

*Plumeria
obtusa*

The Plumecian

VOL. V, ISSUE 1 THE PLUMERIA SOCIETY OF SOUTH TEXAS

APRIL, 1997

Notice of Next Meeting:

Date and Time: Wednesday, April 30, 1997, 7:00 p.m.

Place: Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens, Visitor's Center
8545 South Staples

Program: "Basic Plumeria Skills for Spring"
Root Pruning by Jocko Taylor ✓
Preparing Cuttings & Girdling to Enhance Root Formation by Bob Owen ✓
Inspection of Plumeria Collection ✓

Notice of Future Meeting:

Date and Time: Wednesday, May 28, 1997, 7:00 p.m.

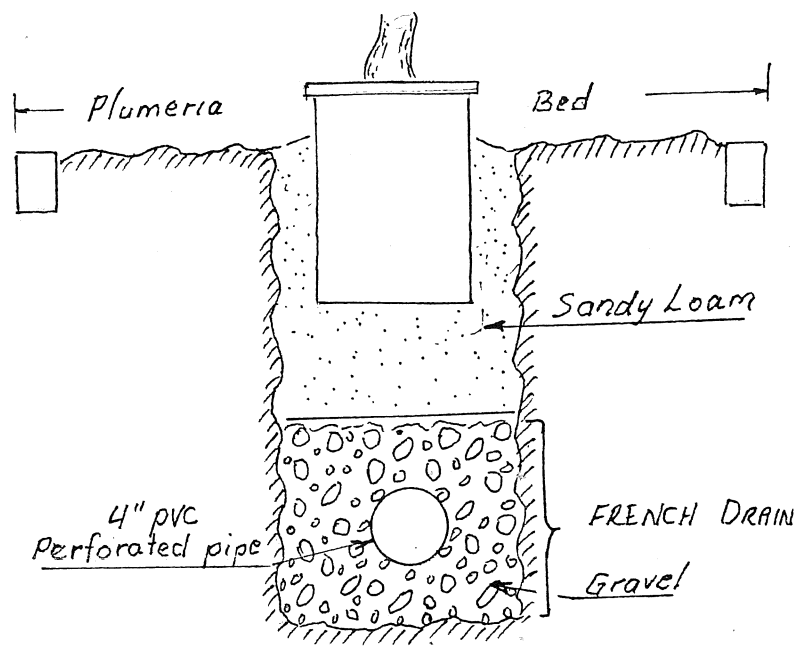
Place: Garden Center, 5325 Greely Drive

Program: "Plumerias in Mexico" by John Murray
A slide presentation on John's 4500-mile journey in search of Plumerias in Mexico and favorite comments on the Plumeria. John is an expert Plumerian as he owns a collection of 400 plants of which 250 are different varieties.

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Just yesterday with 90° F, the weather gave the Plumeria a strong signal to get busy breaking out those leaves and flower stalks. At the same time, if you haven't already started performing "The Spring Ritual" on your collection, you are running late. For the benefit of our new members, "The Spring Ritual" will be repeated elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Plumeria Collection is now in place ready for viewing at the Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens. Without the help of Paul Thornton, Manager at CCBG, Pete Garza and his "boot campers", Sarge Lucian Willoughby, Jocko Taylor, Frank Iwanski, Leonard Howard, Phil Anderson, Ann Yeager, and myself, the project would not be "off and running". I want to thank you for a job well done. After the 12" rain last August where the Plumerias showed serious stress due to lack of water drainage, it was decided we must improve drainage by installing a French Drain under the Plumeria beds. So, we called on



Jocko Taylor, who by the way is a civil engineer, to design the system. The accompanying sketch will give you an idea of what we thought a French Drain should be; that is, dig a trench 22" to 27" deep and 9" wide under where the plumerias will be planted and making sure the dirt grade would drain out. Then place a 2" layer of gravel down with a 4" PVC perforated pipe laid down next, then topped with another 2" to 3" layer of gravel. A weed cover cloth was placed on top of the gravel before trench was filled with sandy loam, insuring a good draining soil. The job was completed just in the nick of time before the latest monsoon. After lifting up one of the pots, Paul Thornton was happy to report the drain is working!

I was shocked to learn that Ray Buebe was killed in an auto accident near Houston recently. As you may recall, Ray Buebe helped PSST get started by being our first speaker. She is special to PSST and will be remembered as an enthusiastic friend of the of the Plumeria.

Our Society is growing! The roster now includes 53 members. I wish to extend a hearty Aloha to new members: Robert Lewis, Debra Hallowell, Debra Malborough, Dan Brigham, Lee H. Nesbit, Newell B. McQuerry, Richard C, Hull, Gerald Rhodes (honorary).

Again, I would like to make an appeal to you as a member to take a job of some kind, however big or small, to help PSST function. Some of the ways you can help:

1. Take your turn looking after the Plumeria Collection at the Botanical Gardens.
2. Grow Plumerias for the annual Plant Sale to raise money for the Botanical Gardens project.
3. Write articles for Newsletter.
4. Be a representative to the Council of Garden Clubs
5. Conduct research on the Plumeria and report findings to membership (refer to May, 1996, newsletter).
6. Work on programs for meetings.
7. Be a refreshments hostess at meetings.
8. Volunteer to help with Plant Sale.
9. Work on Inventory of Plumeria Varieties Committee.

THE SPRING RITUAL
or Waking up the Plumeria

by Bob Owen

It is now March and your Plumerias are still enjoying the dormant cycle. Bring Plumerias outside in late March or early April when the temperatures are above 45° F and there is no longer a chance for a late freeze. An inspection of your plants can reveal some shriveling caused by loss of moisture, which is harmless, and possible rotting. If the tips are black, which may be caused by a fungus, remove rot by pruning down to "white wood". Treat with a fungicide like Benomyl.

Springtime, also, is a time to repot your plants to the next size larger, if desired. When your plant is large, you may want to keep in the same size pot. In this case you can root prune by slicing off the bottom of the root ball, 1" for small plants, and 2" for large plants. Next year you can root prune 1" to 2" around the side of the root ball. By root pruning, you are encouraging the growth of feeder roots that absorb nutrients more efficiently, making for a much healthier plant. Before repotting add an organic soil mixture consisting of:

1/2 composted cow manure
1/4 peat moss or leaf mold
1/4 potting soil and sand
1 handful bone meal or 2 tbsps. Superphosphate

Consider top dressing by shaving off the top bleached out soil and replace with the above soil mix. Use a mulch, such as cypress, on top of this during hot days of summer.

Take this opportunity to shape your plant by pruning, especially if your plant has grown tall and lanky. Pruning encourages more branching, meaning more flower production. Actually, May is considered the best time of the year to prune as optimum number of branches result. Also, cutting propagation success is near 100% during May. Save the cuttings for propagation into plants that can be given to friends, sold at a plant sale for a charitable cause, trading, or cloning an outstanding variety.

When taking plants outside, locate them in full sun to absorb the heat. Plants in pots can be buried in a well drained bed, placed on the patio, or can be planted bare rooted in a well draining soil. Positive growth in the Plumeria occurs at 68° F and higher, so say the experts.

Growers have different opinions on start-up, watering, and fertilizing. Consensus is that the Plumeria should be watered at least once a week, sparingly at first. However, overwatering before the plant sets leaves could cause rot. Pots placed on concrete or brick patios in full sun may require more frequent water days. Some plants that have a clay soil or mostly peat moss can dry out and cause the root ball to shrink away from the side of the pot so that when watered, the water actually runs down and out this space, leaving little benefit to the root ball. In this event, it is suggested that the pot be placed in a water-filled dish and left overnight to soak up moisture, allowing root ball to get completely soaked. Thereafter, water normally.

Wait until the Plumeria has first leaves before fertilizing. Without leaves, the plant cannot process the nutrients. Some favorite fertilizers high in phosphate are recommended:

SuperBloom BR 61 Miracle Gro Superphosphate Bloom Plus

Restrict the use of fertilizer high in nitrogen, such as Peters 20-20-20 and fish emulsion, which will cause too rapid a growth. Continued use of fertilizers high in phosphate can cause the pH to drift to an extreme acid condition. Treat this condition with 1 tbsps. of Epsom salts once a month.

CULTIVATING A PLUMERIA CUTTING

By jim little

CUTTING

The cutting you receive will not be older than 10-15 days. You have up to approximately 6 weeks to start the rooting process. Between 15-30 days is the most viable time. Wait until the cutting turns from white to gray or until it is hard to the touch at the base of the cutting. Each plumeria seems to harden at its own rate.

MEDIUM

After you determined the cutting is callous you may place the cutting in any loose potting soil, sand or pearlight or any other mixture that permits good drainage. Do not use vermiculite. Once again different plumerias will root faster than others. One trick to hastening is to place the cutting in a translucent pot. You can also use a white juice bottle or bucket. This process allows for more light and heat to reach the cutting thus inducing faster rooting. I gang root around 20 cuttings to a 5 gallon bucket, and I normally use unwashed beach sand or pearlight. The use of rooting hormones may aid in the rooting process but are not necessary. You may liquid fertilize right from the beginning every 10-14 days. Good drainage requirements are also essential if you are planting the rooted cutting into the ground. Always dig the hole twice as big as the pot size you are transplanting from.

LIGHT LEVEL

Place the cutting in medium to high light during and after rooting. Plumerias are high light plants. If you live in an area where temperatures exceed 100° it is best to leave the plant in filtered or half light during the day. You may have to water more frequently.

WATERING

It is best to water when the medium feels dry. Also, if the leaves show any withering it's a sign to water. Frequent watering depends on daily temperature, light level and medium density. If the medium is heavy which is not recommended, you should water less. Depending on the above conditions you can water daily or twice a week. The more roots the cutting develops the more frequent water the plant will require. As the plant begins to go into dormancy towards the end of the year (around October in Hawaii) watering may be curtailed or stopped all together until the following Spring (around March in Hawaii).

FERTILIZING

Plumerias are very tolerant to fertilizers. Any kind; liquid granular or slow release. However, they respond best to a high phosphate (middle number) 10-30-10 or 10-20-10 or once well rooted, a 8-24-6 or 9-58-8. Numbers vary depending on the chemical manufacturer. You may use a time release Osmocote 14-14-14 supplemented with any liquid feed every 10-14 days.

Jim Little Nursery
59-657 Alapio Road
Haleiwa, Hawai'i 96712

PLUMERIA INFORMATION AND UPDATE ON NEWLY DISCOVERED CULTIVAR:

A gorgeous plumeria came to my attention last summer when a landscape colleague of mine asked me to cut down a tree for him. It turned out to be "Theresa" (Teddy) Wilder. I first heard of this tree and saw the flower back in 1975 during a conversation with Bill Moragne. The flower was named by Kauka Wilder for his sister in law. Kauka was an associate in Botany at our historic Bishop Museum in Honolulu and wrote numerous books on botany and horticulture. There is a plumeria flower named in his honor, "Kauka Wilder." I'm told by Donald Angus (renowned for his history and plant knowledge) that in the early 1900's Mr. Wilder collected seeds and cuttings from Mexico, a country less known for good plumerias. Wilder was one of the first persons to show an interest in growing plumeria seeds and keeping only the plants with superior flowers. Wilder was known to have a selective eye and all inferior materials were rejected and destroyed.

While it is not known if Kauka actually hybridized plumerias, we are certain that he grew superior material whether collected or grown from seed. Kauka Wilder can be considered instrumental in the promotion of plumerias and his name should be added along with Bill Moragne, Donald Angus and others who were major contributors in the introduction of new cultivars. Further study is being done to identify the names of plumerias in Hawai'i. For additional information on plumeria research, see American Horticulture, April 1991.

On another note, the only two trees in Hawai'i of Iolani Luahine (Royal Heavenly Hawk) have been killed by the larvae of the long-horned beetle. Iolani Luahine will no longer be listed as an active cultivar. However, good fortune was on our side when Donald Angus discovered a Yellow Evergreen Singapore growing in the backyard of a lovely old Hawaiian lady by the name of Maile O'Donnell. Maile shared with me that it was a chance seedling she grew on in her yard. There were only two plumeria trees in her yard; one the common yellow (Celadine) and the other a White Evergreen Singapore and a natural cross took place. The common yellow was the pollen and the White Singapore producing the seed. Upon the recommendation of Donald Angus, Dr. Richard Criley of the University of Hawai'i named the new Yellow Evergreen Singapore in honor of Maile's mother, Mele Pa Bowman. This cultivar carries the same blood line as Iolani developed by Ted Chinn of the University of Hawaii while a research technician, but with a more robust growth habit and a very fragrant flower. So far it has resisted any severe borer attack.

JIM LITTLE NURSERY
59-657 ALAPIO ROAD
HALEIWA, HI 96712

1996-97 PLUMERIA PRICE LIST

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| 1. | Angus No. 3, Reddish - \$12 | 42. | Keiki, Lavender - \$20 * |
| 2. | Bali Whirl, dbl yellow - \$50 | 43. | Kimi Moragne, Pink - \$25 * |
| 3. | Candy Stripe, Rainbow - \$15 | 44. | Kimmo, Orange-Gold - \$15 * |
| 4. | Carmen, Pink-White - \$15 | 45. | King Kalakaua, White - \$20 |
| 5. | Carter #2, Reddish - \$12 | 46. | Kona Hybr. 26, Reddish - \$20 |
| 6. | Carter Selection, Pink - \$12 | 47. | Lei Rainbow, Yellow-red - \$15 |
| 7. | Cerise, Reddish - \$15 | 48. | Loretta, Pink - \$15 |
| 8. | Cerise # 2 - \$20 | 49. | Lurline, Rainbow Yellow - \$15 |
| 9. | Cindy Moragne, White - \$15 | 50. | Madame Poni, White-Yellow - \$15 |
| 10. | Common Yellow - \$10 | 51. | Manoa Beauty, Pink - \$15 |
| 11. | Courtade Pink - \$25 | 52. | Mary Moragne, Pink - \$25 |
| 12. | Cranberry Red - \$25 | 53. | Mela Matson, Pink - \$20 |
| 13. | Daisy Wilcox, White - \$20 | 54. | Moiilili Gold, Yellow - \$15 |
| 14. | Dean Conklin, Salmon-pink - \$20 | 55. | Moir Pink - \$20 |
| 15. | Donald Angus, Red - \$15 | 56. | Nebel's Gold, Yellow - Yellow - \$15 * |
| 16. | Duke, Reddish - \$20 | 57. | No. 23, Yellow - \$25 * |
| 17. | Dwarf Deciduous, White - \$45 | 58. | Penang Peach - \$35 * |
| 18. | Dwarf Singapore, Pink - \$35 | 59. | Pauahi Alii, Rainbow - \$15 |
| 19. | Dwarf Singapore, White - \$65 | 60. | Peachglow Shell, Pink - \$15 |
| 20. | Evergreen Singapore, White - \$15 | 61. | Pinwheel Rainbow - \$15 |
| 21. | Evergreen Singapore, Yw (Mele Pa Bowman) - \$25 | 62. | Plastic Pink - \$15 |
| 22. | Elena, White-Yellow - \$15 | 63. | Puu Kahea, Yellow Rainbow - \$15 |
| 23. | Espind0a Pink - \$15 | 64. | Red Shell - \$20 * |
| 24. | EWC #3, Reddish - \$12 | 65. | Reddish Moragne - \$25 * |
| 25. | Grove Farm, Pinkish - \$20 | 66. | Sally Moragne, Pink - \$25 * |
| 26. | Heidi, Yellow - \$15 | 67. | Samoa Fluff, White - \$20 |
| 27. | Hilo Beauty, Red - \$15 | 68. | Schmidt Red - \$20 |
| 28. | India, Orange - \$25 | 69. | Scott Pratt, Red - \$15 |
| 29. | Intense Rainbow - \$20 | 70. | Sherman White - \$20 |
| 30. | Irma Bryan, Red - \$20 | 71. | Sml Yellow Eye, White - \$15 |
| 31. | Japanese Lantern, Reddish - \$25 | 72. | Sunshine Texas, Yellow - \$25 |
| 32. | Jean Moragne Jr, Orange-pink - \$25 * | 73. | Thornton Lemon - \$25 * |
| 33. | J.L. Bridal White - \$20 | 74. | Thornton Lilac - \$25 * |
| 34. | J.L. Hawaiian Sunset, Orange-pink - \$25 * | 75. | Teresa (Teddy) Wilder Rainbow - \$35 |
| 35. | J.L. Giant Pink - \$25 * | 76. | Tille Highes, Pink - \$20 |
| 36. | J.L. Pink Pansey - \$25 * | 77. | Tomlinson Pink - \$20 |
| 37. | J.L. Starlight, White - \$25 * | 78. | Unknown Yellow - \$15 |
| 38. | Kaneohe Sunburst - \$15 | | |
| 39. | Katie Moragne, Reddish - \$25 * | 80. | Vanda Ruffles Rainbow - \$20 |
| 40. | Kauai Beauty, Red - \$15 | 81. | White Shell - \$20 |
| 41. | Kauka Wilder, Reddish-Orange - \$15 | 82. | Yellow Shell - \$20 |

All cultivars are true to name. While many flowers have various hues, descriptions are made on the dominant color. Cutting lengths range from 12-16" and are shipped P.O. or UPS Collect five to twenty days after payment is received. All orders are subject to availability. While most orders are filled as requested, substitutes should be requested.

Common plumeria cuttings that are designed by color (yellows, reds, pinks, whites, and mixtures thereof) are \$1.92 each. Bulk order minimum is 100 cuttings. Seeds when available are \$6.00 per hundred.

Jim Little Nursery #255 is a fully certified nursery shipping plants and seeds to U.S. mainland and foreign countries since 1973. Certain countries require various import documents and Dept. of Ag. Phyto papers. Please consult your Agricultural source for information.

The 1996-97 CONNOISSEUR'S plumeria list is designed with an asterisk

Specializing in PLUMERIAS • GINGERS • HELECONIAS • CORDYLINA

Orders can be accepted but not mailed between May 20 - June 20, 1996-97
Orders will be filled before and after these dates

Call me at 884-4252 if you want to volunteer or have a new idea.

Happy Plumeriaing,



Bob Owen, President

DUES ARE DUE

This will be your only notice to pay 1997 dues of \$10.00 by sending your check made out to: Plumeria Society of South Texas and mail to: 1107 The 600 Building, Corpus Christi, Texas 78473, or pay Treasurer Lois Millard at the April 30 meeting. For those new members paying dues for the first time after September, 1996, consider this payment for year 1997 also.

PLUMERIA PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

PSST will have a Plumeria Photography contest for 1997 limited to members only. To enter, send color photos to PSST in a 5X7 size identifying variety and name of photographer. Entry deadline will be October 15, 1997. There will be prizes for first, second, and third places and will be awarded at the October, 1997, meeting. Judging will be on artistic showing, color, sharpness, etc. All photo entries will be used in a display at the Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens Visitors Center.

ROOTING TECHNIQUE

By Barbara Gill

You want to hear a success story? Listen to this. For the Plant Sale in 1996, Barbara Gill successfully rooted about 100 cuttings and nurtured them to a growing plant by August. Her technique consisted of:

1. Barbara took the cutting around April 15 while in winter storage two weeks prior to bringing them outside. She cut them in 12" to 3' lengths and dipped in Rootone and then stacked upright in a bucket to callous over.
2. Planted the cutting on May 1 in a rooting medium consisting of 2/3 rds. Turner's potting soil and 1/3 sand in a one gallon pot or larger depending on length of cutting. The bottom end of cutting was buried 1/2 to 2/3 deep in the potting soil. The cutting was staked.
3. For the first 3 weeks, water only, once a week. Thereafter, fertilize with Fertlome Root Stimulator and Plant Starter Solution (3-1/2 tbsps. per gallon of water) one week and alternating with water only the next week. Water or feed once per week.
4. The cuttings in pots were placed on black plastic in a space between the south side of the garage and a 5' wood fence which provided plenty of sun and wind protection. Barbara theorized the plastic provided sufficient bottom heat to the black pots to accelerate rapid growth.