

The Plumeria Society of America, Inc.

March 2011



Plumeria Potpourri

*The next meeting of The Plumeria Society of America will be held
Tuesday, March 8, 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.*

**Spring is finally here! Come to the meeting and thaw out.
Bring your questions, your ideas, mostly yourself.
Perhaps Spring Fever is contagious. With a little luck we will all catch it!**



Penang Peach

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President's Corner

by **Mark Wright, Texas**

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Now that the holidays requiring cold weather are past, I am ready for some warmth. My trees are dormant and resting in the garage. In other words, cabin fever is taking effect. It's too early to move the trees out, but I am ready to do something. Now is the time to improve the soil and plan for the coming year's planting.

One of my favorite ways to improve the soil is with native mulch which is made from clippings from your area. Minerals taken from your soil are replenished by the mulch in a composted form. As the mulch degrades, the soil will retain moisture when the weather is dry. As a result, water is used more efficiently. Adding the mulch year after year builds the beds so they will drain to lower ground around them. Less water, less fertilizer, and better drainage are a reward

for this work. If you don't already use it, look for native mulch in your area.

Planning is the best way to utilize your space. Planting tall trees in the back against the fence or edge of the yard with shorter or wider ones in the front or on the outside of beds allows better use of sunlight. In beds away from the edges of the yard, put the tall ones in the middle. Here on the Gulf Coast in the heat of the summer, most red and orange bloomers like afternoon shade.

If you already have a system in place, congratulations. I must admit I have room for improvement in my plan. Every year I make mental notes for next year's planting. Unfortunately, I sometimes don't remember them by the time the next spring comes around!

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Houston, we have a problem!

by **Eulas Stafford, Texas**

This is the second year in a row that we in Houston and Southeast Texas have survived a series of hard freezes. This is so unusual that we have to go back 20 years to remember it occurring here. The Houston area set a record for February for the most nights in the twenties, and we are still in February as I write this.

So the freeze is over and what can we do with our damaged plants? If you left them unprotected, there is not much you can do but wait and see how bad they were hurt. You can cut all of the black soft wood off and hope that it will put back out from the bottom. Good luck on this one. What about the ones that were covered but had tip damage? These need to be cut back to good white wood as soon as possible to prevent the damage from moving down the branch. Sometimes you have to cut

back past the first split in order to save the rest of the plant.

What if you are not sure if there is damage or not? You should be able to see any damage fairly quickly with the tips getting really soft or starting to turn black.

Go back to before the freeze to see what could have been done to prevent the damage. Just covering your plants would not be enough for this hard freeze. On one fairly large plant I put two strands of the large C-9 Christmas lights along the trunk and branches, then wrapped a frost cloth around the entire tree and a blanket around the base of the tree. I have not seen any damage to this tree. On smaller trees, we just had some of the mini Christmas lights around it, then wrapped the tree with a blanket. Do not use the new LED lights because they don't give off any heat.

PSA Caps

Caps are \$13.00 plus \$5 shipping



*To purchase t-shirts and caps, phone
281-438-3653*



Black Tip and Stem Rot

by *Mark Wright Texas*

Plumerias are a hardy plant group and growing in their native ranges, not much bothers them. Being able to extend their cultivation into areas not suited to the proper temperature range of these trees is one of the reasons that plumeria are the most popular flowering tropical tree. In ideal areas, the temperature would never drop below 40°F. Unfortunately, many of us who love these plants do not live in these areas. Because of the cold and wet, our plumeria are fair game for black tip and stem rot.

Stem rot will affect trees planted in the ground, in storage for winter, and especially in cuttings without many roots. It can strike

45°–50°F. Keep smaller rooting trees even warmer if possible, and especially try to keep the roots warm. Winter storage in barns, garages, and sheds with concrete floors requires some form of insulation between the root ball and the floor. If you see rotted tips or stems, cut them back to wood that is white to stop the progression of this disease. Rot can kill a cutting quickly, so inspect often and cut quickly. Some cultivars are more tolerant of cool conditions and these would be an answer for people with poor storage capabilities.

Black tip strikes after the trees are moved out of storage and back into their growing areas. Sun and warm days start to



the tip and work down the stem, or attack in the middle of the stem and travel in both directions. Soil that is too wet only makes this worse. Dormant trees need no water, so keep them dry. To avoid stem rot in plants in storage, try to keep the temperature above

turn the tips green, or that reddish color on some varieties. When the leaves and inflos start to emerge from the tips, some may start to turn black and harden. New tips will try to form around these failed tips; but they will also die. These dying

tips almost always occur after cool, wet, cloudy weather. The wet chill seems to start this disease. I have sprayed with systemic fungicide and used granules to no avail. The tips can be cut off, but the only thing that seems to turn the tide is warmer weather. Once the

temperature of the soil in the ground or pot is over 80°F, black tip usually disappears. Keep track of the trees that are more susceptible. Sometimes as a tree ages, it may not be as affected. If you know your “problem children,” move them out last when danger of cool temperatures is over.

Another thing to check for is spider mites. Because of limited air movement in storage, spider mites may infest the tips of your plumeria. The mites will weaken the tips making them more susceptible to black tip. Some growers are grafting varieties with a history of black tip to root stock that is

more hardy. This process has shown some success. I have tried it on several cultivars, but my success rate is only around 60%. I am experimenting by grafting to both seedlings and Slaughter Pink cuttings. At this time, I don't have enough information to make a judgment on the success of this effort. Stem rot and black tip rob you of tips which in turn steal your blooms. I like plumeria leaves, but that is not why we grow them. The answer to both these problems seems to be heat at the roots. I choose to keep the varieties that I like that are easier to grow, but not give up on the problem ones as long as I feel they are worth it.





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Plumeria Society 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 (Clear Lake)
 July 12.....meeting
 August 13..... Show & Sale II (Katy)
 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.

PSA Officers/Committee Members—2011

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