

Plumeria Add Tropical Accent to Local Landscapes

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PHOTO CREDIT: Loretta Osteen

Plumeria are well known for their striking, intensely fragrant, and spiral-shaped blooms. The flowers are treasured for their durability, fragrances, and range of colors. An educational program on plumeria will be held on Saturday, June 15, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office.

Have you been looking for an easy to grow tropical tree that is sure to make your landscape a tropical paradise? Consider adding a plumeria tree (also known as frangipani tree) to the warmer areas of your yard. Plumeria is undoubtedly one of the most

beautiful and delightful plants grown in our sub-tropical growing environment.

This easy-to-grow tree will cover itself with fragrant colorful flowers from mid-spring through the beginning of winter. Plumeria

can be maintained as a shrub or small tree grown in the garden or in a container on the patio.

There is absolutely nothing like the sweet fragrance of plumeria in full bloom, with fragrances





reminiscent of jasmine, citrus, spices, gardenia, and other delightful scents. These flowers are treasured for their durability, fragrances and colors of whites, yellows, pinks, reds, and multiple pastels.

There are several different species of plumeria, plus several hybrids and hundreds of cultivars. While plumeria is a native of Central America and the Caribbean area, it is probably thought of as a symbol of Hawaii – it is best known as the source of the Hawaiian lei, a necklace made from a string of these fragrant flowers.

Whether you already grow, or have an interest in growing, plumeria, attending an upcoming seminar entitled “A Passion for Plumeria” will be of value. Master Gardener Loretta Osteen will provide the presentation. Topics to be discussed include proven varieties, proper fertilization, soil and light requirements, pruning, propagation methods, and methods of overwintering.

Loretta’s passion for plumeria started during a family vacation to Hawaii many years ago. “I wanted to learn about these things,” says the Galveston County Master Gardener. She then joined the Plumeria Society of America, an organization founded in Houston.

Then she started growing plumeria in her home landscape on Tiki Island. Like other Master Gardeners with a passion for growing a specific plant or group of plants,

Loretta’s home landscape became a bit crowded. She was fortunate to also own a lot next door and was able to fill it with plumeria.

More than 200 plumerias now surround her Tiki Island home. Loretta fondly describes watching drivers in cars passing by her property then slow down to an almost crawl to take in the view of so many different plumeria plants with blooms in a rainbow of colors.

Loretta’s will present her seminar on Saturday, June 15, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by e-mail (galvcountymgs@gmail.com) or by phone (281-309-5065). Program participants who pre-register will also be eligible to receive a variety of door prize drawings including potted juvenile plumeria, seedling plumeria and other plants.

Gardening Q&As

Q: I'd like to get some information on paper wasps. Should I destroy any nests I find? I seem to remember that wasps pollinate flowers. I've also read that some wasps eliminate garden pests.

A: Wasps feed in two different ways. The adults generally feed on nectar or pollen. Although wasps are not considered as important to plant pollination as bees, they do aid in the pollination of a number of plants. Adults are also excellent

predators that catch and kill other insects.

Wasp stingers are not strictly for defensive use, as in honeybees. Wasps use their stinger to paralyze insects that they bring to their paper nests to feed to their larva. The wasps we most commonly encounter are paper wasps, named for the honeycomb-shaped paper nest they create.

Because paper wasps are excellent predators, you may choose to leave them alone when the nest is not located in a spot that poses a problem to people. However, paper wasps are very protective of their nests and will readily sting people who disturb them. Nests in locations close to where outdoor activities take place should be destroyed using commercial wasp and hornet killers. There are many other species of solitary wasps and mud daubers that share our gardens. They rarely sting people and benefit our gardens by controlling insect pests.

