



Plumerias - the Style of Old Key West

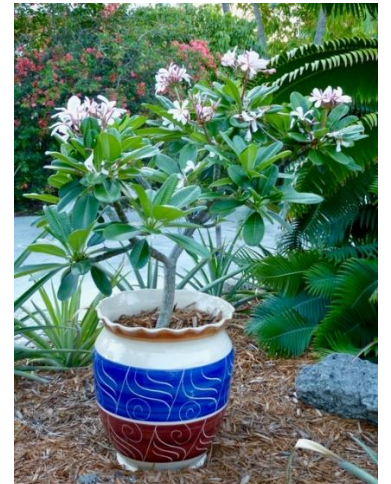
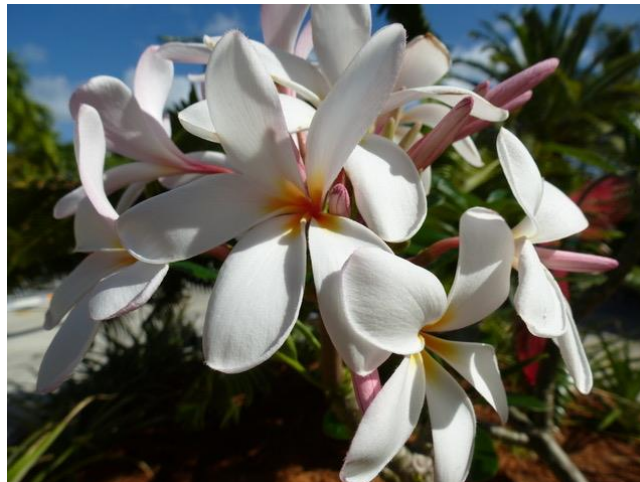
Plumeria, commonly called frangipani, is a plant that evokes old Key West style. Their colorful and fragrant flowers are used to make tropical leis and are sure to be a great addition to your garden. Each type of plumeria flower has its own distinctive scent, color, and growth characteristics. Some varieties can thrive in a large pot with the right water and full sun.

A favorite of gardeners at the Key West Garden Club is Vera Cruz Rose. This beauty blooms almost year-round in the Keys, sporting soft yellow petals with cherry-red edges. The flowers form huge clusters in bouquets at the branch tips. As the name implies, each 4-inch blossom has the distinctive fragrance of a rose. Vera Cruz Rose is a fast grower and a tall tree.



Key West Red is a classic that everyone should have in their garden. It produces 2-inch blooms, well overlapped with a spicy cinnamon fragrance. It is a hardy medium-size tree with prolific blooming all summer long.

Perfect for small spaces is Dwarf Singapore Pink. Grown in a container, this beauty will grow 6 inches per year and mature to 4 feet. It is a generous bloomer with pink buds that open to white flowers with a golden yellow center. The flowers are citrus-scented.





A great plumeria for a snowbird gardener is *Plumeria pudica*, commonly known as Bridal Bouquet. The snow-white flowers are 3 inches wide, appear in clusters, and bloom year-round. The attractive evergreen shrub grows to 12 feet with a natural umbrella top or inverted pyramid shape. The flowers have little or no fragrance but are excellent for cutting.

Each of the 4 plumerias mentioned has good keeping quality to display in a small vase. Be careful of the milky sap, as it is irritating to some. With the exception of *pudica* and Vera Cruz Rose, most plumerias drop all or most of their leaves in the winter but compensate by having delightful fragrances and gorgeous blossoms in the spring and summer. Planting with an understory of evergreen plants such as *jatropha* or silver buttonwood can soften the look of the bare branches in the middle of the winter.



To purchase any of these plumerias, mark your calendar for the fall Plant Sale & Art Show, which will be Friday, November 19 and Saturday, November 20, 2021.

For more information on plumeria care, visit these sites:
<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/plumeria.html>
<https://www.floridacolorsplumeria.com>

Article and photos - Kitty Somerville