

Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



May 8th Meeting!

Tuesday, May 8, 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: Bob Patterson, Southwest Fertilizer

Topic: Perking up Your Plumeria

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President's Corner

by Ray Allison (RayAllison@GaryGreene.com)

To All Plumeria Lovers:

Howdy all, I am Ray Allison, your 2018–19 President of The Plumeria Society of America.

As spring has engulfed us in Houston, “Perking up your Plumeria” will be our topic from Bob Patterson at our May 8, 2018 meeting. His program will include information on various fertilizers, both organic and chemical to use on your plumeria, yard, and garden, along with a question and answer session. Bob is a longtime friend of the PSA and owner of Southwest Fertilizer in the Bellaire area of Houston, Texas.

We had a wonderful and fun PSA presence at the Home Show at the George R. Brown Convention Center the weekend of April 6th and 7th thanks to Red O’Laughlin and several volunteers.

Our first plant sale of the season is coming up June 9th in Clear Lake at the Bay Area Community Center. The second sale on July 21, 2018 will be in the same location. If you are a grower and want to sell, German Collazos is coordinating both sales (see page 11 for sales calendar).

I want to thank our Board of Directors for assisting in getting the last newsletter in the mail.

After our Board meeting we created a small assembly line and got the newsletter in the envelopes, addressed, stamped, and mailed. It was an enjoyable time for all of us.

With regard to the appetizers for our General Meetings, Lisa Berger will be treating us for the upcoming May 8, 2018 meeting. Please help me thank Elaine and Earl Williams for their excellent assistance for the past several meetings. If you are interested in assisting with food for any of the meetings, please let me know.

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!!

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all over the world. It's a great place to
ask a question or show off your blooms.**

The Plumeria Society of America FLOWER SHOW AND SALE

June 9, 2018

9:30 am - 3:00 pm

Clear Lake — Bay Area Community Center

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My Plumeria Journey

by Karen Babb, Texas

I received my first plumeria back in the early 1980s from one of my husband's bosses. It was about 24–36" in a pot. I was told to use old vitamins to feed it. Just poke one down in the soil every month or so and it's good to go! I did get that plant to bloom the loveliest yellow blooms that smelled heavenly. Unfortunately I over loved (over watered), and it died.

A few years later, I received another plumeria from my husband as an anniversary gift. We called it Anniversary Pink as we did not know the name. It turned out to be a *Slaughter Pink*, and I still have that tree today. It has been in the ground for about 15 years and has frozen to the ground several times. It still comes back and blooms each year. I believe this is due to the size of the root ball. We had temperatures in the 20s F. for several days this winter, so it may need to grow back from the roots again!

When I first began my plumeria journey, I was told by Teas Nursery that plumeria were heavy feeders and to give them bone meal one week, fish emulsion the next, and then a super bloom formula the next week. When I first joined the PSA, it was accepted practice to use a fertilizer with a high middle number to promote blooms. This is not what many growers now recommend.

I use Medina HastaGro plant food 6-12-6. It is water soluble, organic, and can be used as a drench or as a foliar feed. For the last three years, I have also used Excalibur IX and had great results. I will be using Excalibur again this year when I repot my plants and look forward to many blooms.

I mix my own soil using a bag of Sta-Green Potting mix, course perlite, green sand, and pine bark mulch. It is very fast draining, does not hold much water, and has worked well for me. I am not too much on measuring—I just mix till it looks about right.

I put my plumeria away for the winter around Thanksgiving. Although Houston doesn't usually



Aloha Freddie



Penang Peach



Razzleberry

have much freezing weather, we do have very wet winters as a rule. The past two winters have seen sustained temperatures in the 20s F. so my plants need protection. The plants are all dug up and moved to the garage for the winter. They sit in the dark until sometime around the first of April when they get to see the sun again. This is always an exciting time as I bring them back outside and look for signs of growth, swollen tips, and sometimes the beginning of an inflo already showing.



Having been a member of the PSA since 2004, I have made many plumeria friends from all over the USA. I have enjoyed exchanging growing information and learning about the different growing climates and challenges of other growers. Plumeria people are some of the most generous and genuine people I have ever met. Here is to a great 2018 growing season!



Coral Cream

Photos by Karen Babb



Mardi Gras



Heirloom



The *Plumeria*

Part 2: Botany

by Donald R. Hodel (drhodel@ucanr.edu)
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This second installment of the series discusses the botany of *Plumeria*, including its nomenclature and taxonomy.

Nomenclature

Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), also known as Carolus Linnaeus and, after his ennoblement, as Carl von Linné, was a Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist most famous for formalizing the binomial (two-name: genus and species) system of naming, ranking, and classifying (taxonomy) organisms that is still used today. The binomial system is based on a genus (plural is genera), for example, *Plumeria*, which is composed of one or more closely related species (plural is species), for example *P. rubra* and *P. obtusa*. Considered the Father of Taxonomy, Linnaeus established and published binomials of many plants in his epic *Species Plantarum* in 1753, including the genus *Plumeria* and its then known three species, *P. rubra*, *P. alba*, and *P.*



Plumeria rubra was the first species of the genus that Linnaeus named in 1753 (Hacienda Heights, California).

obtusa, in that order (Linnaeus 1753). *Species Plantarum* is considered the starting point for modern plant names; whether binomials or not, names that appeared prior to 1753 are considered invalid and unacceptable.

Linnaeus formalized the botanical name *Plumeria*, which honors Charles Plumier (1646–1704), first a young, French monk and later a botanist and one of the most important botanical explorers of his time who made three expeditions to the West Indies, providing the foundation

for Plumier's monumental work *Nova Plantarum Americanarum Genera* (1703–1704). Plumier is credited as the European discoverer of *Plumeria*.

However, Linnaeus was not the first botanist or naturalist to write about or illustrate *Plumeria*. Linnaeus relied heavily upon the names, descriptions, illustrations, and infrequently dried plant parts, called herbarium specimens, which others had previously catalogued or published, upon which to formally name and describe his new genera and species. For example, he based *Plumeria* and its then three species on numerous descriptions and illustrations that had appeared in previous publications, including even one of his own. Linnaeus actually adopted the name *Plumeria* from French botanist and physician Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656–1708), who had previously published it in 1700 (Hollsten 2012, Staples 2018, Tournefort 1700). Tournefort was a colleague of Plumier, and both he and Linnaeus highly respected Plumier.

Linnaeus based one of the species, *Plumeria rubra*, on five names that others had already described and illustrated. He listed the five names and cited, in



Linnaeus named *Plumeria rubra* in 1753, basing it on others names that had been published previous. Here is the modern day cultivar 'Hilo Beauty' in the Ohara garden, Carson, California.

an arcane manner, the publications and their page and plate numbers where the descriptions and illustrations could be found. One of these publications was Hans Sloane's 1725 *Voyage to Jamaica*, a lavishly illustrated account of the plants Sloane had encountered there during a 15-month stay from 1687–1688.

Later botanists then selected from among these illustrations one that would serve as the type specimen for *Plumeria rubra*. A type specimen, critical in establishing the identity of a species, is that one element (in earlier times typically an illustration but now an herbarium specimen) upon which a species is based. In the case of *P. rubra*, botanists in 1983 selected an illustration from Sloane's 1725 publication as the type specimen. Each genus has a type species and the type species for *Plumeria* is *P. rubra*, which botanists had

designated in 1925.

Depending on the region, variety, and personal whim, many common names for *Plumeria* exist. However, the two names of most widespread use and acceptance are plumeria and frangipani. The latter name has an unusual history and derivation. The famous English botanist William J. Hooker of Kew wrote in a letter to London perfumer George Wilhelm Septimus Piesse that *Plumeria* were called frangipani because of the resemblance of their pleasurable fragrance to a well-known perfume in France called frangipani, which itself was named for its inventor, a member of the Italian noble family Frangipani (Piesse 1867). Apparently, this fact was too uninspiring to Piesse and, in order to recharge interest in perfumes and increase sales in the late 1800s, he created a fictional character, botanist Mercurio Frangipani of the real-life Italian noble family Frangipani. Piesse attributed Frangipani, through his acute sense of smell, as the discoverer of land during one of Columbus's voyages through the Caribbean. Apparently, Frangipani was able to detect the agreeable fragrance of *Plumeria*, which guided him to the land. Piesse's objective in this contrivance was to link one of his company's synthetic perfumes with the romanticized but fictionalized account of New

World discoveries, hopefully increasing sales (Kettler 2015).

Another common name is temple tree (Leeuwenberg 2005) because of its use around temples, primarily in tropical Asia. *Plumeria* is strongly linked to Polynesia and especially Hawaii. In the Hawaiian language it is known as *melia* (Leeuwenberg 2005), in Tahitian as *tipanier* (Lim 2013) (*tipanier* refers to the tree and *tipanie* to the flower, M. Hodel, per. comm), and in the Cook Islands language as *tipani* (McCormack 2007).

Taxonomy

Plumeria is in the family Apocynaceae, commonly known as the dogbane family, named after the American plant dogbane (*Apocynum*). With the relatively recent advent of DNA data and modern technology, several plant families have been merged into Apocynaceae (including Asclepiadaceae, the milkweed family) yielding a large family of over 5,000 species (Endress et al. 2014, Nazar et al. 2013, Stevens 2017). Most members of Apocynaceae have milky sap.

Common relatives of *Plumeria* include *Adenium*, *Allamanda*, *Asclepias* (milk weed), *Beaumontia* (Easter lily vine), *Calotropis*, *Carissa* (Natal plum), *Catharanthus* (vinca or Madagascar periwinkle), *Hoya*, *Mandevilla*, *Nerium* (oleander), *Pachypodium*, *Stephanotis*,

Thevetia, *Trachelospermum* (star jasmine), and *Vinca*.

Plumeria includes about 170 published species names and numerous, naturally-occurring varieties, forms, and hybrids; however, only about 20 species are currently accepted (WCSP 2018). The remaining names are considered synonyms, and some are no longer even included in *Plumeria*. Even the quantity of 20 accepted species is likely excessive; the genus is sorely in need of a modern, taxonomic revision and such a work would likely result in even fewer accepted species. Indeed, Leeuwenberg (2005) recognized only seven species. Cuba might hold the key or one of the keys to unraveling the taxonomy of *Plumeria*. This large island has numerous named species and exhibits an incredible amount of diversity in the genus (Hodel 2017).

Himatanthus is a genus closely related to *Plumeria*, and taxonomists have transferred species from one genus to the other as our understanding of the two genera has evolved. *Himatanthus* differs in its large, showy, petal- or leaf-like inflorescence bracts, irregularly shaped and sized calyx lobes, and seeds with a concentric wing (Woodson 1938). In *Plumeria*, the inflorescence bracts are inconspicuous, the calyx lobes are equal, and the seeds have a basal wing. Trunks and branches

of *Plumeria* are more swollen and have lighter wood than those of *Himatanthus*; indeed, the wood of *Plumeria* is not valuable while that of *Himatanthus* is the timber known as *sucuúba* in the Amazon and adjacent Guyana (Woodson 1938). The two genera have a more or less north/south distribution pattern: *Himatanthus* is distributed from Panama to South America as far south as southern Brazil while *Plumeria* mostly occurs from Panama north through Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, and the southern tip of Florida (although two species occur in northern South America).

The two most commonly cultivated species of *Plumeria* are *P. rubra* and *P. obtusa*. Other species or sometimes encountered include



Plumeria obtusa was the third species of the genus that Linnaeus named in 1753. Here it is in habitat in dry forest near Turquino, Santiago, Cuba.

P. filifolia, *P. pudica*, *P. stenopetala*, and *P. tuberculata*. Also, hundreds if not thousands of cultivated varieties (mostly of *P. rubra*) are in gardens and collections. These can be difficult to assign to a species or otherwise identify because they are often of intentional or accidental hybrid origin, the result of a long and intense cultivation of plants maintained in close proximity.

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.

Next: The Botany of *Plumeria*: Description

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Texans in California

The South Coast Plumeria Society (SCPS) met April 15, 2018 in Anaheim, California and hosted some special Texans at their meeting. Cause for celebration also was Bud Guillot's 96th birthday.



Daniel Kirby and George Straw
Whitesboro, Texas

Bud Guillot
born in Shiloh, Texas

Nancy and Emerson Willis
Houston, Texas

The SCPS meeting was a panel discussion. Panel moderator was Vice President, Le Swanson (left).

Panelists, left to right:

- George Straw, Whitesboro, Texas
- Mike Atkinson, San Diego, California
- Laura Jones, Virginia Beach, Virginia
- Jean Thielmann, Santa Barbara, California



Clockwise from upper left ...
Carl Herzog, Joy Herzog, Daniel Kirby,
George Straw, Jean Thielmann, and
Margaret Fors



Emerson Willis and Irene Jones

My Texas Winter

by Paula Furtwangler, Texas

My winter in Houston, Texas was very cold. There were three separated, prolonged freezes. But more importantly, we had 50 inches of rain from Hurricane Harvey in late August. Those plants in the ground loved all the rain, and the water drained off, since I am on higher ground than most of Houston. I was very fortunate. I can't speak about what happened to those folks in the perpetually flooded areas. There was no need to water in the fall. I just let them dry out sufficiently before I stored the plants in late November.

This was the second winter that I tried George Hadjigeorge's method for winter storage of my plumeria. I had zero casualties again, despite the exceptionally cold winter in Houston. I used to lose 5–10 tips to rot during winter storage.

George's advice is to wrap the bare rooted plants in heavy plastic prior to storing. In previous years, I stacked the bare rooted plants in cardboard boxes. However, the roots were open to the air.

By enclosing them in heavy plastic with minimal soil attached to the root ball, the roots keep growing in the dormant season. In the spring, I am rewarded with nice, new white roots ready to grow.

I have never seen such a difference in the **lack** of desiccation. The plastic allows them some air, but not all the moisture escapes, therefore, I think the entire trunk is able to retain more moisture.

This method saves room, too. The only downside is you must repot in the spring.

This year we moved the plumeria out of storage in mid-March. They have been outdoors (either in pots or in the ground) since then. Now, more than a month later, I only have leaf claws. The plants are taking a long time to awaken, and the weather has been very cool compared to normal springtime in Houston.

This morning in mid-April it was 45° F. I expect them to leaf out once night time temperatures are consistently in the 60s. The good news is that they

are all firm and showing the glistening leaf claws, promising a new growth cycle.





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2018 Houston Area Plant Sale Calendar

Clear Lake Sale (1st sale)

May 1 Commitment to sell at Clear Lake
May 8 Sellers' meeting after the general meeting
May 30 Cultivar list for Clear Lake sale
June 9 Sale at Clear Lake

Clear Lake Sale (2nd sale)

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

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

<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

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

To join by mail, select PDF.

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When joining by mail, send a check to:

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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 13meeting
May 8meeting
June 9 (Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/Clear Lake) Show & Sale I
July 10meeting
July 21 (Bay Area Community Center Seabrook/Clear Lake) Show & Sale 2
October 9 Fall 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

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