

# Winterizing & Plumeria Care

## Introduction

Plumeria are deciduous shrubs and trees of tropical America having branches like candelabra and fragrant white or pink flowers; originally from Mexico and Central America. In tropical areas of the world, especially Hawaii, the plumeria grows abundantly but are not indigenous there. Other than the occasional frost and freezes in some desert regions, Plumeria is well suited to our climate and adorns many homes and resorts.

## Location and Planting

Plumeria can make a wonderful landscape addition and well suited to potting culture as well. If you choose to plant in your yard, you only need to consider your winter lows. Plumeria take the valley summers of heat and sun but also do well in part shade or patios, though best flowering is when the plant receives several hours of sun. Plumeria should be planted in a well-draining soil mixes whether in the ground or pots. Some of the best results are from using patio mixes. The products contain an array of beneficial organic material and are well suited to many tropical plants.

## Watering

Watering is simple – just think of a rainy and dry season that the plant is natively accustomed to. When the plant has leaves and/or flowers, typically March/April till November/early December you can water frequently, even every day in the hottest summer days. Stop watering when the leaves just begin to drop. Really, stop watering and don't water again (or very infrequently in the desert) until you see new leaves. This may mean that you won't water for 2-3 months. Watering while the plant is dormant is the number one killer of Plumeria.

## Winter Preparation: Frost Protection & Care

Plumeria like any tropical plant are frost sensitive. During a frost an unprotected plant can be damaged starting with the tips (outer most branches). In a hard freeze the plant, even a mature one, can be killed outright. Planting near your home in the hottest part of your yard is best as the heat released during the winter nights will help in keeping the temperature above freezing. If you have an overhang that is even better and will deter frost from settling overnight. For large in-ground plants start winterizing in the Fall by not fertilizing. In the cool months it is important not to over water as it will rot the plant. If you aren't sure it is best to keep the soil on the dry side. If the plant is outside you must protect it. Frost cloth works best since it is light weight. Just make sure the blanket extends all the way to the ground so to trap the heat during the night. In the absence of frost-cloth, you can use blankets, burlap, and cardboard. Make sure to remove them during the day after the temperature are above freezing or when it is raining as the extra weight may break the limbs. Wrapping the limbs with Christmas lights as also a great way to keep the frost away.

## Freeze-Damaged Plants

Sometimes plants may be damaged by freezing. Symptoms include die back with branches becoming mushy part way down the stalks; tips may also turn black. If this happens wait until there is no further chance of cold weather. Then cut the branch at a 45-degree angle until you reach a clean, white interior wood with no brown or black discoloration. Sterilize the knife blade after each cut. Seal the wound with an antifungal. You will soon see new growth at the leaf scars.

## Reference

[www.tropicamango.com/plumeria](http://www.tropicamango.com/plumeria)