



THE PLUMERIAN

VOLUME IV Issue 1 THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF SOUTH TEXAS April, 1996

NEXT MEETING:

Date and Time: Wednesday, April 24, 1996 @ 7:30pm
Place: Corpus Christi Garden Center, 5325 Greely Drive
Program: "Ecology of the Flora Along the South Texas Coastal Plain, Past and Present" by Dr. Lynn Drawe, Welder Wildlife Foundation. You will be captivated by Dr. Drawe's description of the grasses, flowers and trees that existed on the South Texas Coastal Plains prior to the arrival of the first covered wagons compared to the present Flora with a message on the environment.

REMAINING 1996 ACTIVITY SCHEDULE:

Meetings: May 22, 1996
 July 24, 1996
 October 23, 1996

C.C. Botanical Work Day: Saturday, May 4, 1996

PSST Annual Plant Sale: Saturday, August 24, 1996 @ Padre Staples Mall

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Believe it or not, for the winters of 1994 and 1995, I left my plumerias outside. I did not have one freezing day both winters. Except for a few tips being burned by the chill factor of the 37° wind, the plants survived the winter outside. You might say the benefit was the plants were off to an early start for the blooming season. However, the winter of 1996 was a different story. This winter, I brought my plants in and out of storage four times! For some of my tall plants, I laid them down on the lawn and covered the plants with a black plastic sheet anchored down with bricks on the sides. When there was full sun and temperatures above 40° F, I removed the cover to the side and re-covered when the next norther came along. Those plumerias covered with plastic for the winter survived but did have some tip damage--that is, had black tip fungus on several branches. For comparison, I left some

plumerias in the garage all winter. After bringing these plants outside this April, I noticed the tip ends of the branches were nice and green and healthy. So finally, I am now convinced that plumerias survive the dormant period in the winter better if stored in the garage or greenhouse where temperatures can be controlled above 40° F.

At this moment the Program Chairman and I are working on the programs for the year. We hope to have programs on grafting a "Rainbow Plumeria" and hybridizing, to be announced in the next Newsletter. We always welcome any suggestions from the membership. This year will be a busy year for PSST with the start-up of the C.C. Botanical project and the annual Plant Sale in August. Looking forward to seeing you all April 24th.

Happy Plumeriaing!

Bob Owen, President

PLEASE PAY 1996 DUES NOW

Let this be your notice that the 1996 Dues of \$10.00 are now due. Please pay the Treasurer Lois Millard at the April 24th Meeting or mail in your check to The Plumeria Society of South Texas, 1107 The 600 Building, Corpus Christi, Texas 78473.

*888-4252 Bob Owen
888-0311 WK } Jocko
887-0252 Home }*

CORPUS CHRISTI BOTANICAL GARDENS PROJECT

Jocko Taylor, Chairman of the Botanical Gardens Project, reports that construction of the Lath House will be completed by mid-April and the perimeter sidewalk will be poured around the last week of April. The electrical and water service has been installed. As you may remember, the area outside the perimeter sidewalk has been set aside for the plumeria bed. This bed will be approximately 360'x4' around the outside of the sidewalk. With plumerias spaced every 4', the maximum number of plumerias required will be approximately 90 plants. However, for 1996, Jocko believes it would be prudent to limit the number of plumerias planted to 32 so that we can gain some experience on the required upkeep.

It is recommended that the bed be elevated with a good draining organic type soil. The plumerias will be potted in 20 gal. pots for ease of handling and will be planted in holes in the bed. Frank Iwanski, a PSST member and a plumber by trade, will install an automatic watering system. For the start-up, Jocko has set aside May 4th as a work day at the Botanical Gardens. The Committee is expecting every PSST member to show up for work that Saturday to prepare the bed and plant the plumerias. Final details will be discussed at the April 24th meeting.

Lucian Willoughby, a PSST member, has given some 15 plumerias to the project. Also, I understand Lucian has been caring for these plumerias which have been wintering out in a greenhouse at the Botanical Gardens. Lucian, we do thank you for your generosity.

Yes, your arithmetic is correct, we need more mature plumerias of different varieties. So here's your chance to give your plumerias to the Project. You will be entitled to a tax deduction for the contribution at a fair market value. We will even take your plumeria on

loan. Either way, you will be given credit on a name plate.

Donations of the following will be accepted: \$money\$, sand, composted cow manure, peat moss, fertilizer, potting soil, 10 to 20 gal. black plastic pots, stakes, landscap timbers. Total cost of the project is estimated at \$2000.00.

C.C. AREA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS 14718 RED RIVER DR
78460

Lois Millard represented PSST at the March 15th meeting of the C.C. Area Council of Garden Clubs. It was PSST's time to provide refreshments which Lois so graciously prepared. Lois informed the PSST Executive Committee that the CCACGC is having a plant sale at the Padre Staples Mall on May 11. Each Club is expected to give \$50 worth of plants for the sale or \$50 cash. The plant sale is needed to raise money for their budget which includes operating expenses, care of the garden and grounds in and around the Garden Center, insurance premiums, etc. Please help the CCACGC out by bringing a plant to the April 24th meeting and give it to Leatrice Koch, our newly appointed representative to the Garden Council for 1996. Leatrice needs 5 to 10 plants in the \$5 to 10 price range or the cash.

INVENTORY OF PLUMERIAS

Leatrice Koch is the chairman of the member's Inventory of Plumeria Varieties project and is asking each member to provide the PSST with a list of all the different varieties in their Plumeria collection. The idea behind this is to establish PSST as a source in this area for cuttings of registered and common varieties for sale or trade between members and non-members. Trading between members can reduce the \$25 to 50 per cutting acquisition cost.

WAKING UP YOUR PLUMERIAS--A SPRING RITUAL

On average the last freeze of winter in Corpus Christi is February 15th. This year, however, was an unusually extended-cold winter. By April 1st this year was a safe time to bring ^{out} your plumerias as night temperatures surely will be above 40° F. You will want to give them a little water at first. Carefull not to over water before leaves form as rot can easily develope. As the leaf tips break out increase the amount of water. When the plant has full sized leaves, give them the usual watering amount depending on location, i.e., plants in containers on a brick patio in full sun require more frequent watering than plants in the soil.

Next check for stem rot or black tip fungus on the end of branches. Either case, remove the rotten part by cutting back to white wood and treat with a fungicide or dusting sulphur. Warning!--rot moves down plant quickly and can take your plant, so act quickly. Do not confuse fungus caused rot with shriveling due to moisture loss during dormancy as the later is harmless and will fill out after watering.

By late April or early May, your plumerias should have adequate leaf development to absorb and process nutrients from a first feeding of a balanced fertilizer like Peters 20-20-20. For the next remaining feedings of the season switch to Super Phosphate, Super Bloom, BR 61, Miracle-Gro to encourage blooming. Keep soil slightly acid at 6.5ph to neutral. Once a month add 2 tbsp of Epsom Salts to prevent soil from becoming too acid. A ph meter would be usefull for this purpose.

Take this opportunity to top dress younger plants by removing top soil in the pot carefull not to disturb the roots. Add a mix of bone meal, composted cow manure and potting soil. For mature plants, consider root pruning by removing plumeria root ball from pot, cut 1 to 2" off the bottom. Add the bone meal- manure- potting soil mix to the bottom of the pot and repot the plant. Water in well. Next year for the same plant, root prune the sides of the root ball by shaving off 1 to 2". Re-pot the plant and add the potting mix as above filling in the sides and water in. This procedure will encourage adventurous feeder roots to develope and makes for a heahthy plant.

Late April/early May is also the best time to prune your plumeria for many reasons, such as--(1) to controll shape, height and size, (2) to increase branching for more flower production, (3) to create plants from the cuttings for annual plant sale, trading, gifting. This time of year is best for pruning from the stand point that a greater number of branches breaking out from the leaf nodes can be expected compared to lesser chnce for multiple branching from pruning later in the growing season. Obviously, a multi-branched plant generates a greater production of flowers. Most of us experience the gangling plant which we allow to grow to 5 to 6' waiting for first blooms. A better idea would be to prune the plant early to encourage more branching before first blooms. When pruning, remember to make the cut at an angle to shed water easily. Treat the cut with a pruning paint and a fungicide. Always sterlize cutting tool and fingers between cuts in a bleach or alcohol.

Watch for pesky insects, such as aphids, white flies, spider mites and mealy bugs. Try insecticidal soap spray at first before using a stronger insecticide. Quarantine any plants with mealy bugs. Treat for mealy bugs by spraying with Orthene every 10 days. Repeat spraying at least 5 times to break the egg laying cycle. Glen Johnson on the KEYS1440 Garden Show recommends the "Dipsy Dumpster" for any plants infested with mealy bugs. The plumeria is worth the fight!

Give the plumeria a proper organic soil, good drainage, full sun, judicious watering, generous nutrients and it will richly reward your efforts--"I Guarantee You".

THE PLUMERIA CAN NOW BE "SURFED ON THE INTERNET"

It's true--information on the Plumeria Society of America's Care Bulletins, Research Bulletins, Registered Cultivars and References can be found on the World Wide Web at the following site:

<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/miltonp/plumeria/>

PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF SOUTH TEXAS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Plumeria Society is for those who enjoy the lovely Plumeria and who want to participate in learning more about the aspects of propagation, culture, classification, research, hybridizing.

Meetings are held four times a year on the fourth (4th) Wednesday of the months of March, May, July and October at 7:30 P.M. at the Corpus Christi Garden Center, 5325 Greely Drive. Four Newsletters per year are included. Membership dues are \$10.00 per year per member.

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Your Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

Make checks out to the Plumeria Society of South Texas and mail to:

Membership Chairman
Plumeria Society of South Texas
1107 The 600 Building
Corpus Christi, Texas 78473