



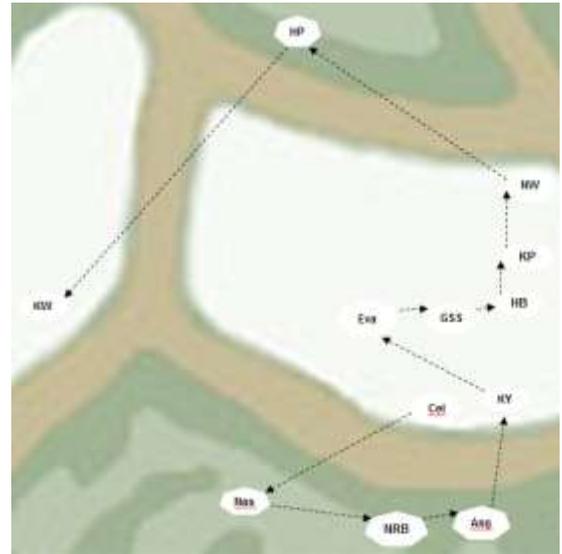
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Common Plumeria Problems

In Southern California, like other Mediterranean climates, plumeria are trouble-free and easy to grow. However, there may be cosmetic problems, and occasionally more serious issues. We've had a few of these in the grove, so let's take a look around.

Cosmetic problems: branches and leaves

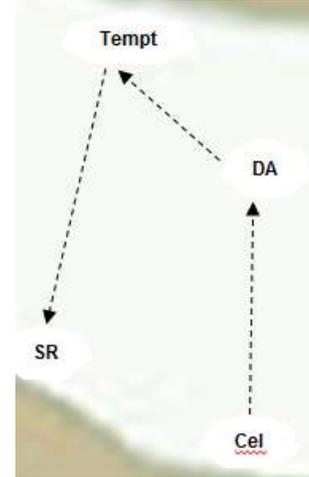
- **Sunburn: Evalani.** Even though plumeria are tropical trees, both bark and leaves can sunburn in hot weather. On leaves, look for brown scorch between mid-stem and leaf edge. On the branches, look for a pale brown patch, followed by peeling and a scaly appearance. If the bark is severely compromised, the branch or even the entire tree can die.
- **Black tip: Nebel's Rainbow** is prone to black tip, which occurs when new growth is exposed to cold weather. The branch tip becomes black, similar in appearance to frostbite, and will not bloom. Sometimes the tree self-terminates the damage: the tip will fall off, and new branches will appear. However, black tip damage can cause rot - trim until you see all white pith.
- **Rot: Guillot's Sunset** had rot at the base of one large trunk, and it broke off when the tree was restaked in 2014. The wound was recut and sealed to prevent new rot.
- **Crinkled or misshapen leaves on Celadine** are due to a large temperature differences between day and night, or inconsistent watering.
- **Swooping branches: Keauhou Yellow** has an unusual shape - the branches grow downwards and then back up. This is due to inconsistent watering of a leggy tree.
- **Awkwardly shaped trees: Angus Gold** has a rather ungainly appearance due to a combination of vandalism, bad pruning and poor branching habit.
- **Flowers out of sight: Hilo Beauty** and **Krystyna's Pink** both have a tall, vertical growth habit, making the flowers too far away to see.
- **Wind damage: Nellie's White** is a strong horizontal grower, with wide spreading branches. Plumeria branches and leaves are quite heavy, and during strong Santa Ana winds, the branches break from the weight.
- **Theft: Kauka Wilder's** branches have been snapped off by thieves, and the tree is now dying from the damage. Sadly, those stolen branches most likely died.
- **Frost damage: Hollywood Pink's** location is a bit colder than the rest of the grove, and a 2013 frost severely damaged the tree. After being trimmed to ground level, she's grown back; however, the hollowed branches invite rot.



- **Rabbit damage:** **Nassau** has gnawed marks at the base, even though plumeria sap is not very appealing to animals.

Cosmetic problems: flowers

- **Bud drop** occurs on **Celadine** due to large temperature swings between day and night. Other varieties may drop buds due to nutritional deficiencies.
- **Small flowers** on **Donald Angus** can happen when temperatures soar; small flowers can happen on **Divine** when temperatures drop. It depends on the variety's genetics.
- **Pale, bland or small blooms** – this is a common complaint from inexperienced or first time growers. A good example is **Temptation** – in hot weather, the bloom is a large, vibrant, heavily veined red, orange and yellow flower. Without heat or in shade, the colors are soft and muted. This can also happen with young plants whose root system is undeveloped. Micronutrients, such as those found in organic fertilizers, fish / seaweed emulsion, can improve bloom color.
- **Small or heart shaped flowers** on our newly planted **Super Round** are due to its young, immature root system. As the tree becomes more vigorous due to better roots, the flowers will increase in size and become more colorful.
- **No or few flowers:** here are several common reasons. Remember, your plant's roots produce flowers, so keep those roots healthy!
 - Poor or undeveloped root system cannot support good flowering. Cut off inflos to concentrate energy in the rooting process.
 - A dying / unrooted plumeria will bloom, but the flowers have poor color and size.
 - Insufficient sunlight or not enough micronutrients



Insect damage is relatively uncommon due to plumeria's latex sap. Pesticides are seldom needed. If you must use it, get the lowest toxicity to avoid killing beneficial insects.

- **Spider Mites** are uncommon in groves, but the bane of greenhouse growers. Look for stippled, pale leaves and fine webs, particularly under leaves.
- **Scale** insects / aphids can be found under leaves and on branches. Look for ant trails and rolled leaf edges.
- **Monarch butterfly larvae**, if starving, will eat plumeria leaves. Relocate to milkweed.
- **Grasshoppers / snails** eat leaves, causing a ragged edge.
- **Plumeria borer beetles** are a major problem in Hawaii, and very difficult to detect. As of 2015, they are relatively rare in California and Florida.
- **Sphinx moth larvae** (*Pseudosphinx tetrio*) in southern Florida devour leaves and can denude a tree.

Take your time and stroll through the rest of our grove, and enjoy the many blooms. As more trees are planted, mature and bloom, this walking tour and other, more in-depth tours will be expanded. Enjoy!