

## ***Plumeria rubra*: Frangipani<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

Frangipani is well-known for its intensely fragrant, lovely, spiral-shaped, reddish blooms which appear at branch tips June through November. The tree itself is rather unusual in appearance; the 12 to 20-inch-long, coarse, deciduous leaves cluster only at the tips of the rough, blunt, sausage-like, thick, grey-green branches. Branches are upright and rather crowded on the trunk forming a vase or umbrella shape with age. They are rather soft and brittle and can break but are usually sturdy unless they are mechanically hit or disturbed. The crown loses its leaves for a short time during the winter displaying the coarse-textured, stubby branches. A milky sap is exuded from the branches when they are bruised or punctured.

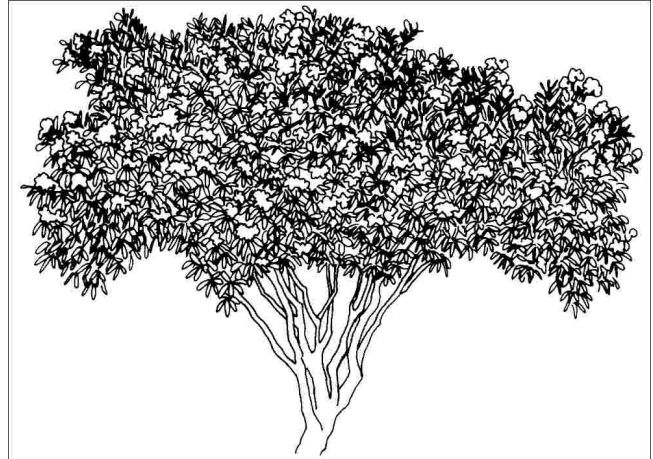
### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Plumeria rubra*

**Pronunciation:** ploo-MEER-ee-uh ROO-bruh

**Common name(s):** Frangipani

**Family:** *Apocynaceae*



**Figure 1.** Middle-aged *Plumeria rubra*: Frangipani

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America.

**Invasive potential:** has been evaluated using the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (Fox et al. 2005). This species is not documented in any undisturbed natural areas in Florida. Thus, it is not considered a problem species and may be used in Florida.

**Uses:** sidewalk cutout (tree pit); deck or patio; specimen; street without sidewalk; container or

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planter; parking lot island < 100 sq ft;  
 parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot  
 island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide;  
 tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft  
 wide; highway median

**Availability:** not native to North America

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple



Figure 2. Range

### Description

**Height:** 20 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 20 to 25 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

**Crown shape:** vase, round

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Leaf margin:** entire, undulate

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval), obovate

**Leaf venation:** brachidodrome, pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 12 to 18 inches, 8 to 12 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** red

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** pink, red

**Flower characteristics:** very showy

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; can be trained to one trunk; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage

**Current year twig color:** brown, green

**Current year twig thickness:** very thick

**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** high

**Other**

**Roots:** not a problem

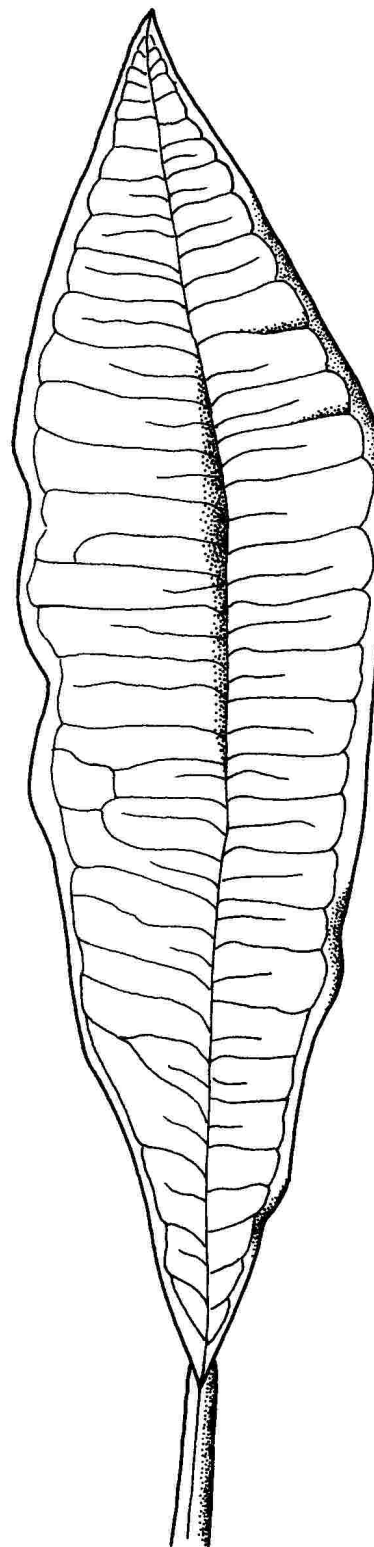
**Winter interest:** yes

**Outstanding tree:** yes

**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown

**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases



**Figure 3.** Foliage

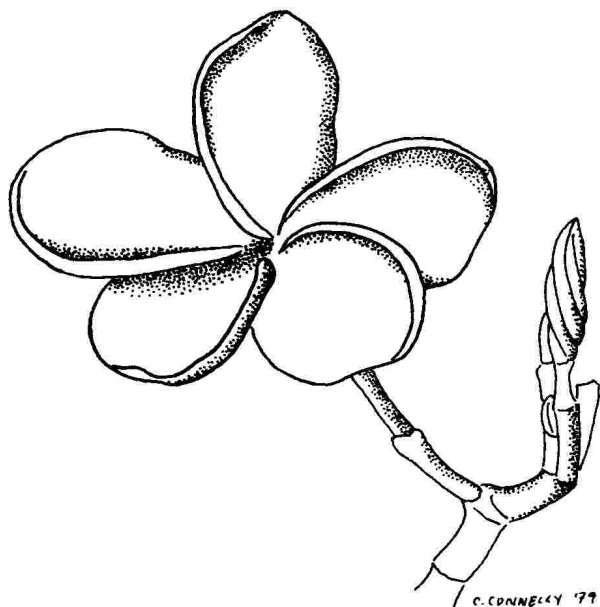


Figure 4. Flower

## Use and Management

Frangipani is very susceptible to freezing temperatures and should be adequately protected or planted only in areas which do not freeze in the winter. Plants will grow quickly in full sun on a variety of well-drained soils and is fairly drought and salt tolerant. Reaching a height of 20 to 25 feet with an equal spread, Frangipani works well as a freestanding specimen, a patio tree, or as part of a shrubby border. It displays well in a front yard as an attention-grabber by the entrance. It can be grown with a single trunk or branched low to the ground into a multi-trunked specimen. Single-trunk specimens could be planted as median or street trees on 15 to 20-foot-centers.

While *Plumeria rubra* produces red-toned flowers, other species offer a variety of colors. *Plumeria alba* has white flowers. *Plumeria obtusa* has white blooms centered in yellow and is variable in form and color. There are other species and cultivars.

Propagation is by cuttings. Large hardwood cuttings should be allowed to dry several days while leafy tip cuttings should be planted immediately. Plants flower at an early age.

## Pests

Some common pests are scales, frangipani caterpillar, and nematodes.

## Diseases

Root rot can infect plants planted in soils with poor drainage.

## Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker (2005) IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. Cited from the Internet (November 3, 2006), <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment.html>