Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America

July 21st 2020
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Speaker: Nina Rach, Houston Orchid Society
Topic: Introduction to the Orchid Family

JL 'Hawaiian Classic'

July 2020

President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

With great deliberation and thought, the PSA Board of Directors has decided to cancel all in-person meetings for the balance of 2020 due to concerns over COVID-19. All sale events have been cancelled, and our remaining two general meetings will be virtual via Zoom software. All PSA members will get email instructions one week prior to the event and again the day before on how to get to the Zoom meetings.

Our newsletter will be printed for July and mailed to those who have requested one to be mailed. The entire PSA paid membership will get a digital newsletter.

COVID continues to change all of our norms and lives. However, like our families, friends, and loved ones, our plumeria almost always make us smile. The blooming season is here—smile, garden, love your plumeria, friends, loved ones, and your families.

Please share those blooms on our Facebook page so we can all enjoy.

Stay happy, healthy, and safe.

If you're on Instagram, join us at
https://instagram.com/p/BiuuQVwnZcF

The Plumeria Society of America

Social Media Guidelines and Information

(see the PSA Facebook Group Files section for the full document)

- Because the PSA is a non-profit organization, selling, trading, or offering for trade of any items is not allowed.
- Advertising, soliciting, self-promoting are not allowed (personal or for the business of others).
- Comments are to be kind and respectful.
- Posted photographs need to be labeled on the photo or in comments, even if a NOID.
- Ask permission before posting, copying, reusing, or sharing someone else's photo.
- When adding friends to the group, please let them know, so they can answer the required screening questions (to prevent spam).

Virtual Meeting - July 21st

Speaker: **Nina Rach**, Houston Orchid Society

Topic: **Introduction to the Orchid Family—What you can grow in and around the Houston area**

- The Zoom waiting room will open at 7 pm on the meeting day; the speaker will start at about 7:30 pm.
- Like our PSA General Meetings, all are invited—we will give priority to our paid PSA members for questions to the speaker, etc.
- To update your contact information, email Sharon Wright at **slwmwwtogether@comcast.net**.

If you're on Facebook, join us at
https://www.facebook.com/groups/PlumeriaSocietyAmerica

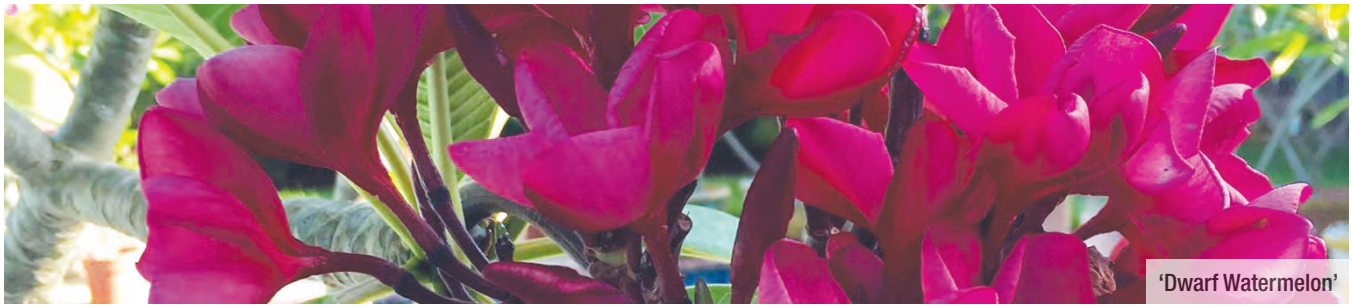
Our page now has 3,680+ members from all over the world—a great place to ask a question or show off your blooms.

Variations in Inflos ...

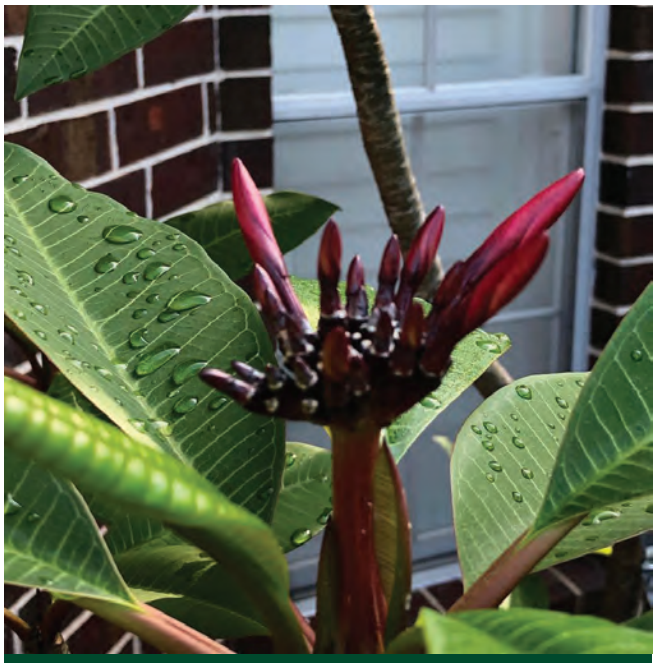
by **Paula Furtwangler, Texas**

'Dwarf Pink Singapore' is tall, green, and pubescent (fuzzy).

'Heirloom' is medium, upright, dark pink, and pubescent (fuzzy).



'Dwarf Watermelon'



'Mermaid Gem' is short, upright, pink, and rough.

'Dwarf Watermelon' is medium, upright, pink, and rough; mature inflorescences become pendulous.

'Vera Cruz Rose' is tall, smooth, pink, and develops a candelabra shape.

'Texas Longhorn' is medium, upright, green, and smooth.

Vera Cruz Rose

JJ 'Xquisite' is medium, upright, pink/green, and rough.

'Toba's Fire' is tall, upright, green/pink, and rough.

A Plumeria Journey from 1 to 2,000

by **George Straw, Texas**

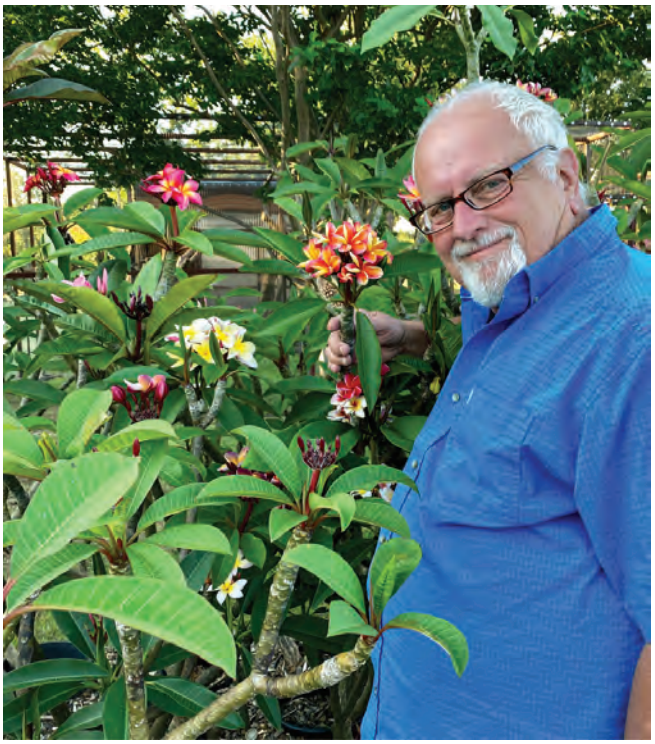
It must have been about 30 years ago when I was first introduced to plumeria. I was at the Texas State Fair, and there was a large booth set up selling cuttings from Hawaii. Of course I had to try it and did not know how to grow them. I took a red, white, and yellow cutting home, planted them in soil, and with luck they survived. A couple of years later I met a guy in Dallas who had plumerias all around his swimming pool, and when I commented on them, he sold me a very nicely rooted branch, a mini tree. That was the beginning of my neverending urge to get one of each kind—not knowing there was no way I would ever have the room, as there are so many.

My collection grew, and at the time I would plant my plants directly in the ground and then pull them up in winter, shake dirt off, and store bare root in a place that would not freeze. This worked great for a number of years, and then one winter the heat went out in my storage building. I lost all of my plumeria, some very nice large plants. I decided at that time I was not going to try and grow plumeria.

Move forward about 10 years, and the plumeria bug bit me again. I have no idea which ones I started with but I still had NOID (NO identification) plumeria and a lot of named ones, as well as registered plumeria.

It has become much easier for new growers with all of the plumeria groups on Facebook, with answers at your fingertips, a few very good books, and a lot of sellers out there. Please make sure you know who you are buying from if you buy on eBay or other sites like that.

My inventory has now grown to over 2,000 plumeria, and I have collected from Bali, Cambodia, and Thailand. I have visited Nui, Sunchai, Dennis, Preche, and many other growers in Thailand. In Bali I visited Serada and a number of growers there. We visited one village in Bali where the whole town had large plumeria trees that were grown from seed with some amazing new varieties. Of course some of those had to come home with me. One plant I got in



Cambodia was from an elderly woman who was working in her garden. I offered to buy a cutting from her, but she gave it to me. I named it 'Cambodia Lady.'

One of the highlights of my collecting was becoming friends with Sunchai Jenakom who is a grower/hybridizer in Thailand. He named one of his plumeria after me—'George Straw Passion.'

'George Straw Passion'

When I am asked which plumeria is my favorite, it is very difficult to name just one. Some are

'Penang Peach' because of its color, fragrance, and the amazing compact growth; 'George Brown'/'Musk Rainbow' has a color hard to beat; 'George Straw Passion" has a unique shape and color. I was one of the first to bring 'Jamaica Fire' back to the states. It is hard to beat—the hotter it gets, the darker the colors become. I could go on and on.

'Jamaica Fire'

The fertilizer I now use is Excalibur© from Florida Colors. I have been using it for about five years, and the difference is amazing. I went from having some blooms to having tons of blooms and healthy leaves.

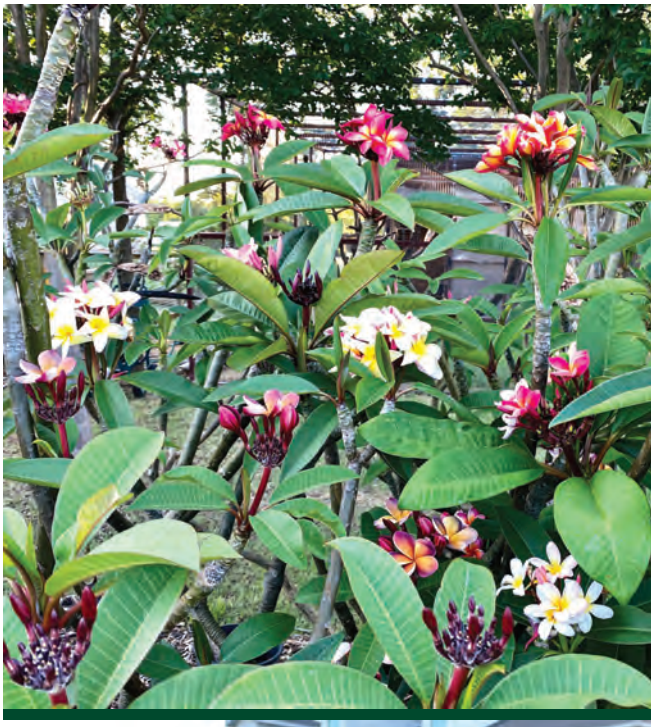
All of my plants are grown in raised beds that I plunge my pots into each spring. In the winter, they are pulled up, and the roots that have grown out of the pot are trimmed back to the pot. They are stored in my greenhouse at about 60° F. Bringing out the plants in the spring takes two guys three days as everything is plunged. We can usually put them in the greenhouse in the winter in about two days—I cut off all leaves and withhold water. I watch to see if any look dehydrated, and if so I will mist and water very little. I live in North Texas and grow my plants in full sun and have had only a few problems. Thailand 'Taj Mahal' does not like the hot sun.

This is one of two greenhouses we have. The other is 20 feet x 100 feet, and in the winter it is packed.

We propagate our plumeria by grafting and rooting cuttings. Grafting is typically done using the slant graft and grafting onto seedlings that we have grown. I have better luck grafting when the host stock has light green leaves. If you use one with dark leaves, your success rate goes down. Success has been very good for us. Dan has it down. We also root our plumeria using coconut coir and perlite, either in pots or rooting tubes. If I break off a branch when I am out working with the plumeria, I will just stick it back in the pot it was growing in and have good success with it rooting; it is called "The Mothering Effect."

I am lucky that I always have a lot of seedpods each year. Growing from seed is always exciting as that is the way you get all of the new varieties. I start my seeds on paper towels; there are many different ways to start seeds. When I see the root start, I plant the seeds into a good plumeria soil mix and make sure they do not dry out. The soil mix I use for my plumeria is ¼ perlite, ¼ pine bark mulch, and ½ potting soil. If you water and fertilize well, you may get lucky and have blooms in less than two years. But it could be as long as five or more years. So plan on becoming patient if you want to grow from seed, but the wait is worth it. You will not know the true color or flower until after the third bloom cycle.

This is how we plunge our pots in the summer.



Getting Leaves with No Roots

by **Scott Lawder, Kansas**
reprinted from *Plumeria Potpourri* October 2009

Recently at a talk to a group and on the Internet, I have had a couple of people ask me, "When rooting, I get leaves with no roots, what do I do?" I myself once had this problem and am familiar with how frustrating it can be. Our rooting window is pretty short here in Kansas City—May through August. If cuttings aren't rooted by August, then we hope the cutting survives our long winter until next May. Some don't make it, and it can be very disappointing. I thought I would share what I learned in my own experience and how people might avoid "leaves without roots" in the future.

I first saw this problem 11 years ago while rooting—of all places—in my greenhouse. I also noticed it also happened sporadically while rooting outside on the ground (instead of a concrete-like surface). It seemed to accompany wild temperature swings—early or late in the season—but not always.

Growth Follows the Heat

It wasn't until years later when I started using a heat mat—and noticed that I no longer had the problem—that I finally had an idea about what might be going on. In my greenhouse there were huge temperature swings from night to day. The air was getting much hotter than the temperature in the root zone inside the pot. This created more heat at the top of the cutting during the day which would help promote growth at the tip. At night, the bottom of the cutting, or root zone, would cool down too much, and this would stop the formation of roots. Same when I tried rooting on a grassy surface. The sun would heat up both tip and base, but at night the ground would not hold the heat like a concrete surface, resulting in too cool a root zone. It wasn't until I started rooting them on a heat mat, which keeps heat focused at the base of the cutting day and night, that the problem disappeared

A heat mat keeps the energy at the bottom where it encourages roots. This worked over and over regardless of the cultivar or time of year. Heat mats also keep day/night temperature swings to 10º F. or between 80–90º F. Interestingly, the ground temperature 5–6 inches down in most places in the summer ranges from 80–90º F. This is one reason rooting them in the ground works so well.

Leaves without roots can also happen under lights, and the same principle applies. In my case, I put a fan on my cuttings 24/7 to cool the plumeria tips which my HID light was making too warm. A general principle to remember is that growth follows the heat. This can be a little confusing for warm weather growers who are used to thinking in terms of light only. It is actually the heat in the root zone that is a bigger factor. The best temperature in the root zone for rooting was 80º F./26.66 C. And the root zone should be warmer than the air temperature during the night (minimum of 80º F. in the root zone).

There is a little more to it than this, but this is the general idea. I have rooted cuttings for years now, regardless of the season, using 1000 watt metal halide lighting and heat mats at 80º F. I have received cuttings in November and had them rooted by Christmas as well as January and February. It is bottom heat that overrides all other factors in rooting plumeria. I have found that if you have proper heat at the bottom (and light) a cutting will root 95% of the time. Many times I have even brought back to life shriveled cuttings during the winter. Some people have planted seeds in November and had them blooming by April. It is actually quite amazing to see that the time of year does not matter.

Before I understood this about plumeria, I lost quite a few cuttings. For those who are inclined towards experimentation, I encourage you to get a soil thermometer and a pyrometer and watch one of the greatest mysteries of plumerias reveal itself to you. Good luck and good rooting!

My Plumeria Journey

by **Charlie Chen, Southern California**

My first encounter to plumeria was when I visited Hawai'i back in 2008ish. I was fascinated by the flower, the fragrance, and beautiful leaves. I was never into gardening or taking care of any type of plant period! But plumeria got my attention when I first saw it. I bought a few cuttings—the locals told me just pot them up—they will grow like a weed. So I thought that's simple enough, why not give it a shot.

So I got back home, and I potted those cuttings up, not knowing how to take care of them. I watered the them weekly ... soon I found out they were rotten, I didn't know how to save them, and of course I killed them all. I got really discouraged and felt badly, so I decided to move on and forget about plumeria.

'Tequila Sunrise'

A couple years later, I started to go to county fairs in Los Angeles and San Diego. There I found plumeria booths. I was like, oh man ... should I try again or not? I decided to give it a try again. Keep in mind, I still had zero knowledge on how to take care of plumerias. And as you all know, county fairs are always around mid-June to end of August, depending on which one you go to. For experienced plumeria growers you know July–August is kinda late to try to root cuttings. Anyway, fast forward, of course, I killed those cuttings I got from the county fairs, and fast forward again, I started to find plumeria in my local Lowe's and Home Depot. I bought a few of them, again, I killed them all because I watered during winter time—I thought they needed water all year.

So finally my wife called me "plant killer" and begged me to stop buy plumeria. She always felt bad for the plants I picked up. She knew they wouldn't last long. Moving forward x2 speed, I found out Facebook had plumeria groups. I joined a few groups and started messaging a few experienced growers like Irene Jones, Danny Kashou, Mike Atkinson, and many others. Since then my plumeria growing skills have improved. I'm still learning new things every day and trying to minimize plant casualties during winter time.

'Aztec Gold'

My first plumeria was 'Aztec Gold' ... fantastic color, amazing peachy fragrance. I was lucky enough that it bloomed for me in the first year, therefore, I was able to watch it bloom, and to smell the fragrance. Ever since, I have become a plumeria addict!

To be honest, I don't know how many plumeria I have right now—I stopped counting them. I don't want to count them, but my kids once counted for me, and they told me "daddy you have over 300 plants!" I immediately told them shhhh ... keep it down! Don't let mommy know! Also I think they probably counted wrong.

I love all plumeria—it's super hard to pick out my favorites, but if I have to pick a few, I would definitely pick 'Aztec Gold,' 'Lemon Drop,' Tequila Sunrise,' 'Valkyrie,' 'Shimmering,' and 'Heirloom.' They all have unique characteristics, amazing colors, and fragrance.

Soil mix—oh boy—it's a big topic, I'm not going to cover it like I know everything. Indeed I learned from so many different growers, and everyone has their own method, so I'm just gonna share what I have been using; what has been working out for me in my area, but there is always


'Heirloom'

room for improvement. In general, I use cactus soil+ perlite+pumice (previous years). Beginning this year, I'm switching pumice with bark. I'm still testing this new mix, trial and error I guess. I noticed with my previous mix, the roots didn't develop into a root ball, so maybe the previous mix has been too loose. That's why I'm using bark instead of pumice and only a light amount of perlite—the rest is just cactus mix. Hopefully the plumeria will like the new soil mix.

My rooting method—I like to keep it simple—I make sure the cutting is well callused before I root it. I use one-gallon black nursery pots no matter what the size of the cutting, except for a gigantic cutting,

JJ 'Valkyrie'

and then I probably would use a two-gallon pot. A heavy amount of perlite and minimal cactus soil is my rooting mix recipe. Pot them up and wrap with foil at base, use stakes to keep cutting stabilized, water once, set it in a warm spot with filtered sun, and forget about it. It has been working out for me with this method. I've tried bag rooting, but for some reason it just doesn't work out for me. So I'm staying away from it.


'Lemon Drop'


'Shimmering'

I live in Murrieta, Southern California. My winter temperatures can get down to the low 30sº F. I move most of them into the backyard patio. I used to put them away in my garage during winter time, but as my collection got bigger, the garage won't fit them all now. I decided to leave them outside throughout winter. But I make sure they get morning sunlight as much as possible.

Growing seedlings has never been my thing, but I have been trying to grow some seedlings here and there. I know seedlings give you a completely different flower vs. flowers from the parent(s). As of right now, my whole focus is growing my current plants and making sure they survive through harsh winters.

I don't do any grafting. First of all, I don't have rootstock, and secondly I'm too scared to cut and graft! I've only done one graft! Yes, just one time—I grafted 'Bill Moragne' and 'Lava Flow' (I heard both are hard to root) on one plant. So I grafted it by myself! Surprisingly it is still alive and growing nicely!

Well, growing plumeria is a super fun hobby, but at times you will get super frustrated due to rotten plants or cuttings, etc. This is always sad when it happens. So it is a lot of work! I never knew the intensity of work I would have to put in.

Here are the reasons why I think it's a lot of work: 1) you have to spend a lot of time finding the plants, finding the cuttings, buying online or picking up locally; 2) you have to spend time planting them, or callusing them, then rooting them; 3) you have to water them (no water during winter time); 4) you have to move pots around to avoid cold damage, then move the pots around again when spring comes; 5) you have to feed and fertilizer them; and 6) repeat the same steps year after year. But once they started to bloom beautifully in the yard, then I feel the amount of time I spend and care for plumeria are totally worth it!

A little tip for everyone, especially new plumeria collectors, don't be afraid to ask questions. If you have a question, I'm sure other growers probably have the same exact question. So ask ask ask! Enjoy the process of growing beautiful plumeria!
Mahalo!

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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Joining the PSA ...

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:
The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 22791
Houston TX 77227-2791, USA

Dues are $35 per year

When does your PSA membership expire?

Your newsletter envelope mailing label has your membership expiration date.

2020 PSA Calendar

January 14 .....meeting
March 10 .....meeting
~~May 12 .....meeting~~
~~June 13 Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/ Clear Lake.....Show & Sale I~~
July 21.....virtual meeting
~~July 25 Harris County Activity Center/ Pasadena.....Show & Sale 2~~
October 13.....virtual 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.

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.

2020 PSA Officers and Directors

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