

Plumeria Potpourri

The Plumeria Society of America



May 11th 2021

In-Person and Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Speaker: Dr. Richard Criley

Topic: A Half Century of Plumerias

May 2021

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'Purple Serendipity' (KT)

Our next meeting on May 11th will be in-person at Cheri Flores Garden Pavilion and via Zoom. Our speaker, Dr. Richard Criley, will be in Hawai'i and speaking to us all via Zoom. Aloha!

Another growing season is upon us. Many folks suffered losses in our historic Arctic freeze in February. Thank you to our very large plumeria family which has reached out and donated seedlings, cuttings, seeds, etc. to "Rebuild Texas Plumeria Gardens" and to other U.S. locales. The PSA has sent out several hundred care packages, both in the mail and some in person. If anyone wishes to donate or receive donations, please go to The Plumeria Society of America's Facebook page and send a Facebook message to the PSA.

We also look forward to seeing all our Plumeria Enthusiasts at our two planned sales in Clear Lake this June 12th and July 24th. We all look forward to our bloom season from our beloved plumeria!

Bloom Show and Sale

The PSA is planning two sales this year, June 12th and July 24th. Both sales will be held at **Bay Area Community Center, Seabrook/Clear Lake (5002 E Nasa Pkwy)**. These sales will be held in the outdoor pavillion. Please stay tuned to The Plumeria Society of America's Facebook page and group for more details on these upcoming sales.

Virtual Meeting - May 11th

Speaker: Dr. Richard Criley

Topic: A Half Century of Plumerias

- The Zoom waiting room will open at 7 pm on the meeting day; the speaker will start at about 7:30 pm.
- Like our PSA General Meetings, all are invited—we will give priority to our paid PSA members for questions to the speaker, etc.
- To update your contact information, email Sharon Wright at slwmwwtogether@comcast.net.

If you're on Facebook, join us at

**[https://www.facebook.com/groups/
PlumeriaSocietyAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/groups/PlumeriaSocietyAmerica)**

Our Facebook page now has 4,220+ members from all over the world—a great place to ask a question or show off your blooms.

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).

My Decades as a Plumeriaholic

by Bill Spurgeon, Southern California

In the early eighties, I was teaching middle school history and raising my daughter by myself. During the winter breaks, I would go snow skiing, which I learned at three years old, and in the summer I would surf. In the summer of 1983, I took two Swiss ski instructors to Kaua'i for a surf trip. We camped on the beach on the property of a friend's grandfather. We pitched our tent under a large 'Celadine' plumeria, although at the time I did not know what it was. Every morning I would wake to the fantastic scent of the blossoms. A world-class windsurfer came to stay next door and after watching him surf his windsurfer, I became obsessed with learning this sport.

Fast forward a few years, and I was traveling to Oahu to stay with a fellow windsurfer and sail the big waves. My friend's wife would place a lei vase filled with 'Celadine' flowers next to my bed, and I remembered that fragrance from Kaua'i. When I returned home to Southern California, my daughter gave me a seedling of a gardenia, but the scent was like a jasmine blossom and not the same as I experienced in Hawaii, so I purchased two 'Celadines.' From that point on it was, "Oh, I don't have one of those."

In about 2010 my collection had reached 160 varieties with many duplicates. As the plumerias grew, I began to weed down to my present number of about 50 trees in the ground, about 40 in large pots, and about 60 in medium to small pots (and 50 rooting plants).

I got a recipe for plumeria soil from Jack Morgan which consisted of a ratio of ¼ Big R redwood, ¼ Turf-N-Tee fine redwood, and ½ pumice. My neighbor gave me an electric cement mixer, so I mix up about 90 gallons at a time. I have used every fertilizer, but now I prefer Dr. Earth® and Bill's Perfect Fertilizer®. I always start with Sul-Po-Mag in March and then fertilize through September. I give occasional sprays of Spray-N-Grow on the leaves

and periodically add seaweed extract to my fertilizers.

I have rooted and given away thousands of cuttings. I prefer bottle rooting, using Trader Joe's plastic water bottles—cut off and with holes in the bottom. Six of Trader Joe's water bottles can fit in



Cuttings in bottles in 5-gallon pots

one five-gallon black pot filled ¼ of the way with gravel to hold the weight and conduct heat. This way I can compress 30–60 cuttings into a small space with fewer than 10 five-gallon pots. I tried bag-rooting, but as I often have the plants root for a long time before they leave me, I found that the bags ripped and were hard to organize.

Because I have very limited space, I have mastered the art of pounding 10' conduit (painted green) next to my plants in the ground and training the branch growth using green plastic garden ties. This way plants can be close together (3 feet) with the branches trained to go upwards (see page 10).

Fortunately, since the freeze of 2007, we have had mild winters in California, so I have not had to sweat the cold. My plants are out all winter except a few smaller, rare ones. They are on a survival of the fittest plan. I am five miles from the ocean, so summer heat is not an issue, and my plants get lush leaves to help protect from heat. However, I do give them magnesium in May to help combat heat damage.



North Hedge: 'Celadine,' 'Guillot's Sunset,' 'Chelsea,' 'Lani,' 'University of Hawaii Orange'



South Hedge: 'Pink and White' (JL), 'Evalani,' 'Candy Stripe,' 'Pu'u Kahea,' White Noid, 'Cerise,' 'Intense Rainbow,' 'Rachel's Cloud,' 'Lavender,' 'Daisy Wilcox,' 'Pink Shell,' Red Noid, 'Marion B,' 'California Sally'

I have grown many seedlings. Presently, I have about 35 two-year olds that I am waiting on to see the flowers. They are from a red Noid (not identified), a 'Kaneohe Sunrise,' and my own pink seedling 'Sherry' (from a white 'Cyndi Moragne'). I have four 15 year-old seedlings that I kept from that original 'Cyndi Moragne.'



My 'Cyndi Moragne' seedling 'Sherry'



My 'Cyndi Moragne' seedling 'WHS'

I have tried grafting and had failures galore. However, I got Diane Gotti's grafting book and realize my mistakes. I will try grafting again.

My favorite plumeria story is about the plumeria legend, Bud Guillot. We are good friends, and one day we went to breakfast. I told Bud he could pick anything to eat as I was paying. He said he would have what he had on that very day in some year in the early forties. I remarked that I could not remember what I ate last Monday and inquired how he remembered a meal 70 years ago. He replied that after breakfast that day, he took off on a bombing mission, was shot down, and spent over a

year in a Nazi prison camp until he was rescued by General Patton. The whole time he dreamed about that meal. What a way to remember a meal. Another time, we went to Jungle Jack's to see their new



Garage Group: 'Ruffles,' 'Charlotte Ebert,' 'Madras Giant,' 'Cyndi Moragne,' 'Polynesian Sunset,' 'Smyth's Candy Stripe'

releases. We both promised not to buy any plants, as we were just going to look. We both came home with five new plants each. Plumeriaholics!

People often ask which is my favorite plumeria. I reply that I spent years rooting, growing, and caring for each plant, so it is like asking which is your favorite child. They all are special in their own way. You discover this when you have to weed out some plants because they are growing so large, and space is limited. I usually give these to someone I know well, so I can visit them and see my plants growing.



Nursery for medium-size plumeria plants



Thai Circle: 'Butterfly Gold,' 'Miss Nonburri,' 'Ngam Prom,' 'Firestorm' (JJ)

Each year, I give a box of cuttings to the Newport Aquatic Center Rowing Team, so they can sell them and raise money to support their fine program.

The best part of growing these plants is the people you meet along the way. I have friends all over the world who share my passion for plumerias. Many of my former students are now growing some of my starts. The real problem is that each year a new variety comes to market, and I don't have one, yet.



'Miss Nonburri'



'Lani'



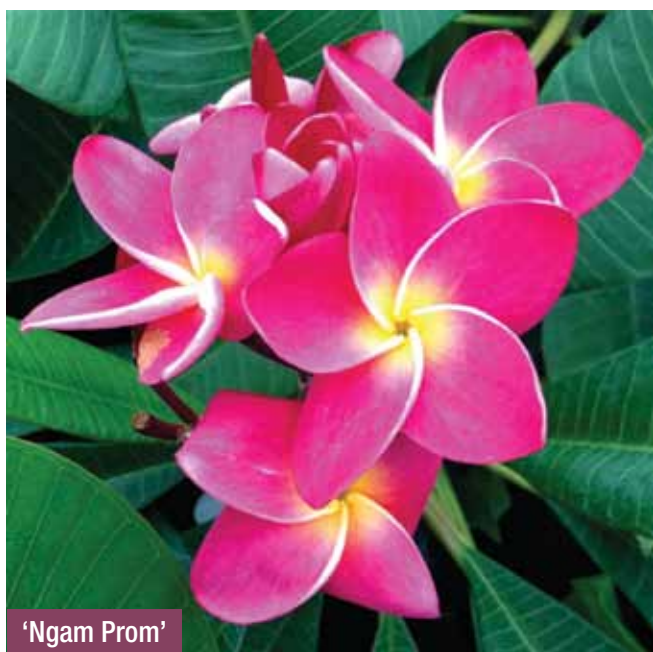
'Smyth's Candy Stripe'



'Inca Gold' (JJ)



'Kalina'



'Ngam Prom'



Left to right: Emerson & Nancy Willis,
Viola & Bud Guillot, and Bill Spurgeon

The End of an Era

by Emerson Willis, Texas

In the warm afternoon sun, on the 28th day of December 2020, I backed our motor home into its assigned space at the Terra Marine Park in Marathon, Florida Keys which is located on the ocean side of US-1. I looked at my sweet wife of 55 years who was sitting in the most torcherous seat on the bus—the passenger seat. And she was totally exhausted! This time she wasn't alone; I was beat. Hey, it's not like I'm a weenie. I'm 80 years old, and she is right behind me. Fifteen hundred miles one way seems much farther than it did 27 years ago. Before I unsnapped my seat belt, I mumbled under my breath, "This is the last trip." I didn't realize I had spoken aloud until I noticed her cartwheeling down the center isle.

I am going to try and share a few memories because RV'ing and our love of plumerias are tightly intertwined.

Many years ago, a few diving trips both scuba and free-diving, introduced me to these gorgeous little islands which are connected with bridges all the way to Key West. I was fascinated by being able to stand in one place and throw rocks into both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. (For the purists out there, I know one of the rocks landed in Florida Bay.) Gulf reads so much more grand than Bay. After all, the U.S. Post Office uses Gulf and Ocean, depending on which side of US-1 you are addressing.

In the early '90s we discovered plumerias and little by Little (the capitalization is intentional) it became a full-blown passion. I think maybe more than a few of you out there can understand and/or sympathize.

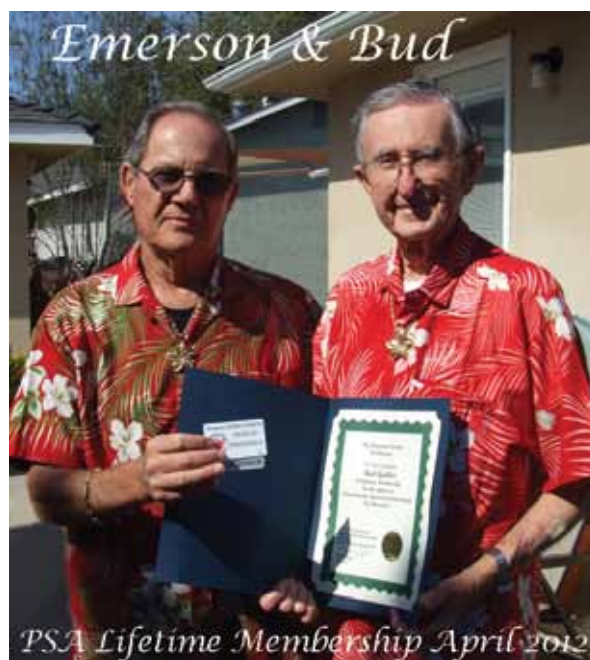
We bought our first motor home, a 27' gasoline in 1994, and our traveling increased considerably. Two years later, we jumped off in the deep end with a 36' diesel pusher—slide-out room, hot tub, and satellite television, all necessities of a rugged campsite. Nan had laid down the law, "If both of us

are passing in the kitchen, we're going to have more room especially being parked in one place for two months at a time." I loved spending January and February in the Keys. I would have tried to extend our stay, but knew we had to come home and trailer-in potting soil for my Florida and Southern California cuttings and till the garden for "take out."



Nan in front of a bougainvillea tree in Key Largo

I'll quickly explain the California connection: Before we purchased our first RV, two young ladies in California called us on the phone several times, and they could speak "Plumeria" fluently. I enjoyed these exchanges immensely. They suggested I call an old man in Huntington Beach who was really into



plumerias. This old man was much, much younger than I am now. You know of whom I am writing. This is of course Sgt. O.R. "Bud" Guillot. Nancy and I have not missed being there for his birthday on April 16th since 1994. I was amazed at how huge his plants were and how often he pruned them. He offered to give me cuttings. When I stopped crying, knowing how many plumeria-starved people there were, I answered yes in seven different languages before restoring my composure. By the way, Nan and I plan to be with him once again for his 99th birthday. But we will not be in the motor home. It has been demoted to being a spare bed, a large generator, and hurricane evacuation vehicle if needed.

On the rear of the big bus we placed a huge vinyl print of a 'Mary Moragne' (photo by the late John Murray), under which read: "Nan and the Plumeria Man." Richard Eggenberger and his late wife, Mary Helen, were kind enough to include a shot of Nan and I standing behind our plumeriamobile in their book, *The Handbook on Plumeria Culture* - 4th edition.



Additionally, a painting of Elizabeth Thornton's 'Mardi Gras' from my photograph is on the tire cover of our tow car. A picture of this accessory was



printed in the *Honolulu Advertiser*, the daily paper. Jim Little, the Plumeria Guru, mailed a copy to me. Barbara Randolph, our good friend and mentor, gave us a copy of Jim Little's List of Cultivars. Earlier in our travels, we would carry copies to hand out to anyone interested, and in time with the help of mother nature, we would carry cuttings and later rooted cuttings along with these order blanks to give to anyone interested. It was amazing how pleasant some of our rest and fuel stops could be. I still occasionally receive calls these folks many years later which might go something like this: "You created this monster," or "This addiction is your fault." All was in fun of course. I'm very hard of hearing so not sure if I was shot at ... if so, they missed.

We camped every January and February at the Gulf Stream RV park in Marathon for 11 years. It had two beautiful plumeria trees growing on the property. I named them 'Ryann Chelsey' and 'Gulf Stream.' I



hope these names are a tad familiar to a few of you. When the park was sold for condo construction, we moved across the island to the Terra Marine Park where we happily camped for the next 16 years. The owners of this park allowed several of my cultivars to be planted, for there was plenty of open space.

When the park owner learned of our giving up our space after all the years, she arranged a going away party for us. It was happy/sad/beautiful. The park was small and really like a close family. We told everyone we would see them in a few years when we drive or fly in for a hotel stay.

Another treat of the Florida camping was visiting Florida Colors Nursery. It was a joy to visit Luc and Carol. In fact Nan and I after Luc's passing were present at his memorial there in Homestead. Our own Tex and Kay Norwood then joined Carol and FCN. The three of them went to work on the nursery, and if you have not been there for a while you would not know it. It is a work of art and absolutely beautiful. This trip Tex called us at the park and said he would like to give the PSA (and me, of course) some free cuttings. I didn't hear very much after the words "free cuttings" except my little truck cranking up, but I think it was something about enlarging a koi pond and having to cut something down. If you are new to the group and have never met Tex, just think of Excalibur Plumeria Fertilizer®. It works.

Much of Texas suffered the coldest winter in years. Many plumerias were lost partly because of power outage. For example, our son who lives here in the Houston area lost power for 53 hours. If my 220V heater would have been down a third of that time, I would have been wiped out. Please do not give up. Replace! Try to remember the joy and the love you had for your beauties. Replace, and when you see the color and that magnificent scent caresses your nose once again, you will know you did the right thing.



*2021 is the 375th anniversary of
Charles Plumier's birth—
April 20th in 1646.*



See the January 2021 issue of the newsletter for an article on Charles Plumier's life.

Staking and Training Branches for Narrow Spaces

by Bill Spurgeon, Southern California



(1) When a cutting is about a foot above the first split, it should be staked. The stake is tied to the main branch—best if right under the first split. As the split branches grow, 1" green garden plastic tie is wrapped around, near the bottom leaves and around the stake, pulling the branch slightly toward the stake. Be careful not to pull too hard. Pull until it gets tight, but not too hard to break the branch. (2) Over time, more ties are added to keep the branches growing upward, and as fairly tight as the plant will allow. Branches invading another plant's space are either trained upwards or cut off.

(3) A wire may need to be attached to the stake and then fed through a hole drilled or poked in the pot edge to keep the stake from being pulled over by the growth and weight of the plant. (4) Sometimes three wires are run triangulated out to keep the stake centered and stable. Attention to details early saves more difficult corrections later.

(5) When the plant is placed in the ground or into a 25-gallon pot, and it is over 5 feet, a green-painted conduit (metal) is pounded next to the stem. The ties move upward as the plant grows, and the lower ones are removed as the branches get strong enough to stay in place. (6) These lower ties can now be removed. Conduit in large pots may need triangulated wires to keep centered.

(7) Eventually, you will have a well-shaped plant with branches moving upwards. Branches that grow outward and cannot be trained are cut next to the branch so they will not grow new branches. These cuts are allowed to dry for an hour and then are coated with brown DAP® Alex Plus®. (8) Eventually, the stake is removed, and the plant can now spread out high above head level or can be kept in a hedge confined to their space.

In Memorium—Merrill O'Neal

Merrill Presley O'Neal passed away peacefully on March 22nd at the age of 92 with his wife, Gladys at his side. He was born on December 22, 1928 in the small town of Weston, Texas. After growing up in McKinney and later Fort Worth, he joined the Navy where he spent four years in the Pacific and discovered his love of travel and oriental art.

As a boy, he developed an interest in plants which lasted

throughout his life. He founded and owned a nursery on the west side of Houston and particularly loved many tropical plants, especially bromeliads and plumerias. He was an officer and lifetime member of both the bromeliad and plumeria societies of Houston and was a requested speaker at garden clubs across the area. For many years, people came from all over to attend his plant sales where he loved to give a tour of his garden and



greenhouse. He was also a long-time volunteer and participant at the Houston Bulb & Plant Mart, always encouraging everyone he knew to attend.

*If you're on Instagram,
join us at*
<https://instagram.com/p/BiuuQVwnZcF>

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



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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.

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 77227-2791, USA

Dues are \$35 per year

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.

2021 PSA Calendar

February 9 ZOOM meeting only
March 9 ZOOM meeting and in-person meeting
May 11 ZOOM meeting and in-person meeting
June 12 Show & Sale I—Clear Lake
July 13 ZOOM meeting and in-person meeting
July 17 ... Show & Sale 2—Tentative Location: Clear Lake
October 12 ZOOM meeting and in-person 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.

2021 PSA Officers and Directors

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