



Plumeria Care

Also known as frangipani, or temple trees, plumerias are tropical American shrubs or small trees with an unusual appearance and sweet, fragrant blooms. They are easy to care for and ideal for any sun-lover's patio or garden area.



Plumerias are more or less deciduous, stiffly branched, gaunt-looking plants with milky sap and thick, succulent branches. Their long leathery, pointed leaves are 8 to 10 inches in length. These leaves usually fall from the plant in late fall or winter, unless the plumeria is protected indoors.

WINTER PROTECTION

Plumerias are tender to frost, so they are usually grown in containers on a porch or patio where they will benefit from as much sun as possible. At least half a day of sun is recommended for any amount of blooming.

Plumerias can be uprooted from containers and stored in a frost-free garage or shed for the winter months, then repotted in the spring. If whole containers are moved indoors for winter, plants should be given little water and should not be fertilized. Late fall feeding is also not recommended, as it will produce soft growth, which is easily injured by the slightest frost.

THE PLUMERIA BLOOM

The showy and fragrant frangipani flowers are used for leis in Hawaii. Bloom colors include white, white with yellow, pink, pink with yellow, yellow, orange, and red. Flowers range in size from .75 inch across (dwarf) to 2.5 inches or larger and appear from out of doors from April to November. Feeding with hibiscus fertilizer in the spring is recommended for optimal blooming.

PROPAGATION FROM CUTTINGS

Plumerias root easily from cuttings or can be grown from seed. Growing seedlings will, of course, not guarantee flower color true to the parent plant. Seedling color cannot be

discerned until blooming occurs, usually in two to three years.

Cuttings are the only way to guarantee the same bloom color as the parent plant. The best time to take cuttings is in the spring. These should be allowed to heal their wounds before potting in well drained medium, such as coarse sand or a perlite/peat moss mix. A rooting hormone will aid the process. Cuttings should be kept warm.

WATERING PLUMERIAS

Plumerias should be allowed to dry out somewhat between waterings, but excessive dryness will result in foliage loss. Soil should never remain soggy. Plants should be provided with good drainage.

INSECTS & DISEASES

Plumerias are susceptible to several insect pests, most notably spider mites. If infestation should occur, treat it with Safer Insecticidal Soap or a general purpose insecticide.

In the Gulf Coast, the most common disease on plumeria is rust, characterized by bright orange "rusty" spots on the underside of leaves and yellow spotting on the top. The best way to control rust is with a preventative spray. Spray when new leaves emerge in the spring and regularly during the growing season — about every two weeks.

Should your plumerias get rust nevertheless, strip off and destroy the leaves. **DO NOT COMPOST THEM.** Begin spraying when new leaves appear and every two weeks during the growing season.