

PLUMERIAS IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

By Paula Furtwangler

Past President Plumeria Society Of America



L to r above: 'Bill Moragne, 'Dwarf Deciduous,' 'Grove Farm,' 'Lemon Drop,' and 'Scott Pratt'

L to r, below, 'Charlotte Ebert,' 'Makaha Sunn' and 'Grove Farm'



Houston has received so much rain lately that most gardeners are happy for all the free God-given rain water. But plumerias have a problem when it comes to excessive rain in the Spring...they can rot during the propagation process.

Root rot can occur if the soil is too wet during the rooting process. Plumerias cuttings need to be deprived of water to encourage root formation. They will send out roots to "look" for water. Plumeria growers are wise to collect our rainwater and use it later after roots have formed.



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Cuttings are actually a clone of the plant. The only way to get an exact duplicate of a plumeria is to take a cutting. Seeds will not produce plants identical to the mother plant.

Preparing the cutting:

In early Spring, The Plumeria Society of America (PSA) recommends taking plumeria cuttings in old gray wood (not green new growth), with a length of at least 12 inches. Cut the branch straight across. It is best to callous (harden off) the cutting end before planting, allowing two weeks to allow a good callous to form. Then dip the cutting in a rooting hormone like Clonex gel (available online) if it cannot be found in local nurseries.

Rooting a cutting:

An easy way to create root formation would be to

1. Prepare a small pot (one gallon inexpensive black nursery pot) with well draining soil. We prefer Rose Mix with added perlite to make more air available to the root system once established. This allow the roots to stay drier and encourages their growth.
2. Dampen your soil mixture, make a small divot in the soil with your finger, then gently insert the hormone dipped cutting into the hole.
3. Tamp the soil around the base of the cutting. Add a bit more soil, then brace the cutting with a stake to keep it stable in the pot.
4. Place the pot in full sun on the hot concrete patio and wait for the roots to develop, usually in four to six weeks.
5. Do not water until you have new leaves forming. The key is to wait...patience is a virtue for all plumeria enthusiasts.

You will see new growth development at the tip. The leaf claws will emerge and appear to be "wet." Once you have true leaves (4 or more) then you can begin to fertilize, and water sparingly. If your plant has no roots it is a shame to waste good fertilizer in soil that has no roots to deliver nutrients to the plant. The PSA recommends rooting only in the active growing season (hot spring and early summer) when plumerias are wanting to grow. In the winter, plumerias want to go dormant and are more difficult to root.

Established plumerias love the full sun and lots of heat. Early spring time inflorescences (flower bud stalks) can even begin flowering before leaf formation on previously rooted plants.

Did you know that plumerias are not only colorful, but have many different fragrances? Here are some beautiful varieties that will blow you away in your plumeria garden.

PLUMERIA FRAGRANCE BUYER'S GUIDE

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- **Citrus:** Singapore, Lemon Drop, Dwarf Deciduous, Lemon Chiffon, Dwarf Pink Singapore
- **Honeysuckle:** San Germaine
- **Gardenia:** Gardenia Glory, Charlotte Ebert, Tahitian Sunset
- **Rose:** Vera Cruz Rose, Guillot's Sunset,
- **Grape Koolaid:** Bill Moragne, Grapette, Pink Pansy
- **Peach:** Aztec Gold, Just Peachy, Intense Rainbow
- **Clove:** Negril
- **Spicy:** Kauka Wilder, Scott Pratt, India, Joshua, Carmen
- **Coconut:** Charlotte Ebert, Miami Rose, Scott Pratt
- **Lime:** Kimo
- **Carnation:** Dean Conklin
- **Pez Candy:** Britney
- **Sun Tan Lotion:** Celandine
- **Unique Strong:** Makaha Sunn, Grove Farm, San Germaine, Bali Whirl, Mele Pa Bowman

The Plumeria Society of America invites you to join, and learn more about plumerias for your home gardens. Visit theplumeriasociety.org for more information.

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