Wrong, Wrong)! If you have ever been out at 3:00 AM digging up big trees for a couple of nights when it was cold, the wind blowing, heavy mist to light rain slapping you in the face, you get the picture! Even all the coffee and hot chocolate didn't help. "Bob's Rule" was created on the spot! I believe his exact words were, "I'll put them out once a year, bring them in once a year, but not twice!!!" Yes the weather man predicted a freeze, the next night which was in early April. He was right. It did freeze and a lot of friends lost a lot of plants. Luckily, we were able to get all but a few in. The only thing that would have been worse, is if we had brought them all in and there hadn't been a freeze.

Many of those who live in our same general area have had the same problem with blooms. Due to circumstances beyond our control, our plants did not get out of storage until very late in May and June this year. We thought that might have been the problem. However, after talking to others, it probably was not.

We have several trees and their cuttings (not in the ground) that have come through with flying colors in the blooming department. The one that was not in the ground (bare rooted during the winter), was planted in the ground the middle of June and has really bloomed profusely, is the one that took ten years to bloom from seed. Over the years we have found that the larger and older the tree, the better they seem to tolerate the colder weather.

Armed with this information as a detective, one conclusion, until we do more research, would be that all other things being equal, that it is just the weather. Or is it getting the plants out earlier? If you have a couple of extra plants next year, you might want to see what happens in your area by not taking all of your plants out at the usual time.

If the trees follow past years when there has been slow production of blooms they will probably start blooming in January, February or very early next spring. When our trees do bloom, we must take the opportunity to appreciate, enjoy and store up wonderful memories of the beautiful sights and fragrances. Take time to smell the Plumeria and enjoy the small and wonderful things of life.

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Plumeria Registration

The registration committee has been working to wrap up the information gathered on the "Registration safari". Additional effort has been spent working on writing descriptions of some local varieties that have been registered because of their wide distribution.

One application of a new variety was submitted and approved. The results of our work is the supplemental list of registered cultivars enclosed in this newsletter. A complete listing of registered cultivars will be available at a later date. If there are any suggested additions, please contact Sven Borskoefoed at 713-996-1540

Senior Citizens

by Sven Borskoefoed

The Parks and Recreation Board made the Plumeria Society the offer of one year's free rent for our meeting room, if we would give a talk on Plumeria to the Senior Citizens. I offered to do the service.

A total of 17 seniors attended the meeting, showing varying amounts of interest in the subject at hand. Some chose to nap, others seemed mostly concerned about their refreshments, but many seemed genuinely interested in the Plumerias.

I had a table full of Plumeria flowers that the seniors were delighted to be able to take home. Hopefully, there were a few more led to the appreciation of the beautiful plumeria flower because of this program.

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Research Committee Report

by Milt Pierson

This has been a year of fewer blooms than most for me. I've heard similar comments from many Plumeria growers. I wonder why? Is the reduced flowering a response to weather conditions, like our cooler than normal past winter, or is it more of a cultural thing? For example, my "Celadine" did not bloom at all this year. In fact, a list of plants that did bloom would be shorter. This year, "Aztec Gold", "Petite Pink", "Gold", "Kimo", "J.L. Bridal White" and some unnamed Mexican pinks, plus a number of larger seedlings have bloomed well. A few others have bloomed sparsely such as "Slaughter Pink" "Lemon Chiffon" and "Heidi".

This seemingly universal lack of blooming profusion leads me to wonder if there might be something we growers are doing or not doing. Is it possible that there are forces of nature at work which we have no control over? Are we seeing a response in our plumeria to the cyclic nature of El Nino, or the 11 year sun spot cycle?

PSA is proposing a small survey that I would like as many responses to as possible. This is directed primarily at those of us who must protect our frost tender plants in the cold winter months. Our goal is to see if we can compile a few cultural tips from the results. Responses can be sent to Milton Pierson at:

The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 22791
Houston, Texas 77227-2791
or E-mail to miltonp@ruf.rice.edu

The survey is this; for each blooming plant, list or identify the following about its culture. How and where planted, how and with what fertilized, and how stored in the winter?

In this same survey, it would be interesting for us to list our ten favorite plumeria (1- most favorite, 2 - second, etc...). The results of this survey will be published in the first newsletter next year. Thank you in advance for your assistance. Also, don't forget to check out the PSA WWW Site at;

http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~miltonp/plumeria/

Membership Committee Report

by Mary Sue Lockler

Lots of good thoughts and a sincere welcome to all of our new members from Houston and all over. The Houston members are Diane Voll, Linda Kuranoff, Sheila Roy, Patsy and Tom Frey, Brenda Blair, Daryl Puckett, Barbara and Keith McQuary, Mary Kay and James Thayer, Joyce Shook, Lottie and David McCorkle, Kathie Dunham, Donna Kay Grant, Donna Rendon, Abraham Cortes, Josephine Vasquez, G.L. and Y.A Robles, Kathleen Mueller, G.E. and Donna McPhail, Richard Marks, Barbara and Tim Featherston, Linda and Harold Harris.

The new associate members are Marilyn Palmer from Ramona, California, Charles Bigelow from Kula, Hawaii, Yvonne Wiegand from Woodland Hills, Califonia, Anne White from Fountain Valley, California, Tina Murray from Long Beach, California, Edward Kemble from Granbury, Texas, David Kemble from Dallas, Texas, Andra and Charles Fabac from Farmers Branch, Texas, Gary Spiekerman from Mason, Minnesota, Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park from Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, BWI, Pablo Gordienko from Miami, Florida, Karla Dias from Kailua, Hawaii, Pat Sage from Kakului, Maui, Hawaii, Lisa Marty from Petaluma, California, Jim Macy from San Diego, California, Tina and David Silber from Granada Hills, California, Karen Ann Kowaleski from Cape Coral, Florida, Barbara and Ronald Jones from Cupertino, California, Randy Jones from Norman, Oklahoma, Mai Vong from Cupertino, California, Mary Jane Wilke from Cincinnati, Ohio and Peter Buckley from La Mesa, California.

Please remember that the date on the label is the date that you paid your dues. Also, all dues will be due in March of 1997. If you have any questions or corrections, please contact Mary Sue Lockler, 4729 Redstart, Houston, TX 77035

Happy gardening and peace to all members. (They go together)

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Houston, TX 77227-2791

milt 713-728-2413