

Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



October 10th Meeting!

Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas

... anyone with an interest in plumeria is invited to attend ...

ANNUAL SOCIAL and MEETING

Speaker: Karen Miller Abrams

Topic: Perfect Plumeria Photography

October 2018

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President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

To All Plumeria Lovers,

Just as our gorgeous plumeria season is coming to a seasonal close, it's time to start contemplating capturing those blooms next year. "Perfect Plumeria Photography" will be our topic from our speaker Karen Miller Abrams at our Wednesday, October 10th meeting. Karen will be addressing the PSA meeting and others via Facebook Live broadcast on the subject of the many areas of photographing gorgeous blooms with sophisticated digital SLRs, point and shoot cameras, and cell phone cameras—something for everyone and every level of photographer and camera. Karen is a long-time PSA member, gardener, overall plant lover, and grower of plumeria at her home in Fort Worth, Texas.

Both of our 2018 PSA Plant Show and Sales are in the books for this year. Both were held in Clear Lake (an area of Houston, Texas) at the Bay Area Community Center. The first sale was somewhat frantic and started with a long line of folks

wanting to get in before we even opened the doors. We were all but sold out in two hours. The second sale was less frantic as we had more plants, sellers, volunteers, and overall activity. For the first time in PSA history, the second sale surpassed the first sale in gross revenues. I want to thank all who participated in both sales.

At the October 10th meeting, we will announce the location(s) of the 2019 PSA Show and Sales and some special events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the PSA in 2019.

After the presentation on Wednesday, October 10th, our fall Luau and Pot Luck social will be held at our regular meeting location, the Cheri Flores Garden Pavilion in Hermann Park. The building had a conflict with our regularly scheduled Tuesday meeting, so we have moved this meeting to Wednesday. Please note the new date and get those wonderful recipes ready!!!

I am grateful for so many new PSA members for 2018 and so many wanting to get involved and help the PSA. New members and ideas are always welcome. My cell is 832-689-9938 and email is RayAllison@GaryGreene.com. I look forward to hearing from you.



Dwarf Singapore
Pink seedling

Photo credit to Linda M. Ohara

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Our page now has 2,945 members from all over the world. It's a great place to ask a question or show off your blooms.

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PSA New Registrations



'Tarvin's California Gold'

Paula Furtwangler, representing the PSA, visited with John Tarvin in Huntington Beach, California in August and presented him with the PSA registration certificate for 'Tarvin's California Gold.'

'Kena's Pacific Rim' and 'Kena's Nani Paula'

Paula Ames, widow of Ken Ames, registered two of Ken's plumerias. Paula Furtwangler, representing the PSA, presented the registration certificates to Paula Ames for 'Kena's Pacific Rim' and 'Kena's Nani Paula' at a Southern California Plumeria Society meeting in August.

Left to right: Paula Ames, Paula Furtwangler, and Dawn Sullivan, President of SCPS.



Photo credit to Peri Cunefare



The *Plumeria*

Part 4: A Key to the Species and *Plumeria alba*

by Donald R. Hodel (drhodel@ucanr.edu)
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This fourth installment of the series presents a tentative key to the species and a hybrid, and treats the first species, *Plumeria alba*.

Key to the Species and a Hybrid of *Plumeria*

This tentative key is based mostly on Woodson (1938a), which is the most recent, inclusive treatment of the entire genus. *Plumeria* is sorely in need of a modern treatment, especially one that unravels the extremely variable *P. obtusa* and complex of related taxa in Cuba (Hodel 2017) and Hispaniola. But until then, we are left largely with Woodson's 80-year-old treatment. A few names have appeared since Woodson's treatment but all are considered or are likely synonyms of pre-existing species. Remember that many, mostly artificial hybrids exist among *P. alba*, *P. obtusa*, and *P. rubra*, which tend to muddle the distinctions between species.

Corolla tube generally gradually widening above stamens to approximately twice as wide.

Leaf blade conspicuously expanded near tip 5. *P. pudica*

Leaf blade not conspicuously expanded near tip 3. *P. inodora*

Corolla tube generally not widening significantly above stamens.

Lateral nerves exiting midrib at an acute angle.

Petal lobes extremely narrow, linear-lanceolate, only slightly overlapping at their base 7. *P. x stenopetala*

Petal lobes broad, obovate to rounded, conspicuously overlapping at their base.

Leaves with a conspicuous petiole, marginal nerve well developed, secondary and tertiary venation not pronounced 6. *P. rubra*

Lateral without a conspicuous petiole (very short or lacking), marginal nerve not well developed, secondary and tertiary venation prominent 8. *P. subsessilis*

Lateral nerves exiting midrib at a perpendicular angle.

Leaf tips rounded or sometimes notched, lateral nerves connecting at their tips to form conspicuous marginal nerve 4. *P. obtusa*

Leaf tips short- or long-pointed, lateral nerves connecting at their tips but not forming conspicuous marginal nerve.

Leaves lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, 0.6-2.75 inches wide, leaf blade margins strongly rolled under and taking some of the blade with it, lateral nerves conspicuously impressed 1. *P. alba*

Leaves extremely narrow, linear, even thread-like, less than 0.4 inch wide, leaf blade margins not strongly rolled under, lateral nerves not impressed . . . 2. *P. filifolia*

1. *Plumeria alba* L.

Linnaeus (1753) named and described *Plumeria alba* in his monumental work, *Species Plantarum*, basing it on descriptions and illustrations that earlier workers had published. Only moderately common in the trade, *P. alba* is, nonetheless, easily recognizable by its unusually narrow leaves with both margins conspicuously rolled under and the impressed lateral nerves giving the leaves a puckered look. The description is from Acevedo-Rodríguez (1996), Little and Wadsworth (1964), and Woodson (1938b).

Habit: small to medium, mostly deciduous to sometimes evergreen tree to 25 feet tall and wide or more, vase-shape, more or less open, or sometimes a shrub (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: *Plumeria alba* is a small to medium, vase-shaped, mostly open, deciduous to sometimes evergreen tree (all photos taken in the Linda and Eileen Ohara garden in Carson, California).

Trunk: 4 inches diameter; bark smooth, purplish brownish gray (Fig. 2), becoming corky with

age; twigs 0.5–0.75 inch diameter, greenish turning brownish gray, with numerous round leaf scars.



Fig. 2: Bark of *Plumeria alba* is smooth and purplish brownish gray.

Leaves: spirally arranged (Fig. 3); petioles 0.75–2.5 inches long; blades 6–15 inches long,



Fig. 3: Leaves of *Plumeria alba* are spirally arranged and slender.

0.6–2.75 inches wide, narrowly lance-shaped, glossy green above (Fig. 4), pale below (Fig. 5),



Fig. 4: Leaf blades of *Plumeria alba* are narrowly lance-shaped, glossy green above, with strongly rolled under margins.



Fig. 5: Leaf blades of *Plumeria alba* are pale below.

densely and minutely white hairy below (Fig. 6), thick, leathery, margins conspicuously rolled under (Figs. 4, 7), apex long-pointed, base obtuse or tapering lateral nerves perpendicular to midrib, impressed, giving blade a puckered look (Fig. 8).



Fig. 6: Leaf blades of *Plumeria alba* are densely and minutely white hairy below.



Fig. 7: Leaf blades of *Plumeria alba* have strongly rolled under margins.



Fig. 8: Leaf blades of *Plumeria alba* have lateral nerves perpendicular to midrib, impressed, and giving blade a puckered look.

Flowers: arranged in a compact, flattened cluster on unusually long stalks to 8 inches long (Figs. 9–10); individual flowers 1.5–2 inches long and wide (Fig. 11), on pedicels 0.3–0.4 inch long; calyx lobes ovate to nearly square, 0.06–0.08 inch long, rounded to broadly long-pointed; corolla tubular at base, 0.4–0.9 in long, 0.04–0.06 in wide at base, flared distally with overlapping obovate to oblong lobes 1–1.6 inches long, white except for yellow dot or “eye” at base of lobes (Fig. 12), very fragrant; stamens 5, inserted near base of corolla tube; pistil composed of 2 separate ovaries 0.12 inch long with a single, short style.



Fig. 9: Flowers of *Plumeria alba* are arranged in a compact cluster.



Fig. 10: The cluster of flowers of *Plumeria alba* is on an unusually long stalk.



Fig. 11: Flowers of *Plumeria alba* are 1.5–2 inches long and wide.

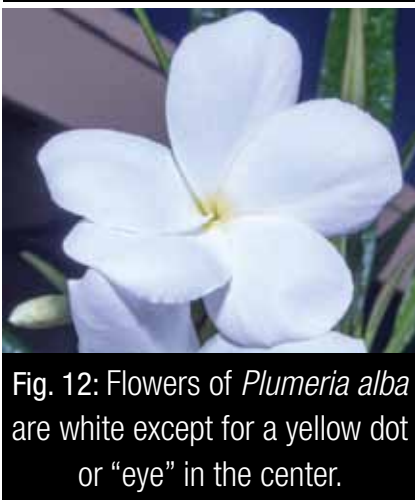


Fig. 12: Flowers of *Plumeria alba* are white except for a yellow dot or “eye” in the center.

Fruit: 2 pods (follicles) to 6 inches long, to 0.6 inch wide, brown, long-pointed, wide-spreading, joined at base.

Distribution: Puerto Rico and the Lesser Antilles from the Virgin Islands to Grenada.

Ecology: *Plumeria alba* mostly occurs at lower to middle elevations in seasonally dry forests, often on limestone.

Common Names: *alelí*, *alelí blanco*, *alelaila*, milktree (Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands); milky bush (Virgin Islands); jasmine (Barbuda); *frangipanier sauvage* (Guadeloupe); white grangepane,

pigeonwood (Dutch West Indies); frangipani, white frangipani, West Indian jasmine, *klang hout*, milky bush, *paucipan*, snake root, wild frangipani, wormy tree.

Notes: The name *Plumeria alba* is mired in controversy. It is an accepted name currently in use for a distinctive and easily recognized species. However, some botanists contend that the type material of *P. alba*, the specimen or drawing upon which a species is based, actually represents *P. rubra*! If this notion turns out to be true, an effort should be made to conserve the name *P. alba* and designate a type specimen.

The combination of long, slender leaves with the margins strongly rolled under and the impressed lateral nerves readily identify *Plumeria alba*. The specific epithet *alba* means white, and refers to the flower color. The name *P. alba* is often misapplied to any *Plumeria* with white flowers. Indeed, an on-line survey for *P. alba* shows that nearly all popular references to this species depict white-flowered forms of *P. rubra* or sometimes even *P. obtusa*. Leaves in images of these flowers are nearly always broad and flat, not the characteristic long and narrow and with the rolled-under margins of *P. alba*.

NEXT: *Plumeria filifolia*

Acknowledgements

Michael Grayum, curator and exceptional student of the Mesoamerican flora at the Missouri Botanical Garden, provided guidance on interpreting early botanical publications and nomenclature.

Dr. Richard Criley, who has had a long and distinguished career in the tropical horticulture department at the University of Hawaii, reviewed the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions to it.

Plumeria collector Linda M. Ohara let me take photographs in her garden and also reviewed the manuscript.

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Our Plumeria Journey

by Linda M. Ohara, Southern California

My sister, Eileen, and I started to collect plumerias in the late 1990's. My parents started a retail nursery, George Nursery in Carson, California,

Ohara family at George Nursery



in 1946, and from 1979 to August 1997, my sister and I ran it. We started to sell plumerias, *rubras* and *obtusas*, obtained from local wholesale growers in the early 1990's. That was our first introduction to plumerias.

After we closed the nursery in 1997, we started to collect plumerias for our own collection. It was slim pickings back then! Our sources were the wholesale nurseries we used to buy general nursery stock from (Taketomo Nursery, ABC Nursery, Marilyn's Garden), retail nurseries (Upland Nursery, H & H Nursery, Island Plumerias, Sav-on Drug Store's garden center), catalogues/mail orders (Jim Little Farm, Plumeria People, Stoke's Nursery), other collectors, the local plumeria societies (South Coast Plumeria Society, Southern California Plumeria Society), and online/Ebay nurseries (Florida Colors Nursery, Brad's Buds and Blooms, bloomingplumerias, 1stopaloha).

My late boyfriend, Gary, and I went to Hawaii in 2002, the PSA plumeria sale in Texas in 2004, the Frangifest Plumeria conference in Australia in 2005, and the plumeria conference in Thailand in 2006 and brought back dozens of cuttings and a few rooted ones. The most travelled of my plumerias was a cutting which came from the now defunct nursery, DJ's Way of Australia. It was a 'Musk Rainbow' which has been registered as 'George Brown,' and it

went from Australia to Florida and then on to Southern California. I was so worried about it being confiscated by our California state or federal agriculture department, that the late Luc Vannoorbeeck of Florida Colors Nursery, who was also on the trip with his wife Carol, offered to ship it with his many cuttings. I remember being so happy when it finally arrived! Many of my newer plumerias are Thai plants that have come from Jungle Jack's Nursery.

Some of our first plumerias were the Hawaiian classics such as 'Singapore,' 'Celadine,' 'Samoa Fluff,' 'Japanese Lantern,' 'Nebel's Gold,' 'Nebel's Rainbow,' 'Heidi,' 'Gloria Schmidt,' 'Donald Angus Red,' 'Pauahi Ali'i,' and lots of no ids. My late Hawaiian plumeria friend, Celso, told Gary and me about a person who had a huge, above-the-roof-size, 'Hilo Beauty.' We went down there and bought several dozen cuttings. We were ecstatic about obtaining a DARK BLACKISH RED! Dark reds were a rarity back in the late 1990's and early 2000.

Later on, Celso, Gary and I heard about a person selling 'Wildfire' around the early to mid-2000. We contacted the seller, met her in the parking lot of a restaurant, and each bought one cutting for \$95! I remember mine was shriveled, Gary's cutting was crooked, and we all thought we were the luckiest people on earth to each score a 'Wildfire!' Gary and I would sit with Celso in his plumeria patch or at our weekly lunches and look at the pictures in the Plumeria People catalogue or Jim



Left to right: Carole Callahan, Gary, Eileen, Celso, and Linda

Little's plumeria books and talk story for hours. Fun memories!

Over the years, my sister has gravitated towards the obtusa hybrids and plumeria species which include *Plumeria alba*, *P. bahamensis*, *P. tuberculata*, *P. cubensis*, *P. stenopetala*, *P. filifolia*,



P. pudica 'Bridal Bouquet,' besides having about 40+ Singapore White. I prefer the *rubra* species with their infinite amount of color, shapes, and scents. Currently we have approximately 1500+ plumeria, about 15 in the ground, and the rest in one-gallon pots to 24" boxes on approximately 3.5+ acres.



We do not plant more in the ground because of

drainage issues. If we get heavy rains, such as in 2004–2005 when 37"+ fell in a short period of time, our property floods and it takes days for it to drain. In 2005, approximately 50 plumerias rotted in the ground after sitting in water for days. Luckily, our winters are not extremely cold so we do not shelter them any more like we use to, but I have lots of frost cloth, just in case. Generally, the lows are in the mid to high forties. This year we had to cover to protect from sunburn in July because of an unprecedented heat wave. The plumerias had many inflos but the majority of them had little to no leaves until late July, early August. We used palm fronds, sheets, shade cloth, and towels to cover them, or we moved them to shady areas.

We fertilize in April or May with whatever is on sale and/or clearance. This year the plumerias were fed with Osmocote Outdoor & Indoor, Miracle Gro Shake 'N Feed, Scott's Turf Builder, Bayer Rose and Flower Care, or various organics. These products were purchased during the previous fall and winter from various stores around us.

After the previous years of drought and water restrictions in California, we have started to plant the plumerias in a more water-retaining mix by adding a lot less to no perlite and/or pumice to the soil mix we purchase from a local top soil company. Their mix consists mainly of fir shavings, a relatively small amount of pumice, and fine sand with added time release fertilizer. Our newly rooted cuttings are planted in a fast draining 50% coir/50% perlite mix.

We have been growing seedlings since the beginning. My late boyfriend and I would plant any seeds we could locate. We found seeds in Hawaii in 2002, some seeds we acquired were donated to the South Coast Plumeria Society by Dr. Richard Criley of Hawaii when he was our guest speaker many years ago, and other seeds were purchased. Many of the seedlings died in the 2004–2005 rains and in January 2007 when we had record low temperatures.

Some seeds that survived had nondescript blooms, and others were pretty nice such as

'Cheetos Cat,' 'Emily Kitty,' 'Megan Kitty,' 'Summer Sunshine,' 'Crazy Cat Lady,' 'Meiji—From the Land of



the Rising Sun,' and 'Lovers' Full Moon,' a two-time Best in Show winner at the Southern California Plumeria Society's annual flower show and sale in San Diego, California.

Some of the seedlings are named after my cats and dogs that have passed, others after my parents, grandparents, and uncles. The fun about growing from seeds is one never knows what one will get, and since each seedling is genetically unique from all other seedlings, the seedling can be named and registered with the PSA. Of course, not all seedlings are worthy of being registered.

This brings me to 2017. I am one of the administrators on the popular Facebook group, Plumeria Growers, and noticed last year many postings of plumerias with distorted and discolored leaves. I enlisted the expert help of my good friend Donald R. Hodel, Environmental Horticulture Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension, author, internationally recognized palm biologist and now, plumeria enthusiast, and with his colleague, Los Angeles County entomologist, Gevork Arakelian, we figured out the problem was caused by a tiny green leafhopper, tentatively identified as *Empoasca stevensi*. It was an interesting adventure to see this tiny green insect go from a plumeria garden in Long Beach, California to the Los Angeles County entomologist office, then to the California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento, California, and finally on to the Systematic Entomology Laboratory (U.S.D.A.) in Maryland where it will be officially identified. To read about it, and many other interesting articles written by Don, go to his E-Journal: <http://ucanr.edu/sites/HodelPalmTrees/PalmArbor>

In the winter when the plumerias are dormant, my sister goes on one of her many ski trips with her ski club all over the U.S., and I am in the garden with my little dog Scruffy with my other non-plumeria plant species that I collect: Haworthia, Gasteria, large leafed Ficus, Anthurium, Pachypodium, Hoya, Platycerium, cycads, various cacti and succulents, crested/montrosed and caudexed plants. I am never not in the garden or out buying plants.





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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 check for updates and to see added features such as the flower identification database and a members only newsletter archive! Below is 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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Dues are \$35 per year

Purpose of The Plumeria Society of America

1. 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.

When does your PSA membership expire?

Your newsletter envelope mailing label has your membership expiration date.

2018 PSA Calendar

January 9 (Historic Clubhouse, 6201 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas)meeting
March 13meeting
May 8meeting
June 9 (Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/Clear Lake) Show & Sale 1
July 10meeting
July 21 (Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/Clear Lake) Show & Sale 2
October 10 Fall Luau Social (potluck) & meeting

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

2018 PSA Officers and Directors

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