



FRANGIPANI

(*Plumeria alba* - white Frangipani

Plumeria rubra - red Frangipani

Plumeria obtusa - wild Frangipani)

Some say the name Frangipani came from a famous perfume, invented and named by an Italian baker in the 12th century, Signor Frangipani. Others believe the name came from the French word “fangipanier” meaning coagulated milk which described the milky sap which flows from the branches when slashed.

The red and white frangipani are native to Central America, but have spread throughout the Caribbean, and even to Sri Lanka, where they are called Temple trees, and planted near Buddhist temples.

The red and the white species may grow to 13 m in height. They branch into two at each dividing point. The leaves and flowers are borne at the end of the branches so that the tree looks bare beneath its crown.

The leaves are long and lance-shaped with well-marked veins. The white Frangipani leaves may grow to 35 cm in length, and the red to 45 cm. The white Frangipani has white flowers with a diffuse yellow at the base. The red has pink red, sometimes orange yellow or even white petals, with a yellowish base.

The third species, the wild Frangipani is a native of Jamaica. It is smaller, up to 6 m in height, or shrub-like. The leaves are shorter and thicker, and unlike the other species, it does not drop its leaves. It has white flowers, also with a yellowish base to the petals which are often less numerous than the other species. It grows in wooded limestone areas, often not far from the sea - eg in Helishire in St. Catherine.

Not many animals feed on Frangipani as they contain poisons. The spectacular Frangipani caterpillar, (*Pseudosphinx tetrio*) eats the leaves of Frangipanis. It grows up to 12 cm long; it is black, with 10 vivid yellow bands ringing the body and has a bright red head and appendages. This caterpillar takes in the poison and so become poisonous itself. When full grown they head down the



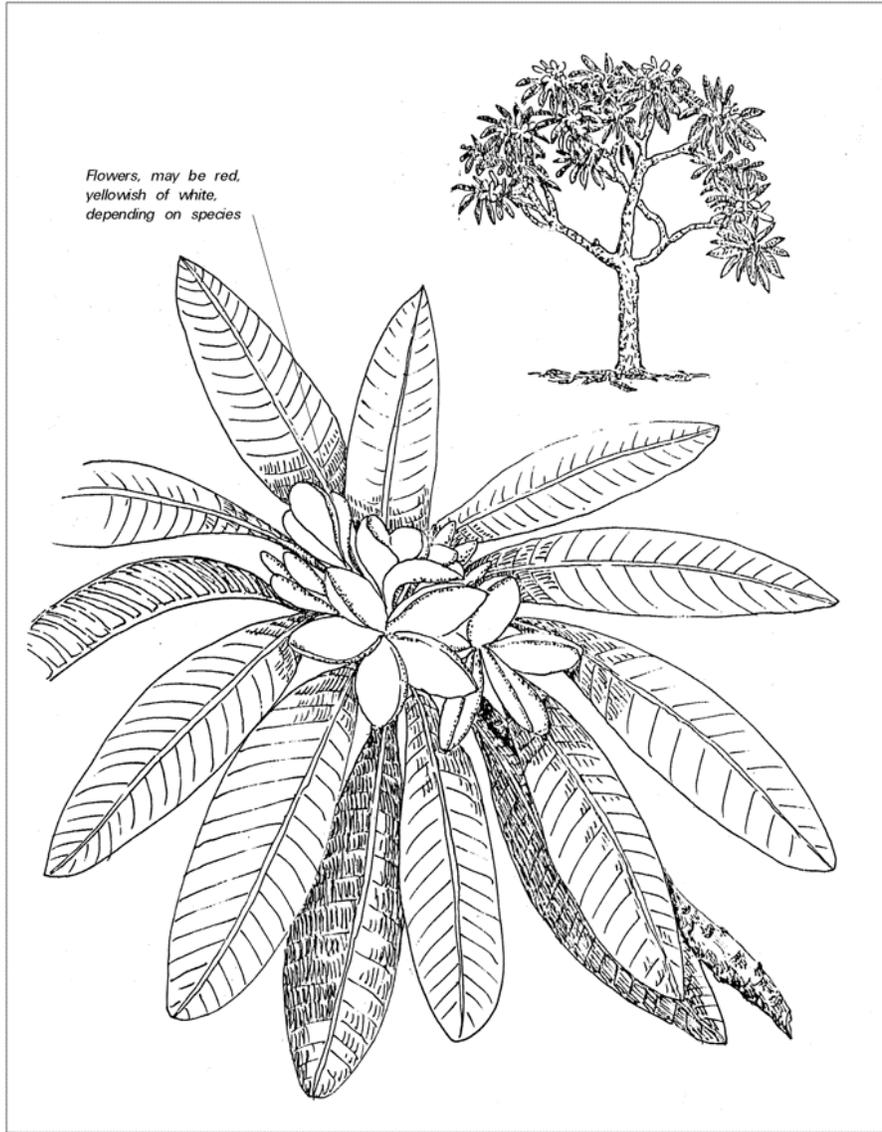
trunk and pupate under fallen leaves. The moth that emerges is silvery grey, and has wings about 7 cm long and belong to the family called hawk moths. When there are a large number of caterpillars they may eat every leaf, however the tree recovers perfectly well.

The milky sap has been used for centuries for all manners of poultices and remedies - but beware! It should be treated with great caution.



FRANGIPANI (*Plumeria sp.*)

Family: Apocynaceae	Species: <i>Plumeria spp.</i>	Author:
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Height: Red & White - 14m Wild - 6m	Habitat: Sea level - 900m	Persistence: Red & white - decidius Wild - evergreen
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