

Plumeria rubra

Frangipani, Pagoda Tree, Tinajero, Frangipanier

Apocynaceae

Flower Display: A



S.H.Brown

Fort Myers, FL

Early May

Forma rubra, left. Forma lutea, right.

Syn: *P. acutifolia*, *P. lutea*, *P. tricolor*

Origin: Central Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, Colombia

Zone: 9b-12b, 26°F

Growth Rate: Slow

Typical Dimensions: 15'x18'

Flowering Months: March-July

Flowering Days: Forma acutifolia, 35. Forma rubra, 70

Leaf Persistence: Deciduous from November—March

Messiness: High in summer and fall

Salt Tolerance: High

Drought Tolerance: High

Nutritional Requirement: Low

Potential Pests: Caterpillars, mealybugs, rust

Uses: Container, Garden, Park, Patio, Seaside, Streetscape

Plumeria rubra is a small beautiful, flowering tree, with a wide variety of flower colors. It is the most commonly seen plumeria in Florida. The waxy, long-lasting flowers are sweetly perfumed, making the species a natural for many warm-climate gardens around the world. The blossoms usually appear before the leaves, thus contrasting beautifully against the blue tropical sky. Soon, flowers and foliage come together on the tree to present an intensely tropical effect. A few pods occasionally follow the flowers. *P. rubra* is apparently the source of many plumeria hybrid cultivars. In the past, the flower colors were associated with distinct species but are now regarded as different forms of the same species. All forms have twisted overlapping corollas, much like blades of a propeller. Forma acutifolia has white flowers with yellow centers. Forma lutea has yellow flowers fading to white at the edge as they mature. Forma rubra has deep pink flowers with a yellow center and forma tricolor has pale white flowers with yellow centers and red or pink rims. Flowers of the white and yellow forms appear slightly earlier in the year than the pink form, but their flowering days are generally shorter. Forma rubra has the longest flowering days of the four forms and includes the 'Hot Pink' cultivar. 'Hot Pink' is one of the tallest plumeria cultivars and can attain heights of 30 feet. 'Aztec Gold' is a forma lutea cultivar,



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Fort Myers, FL
Late April
Forma acutifolia



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Late May
Forma lutea



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St. Thomas, USVI
Early July
Forma rubra. A widely spread inflorescence



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Leaves: Simple, alternate, broadly elliptic or oblong-lanceolate, to 22 inches long and 7 ½ inches wide, clustered at branch tips
Flowers: Salverform, fleshy, strongly perfumed, white, yellow, pink, to 4 ½ inches wide and 2 ¾ long, on terminal cymes
Fruits: Follicles, tapered to 6 inches long usually held in pairs and not often produced
 Left to right, forma acutifolia, rubra and lutea

Tropical Flowering Trees List
 Questions/Comments:
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and is a popular Florida tree. March to July is the main flowering period of *P. rubra*. However, some treelets will retain a splattering of flowers well into October. *P. rubra* is quite common in all of south Florida. In Southern California, it performs best in mild coastal areas. *P. rubra*'s stiff branches are subdivided into two or three stout, distinct, smaller, upright branches. This causes a compact, symmetrical growth with a candelabrum-like effect making pruning unnecessary. When severely pruned, hat-racked, the tree is disfigured and flowering skips a year or two. The species is messy from April to November. Corollas fall as readily as the flowers are formed. By August, some leaves fall almost every day, but being large, they are easy to pick up. The species loses most or all its leaves in late fall and regains them by March or April of the next year. However, a rust fungus causes premature deciduousness. In some cases, the rust makes its appearance along with the new leaves. Application of a recommended fungicide in late August will help to reduce the period of deciduousness. On rare occasions, mealybugs may attack and deform new leaves. Scales are only a periodic problem. An oil spray will help to control them. Propagate this species from stout cuttings or occasionally from seeds. Seedlings take three or more years to flower. Cuttings will flower the first years after planting, rest the second year, and begin annual flowering thereafter.