

# Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



## Happy New Year! January 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Tuesday, January 15, 2019, 7:00 p.m.  
Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas

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

Speaker: **Melissa Garcia**  
Topic: **Plumeria Society of South Texas**

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## President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

Happy New Year! And welcome to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of The Plumeria Society of America! We have celebrations planned throughout 2019 to celebrate this special 40<sup>th</sup> year of the PSA.

2018 has certainly been an interesting year for the PSA ...

We had two very good sales at the Bay Area Community Center in Clear Lake at Clear Lake Park. The first sale was so very frantic we were virtually sold out in about 90 minutes. The second sale, while not as frantic as the first sale, actually grossed a little more in revenue than the first sale, which historically is unusual.

Based on the 2018 sales success, both of the 2019 PSA sales will be held in Clear Lake at the same location and are already booked.

We employed Facebook-Live to broadcast a few meetings on our Facebook page and plan to continue, so members not close by or unable to attend can see our meetings.

Most of the PSA records have now been electronically scanned and are a little easier for the Board to review.

By popular request, we are also producing and emailing a low-resolution electronic version of *Plumeria Potpourri* to our membership. If we don't have a good email address for you, please let us know. We will continue to publish and mail the print newsletter.

Stay tuned for 2019—more fun to come as we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Plumeria Society of America.

## Melissa Garcia—January 15<sup>th</sup> Speaker



Melissa Garcia, from the Plumeria Society of South Texas, will talk about plumeria, including how the PSST has established and maintains the Plumeria Grove at the South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center in Corpus Christi, where she frequently volunteers.

Melissa has have been with the Plumeria Society of South Texas for a year, and is the newsletter editor and webmaster.

She is a registered nurse and has been working as a home health and hospice nurse since 2001 with Nurses On Wheels, Inc. in Corpus Christi, Texas.

She is a part time wildlife and nature photographer and is married to Norbie Portales, III. They have two dogs by the names of Paquito and Qiqi.

Melissa loves plumerias and a variety of other plants. She credits her great grandmother Modesta P. Munoz for passing her green thumb on to her.



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# The Quilt

by Emerson Willis, Texas

While reading our local newspaper, *The Houston Chronicle*, I noticed it was the weekend (November 10–11) of the International Quilt Festival downtown at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Not being a fan of quilting, I would have usually skipped over this article except for a photo of one of the quilts. Familiar blooms got my attention.



“Velvet Flowers” by Linda Anderson of La Mesa, California

About the quilt: The Oaxacan tradition of hand-embroidered velvet for blouses and skirts is documented in this quilt that captures the skills of the women and men who still practice this beautiful craft in the village of Santa Rosa. Anderson's piece is made of cotton and uses raw-edge applique with stationary and free-motion machine quilting.

# The PSA Website

Under “Plumeria Info” on the PSA website, there is a section called “How to Register Plumeria” with the application form and the rules for registration.



A new article provided by Dr. Richard Criley titled “How to Name a New Cultivar” has been added to the website. To find the article, scroll down to the bottom of “How to Register Plumeria.”



“Plumeria Info” also has a section called “Plumeria Newsletter Archive” with back issues of *Plumeria Potpourri*.

Log in: psamember

Password: Scottpratt93



# The *Plumeria*

## Part 5: *Plumeria filifolia*

by Donald R. Hodel (drhodel@ucanr.edu)  
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This fifth installment of the series presents and discusses *Plumeria filifolia*.

### 2. *Plumeria filifolia* (*filifolia* = threadlike leaf)

Synonym: *P. stenophylla* (*stenophylla* = narrow leaf)

August Heinrich Rudolf Grisebach (1814–1879), a German botanist and phytogeographer, named and described *Plumeria filifolia* in 1862 in his *Plantae Wrightianae e Cuba Oriental* (Vol. 2), an account of American botanist Charles Wright's plant collections from eastern Cuba (Grisebach 1862). Wright (1811–1885) was in Cuba from 1856 to 1867, and collected what would become *P. filifolia* near "Nouvelle Sophie" in the eastern part of the island. Wright had noted it was a small tree, and his collection showed that the leaves of this species were unusually narrow, sometimes nearly threadlike, which set it apart from all other known plumerias.

In 1924 Ignatius Urban (1848–1931), a German botanist who worked extensively with Brazilian and Caribbean plants, named and described *Plumeria stenophylla* from eastern Cuba. In his description of this new species he noted it had leaves to 0.4 inches wide. Because of its narrow leaf Urban compared it to *P. filifolia*, stating his new species differed in its petioles to 0.05 inch wide, the midrib scarcely conspicuous, lateral nerves obscure, and the margins of the corolla lobes variously glabrous. With the exception of the leaf width, which is likely a variable feature, these are all characters that apply to *P. filifolia*; thus, in his treatment of *Plumeria*, Woodson (1938) considered *P. stenophylla* to be synonym (or another name) for the previously named *P. filifolia*. Because it is an older name, *P. filifolia* has priority.

A very distinctive plant on account of its unusually narrow leaves, *Plumeria filifolia* is unlikely to be confused with any other species. However, as I noted in an earlier article in these pages (Hodel

2017), a continuum of leaf widths, from nearly threadlike to two inches or more wide, is present along the southeastern coast of Cuba, making a strong case for further study.

The description is from Grisebach (1862), Urban (1924), Woodson (1938), my field observations in Cuba, and examination of cultivated plants.

**Habit:** small to medium, mostly deciduous to sometimes evergreen tree to 12 feet tall and wide or more, vase-shape, sparsely to moderately branched, open to moderately dense (Figs. 1–2).



Fig. 1: *Plumeria filifolia* is a small to medium, vase-shaped, sparsely to moderately branched, deciduous to sometimes evergreen tree (cultivated, Las Tunas Botanical Garden, Las Tunas, Cuba).

**Trunk:** 4–5 inches diameter; bark smooth, purplish brownish gray, becoming corky and knobby with age; twigs 0.25 inch diameter, greenish turning brownish gray, with numerous round to semi-circular leaf scars.





Fig. 2: *Plumeria filifolia* is sometimes moderately branched and dense (in habitat, southeastern coast near Turquino, Santiago, Cuba).

**Leaves:** spirally arranged; petioles 0.2–0.8 inch long, 0.03–0.07 inch wide, green to purplish red, (Figs. 3, 10), sometimes initially with deciduous, very



Fig. 3: Petioles of *Plumeria filifolia* are green to purplish red. Note the leaf blade drawn out at the base (cultivated, garden of Linda and Eileen Ohara, Carson, California).



Fig. 10: Flowers of *Plumeria filifolia* are sometimes arranged in a few-flowered cluster. Note the reddish purple stalk of the flower cluster, pedicels of individual flowers, and petioles (cultivated, Las Tunas Botanical Garden, Las Tunas, Cuba).

short hairs to 0.001 inch long; blades 4–8 inches long, 0.05–0.4 inch wide, subfiliform to linear-lanceolate (Figs. 4–6), v-shaped (Fig. 7) to flat in



Fig. 4: Some forms of *Plumeria filifolia* can have drooping leaves with nearly threadlike leaf blades (in habitat, Sierra de Nipe, Holguin, Cuba).



Fig. 5: Leaves of some forms of *Plumeria filifolia* can be spreading and have linear-lanceolate, flat leaf blades. Note the compact flower cluster (in habitat, southeastern coast, Granma, Cuba).

transverse section, drooping to spreading (Figs. 4–6), drawn out at base (Fig. 3), short-pointed at apex (Fig. 8), green above, pale below, thick-papery, initially with inconspicuous, very short marginal hairs



Fig. 6: Leaves of some forms of *Plumeria filifolia* can be spreading and have broadly linear-lanceolate, flat leaf blades up to 0.4 inch wide with more conspicuous lateral nerves (in habitat, southeastern coast near Turquino, Santiago, Cuba).

to 0.001 inch long, midrib light green above, whitish and prominently raised below (Fig. 9), other nerves obscure, barely discernable to inconspicuous above, more conspicuous below.

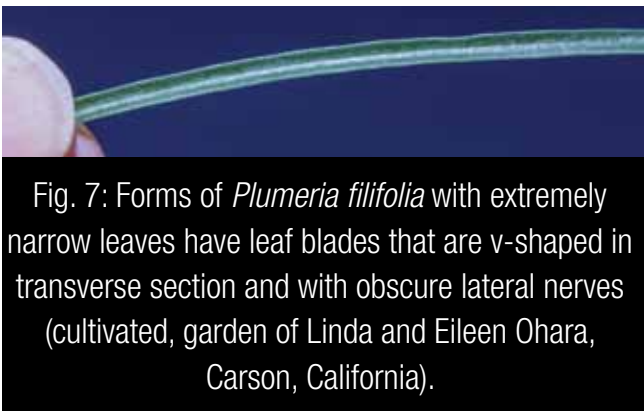


Fig. 7: Forms of *Plumeria filifolia* with extremely narrow leaves have leaf blades that are v-shaped in transverse section and with obscure lateral nerves (cultivated, garden of Linda and Eileen Ohara, Carson, California).



Fig. 8: Leaf blades of *Plumeria filifolia* are typically short-pointed at the tip (cultivated, garden of Linda and Eileen Ohara, Carson, California).

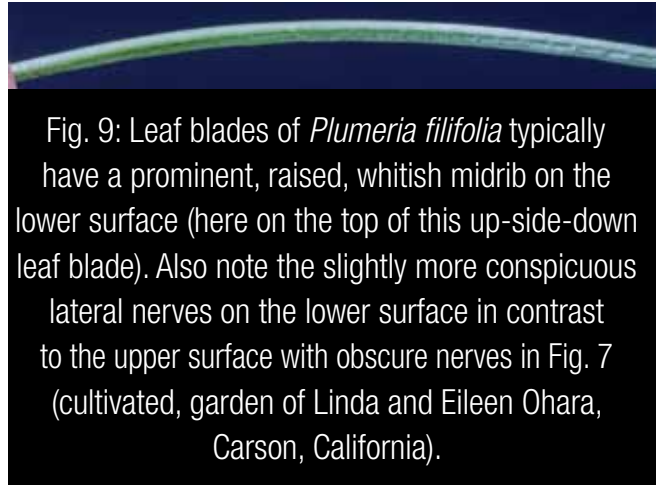


Fig. 9: Leaf blades of *Plumeria filifolia* typically have a prominent, raised, whitish midrib on the lower surface (here on the top of this up-side-down leaf blade). Also note the slightly more conspicuous lateral nerves on the lower surface in contrast to the upper surface with obscure nerves in Fig. 7 (cultivated, garden of Linda and Eileen Ohara, Carson, California).

**Flowers:** arranged in a compact, few- to several-flowered cluster (Figs. 5, 10) on green to reddish purple stalks 1–2.75 inches long, 0.12–0.25 inch diameter (Fig. 10); individual flowers 1–1.6 inches long, 1.4 inches wide, on green to reddish purple pedicels 0.15–0.4 inch long with minute hairs to 0.001 inch long (Fig. 10); calyx crown-like, 0.07–0.15 inch tall, 0.15–0.2 inch wide, lobes ovate-deltoid, rounded to inconspicuously acuminate, 0.03–0.05 inch long; corolla tubular at base, 0.4–1 inch long, 0.04–0.15 inch wide at base, flared distally with proximally overlapping, obovate-oblong to narrowly obovate to spatulate lobes 0.75–1 inch long, 0.35–0.5 inch wide, free in distal  $\frac{3}{4}$ , imbricate in proximal  $\frac{1}{4}$ , white except for yellow dot or “eye” at base of lobes (Fig. 11), fragrant.



Fig. 11: Corolla lobes (petals) of *Plumeria filifolia* are proximally overlapping, obovate-oblong to narrowly obovate to spatulate, free in distal  $\frac{3}{4}$ , imbricate in proximal  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and white except for yellow dot or “eye” at base of the lobes (cultivated, Las Tunas Botanical Garden, Las Tunas, Cuba).



**Fruit:** 2 pods (follicles) to 2.5 inches long, to 0.6 inch wide, brown, short-pointed, wide-spreading, joined at base.

**Distribution:** southeastern Cuba.

**Ecology:** *Plumeria filifolia* mostly occurs from sea level to 2,000 feet elevation in seasonally dry forests, thorny scrublands; often on limestone.

**Common Names:** unknown other than the universal frangipani and plumeria.

**Notes:** *Plumeria filifolia* is distinctive but rare in collections, although many people desire it because of its unusually narrow leaves. In the original, strict interpretation of *P. filifolia* (in other words, excluding material referable to *P. stenophylla*), it is a plant with extremely narrow, nearly threadlike, drooping leaves 0.05–0.1 inch wide and with obscure, barely discernable lateral nerves (Figs. 4, 7). If *P. stenophylla* is separated out, it also has narrow leaves but they are wider, 0.1 to 0.4 inch wide, spreading, and with slightly more conspicuous lateral nerves (Figs. 5–6). The only differences seem to be in the width of the leaf and prominence of lateral nerves. Whether the leaves are drooping or spreading is likely directly related to leaf width; extremely narrow, threadlike leaves simply lack the internal structure necessary to support themselves while wider leaves have sufficient internal structure and are self-supporting. Leaf width likely affects the prominence of lateral nerves in a similar manner.

When one considers *Plumeria filifolia* and *P.*

*stenophylla* each in their own strict, narrow sense, it is difficult to think only one species is involved here. However, what we are not seeing are the numerous intermediate forms that “tie” the two together, as I noted earlier in the continuum of leaf widths. Indeed, this continuum, from nearly threadlike to 2 inches wide in southeastern Cuba, especially along the coast, is confounding, and further work employing a modern molecular study might be able to resolve these issues and perhaps segregate out *P. stenophylla*, resurrecting it from synonymy. Until then, collectors wishing to obtain the highly sought-after form of *P. filifolia* with drooping, nearly threadlike leaves should specify just that to potential suppliers.

**NEXT: *Plumeria inodora***

### Acknowledgements

Plumeria collectors Linda M. Ohara and Eileen T. Ohara let me take photographs in their garden and assisted with leaf measurements.

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Cindy Schmidt



Guillot's Sunset

# My Plumeria Journey

by Sandra White, Cape Coral, Florida

I fell in love with frangipanis (plumeria) just as I moved into my new house in southwest Florida in 2009. My neighbor across the street had a lovely tree in her front yard. She told me it was called an “Elkhorn” tree because it lost all its leaves in winter. I was confused because it was November, and the tree still had its luxurious leaves. I felt the tropical look was just what I wanted. In December it did lose its leaves, and the bare branches did look a bit like “antlers” but even at that I liked the tree. In early summer this same neighbor confessed that she didn’t like the tree in her front yard, because it was so ugly in the winter. By this time I knew that the tree was what the locals called frangipani, and it had beautiful flowers often with a nice scent. My neighbor dug up the tree and put it out by the street to have the trash pickup take it away. I asked if I could have it. She said OK, and so my love of frangipani trees was in full bloom. A little research taught me that I had a *Plumeria rubra* that might be in the ‘Aztec Gold’ family.



Well into my first year in tropical Florida, a new friend gifted me with frangipani cuttings from trees he had no name for. I put the leafed-out cuttings in water overnight. The next day, I dipped the root end in rooting hormone and pushed the branch into a one-gallon container of mostly composted cow manure. The cutting held onto its leaves, and by the

end of summer, roots were coming out of the bottom of the pot. I moved it out into the garden where it didn’t miss a beat and just kept on growing. It dropped its leaves in mid-winter but flowered beautifully the next summer. It thrived in the summer “rainy season.”

Several years later, I would learn that my new plant is most likely ‘Miami Rose’—very tall, clear, bright pink with a spicy scent.



Bolstered by my success with the cast offs, in 2012 I purchased a pretty white/yellow plumeria named ‘White Sunset’ at the local Pine Island Mango Mania festival.



‘White Sunset’ is a compact, multi-branched, continuously blooming tree. It has a pleasant, light scent. When a friend accidentally broke off a side branch, I just did “like the Hawaiians do” and pushed



the little branch into the soil. It is now almost as large as its mama tree. After Hurricane Irma in 2017, almost half of 'White Sunset' was smashed by a large fallen branch off the nearby Royal Poinciana tree. I took the cuttings and planted them all around my property and so far, a year later, they are all doing well, and some have even flowered. They may look delicate, but as far as I'm concerned, plumeria are tough as nails and never disappoint.

In 2017, while driving with friends over to Pine Island, we kept seeing beautiful plumeria in almost every dooryard. I became determined to learn more about these enchanting plants. First I looked up "growing plumeria" on the Internet and found lots of growers, but they were too far away for me to make a day trip to visit. I also kept finding references to The Plumeria Society of America, so I did a search and wound up joining the PSA. When I received my first PSA newsletter, I was astonished at the beauty of the featured trees/flowers and the terrific enthusiasm for plumeria that seemed to jump off the pages.

In the post-Hurricane Irma issue, there was an article on the devastation the Naples Botanical Gardens in southwest Florida had suffered, and an offer to PSA members of 25 free seeds that had been harvested before the storm. Of course, I sent for the seeds. Following the advice that I read in the PSA's magazine on growing seeds, I sorted the seeds, thought that 4 were not viable, and planted the rest. Nineteen germinated, some quicker than others. After my past experience successfully growing other tree seeds with lower germination numbers, I was pleased with those results.

I planted some of the seeds in gang pots and others got their own pot. They all got the same growing medium—organic composted cow manure. Since they were going to live outside on the south side of the driveway, I figured they could use all the water retention capabilities I could provide. That part of the driveway gets the full brunt of the 92° F+ noonday sun and afternoon thunderstorms. The

varying sizes and vigor is really apparent two months after planting the seeds. However, they all seem to take the extreme weather well.



Although most of the outdoor seedlings did well, a few were attacked by what I think are slugs. To protect them, I brought them inside to my lanai where they could stay in a protected environment surrounded by my orchids.



The orchids and their friends enjoy the lanai's morning sun.

This next little beauty (following page) is blossoming on a cutting from a Hurricane Irma victim—a mostly destroyed plumeria in my neighbor's yard. The neighbors' name is Ricks, and they were devastated with the loss of a favorite tree. They cut up and salvaged as many branches as they could and offered them to anyone who wanted them. I took two four-foot branches, and again doing as the

Hawaiians do, literally stuck them in the ground, staked them, and left them alone. That was September. By May, one branch had held onto a seed pod, and it was ripe enough to harvest the seeds.



To plant these seeds, I used the same method and soil as before—planting the seeds with several in one cell of a seed starter kit.

Three weeks later all the seeds had germinated and were quite vigorous. The mama cutting was now



in full flower and since the previous owners didn't know its name, and its seeds were genetically different from the parent anyway, I named it 'Ricks White.'

'Ricks White' has clusters of beautiful flowers and a strong, perfume-y fragrance. The parent tree was about eight feet tall and well branched. I'm hoping the seedlings will keep all the wonderful characteristics of the parent. Only time will tell.

Though I love my seedlings, I still have to wait years to see what comes of them. Since I'm a fairly impatient person, I decided to buy at least one colorful and fragrant plumeria for my own pleasure.

After going online to many growers, I settled on Florida Colors in Homestead, Florida. They seemed the most diversified and affordable growers, and

they provided all sorts of great information on growing plumeria. The cutting I bought was a lovely white/pink beauty named 'Lilly Warmtoes.' Who could resist a name like that? It makes me chuckle just saying it.



The cutting arrived with two branches (Y) and a significant bareroot ball. I placed it in water overnight and planted it in a three-gallon container the next day. I moved it out to the front garden where I could monitor its progress. To my great surprise, a month later, it flowered. The heat was overwhelming and the afternoon thunderstorms were ferocious, but 'Lilly' didn't care. She put out flowers on both branches and was very fragrant. All the passers-by noticed the little tree and everyone loves the name.

We do have a difference of opinion about 'Lilly's' scent though. Some say it's cinnamon, some say it's pumpkin spice, and I say it's allspice. Seriously though, does it really matter?

My thanks to Florida Colors for providing me with this wonderful little plumeria. Now, if she produces seeds ....







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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**



### Joining the PSA ...

[www.theplumeriasociety.org](http://www.theplumeriasociety.org)

Click on "Join the PSA" tab at the top of the home page.

To join by mail, select PDF.

To join online, select Online Form (Paypal).

When joining by mail, send a check to:

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Houston TX 77227-2791, USA

**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.

### 2019 PSA Calendar

January 15 .....meeting  
March 12 .....meeting  
May 7 .....meeting  
June 8 (Bay Area Community Center  
Seabrook/Clear Lake) ..... Show & Sale I  
July 9 .....meeting  
July 20 (Bay Area Community Center  
Seabrook/Clear Lake) ..... Show & Sale 2  
October 8 ..... Fall Luau Social (potluck) & meeting

- Meetings are held at Cherie Flores Garden Pavilion, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas.
- Meetings begin at 7:00 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.

### 2019 PSA Officers and Directors

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