

American Oleander Cultivars: History, Origins, and Dates

Agnes Campbell (single, pale salmon with fuchsia-striped yellow throat; faint fragrance; vigorous, fast-growing shrub) Galveston variety; origin unknown.

Algiers (single, dark-red, widely-separated petals; not fragrant. Compact habit). Discovered in a cemetery in Algeria; cuttings collected by Howard Past of Monrovia Nurseries and introduced by Monrovia in 1978.

Alsace (known as **Mrs. Willard Cooke** in Galveston): single, extremely pale pink, essentially white. Buds pale peach or salmon. Faint fragrance on warm, humid evenings. Beautiful deep-green foliage). Outstanding; robust; easy to grow and propagate. Probably a very old European variety whose origins are lost in the distant past.

Apple Blossom (single, light pink, lightly fragrant; rounded, large shrub; cold tolerant). Origin: Aldridge Nursery, Von Ormy, Texas, 1946.

Barbara Bush (single, pale pink, widely-separated petals, not fragrant; compact to medium-sized shrub) Galveston variety; origin unknown.

Bill Cherry (single, intense red, dwarf or compact shrub resembling an azalea). Hybridized by Bob Newding; Emile Sahut was one of the parent plants. Named for one of Galveston's most colorful and multifaceted citizens. Galveston variety.

Calypso (single, deep pink; at a distance appears light-red or salmon orange in the afternoon sun, but can appear deep lavender in the early morning hours; luminous, fluorescent quality especially when viewed from a distance; fragrant; medium-sized shrub, very cold-tolerant). An outstanding cultivar and now possibly the most popular oleander in the USA. First introduced by Storm Nursery, Fremont, Texas, in the 1970's; Monrovia Nurseries first received cuttings of it in 1976 and began offering it around 1980.

Cardinal Red (single, red). Clarke's catalogue, 1932. Possibly Emile Sahut?

Casablanca (single white; medium-sized shrub). Discovered in Algeria and introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1978.

Centennial (single; pale ivory with red-striped yellow throat; overall effect white with an orange throat; not fragrant. "Looks like a fried egg". Compact shrub). Named on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the University of Texas Medical Branch; whose official color is bright orange. Galveston variety.

Charles Murcott (single, light pink)

Charles A. Newding (single; petals two-toned lengthwise red and pink. Large, hydrangea-like inflorescences on a large, vigorous shrub; fragrant). Hybridized by Bob Newding and named for his father. Emile Sahut was one of the parent plants; Tangier may have been the other. Galveston variety.

Cherry Ripe (single, light red). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1952.

College Beauty (double; deep pink) Galveston variety.

Commandant Barthélémy (double, crimson/magenta, sometimes with white streaks, fragrant; medium-sized but wide shrub). Sometimes erroneously called ‘Géant des Batailles’ in Europe. An old French variety, listed in Félix Sahut’s catalogue from 1898.

East End Pink (single, light-pink with bluish or lavender overtones, medium-sized shrub; very easy to grow and propagate). Possibly synonymous with ‘Sealy Pink’, which was introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1958.

Ed Barr (single, white, non-fragrant; enormous and vigorous shrub, very easy to propagate; very cold-tolerant. One of two oleander varieties brought to Galveston from Jamaica by Joseph Osterman in 1841, and therefore a very old variety of great historical significance. It was probably introduced to Jamaica by the Spanish prior to 1655, or possibly by the English after 1655 and prior to 1841. May be identical to the ‘Nerium album’ described by Philip Miller in The Gardener’s Dictionary in the mid-18th century, which he claimed was growing as a native in the Spanish West Indies, and it might also possibly be the original white mutation discovered on Mount Ídhi (Psilorítis) in Crete in 1547. Named for a business partner of George Sealy Jr. who propagated thousands of oleander plants by seeds, cuttings, and grafting, keeping fastidious records which survive today in the possession of the International Oleander Society. He gave these plants away at no cost to anyone who would plant them, helping to reestablish the island’s vegetation after the 1900 hurricane; plants were also given away for free to American soldiers returning to the USA after World War 1 so that they could bring a souvenir of “The Oleander City”, their first landing point in the USA, to their mothers, wives, and girlfriends back home.

Ella Sealy Newell (single, medium-pink; yellow coronas with pink stripes) Galveston variety.

Frances Moody Newman (single, medium to deep pink, flowers slightly funnel-shaped) Galveston variety.

Emile Sahut (known as ‘Scarlet Beauty’ in Galveston): single, deep-red slightly cupped or goblet-shaped flowers with a light, fine fragrance. Shrub medium to large with a stiffly upright growth habit). Very well-known old French variety introduced by Félix Sahut in 1873.

Firewalker: (single, intense red, lightly fragrant flowers on an upright shrub): My own discovery. It has almost the same intense red color as Emile Sahut, but a bit more scarlet than crimson, and is probably a seedling of it. The flowers open flatter, however, and the foliage is

somewhat lighter in color. A major advantage: the lower stems don't get bare early on. The plant is rounder than Emile Sahut, and also seems to be more robust; many sprouts appear in the leaf axils. 'Firewalker' has had an adventurous history. The original cutting was brought over from Sulmona, Italy, by an Italian resident of Wethersfield, Connecticut. He gave a cutting to a Portuguese neighbor, who in turn gave me a couple of cuttings. I recognized the plant as a superior variety and named it after my firefighter boots (Ranger Firewalker brand). I sent several cuttings to Germany (to the Flora Mediterranea nursery) and the cultivar later turned up in Hungary, in the collection of the Hungarian oleander expert Mariann Hámori. A photo of it appears in her book *Leanderoázis (An Oleander Oasis)*.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (single, salmon with red-striped yellow throat, not fragrant; slightly star-shaped as one edge of petal curls inward; cold-tolerant; medium-sized shrub). Named for the President on the occasion of his visit to Galveston in 1938. Known as 'Sensation' prior to 1938.

Garten Verein (single, medium-pink) Named for the octagonal dance hall (built in 1880) which was a gathering place for Galveston's German community and is located in what is now Kempner Park. Galveston variety.

General Pershing (double, deep red, sometimes with white stripes). Vigorous shrub with unusually large and long leaves.

George Sealy (single, light-to- medium pink, fragrant; medium-sized shrub) Named for one of Galveston's most prominent businessmen and philanthropists at the turn of the last century. The original seed was planted in 1912 at a "Cotton Carnival" in Galveston.

Hardy Pink (known as **Pink Beauty** in Galveston): single, large, lightly fragrant medium-pink flowers with characteristic, swollen, balloon-like buds. Vigorous plant, cold-tolerant. Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries by the name 'Hardy Pink' in 1965. Known as 'Hardy Pink in Europe' and NOT the same as the extremely large and vigorous plant sold under the name 'Pink Beauty' in Europe, which is another Monrovia introduction from the year 1952. 'Hardy Pink' from 1965 has the balloon-like buds; 'Pink Beauty' from 1952 does not).

Hardy Red (intense crimson/magenta, very broad petals, lightly fragrant; white stamen extensions very long and conspicuous; medium-sized shrub, very cold-tolerant). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries, California, in 1965.

Harriet Newding (Very unusual; single; broad parchment-white petals with a deep red streak running along the middle of each one and a scattering of additional red dots. Medium-sized shrub, quite cold-tolerant. Probably a natural hybrid of Ed Barr and Hardy Red). Named by biologist and engineer Robert Newding for his mother, in whose yard it was discovered. Galveston variety, now widely distributed throughout Europe.

Hawai'i (single salmon, widely-separated petals with yellow throat, very long corona appendages, not fragrant. Cold-sensitive). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1965.

Henry Rosenberg (single; medium-pink, funnel-shaped flower with slightly curling petals giving it a star shape. Large shrub). Named for a remarkable 19th-century Galveston citizen, a Swiss immigrant who became a prominent financier and outstanding philanthropist. Galveston variety.

Henry's Red (single, intense fuchsia-red; compact but wide growth habit, very short internodes. The broad leaves form a very attractive geometric pattern along the stems). Very rare; discovered next to Henry's Mexican Restaurant at the corner of Broadway und Martin Luther King Boulevard in Galveston. Galveston variety.

Isle of Capri (known as 'I. Lovenberg' in Galveston: single, cream-yellow with intense yellow throat; star-shaped as one edge of each petal curls inward. Medium-sized to large shrub). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1963.

Jannoch (single fuchsia, large flower with widely-separated petals and very long corona fringes, not fragrant, very floriferous. Compact, rounded shrub; undemanding and cold-tolerant). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1952.

John Samuels (double, deep pink, petals have ruffled edges) Very rare, only one plant known to exist in Galveston. Galveston variety.

John Woods Harris (single, rich deep red, widely-separated petals, not fragrant; large shrub). Named for a prominent Galveston citizen who was the director of the Galveston Foundation. A hybrid of 'Emile Sahut' and 'Tangier'. The original cross was made by Bob Newding around 1993. Galveston variety.

Kewpie (Extraordinarily unusual cultivar; pinwheel-shaped large flowers variegated pink and white, with widely-separated, spiraling petals). Named for Maureen "Kewpie" Gaido, founder of the International Oleander Society. A chance seedling discovered in Galveston by Ethyl Mae Koehler, one of the co-founders of the International Oleander Society. Galveston variety, now becoming very popular in Europe.

Lady Kate (Single, very pale pink; large shrub). Galveston variety.

Lane Taylor Sealy (Single, very large pale salmon flowers with red-striped yellow throats, fragrant; compact shrub, cold-tolerant). Named by the prominent Galveston businessman and philanthropist George Sealy Jr. for his young son whom he engaged to "steal" cuttings during the 1940's. Lane Sealy only found out about this honor by chance from oleander expert Clarence Pleasants approximately fifty years later. Galveston variety.

Little Red (= **Petite Red**: single, deep-red; slightly fragrant; dwarf plant; somewhat temperamental). Known as ‘Petite Red’ and sometimes as ‘Maravenne’ in Europe. Its origin is sometimes given in the literature as Kenya, by analogy with the other ‘Petites’ (White, Pink, and Salmon), but this is erroneous. ‘Little Red’ is a hybrid of ‘Emile Sahut’ and ‘Hardy Red’, first introduced by Aldridge Nursery of Von Ormy, Texas in 1982)

Magnolia Willis Sealy (= **Mont Blanc**): hose-in-hose, white, broad petals, each coming to a small point in the middle of the rounded outer margin; very fragrant; vigorous shrub; a very old European variety of unknown origin). Named after the wife of George Sealy; a remarkably dynamic woman who housed hundreds of survivors of the 1900 hurricane in her own home, and who worked tirelessly to collect oleanders and other plants and to replace and replant the island’s vegetation after that catastrophe.

Martha Hanna Hensley (Single, wide petals variegated pink & white, lightly fragrant; compact shrub). Named for a prominent Galveston citizen who was a close friend of Harriet Newding. First listed by Florida State Horticultural Society, 1975. Galveston variety.

Mathilde Ferrier (= **Luteum Plenum**: double, pale yellow, pointed petals, fragrant; vigorous shrub). An old variety described in 1854 in Julius W. F. Bosse’s *Handbuch der Blumengärtnerei* (Handbook of Flower Gardening).

Marrakesh (single red; dwarf). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1994.

Morocco (single white; dwarf). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1994.

Mrs. Burton (double rose-pink, very fragrant; large shrub, somewhat cold-tolerant) Galveston variety.

Mrs. Eugenia Fowler (hose-in hose, medium pink, flowers slightly funnel-shaped; large vigorous shrub). First listed by Florida State Horticultural Society, 1975. Galveston variety.

Mrs. F. Roeding (double salmon/yellow/orange/pink “sunset colors”, fragrant; medium-sized shrub with a somewhat spreading and weeping habit). Introduced in 1905 by Fancher Creek Nursery, California. Raised from seed imported from Japan.

Mrs. Isadore Dyer (double pink, some petals streaked with white; fragrant; vigorous bush). A representative of a complex of closely-related, typical “heirloom” oleanders [“Splendens group”], a type which has been commonly grown in Europe since being introduced from India in the late 17th century. ‘Mrs. Dyer’ was brought from Jamaica and introduced to Galveston by businessman Joseph Osterman in 1841.

Mrs. John Adriance (single white). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Kelso (single white; flowers star-shaped as one edge of petal curls inward; not fragrant. Medium-sized shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Moody (single white, one side of petal tip comes to a point, giving an overall notched effect; not fragrant). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Kempner (double, deep rose-red, carnation-like flowers). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Pearl Knox (double white, outer margin of petals rounded; not fragrant. Large shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Lucille Hutchings (double, light salmon; petals edged with pink; large flowers. Large shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Masterson (single, bell-shaped, light-pink with pink-striped white throat, not fragrant, large shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Moody (single white, one side of petal tip comes to a point, giving an overall notched effect; not fragrant). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Robertson (single, cerise, large flowers; very fragrant; large shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Runge (= **Splendens Foliis Variegatis**) (double pink flowers, fragrant, leaves variegated with green and cream-yellow). Old European variety mentioned by Julius W. F. Bosse in his *Handbuch der Blumengärtnerei*, 1854.

Mrs. Swanson (double light pink; upright growth; cold-tolerant). Originated in California, brought by Clarence Pleasants from Virginia to Galveston.

Mrs. Trueheart (large, deep pink, very fragrant flowers; rounded shrub). Galveston variety.

Mrs. Willard Cooke (= **Alsace**: single, extremely pale pink, essentially white. Buds pale peach or salmon. Faint fragrance on warm, humid evenings. Beautiful deep-green foliage). Outstanding; robust; easy to grow and propagate. Probably a very old European variety whose origins are lost in the distant past.

Peach Blossom (double salmon) Sold under this name by Logee's Greenhouses, Danielson, Connecticut.

Petite Pink (single pale pink, non-fragrant; dwarf shrub). Originated in Kenya. Introduced by the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum prior to 1973.

Petite Salmon (single salmon flowers, not fragrant; dwarf shrub). Originated in Kenya. Introduced by the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum prior to 1973.

Pink Beauty (= **Hardy Pink**: single, large, lightly fragrant medium-pink flowers with characteristic, swollen, balloon-like buds. Vigorous plant, cold-tolerant. Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries by the name 'Hardy Pink' in 1965. Known as 'Hardy Pink in Europe' and NOT the same as the extremely large and vigorous plant sold under the name 'Pink Beauty' in Europe,

which is another Monrovia introduction from the year 1952. ‘Hardy Pink’ from 1965 has the balloon-like buds; ‘Pink Beauty’ from 1952 does not).

Pleasants Postoffice Pink (single medium to dark pink, large flowers, petals “keeled” down the middle lengthwise. Large shrub). Discovered on Postoffice Street in Galveston and named after Clarence Pleasants, a co-founder of the International Oleander Society. Galveston variety.

Professor Parlаторre [sic] - should be **Parlatore**. (single, cerise with lavender overtones, large flower with widely-separated petals; not fragrant. Large shrub; cold-tolerant). A cultivar of the same name, but with hose-in-hose light pink flowers, was listed in Félix Sahut’s catalogue in 1876. Apparently named for Filippo Parlatore, a well-known and highly regarded 19th-century Italian botanist.

Robert Newding (= **Newding’s Hillside Red**: single, intense deep red flowers on a compact plant with a spreading habit resembling an azalea). The original plant is growing on the slope next to Harriet Newding’s house. Galveston variety.

Ruby Lace (very unusual; single, extremely large magenta flowers with pinwheel shaped-flowers; inner edge of petal ruffled or scalloped; fragrant. Medium-sized shrub, fairly cold-tolerant, small leaves. Appeared as a chance seedling in a private California garden belonging to a Monrovia employee in the mid 1960’s; donated by the owner to Monrovia Nurseries, which introduced it in 1986).

Scarlet Beauty (= **Emile Sahut**: single, deep-red slightly cupped or goblet-shaped flowers with a light, fine fragrance. Shrub medium to large with a stiffly upright growth habit). Very well-known old French variety introduced by Félix Sahut in 1873.

Sister Agnes (= **Soeur Agnès**: single, pure-white flowers with yellow throat; slightly fragrant on warm, humid evenings; large, vigorous plant). Well-known old European variety, introduced by Félix Sahut in 1873

Sorrento (hose-in-hose, light lemon-yellow flowers with broad petals; fragrant. Medium-sized shrub; floriferous. Cold-sensitive). Introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1964.

Splendens (double pink, fragrant; vigorous bush; the typical heirloom oleander which has been grown in Europe since its introduction from India in the late 17th century).

Sue Hawley Oakes (single, cream-yellow with bright yellow throat; star-shaped flower as one edge of petal curls inward; not fragrant; medium-sized shrub) Galveston variety.

Sugarland (See Hardy Red. This is said to be a more cold-tolerant variant).

Tangier (single medium-pink, widely-separated petals.; medium-sized shrub). Originated in Algeria; introduced by Monrovia Nurseries in 1978.

Turner's Carnival (single salmon/ pink/ cream-yellow; dwarf plant). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Daisy (single, cream-yellow edged with soft pink; dwarf shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Elaine Turner (single, ivory edged with soft pink and yellow; red-striped throat; dwarf shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Flirt (single pink; fragrant; petals have squared tips. Dwarf to medium-sized shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Katherine Childers (single; white with pale-pink blush; upright growth, normal-sized shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Kim Bell (single, pale-yellow with red-striped yellow throat; star-shaped flower owing to curling petals). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Shari D (single, cream-yellow with fuchsia-striped canary-yellow throat; compact shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Sissy King (single, ivory with pink striped corona; dwarf plant) Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Tickled Pink (single light peach-pink, throat yellow with red stripes; compact shrub). Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Turner's Trey Boy (single dark pink; red-striped yellow throat; dwarf shrub. Introduced by Turner's Gardenland, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Wimcrest (single, pale yellow with yellow throat; medium-sized shrub). Discovered on Wimcrest Street in Galveston; very rare. Galveston variety.