

NEWS RELEASE



# Vanuatu Frangipani

*Plumeria* (common name Frangipani) is a small genus native to subtropical and tropical Mexico and Central America. *Plumeria* has spread to all tropical areas of the world, especially Hawaii, the South Pacific, India and as far as Eastern Africa. The genus, originally spelled *Plumiera*, is named in honour of the seventeenth-century French botanist Charles Plumier who traveled to the New World documenting many plant and animal species. The common name "Frangipani" comes from the Marquess of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian noble family, who invented a plumeria-scented perfume.



*Plumeria* is generally a medium-sized tree growing to about 10M high. Its broad, usually round-headed canopy is often as wide as the tree is tall. The species and hybrids vary in tree size, compactness, branching character, leaf and flower size and colour, and deciduousness. In deciduous types the leaves fall during wintertime while hybrids tend to retain their foliage year-round. The flowers expand into a

"pinwheel" of five petals and may be white, red, yellow, pink, or multiple colors. The hybrids differ in their profusion of blooms, with some producing more than 200 flowers per cluster and others only 50–60 flowers. The trees grow easily in hot, dry areas and are usually found from sea level to 700M elevation, but require full sun and grow best in well-drained, slightly acidic soil. They have moderate wind resistance and salt tolerance and reach maturity in about five years.



*Plumeria* possesses poisonous, milky sap and its flowers are most fragrant at night in order to lure sphinx moths to pollinate them. The flowers have no nectar, and simply dupe their pollinators. The moths inadvertently pollinate them by transferring pollen from flower to flower in their fruitless search for nectar.



In the Pacific Islands, *Plumeria* is used for making leis and in modern Polynesian culture, the flower is often worn by women to indicate their relationship status - over the right ear if seeking a relationship, and over the left, if not available. In Vanuatu the flower is popular for decoration and is used for beauty products.

### Collectors' Notes

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Designer:       | Sue Wickison, Wellington, New Zealand                      |
| Printer:        | Southern Colour Print, Christchurch, New Zealand           |
| Process:        | Offset lithography   |
| Stamp Size:     | Four horizontal, 48.0mm x 24.28mm incl. blue vertical bars |
| Panes:          | 2 panes of 25 stamps per sheet                             |
| Denominations:  | 90, 100, 130, and 150 vatu..                               |
| Paper:          | Tullis Russell Non Phosphor gummed stamp paper 104gsm      |
| Period of Sale: | 14 May 2009 for a period of 2 years                        |

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