

# Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



## June Bloom Show and Sale

June 13, 2020

### May 2020

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JL 'Black Ruby'

## President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

As I write this article, I reflect on how much and quickly daily life has changed over the past many weeks. I hope this writing finds all in our large extended Plumeria Family scattered around the world and your loved ones, happy, healthy, and very safe.

Typically, we would all be rejoicing with Spring in the air and about our plumerias waking up as another gorgeous blooming season is upon us. This year is different with Covid-19. The PSA Board of Directors has carefully considered all of the factors surrounding our May PSA general meeting and has elected to cancel that meeting. We will all miss our scheduled speaker Nichole Teirnan and her talk about "Plumeria of the Caribbean." We are in hopes we can reschedule her to speak next year.

Additionally, in these unprecedented times, this newsletter of the May 2020 publication of *Potpourri* will be digital only.

We will keep you posted on the subsequent two general meetings for 2020 and the two public sales scheduled for this Summer.

Regardless of Covid-19 and how this may affect all of us, our plumeria almost always make us smile. The blooming season is upon us—smile, garden, love your plumerias, friends, loved ones, and families. Please share those blooms as they arrive and excite us all. Stay happy, healthy and safe!

'Ruby's Rainbow'

*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).

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

Our page now has 3,530+ members from all over the world—a great place to ask a question or show off your blooms.

### 2020 Houston Area Plant Sale Calendar

#### Clear Lake (1<sup>st</sup> sale)

April 30 Commitment to sell at Clear Lake

May 12 Sellers' meeting after the general meeting

May 29 Cultivar list for Clear Lake sale required

June 13 Sale at Clear Lake

#### Harris County Activity Center/Pasadena (2<sup>nd</sup> sale)

July 1 Commitment to sell at Pasadena

July 14 Sellers' meeting after the general meeting

July 17 Cultivar list for Pasadena sale required

July 25 Sale at Harris County Activity Center/Pasadena

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# My Plumeria Journey

by Trace Westcott, Southern California

Aloha plumeria friends! I have had an interest in gardening for over 50 years. I started growing cactus and succulents, among other things, in the late 60's. Gardening is my escape from reality and the stress of daily life. Gardening is like meditation for me.

I received my first plumeria cutting from a friend, returning from Hawaii around 1975. Like many other folks my first plumeria was a 'Celadine.'

I currently have about 350 plumeria. Very few are duplicates, with the exception of a few younger seedlings. Several times over the years, I have accumulated as many as 500 plumeria at one time. I do this mostly myself, with the occasional help from my understanding wife. My recommendation is to not exceed the quantity that is comfortable for you. I have been at that



maximum number of plants a few times, and it can become too much like work. In my opinion you want your hobbies to be fun, not work. I currently have about 45 trees in the ground. Several others are in 24-inch box planters. The remainder are in 20 gallon or less sized pots. I also gravitate towards other tropical varieties such as Adenium, Pacapodium, Jatropha, and Fokea, while also maintaining my collection of cactus and succulents.

I am fortunate that I live in zone 10A in the coastal facing foothills of Southern California. Being basically tropical plants, plumeria have an ideal temperature band of approximately 60° F. to 90° F. In my location, we exceed that on both ends. Occasionally, we get up into the low 100's in summer, and the most sensitive varieties require protection from direct sun—using sun filtering shade cloth or placing them away from afternoon hot sun.

I have found over the years that it is not one-size-fits-all when it comes to the environment certain varieties like. I have found that hard, shiny-leafed plumerias are much hardier in hot sun than light, papery-leaf varieties.

Temperatures here can also dip into the mid-30's in winter, although mid-40's is most common. I do move some of my more treasured potted varieties into my greenhouse during the months of December, January,



and February. It just becomes less for me to worry about, because I have many others that cannot be moved and must be protected if necessary, due to frost, freezing, or excessive rain.

I have frost cloth and frost bonnets for all plumeria in the ground and in large containers that can not be moved. Although frost/freeze protection is not often needed in my climate, I have used it over the years and view it like a fire extinguisher. You hope you never need it, but if you do, you will be very glad you have it.

My favorite plumeria variety, even after seeing hundreds of different exotic varieties over the years, is still 'Jean Moragne Jr.,' usually referred to as 'Jeannie Moragne.' This variety has it all in my opinion—size, durability, prolific blooming, wow factor, and scent. If I had to make the difficult choice to pick one desert island plumeria, it would be her.

I am always evolving with my fertilizer regimen. Currently, on anything 5 gallons and smaller, I am using 9-month Excalibur®, a slow release fertilizer from Florida Colors Nursery. On my larger potted plants, as well as those in the ground, I use Simplot Best 6-24-24 XB+, a six week granular fertilizer.

Also periodically throughout the growing season, I supplement with Grow More®, Sea Grow 16-16-16 at about 1/3 strength applied with a 16:1 siphon mixer.

This is a quick release fertilizer that really picks them up during the warmer months.

In late fall, I use Sul-Po-Mag one time to help fortify my plants through winter. I personally feel it helps fortify cell strength, and I have had far fewer damaged and lost plants over winter since I began using it about 15 years ago.

I have used many soils over the years, many times even mixing my own. My current favorite "right out of the bag" mix for plumeria is E.B. Stone™ Palm & Citrus mix, or E.B. Stone™ Cactus mix. With either, I add about 10% pumice or perlite as I want to promote excellent drainage. I would rather have to water a little bit more in the warmer months than have pots remain too wet at any time, especially in cooler weather.

When I root cuttings, I prefer bag rooting in a mix of coco coir and perlite. For very large cuttings, where bag rooting isn't possible, I will root in a similar mix or coarse cactus mix, using an appropriate size pot or clear juice container. I like clear containers when possible, because I can observe root development. This is also one reason I like bag rooting. When I have a large quantity of common variety cuttings, many times I will gang root them in a pot. I have three large heat mats and size permitting, I always put my rooting cuttings on a heat mat.

Bottom heat is essential in root development.

I began growing seedlings about 15 years ago and did it for a few years. For one reason or another I did not plant seeds for about eight years. When those first generations of seedlings began blooming, it reignited my interest in seedlings. I currently have several hundred seedlings one to four years old. I grow seedlings primarily to obtain new varieties—that's the real lure.

I plant seeds using the small portable peat pod trays obtained at home stores or on the Internet. I like the peat pods because the seedlings can be transplanted without disturbing the roots.

However, I also plant common white or similar varieties and use them for rootstock when I graft. If I am planting common variety seeds, many times I will gang root them in a 1 to 2 gallon pot.

I graft plumeria primarily when I have hard to root cuttings. When I graft I prefer my host to be either seedlings or rooted cuttings of common whites, 'Celadines,' or other light-colored varieties. Some people have conducted studies showing that lighter-colored plumeria varieties proved to be better hosts for grafting stock as opposed to darker colors.

Over the years I have changed grafting styles several times. Currently I am using a V-graft. For me, it seems to

## In praise of 'Jeannie' ...

provide a more stable graft that is easy to do for one person. In the past, I did slant grafts which I know many still use. I always felt like I had to have a third hand involved to stabilize the slant graft and prevent it from traveling while zip tying and taping.

A successful graft can be quite rewarding, because within just a few weeks or months you can have a fully functioning mature plant soon after your graft takes hold. The most critical component of grafting regardless of your technique is sanitize, sanitize, sanitize. I use 50% isopropyl alcohol liberally in a sprayer during the whole process. Use it after each cut both on your tools and the area of the plant you are working on. I have tried many different methods wrapping my grafts. Currently I am using a product called parafilm laboratory tape. It only sticks to itself and is easily molded and breathable. My success rate has gone up versus using the other conventional grafting tape or electrical tape.

Over the years I have asked a lot of questions of fellow gardeners and plumerians, and I always find I can learn something new. Southern California has a great, experienced plumeria community which I'm very grateful for.

I hope a few of the items I have shared here inspire you to appreciate more these amazing tropical flowering trees. Mahalo!



# Common Plumeria Pests...

photos by Linda Ohara, Southern California



Spider Mite Damage



Red Spider Mites



Broad Mite Damage

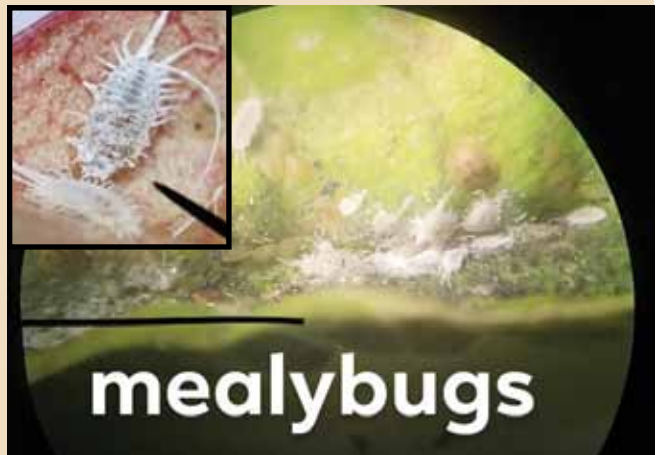


Soft Scale (with ants)



Aphids

Aphid Damage



mealybugs



Thrip Damage



Leaf Hoppers and Damage



Whiteflies



Leaf Fungus



Leaf Fungus



Petiole Fungus



Blossom Fungus



Rust

# My Plumeria Journey

by Roger C. Galle, Central West Coast Florida

I came across my first plumeria at a July 4<sup>th</sup> party. It was an 'Aztec Gold.' I asked for a cutting, and the owner gave me one, and it sat in a 5-gallon bucket for a year where it bloomed again. I planted it, and to this day it still blooms every year and is usually the plumeria I share with visitors to my home who want to start their collection.

We have 74 plumeria at this time—some in larger pots and some in the ground. I would have to say my favorite is a very hard choice to make, but 'Engelwood' is the one I look forward to seeing bloom every year.



'Engelwood'



20-year old seedling of 'Engelwood' and 'Scott Pratt'

I do raise a few seedling from time to time, not as much as I use to, but I'm always looking for a new one to add to my collection.

When I take a cutting to share with friends, my preferred way to root is gang

rooting in almost anything from oak leaves, to sand, and just mulch. All seem to work here in Florida. I have also noticed that when taking cuttings in the fall, usually by March I have roots on most cuttings.

I typically do not worry about my plumeria in the winter as I'm located in central west coast Florida.

I have done the grafting thing in the past, but

now I just root them if possible.

I have to say that from the first time I started collecting plumeria, we have met some of the nicest people who we now call our friends. We go to Houston most years for the June sale, and that gives us time to visit those friends. A special thanks to Nancy and Emerson Willis who host us during that busy time. We have met plumeria friends from all over the world who we have shared cuttings with and received cuttings from. My collection includes plumeria from Thailand, Indonesia, and India because of those friends.



Tex Norwood and Roger Galle



Left to Right: Roger Galle, Laurie Galle, Vonna Bickle, Tami Caldwell, Allen Caldwell

From time to time I will be asked to share my experience with growing plumeria with local plant societies. I also learned that most people I speak to have at least one plumeria and are looking for another to add to their landscaping.

Let me say again, the friendship we have with people we meet, all because this plant, has blessed us in so many ways. Look forward to seeing everybody in Houston in June. Stay Safe!



## Air Layering for Success

by Jim Little, Oahu, Hawaii

reprinted from *Plumeria Potpourri* October 2009

Air layering is simply a method of plant propagation that allows for girdling or cutting part of a branch and applying a moist ball (not soaking wet) of sphagnum moss. At the appropriate time when roots form, the branch can be removed and grown as an independent plant.

The process requires removing a ring of bark (first layer) by cutting or scraping a ring around the



branch, usually about one to two inches wide depending on the length and thickness of the branch. This layer is called the cambium. Below the cambium layer is the phloem (food conduit tissue of the plant) which transports the carbohydrates and photosynthates down from the leaves to the lower parts of the plant. The last layer is called the xylem. It transports water and nutrients from the roots up to the leafy parts of the tree.

By removing the bark, cambium, and phloem, the carbohydrates and photosynthates are prevented from flowing down the trunk. It does not inhibit the water and nutrients to flow upward through the leaves via the channels in the xylem, thus insuring that the leaves don't dry out. By removing the cambium layer, the carbohydrates and photosynthates are allowed to flow down the branch and collect at the girdling site. The moist sphagnum moss will cause the stranded cut on the girdle to grow into roots.

So what is the best way to girdle a plumeria? Start by selecting a branch on the tree that is upright in the tree and has ample exposure to the sunlight which helps heat the moss pouch. Air layering branches that are in the shade reduces the rooting

speed. Use a sharp knife to strip your bark. Some gardeners will disinfect their knife before cutting into the branch, but it is not necessary. It is best to select a plumeria that is in its growth period. This will vary depending on the cultivar. Some trees experience a jump start beginning in the early spring while others come into their growth period at a much later time. This is why some trees flower early in the season, and others wait for the warmer summer months. Plumerias all have their favorite month for showing off. It is important not to make assumptions that all plumeria behave the same.

After you make the girdle or cut, simply wrap a handful of damp sphagnum moss (that has been soaked in water for about 15 minutes) around the girdle. Be sure to wring out the moss before you



apply it to the girdle. The moss should not be dripping wet but only slightly moist. Next, wrap the sphagnum ball with 3 ml thickness translucent polypropylene plastic and tie it on both sides of the ball with plastic tape or cable slip ties. Depending on where you live, a rooting compound may aid rooting. It is not necessary in Hawaii. The plastic wrap will last for months before there is any damage by the

ultraviolet rays of the sun. Even then, I have sometimes forgotten about an air lay that was done months earlier only to find out that there was no damaging effect. You can also remove the air laid branch earlier if you wish, but it will not grow as fast when planted. Delaying the removal will sometimes result in the moss ball drying out, therefore canceling your efforts. It should be mentioned that the fold in the plastic wrap should be turned downward so as not to collect water from rain and make the moss ball too wet causing diseases and rotting to develop.



Depending on the time of year, your air layering technique, the plumeria variety, and the sunshine and temperature, you should see roots as early as 7 weeks. The average rooting visibility occurs within 8–10 weeks. The plastic pouch that holds the



sphagnum moss is like a mini humidifier that swells and induces roots to form. You will soon have a root

formation that is ready to be severed from the tree and grown as an independent plant. If the process is



done successfully, you will see flowers within the first year and sometimes as early as a few months, depending whether there was a bud emerging from your air layer branch. An inflorescence may even appear while the air layer branch is still attached to the tree.

There are advantages to the air layering method of propagation. One is that it is a simple way to make a few or many rooted plants from any size tree or any size branch while, at the same time, pruning your tree. My personal experience is that evergreen trees such as 'Singapore Obtusa,' 'Mele Pa Bowman,' and certain dwarf varieties are more easily rooted at any time of the year, while deciduous trees take a little longer depending on what month the air layering procedure is carried out. The difficult to root plumeria 'Richard Criley Dwarf Rainbow' is easily rooted using this technique.

Another benefit is that you can wrap up the soilless, rooted air layered plant and ship it to its destination. The receiver simply removes the plastic and slam-bam the plant is ready to be planted, without delay, directly into the chosen medium and without removing the moss ball that encases the root ball. The rooted moss ball makes an excellent support system for the new branch when potted.

The air layering method is explained in the book *Growing Plumeria in Hawaii and Around the World*. If you decide to implement the steps outlined above, you will learn how surprisingly simple, effective, and most gratifying this technique is for making newly rooted and ready to grow plumeria branches.

# New PSA Registration

'Tarvin's Aztec Fire'  
seedling of 'Aztec Gold'  
registered by John Tarvin  
Southern California



## Southwest Fertilizer

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Each year in February there is a plant society appreciation week—members get a 15% discount.



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[www.jlplumeriahawaii.com](http://www.jlplumeriahawaii.com)

## <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:  
The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.

P.O. Box 22791  
Houston TX 77227-279w1, 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 14 .....meeting  
July 25 Harris County Activity Center/  
Pasadena .....Show & Sale 2  
October 13 .....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.

### 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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