

The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.
May 2011



Plumeria Potpourri

*The next meeting of The Plumeria Society of America will be held
Tuesday, May 10, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park
1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, Texas.
Anyone with an interest in plumerias is invited to attend.*

May 10th Meeting Speaker: Rick Porter

As a youth, I came to appreciate plants working beside my mother on our 2.5 acres right on Cypress Creek in Northwest Houston. Although my job description consisted mostly of mowing, weeding, hauling, and digging. I watched my mother work with large blooming trees and bushes such as magnolias, oleanders, dogwoods, gardenias, azaleas, crepe myrtles, etc. More delicate blooms seemed too difficult to maintain in the Houston climate—at least for a teenager in the 1960s. In the mid 1970s, I moved to New York City to be an actor and soon began a career doing the daytime dramas, “Another World” and “Days of our Lives” (Google Rick J. Porter). This type of work gave me the time and the resources to garden out on Long Island in the Hamptons. Hibiscus and tomatoes were my favorites. Hibiscus required a lot of attention, but I learned subtle pruning and fertilizing techniques to keep them blooming for months. There were many Italians in our community on the Great South Bay, and several elders taught me some family secrets on getting the the highest yield and sweetest tomatoes using chemical-free organic fertilizers. Recently, I moved back to my Cypress home and am now applying some of what I have picked up over several decades of gardening, but mostly, I just apply worm castings to everything.

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President's Corner

by **Mark Wright, Texas**

email: wright5447@sbcglobal.net

I don't know what everyone else uses to gauge the arrival of spring, but purple-red tips on plumeria work for me. Lots of bright tips and emerging inflos are always a good sight.

Irene Jones sent me a copy of Bud Guillot's book titled *Bud's Plumeria Stories*. As a history buff, this book is a must read. Reading the history of these cultivars gives me greater appreciation of these trees. I already think the world of the author.

In the past, I have asked for photos of your trees taken in your area for a reason. I'm willing to up the ante to get some. Send me a story of your favorite variety. This could be a favorite gifted to you, one you have grown from seed, or one you purchased. Tell us why it is special to you. Send a couple of pictures to go along with your story. The best one will be printed in an upcoming issue of the newsletter. All may go on the web site. Anyone sending

me a story with pictures will receive a Plumeria Society T-shirt for free—shipping included. Don't worry if you cannot write a story. I can't write worth a lick, but Irene makes my stuff almost readable. You can bet she can do the same with yours.

I have been very happy to see more registered plumeria being donated to Naples Botanical Gardens. Hetty Ford is working really hard to complete this collection. Take a moment to see which varieties are still needed and consider donating to Naples. These plants are listed on the PSA web site.

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Juanita Davis and Richard Babb. Mrs. Davis was perhaps our longest-tenured member, and we will miss seeing her at our meetings. Richard was the husband of our secretary, Karen Babb. They will both be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

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PSA Plant Sales

by **German Collazos, Texas**

email: german.collazos@tic.toshiba.com

We are now planning the 2011 plant sales. Our first plant sale of the year is June 11th in Seabrook, Texas, followed by the sale at the Merrell Center in Katy on August 13th. Please note the key dates summarized below. The growers' meetings will be held after the general meeting on May 10th in order to allow time for people to arrive. We had two very successful plant sales last year. With your help, this will be another great year for our sales!



Seabrook (Clear Lake) Sale

April 26	Commitment to sell on June 11 th
May 10	Sellers' meeting (after the general meeting)
June 1	List of plumerias to be sold at June 11 th sale
June 11	Sale in Seabrook

Katy (Merrell Center) Sale

June 28	Commitment to sell on August 13 th
July 12	Sellers' meeting (after the general meeting)
August 3	List of plumerias to be sold at August 13 th sale
August 13	Sale in Katy at the Merrell Center

Q&A: Answers from the Experts

by **Jim Little, Hawaii**

How do you get plumeria to bloom earlier and more profusely?

All plumeria are different genetically, therefore, some will by nature have an early blooming season, and others will by nature have a later blooming season. The cultivar *Kauka Wilder* is a good example of an early bloomer in most geographical settings. Early bloomers lose their production strength later in the season, while the later seasonal plumeria are starting to bloom. You can use the same culture practices on different trees, and you will not change the blooming cycle. You cannot take a late season blooming plumeria and have it respond as an early blooming plumeria. You can, however, with good culture practices—light, water, and fertilizer—increase the number of florets and flower size during the growing season. Evergreen *obtusata* plumeria and the popular new evergreen dwarfs can produce flowers all year. They will not produce as heavily during the off-season, but will continue to grow by just providing ample light (natural or artificial) throughout the year along with a balanced liquid feed and light misting.

You may change the blooming season on certain cultivars (*Celadine*, for example), by using the chemical Ethephon as a treatment to promote winter flowering and/or by using the cytokinin chemical method to increase leaf retention and promote branching as reported by Dr. Richard Criley, Professor Emeritus of

Horticulture at the University of Hawaii. These reports can be found by using the references in the box below. Also, the experiment by Dr. Criley using Ethephon is mentioned in the book *Growing Plumeria in Hawai'i and Around the World* by Jim Little. Still another chemical used for plant growth regulation from seed is Gibberellic Acid. The Queen of Plumeria, Elizabeth Thornton, touched on this subject in her book *The Exotic Plumeria*. To my knowledge, no one has done a comprehensive study using chemicals.

Why are seedlings from the same pod not the same?

Fertilization can occur over time, allowing many pollinators to visit one flower, both naturally or hand pollinated. This can result in many seed differences within one seed pod.

What is the best way to grow plumeria from seed?

No magic ... just good cultural practice along with Vitamin B1 when transplanting will give them a jump start and prevent root shock. Many of my professional nursery colleagues use only perlite to germinate seeds, repotting as necessary, and a balanced liquid feed, followed up with a time-release or a hard feed fertilizer (granular, triple 10, 15, or 16 with minors) if the trees are growing in the ground. Often a soil pH test will help dictate the best type of fertilizer to use.

Ethephon—Winter Flowering

www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/HRN-13.pdf

Cytokinin (6-benzylaminopurine)—Branching

<http://www.theplumeriasociety.org/spps/ahpg.cfm?spgid=35>

Q&A: Answers from the Experts

by **Eulas Stafford, Texas**

How do you get plumeria to bloom earlier and more profusely?

This is my opinion. To get early blooms you need to start earlier, like last September. A good foliar feeding twice, about two weeks apart, in September will help to start the bloom process so you can get a jump start in the spring. A good root activator when you bring them out in the Spring will also help.

What is the best way to grow plumeria from seed?

There are many different ways to grow seeds.

1. If you have a few seeds, you can lay them in between two paper towels and keep them moist until you see the little white root start to grow. After the roots are about a one-quarter inch long, you can plant them in a good rooting mix and keep them damp, but not wet, until the leaves come out. Don't

transplant them until it they are 6 to 8 inches tall. Remember, they will continue to grow the first winter, so keep them warm and continue to keep them moist and lightly feed them during the first winter.

2. If you are planting a whole pod, you can just sprinkle the seeds over the top of a planting box (a 2 or 3 foot long planter works well) with 3 or 4 inches of good planting mix in the bottom, then cover the seeds with a thin layer of the mix. Keep them moist, but not wet, until they start to grow, then you can lightly spray with a dilute fertilizer. Don't transplant them until they are 6 to 8 inches tall. Remember, they will continue to grow the first winter, so keep them warm and continue to keep them moist and lightly feed them during the first winter.



A Plumeria Spring Awakening Process and a Summer Fertilizing Program

by **Dan Teel, Texas**

The following is not a PSA recommendation. This article was written to document the steps I will use this year handling my plumeria plants. I hope this information can also be used in whole or part by other PSA members in their programs. The chemicals I used in this process were recommended by another PSA member.

The following is the process that I used this year to wake up my plumerias from their winter sleep. I began the process the first week in March by moving all my plants from their limited light winter enclosure to the shade of a large tree in my backyard. Then, over the next week, I slowly moved them from the shade of the tree into full sunlight.

Next, I mixed up a drench using 2½ ounces of Carl Pool's Vitazyme and a pint of Carl Pool's Root Activator per 5 gallons of water. I then submerged each pot in this mixture for approximately 30–45 minutes. (I also soaked the roots of the bare rooted plants in the same manner.) After draining the pots over a hardware cloth to recapture any excess liquid, I sprinkled about an ounce of NutriStar 5-30-5 Plumeria Food in each one-gallon pot. I added proportionally more fertilizer to the larger pots. Then, I mixed the fertilizer into the existing soil.

Next, I used a mixture of 1 part natural mulch, 1 part Miracle-Gro® Potting Mix, and one-half part perlite to top dress the pots. Also, I planted the bare rooted plants in the above

mixture, then watered in the NutriStar plumeria time-release fertilizer. I then placed all the plants on black weed block material where they would get about 8 hours of direct sunlight each day.

Until the plants are leafed out, I will use a weekly ground feeding regimen with a mixture of Carl Pool's BR-61 (9-58-8) (1 tablespoon per gallon of water), Vitazyme (2 ounces per gallon of water), and Epsom salt (1 tablespoon per gallon of water). Using a moisture meter, I will make sure not to over moisturize the plants.

After the plants are fully leafed out, I will change to a weekly foliar feeding program by spraying the leaves late in the day with a mixture of BR-61 (1 tablespoon per gallon of water) and Medina HastaGro (6-12-6) (½ ounce per gallon of water). I will augment this routine with a one-time application of NutriStar plumeria time-release fertilizer during the first week of July.

I will discontinue all fertilization during the first week of September so the plants can begin winding down for the winter. Hopefully, the above processes will encourage large green leaves and many beautiful blooms on strong healthy plants.



NutriStar 5-30-5 Plumeria Food

Time to Inspect Those Plants

by **Eulas Stafford, Texas**

Well, you should have all of your plants out by now, but have you really looked at them closely? If you had an insect problem last year, then you could have it again this year. Inspect those new leaves for any sign of pests like mealybugs, spider mites, and/or scale. You can get rid of them now before they become a problem. An insecticidal soap works well for most small infestations of insects, or you can use any insecticide mixed with about 1 ounce of dish washing soap per gallon of water. Or you can use Neem oil spray to kill the eggs and larvae of most insects. This might be good if you have any of the black soot that was left on

your trees from last year as this can contain eggs. If you see signs of scale on the branches, you can use dormant oil to kill them.

It is time to fertilize all of your plants but be sure to water it in really good especially if you live in Texas and Florida with the drought conditions that are in effect now. You can use any good dry fertilizer or liquid fertilizer that can be combined with any of the microbial soil amendments such as Vitazyme, Spray-N-Grow®, and a new one, VermaPlex®. Remember, what you do now will affect your plants all year long.

Have a great year of beautiful flowers and healthy plants!



Photo by Mark Terrill, Texas

Thai Names

***Mangkonyok* translated = Jaded Dragon**

aka *Muang Mangkonyok* translated = Purple Jaded Dragon

aka *Saeng Manee*

Common English Name: *Violet Jaded Dragon*

Sold to the US as *Violet Dragon Jade*, *Violet Jaded Dragon*, and *Saeng Manee*.

Fragrance: medium strength, sweet honey and strawberries

Christmas in March

by **Dan Teel, Texas**

In my backyard where I keep my plumeria plants, there are two large pecan trees and quite a few squirrels.

My plumeria collection has multiplied substantially over the past two years, making it impractical to winter my plants in my small, two-car garage. So, I purchased a 10' X 20' car shelter that is completely enclosed by a plastic tarp-like material in which I kept my plants during the past two extremely cold winters. One end has a zippered flap that allows entrance into the shelter. I used only two electric heating lamps on the extremely cold nights to keep the plants from freezing.

In March, I felt just like a kid at Christmas when I unzipped the entrance flap to my shelter to see what gifts my plumerias would offer me. First, to my surprise I didn't have a single frozen tip or plant. Also interesting was that I had two plants with new bloom spikes

and nubs, but there were no leaves on either plant. I had several plants that did have small leaves starting to grow. It was as if they were trying to say, "get us out of here and bring on spring." Also, to my surprise several of the smaller plants that I put in the shelter in early November seemed to have gotten much bigger, or was it just my imagination? I thought they were supposed to be sleeping in the winter, not growing.

The squirrels must have really been busy in the fall, because I had enough small, leafed-out pecan seedlings growing in my pots to start a small pecan orchard.

After getting all my plants out of the shelter and preparing them for the growing season, I am now ready for the best surprise my plumerias can offer—large green leaves and beautiful blooms.



Grove Farm



Kalina (OZ)



seedling

A New Home

by **Emerson Willis, Texas**

www.emersonsplumerias.com

Nancy and I have been visiting the Florida Keys in the winter for many years, carrying with us various cultivars to plant or present. I'm not inferring there are no beautiful frangipanis long established in the Keys, however, blended with Hawaiian (including Jim Little selections), a mix of Elizabeth Thornton's, and Bud Guillot's favorites, these varieties stir the pot considerably.

I'm leading up to one of my strangest plantings. At least seven years ago, I gave a plumeria to a lady at the Gulf Stream Park and Marina, which was eventually sold for condos. Yes, seven years ago! She potted her plant but as thousands of snowbirds do, she would head north at winter's end, never having the opportunity to see her plant bloom. In fact, she did not know its color, and I don't have a clue since my markings came off years ago. As luck would have it, she winters across the canal from the park Nan and I now make camp. She decided to return the plant to me. Even though it was bonsaid from being pot bound, it was so large that in order to carry it home, it would have needed to travel in the shower of our motor home. Well, since Nan uses the shower now and then, a search for a new home was in order.

Fortunately, a few weeks earlier, we had met a gentleman who had recently purchased what might be one of the nicest homes in Marathon—and he's a plumeria lover. I had planted a *Guillot's Sunset* for the original owners as the house was being completed. This story ends with a happy home owner, a happy plumeria man, and I somehow feel the little tree will be happy also whatever its name may be.





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The Plumeria Society of America Web Site

Additional information concerning The Plumeria Society of America and culture of plumeria plants may be found on the World Wide Web at the following address:

<http://www.ThePlumeriaSociety.org>

A listing of currently registered cultivars — Research Committee Bulletins — PSA By-Laws
Plumeria Care Bulletins — Photos from past events — Map links to meeting and sale sites
Photos of plumeria plants and flowers — past color insert pages in PDF format

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.

*Copy this page for all your friends who love plumeria
or just want to know more about them.*

The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.

P.O. Box 22791

Houston, TX 77227-2791, USA

Dues are \$25 per year

PSA Calendar — 2011

January 11meeting
March 8meeting
May 10meeting
June 11 Show & Sale I (Seabrook/Clear Lake)
July 12.....meeting
August 13.....Show & Sale II (Katy/Merrell Center)
October 11meeting
TBAFall Social

- All regular meetings are held at the Houston Garden Center in Hermann Park, 1500 Hermann Drive, Houston, TX. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., workshops begin at 6:45 p.m.
- Bring your blooms. Bring your friends.
- Bring plants, cuttings, etc. for door prizes!! These can be anything, not just plumerias.
- Visitors are invited and encouraged to attend.

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Species Jamesonii



Palermo Fahrenheit and Daeng Mang Mee



*Penang Peach, Daeng Mang Mee,
Palermo Fahrenheit*



Hilo Beauty



Palermo Princess