

# Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



## July 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting!

Tuesday, July 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 ...*

Speaker: Emerson Willis

Long-Time PSA Member and Plumeria Grower

Topic: Plumeria—The Second Greatest Love of My Life

### In this Issue

July 2018

President's Corner	p 2	The <i>Plumeria</i> Part 3: Botany—Donald R. Hodel	p 6
My Plumeria Journey—Michael Janson	p 3	From Sea to Shining Sea—Emerson Willis	p 10

## President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

As gorgeous plumeria blooms surround all of us, along with our seasonal heat and humidity in the Houston, Texas area, "Plumeria—The Second Greatest Love of my Life" will be the topic from our speaker Emerson Willis at our July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Emerson will address many areas of interest to us all in his long history of growing and loving plumeria. Emerson is a long-time PSA member and grower of plumeria at his home in the LaPorte area of Greater Houston.

Our first plant sale of the season held on June 9, 2018 in Clear Lake was a huge success with most sellers sold out in less than 2 hours. We had gross sales of \$34K plus with 19 growers involved, and we sold over 1,100 plants and other items. A huge THANK YOU goes to all who made this sale happen—the growers, volunteers, and everyone that worked so hard.

The second and final sale of the season for the PSA will be held on July 21, 2018 at the same location, the Bay Area Community Center in Clear Lake. If you are a grower and want to sell, please contact German Collazos.

The June 9<sup>th</sup> PSA Show and Sale, plus many of our other activities, including the enthusiasm of those on social media, have brought many new and

renewing PSA members. Please help me in welcoming all. If anyone needs to join or renew their membership, you can always go to the PSA website and follow the instructions.

Our fall luau and potluck social will be held on Wednesday, October 10, 2018 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 a Wednesday. Please note the new date and get those wonderful recipes ready!!!

I am grateful so many want to get involved and help in so many areas of 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!!

Your 2018–19 President of The Plumeria Society of America.

### 2018 Houston Area Plant Sale Calendar

#### Clear Lake Sale (2<sup>nd</sup> sale)

July 3	Commitment to sell at Clear Lake
July 10	Sellers' meeting after the general meeting
July 11	Submission of cultivar list for Clear Lake sale
July 21	Sale at Clear Lake

#### Contact

German Collazos  
german.collazos@toshiba.com  
713-670-4064

### The Plumeria Society of America FLOWER SHOW AND SALE

**July 21, 2018**

**9:30 am - 3:00 pm**

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# My Plumeria Journey

by Michael Janson, Texas

## When and how did you come across your first plumeria?

While garage selling in the year 2000 with Kyras Hopkins (who lived in Corpus growing up and Hawaii for two years), we found Rick Stone. I bought some plumeria plants and was given some seeds. Rick told me that if I got them for free, I would probably not bring them in before the first freeze and would come back in the spring for more free plants.

## What variety was your first plumeria?

*Mardi Gras*. It now has a 5" diameter and is 15 years old. I have probably propagated 75 plants in the last 15 years from it.

## Do you have a favorite plumeria?

*Razzelberry* from Thea Whitenton. Thea told me it took 11 years for *Razzelberry* to bloom. My plant blooms on 5–10 inch branches every year.

*Mardi Gras* is my second choice. I love all the reds.



## Approximately how many plumerias do you have now?

In November 2017, I moved 600 plants to West Columbia, Texas where my brother Leslie built a 20 foot x 40 foot tubed greenhouse in December for them. (My family moved 30 miles from Sugar Land, SW Houston to Cypress, Texas, NW Houston in March 2018.) All the plants were leafless, but they did get snowed on for two days before a clear,

plastic cover was installed over the metal hoops. A 220 volt heater was installed and kept the temperature above 38° F. while the outside was 29° F. Since the greenhouse is 75 miles away, I only see my 600 plants once a month or less.

Yes, a Christmas miracle—only about nine plants died three months later and maybe 30 tips needed to be removed.

There still were about 100 plants in Sugar Land during the snow, and I called on J.P. Erwin to see if he could store them since there was no room in the inn. He was able to take them and very few were damaged by the snow.



## What fertilizer(s) do you use?

Any with a low middle number. In the Houston area, the clay soil is high in phosphorus.

## What soil mix do you use?

For 12 years I used clay soil that came from a hill in my backyard in Sugar Land, Texas. Seeing how plumerias looked so much better in Mark Terrill's yard, I started adding organic amendments along with MicroLife™.



Now I use hardwood mulch and natural mulch (trimmings of various tree limbs from a telephone

company) along with perlite. Sometimes I top dress with pine bark mulch for erosion control. Pine bark mulch is slower to break down than natural mulch because it contains resins.



Most years I get five to six car loads of leaves in winter and let them decay. One winter I enthusiastically got 27 cubic yards, and it almost didn't decompose fast enough to use in the spring. My

grandson found a dead squirrel in the pile.

### **What's your preferred rooting method?**

For many years I made sure there was a lot of latex on my new cuttings by standing the stick with the cut end up and letting it dry in this position. If there wasn't much latex, I would break leaves off the same stick and drip the latex onto the new cut.

Later I changed my method and used Saran Wrap on the cut end. It would be wrapped tightly to eliminate the air. This was Mark Terrill's idea—by eliminating the air, the cut end was not exposed to pathogens.

In most instances you can remove the Saran Wrap within 7 days to stop the process of callousing. Too much callous may slow down the rooting of the cutting.

### **Do you protect them during the colder months of the year?**

With 600 plants, the process of removing leaves begins six weeks before Thanksgiving. Scissors work OK, but a hedge clipper gives a longer reach. I try to remove the leaves in stages by taking the bottom one-third of the leaves first, then two weeks later, another third of the leaves.



These two pots show how I plant 200 of my plants during the growing months—two-thirds of each pot is in the ground. For winter storage, they are removed from the ground and stacked four-pots high.

I put the pots in my airtight shed which is made of black plastic walls attached to the roof of my house. The shed/greenhouse is dark and cold which helps put the plumeria into dormancy. In 18 years the plastic has been replaced three times. The heat from the house has kept the temperature above 31° F.

As the shed is airtight and the plants have no leaves, there is no need to water and fight off white flies and other bugs. I do poison for slugs and rats.

### **Do you grow seedlings?**

I grow seedlings for grafting and recommend Color Star by Nelson as a good fertilizer for seedlings. It has a formula of 19-13-6. I fertilize every four weeks and they grow like crazy!





I place a red ribbon at the bottom of my seed plugs so that I can easily lift the plug and check on the roots. This is one of three variegated seedlings from one of my unknown seed pods.



As Mike Atkinson says, plumeria want to survive. I lose less than 5% of the plants throughout the year, but I grow and graft 10%+, so always end up with a positive outcome. Having so many plants, new varieties bloom every week from June through November. Six to seven months of growing is what we get in Texas. With limited growing time, I strive for quantity and new varieties so that I always have something new blooming.

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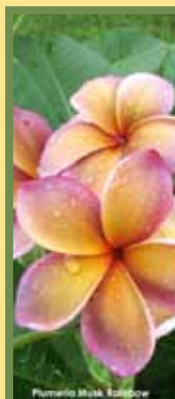
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Plumeria Musk, Singapore

# The *Plumeria*

## Part 3: Botany

by Donald R. Hodel (drhodel@ucanr.edu)  
University of California, Cooperative Extension  
700 W. Main St., Alhambra, CA 91801

### Description of the Genus *Plumeria*

The description is from Criley (2005), Woodson (1938), Zarucchi (2015), and my field observations, and applies to the genus as a whole.

**Habit:** deciduous to nearly evergreen, more or less succulent to semi-woody, shrubs or trees, mostly 10 to 20 feet tall but occasionally to 50 feet tall (Fig. 1); their candelabrum-shaped habit is



Fig. 1: Plumerias make large shrubs to small trees, as here with *Plumeria rubra* in Lakewood, California.

typical and easily recognizable, the result of an inflorescence (flower stalk) terminating growth on a shoot and that shoot then resprouting into two or more new shoots; copious white latex produced when wounded.

**Trunk:** solitary, rarely multiple, 2 to 12 inches diameter. Bark initially thin, smooth, gray or pinkish



Fig. 2: Bark of Plumerias is thin, smooth, gray or pinkish or purplish gray, as here on *Plumeria obtusa* in habitat near Turquino, Santiago, Cuba.

or purplish gray (Fig. 2), becoming thick and corky in some species or with age and then often with protuberances (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Bark of Plumerias becomes thick and corky in some species with age and then it often has protuberances, as here on *Plumeria obtusa* in habitat near Punta Guayacanes, Guantanamo, Cuba.

**Branches (shoots):** 0.75 to 1.25 inches diameter, rounded, leaf scars conspicuous, bark similar to that of the trunk.

**Leaves:** alternate (spirally arranged), typically grouped toward the branch tips (Fig. 4); petiole long



Fig. 4: Leaves of Plumerias are alternate (spirally arranged) and typically grouped toward the branch tips, as here on *Plumeria rubra* in the Ohara garden in Carson, California.

to short or lacking; blade (0.1-) 2 to 4 inches wide, 8 to 12 inches long, simple, mostly elliptic to obovate, sometimes linear, rarely thread-like, pointed to



blunt-tipped, matte green to glossy green, typically glabrous (without hairs), mostly thick and fleshy, conspicuously nerved, secondary nerves united at their terminus near the leaf margins into a series of curls or curves, margins entire, rarely lobed, frequently revolute (curled under)(Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Leaves of Plumerias are conspicuously nerved and frequently with revolute margins, as here on *Plumeria obtusa* cultivated in the Las Tunas Botanical Garden, Las Tunas, Cuba.

**Inflorescences (flower stalks):** a terminal cyme (central stem bearing a terminal flower that develops first followed by lateral stems each with a terminal flower)(Fig. 6); alternately branched to 2–3 orders; peduncle (main stem of inflorescence)



Fig. 6: Inflorescences of Plumerias are a terminal cyme, as here on *Plumeria rubra* in Lakewood, California.

typically conspicuous, elongate; bracts small and mostly inconspicuous, usually deciduous prior to anthesis (flower opening); the entire structure a densely or loosely flowered hemispherical head (Fig. 7).

**Flowers:** fragrant, waxy, showy (Fig. 8); calyx (collective term for sepals) crown-like, small, typically inconspicuous, 5-lobed, the lobes equal (Figs. 9–10); corolla (collective term for petals)



Fig. 7: The inflorescences of Plumerias typically look like a densely or loosely flowered hemispherical head, as on this *Plumeria rubra* in Whittier, California.



Fig. 8: Flowers of Plumerias are typically beautiful and showy, as here on a cultivated *Plumeria rubra* in Taioha'e, Nuku Hiva, French Polynesia.

white, yellow, red, purple-red, or combinations and variations of these colors, funnel-form; petals 5(-6), united proximally (basally) to form slender tube (Fig. 9) with short hairs adaxially (inside)(Fig. 12), free (not



Fig. 9: The calyx of *Plumeria* flowers is small, typically inconspicuous, and with five equal lobes, as here on *P. rubra*. Petals are united proximally to form a slender tube that ends at the calyx.

united) and typically broadened, outwardly flared and



Fig. 10: The calyx of *Plumeria* flowers is small, equally lobed, and crown-like, as here on *P. rubra*. The green top of the inferior ovary can be seen in the center of the crown-like calyx.

overlapping distally (apically)(Fig. 11); stamens short, inserted at or near base of tube, anthers free, oblong,



Fig. 11: Petals of *Plumeria* flowers are typically free distally and they are broadened, outwardly flared, and overlapping, as here on the award-winning *P. rubra* 'Lovers' Full Moon' in the Ohara Garden, Carson, CA.

yellow to orange aging to grayish white (Fig. 12); pistil shorter than stamens, ovary subinferior (positioned more or less below the attachment of the petals and sepals)(Fig. 10), composed of 2 carpels, these united apically in a bi-lobed or bi-clefted, greenish stigma (Fig. 12). Nectaries absent.

**Fruit:** 2 follicles (dry fruit opening on one side to release seeds) united at base but each outwardly flared, green maturing to brown (Fig. 13).

**Seeds:** flat, with a membranous wing basally (Fig. 14).



Fig. 12: Stamens of *Plumeria* flowers are short, inserted at or near base of the floral tube, and have oblong, yellow to orange anthers aging to grayish white, as here on *P. rubra*. Note the short hairs in the throat of the tube. The bi-lobed, greenish stigma is shorter than the petals.



Fig. 13: Fruits of *Plumerias* are two follicles united at the base, typically outwardly flared, and green maturing to brown, as here on *Plumeria rubra* 'Ryann Chelsey' in the Ohara garden, Carson, California.



Fig. 14: Seeds of *Plumerias* are flat, with a membranous wing basally, as here with *Plumeria obtusa* in habitat in the Sierra de Nipe, Holguin, Cuba.



## Distribution and Ecology

*Plumeria* occurs naturally from Mexico through Central America, the far southern tip of Florida, and the Caribbean Islands into northern South America. Cuba appears especially rich in species and diversity. Plumerias are also widely cultivated around the world wherever growing conditions are appropriate. They are so widespread and common in cultivation that they are often erroneously considered native to countries outside their native range.

*Plumeria* generally is found in exposed, sunny, mostly well drained, often rocky and dry or at least seasonally dry habitats, typically in water-deficit, deciduous, thorny/spiny forest (Fig. 15). They do not



Fig. 15: Plumerias mostly occur exposed, sunny, well drained, often rocky, dry, water-deficit, deciduous, thorny/spiny forest, as here with *Plumeria obtusa* in habitat near Punta Guaycanes, Guantanamo, Cuba, one of the driest places on the Island.

occur in wet, shady forests, but they are sometimes in moist forest and then are found exposed on rocky outcrops. They can be found on rocky, porous,

limestone, serpentine, or granitic substrates. Many species can be classified as xerophytes and inhabit areas of low rainfall, less than 20 inches annually, with extended rainless periods lasting for six months or more.

Flowers of *Plumeria* are nectarless but, nonetheless, might be pollinated by nectar-feeding hawkmoths (Sphingidae) who are fooled into visiting the flowers by their shape and scent (Haber 1984).

## NEXT: Part 4: The Species of Plumeria

### 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, and reviewed the manuscript to improve this paper.

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 improve this paper.

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*Helene*



*Sandy (JL)*



*Irma #22*

# From Sea to Shining Sea

by Emerson Willis, Texas

In 1989 I tent-camped the Florida Keys ... solo, of course. I saw many plumerias, but it was the wrong time of year to study blooms. The following year, Nancy and I, along with another couple, returned with my boat during the summer to spearfish and study blooms. As I had suspected, the flowers were beautiful, but there was room for improvement.

Since 1994, Nan and I have been spending much of our wintertime in the Florida Keys. We would carry local and Jim Little (Hawaiian) potted cultivars in our tow car behind the motor home. In the early days, I couldn't spare as many plants as would come in the following years. It grew from gallon pots in a banana box to much taller trees in five-gallon pots standing in the shower of our bus. Nan wasn't too crazy about this arrangement. She thought the only purpose of a shower was bathing.

In 1996 we bought a longer RV with a much larger shower and also placed a beautiful 55 inch oval vinyl decal of *Mary Moragne* on the rear with letters reading "Nan and the Plumeriaman." Ever so often the CB would light up with someone wanting to know what a "plum-er- rea" was. If the inquisitor wished, at the next stop (be it a rest area or draw bridge) they would become a newbie with a frangipani. We repeated this little gesture not only on our Florida trips but when we used to tour the entire country. The problem was having enough plants. Sometimes it would be bare cuttings with rooting instructions. I wish I could tell you how many of Jim Little's "List of Cultivars" I gave to interested parties. I smile when I think of all the nice people over the years who might have fallen under the spell of these wonderful creations. A healthy cutting has to be the original "joystick." Aviators, gamers cringe all you might, I know I'm hopeless.

We knew the winter of 2017/18 was going to be a sad one. Hurricane Irma had come calling to Florida spewing fury with her horrific winds and

countless funnels whipping about. Huge boats were washed upon docks and homes. It's difficult to work up sympathy for the landscape when people have lost their lives, homes, boats, autos and, in some waterfront locations, their yards. But it still broke my heart to have so much of my work blown away.

Over the years I had given and/or planted pots up and down the Florida Keys. A precious few were fronting US-1 aka "The Over-Seas Highway." Rare was the business which owned the ground under its feet, therefore, owners were unable to give me permission to plant. However, private homes were a different story. I only asked that we plant where the tree could be seen from the street if at all possible. In turn, for 23 or so years, I never wrote down an address or even a township. You see, many of these homes are vacant in the summertime. I would reveal locations to a few close friends and only if I knew the homeowners were present. I should think anyone reading this understands plumeria paranoia. If not, I hope you never have to.

As the years slipped by, digging holes in the Keys began to wear me down. A few inches of soil gives way to dead coral. I began to plant only where I could dig or the homeowner could rent a gas-powered auger. The roots growing into the coral is what was holding these plants up in the storms, or so I thought. This might be true if you are dealing with a *Hot Pink/Miami Rose*. Problem was I didn't plant any of these. Pruned quite a few however.

Growing older had another downside. I reduced my driving and was planting more and more around where we camped in the Marathon area. This is where the wind was almost as vicious as it was on Cudjoe Key where landfall of Irma was over 140 mph.

I uprighted a few trees with our 4-wheel drive Suzuki. With the ground being salted, survival is questionable. Many trees just totally disappeared along with boats up to 55 feet, countless homes, campers, trucks, you name it, disappeared!



We had carried a full load of plants but remembering what Jim Little taught me years ago about salt water and plumerias, as I gave the pots away, I asked they not to be planted for at least six months and only then if there had been plenty of rain. Coincidentally, as I write this it has been pouring down for two full days in the Sunshine State.

For the record everything is not about plumerias. On our way out we stopped in Bradenton and visited Laura and Roger Galle along with Al and Suzanne Semango. (OK, Roger did give me a box of cuttings.)

One more Florida stop was at an Okeechobee U-Pick. Our grand-daughter, Ryann Chelsey, came over from Orlando (she is a Disney girl) to spend a few days with us and learn how to pick tomatoes. She soon realized that it is hard work!

Nan and I were home long enough to rest a bit and then we had a “take out.” She and I took out our pots, after which we called for help with the big guns. Two young men took care of the heavy work carrying and replanting the bare rooted stock.

In a few days we were on I-10 once more, but we were driving an auto instead of an RV and heading in the opposite direction towards that other shining sea. Since 1994 we haven’t missed “Legendary” Bud Guillot’s birthday in California.

This trip was extra special. All Nancy and I had to do was hang on to Bud’s coattails because his friends and plumeria club had things lined up for him.

Matt and Le Swanson had dinner reservations for twelve at Roy’s Hawaiian Fusion in Anaheim to celebrate Le and Bud’s birthdays. The party was located in a private room (which was wonderful for my sorry ears) and the fare and service was absolutely fantastic. Bud, Nan, and I were seated across from George Straw and Daniel Kirby. We had seen them in Naples at the IPC (International Plumeria Conference) but had not officially met ... which was our loss. What fine plumeria people. Nancy keeps wanting to say “George Strait.” And I say, “No, no. George Strait is shorter.”

The next day the South Coast Plumeria Society held its meeting/Bud’s birthday party at the United Methodist Church in Anaheim. I was amazed at how many people were present. Very kind people I might add. Several asked me if I had such and such plumeria (of course, I didn’t have it) and then would give me a very nice multi-tipped cutting. I began to think it was my birthday.

The next day was April 16<sup>th</sup>, Bud’s 96<sup>th</sup> birthday. Our group: Bud, his daughter Gena and her son Craig, his wife Katie, Bud’s son Keith, along with Nan and I set out for Bud’s choice which was Chili’s this year.

Fine food, atmosphere, plumerias, and people you love. Life is wonderful!

Dinner at Roy’s Hawaiian Fusion in Anaheim ... counter clockwise from lower right: George Straw, Daniel Kirby, Le Swanson, Liam Swanson, Matt Swanson, Malia Swanson, Alan Thielmann, Laura Jones, Jean Thielmann, Bud Guillot, Nancy Willis, and Emerson Willis



## <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**

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### 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 13 .....meeting  
May 8 .....meeting  
June 9 (Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/Clear Lake) ..... Show & Sale I  
July 10 .....meeting  
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

Ray Allison <i>President</i>	RayAllison@GaryGreene.com 832-689-9938
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