

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

March 2015



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Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México

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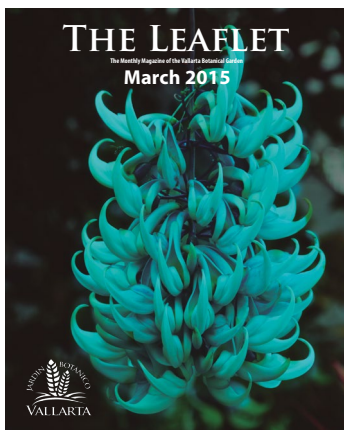
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Cover photo: Gerardo Luna
Phillipine jade vine



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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

This last month my dear mother Betty flew in to Puerto Vallarta in eager anticipation of our Curator's Candlelight Dinner on February 19th. Sadly, she fell suddenly ill and passed away within days of her arrival. While I mourn her loss, I wish to share with you all her love for the Vallarta Botanical Garden and her gratitude to our generous family of members and supporters. To all of you who have showed your love and support to me and my family since her passing, Thank you.

As I reflect now on my mother's life, I'm surrounded by new life here at the garden with springtime already upon us. While some are particularly drawn to the new plants and flowers now emerging, others are more inclined to observe animals. In March we especially celebrate birds—not just for their beautiful songs and splendid plumage—but also the important roles they play in our natural environment.

We could never pay birds back for the work they do in our Garden and the surrounding forest as they pollinate flowers, disperse seeds, control insect populations, and provide us with a constant delight.

Fortunately, our feathered friends ask for no reimbursements for their services, but nevertheless we feel compelled to show our appreciation by studying them and educating others about the importance of conserving their varied habitats. We at the Garden are proud to be a co-host of the annual Vallarta Bird Festival since its inception and scheduled this year for March 5-8th.

For those of you in Puerto Vallarta, please come up to the mountains and visit us soon; to those of you in other places, keep Mexico in your hearts!

***Yours in friendship,
Bob Price, Curator and Founder, VBG***

Photo: Iván Jiménez
Echeveria spp.



In Memory — Betty Ann Price

Betty Price, co-founder of the Vallarta Botanical Garden, passed away on February 17th, 2015. She is deeply missed and will be remembered forever by those who knew her and we continue to feel her warm presence here at the Garden she loved so dearly.



GOD, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Mexican Orchid of the Month — *Govenia jouyana*

By Lizbeth Hernández Hernández, Biologist & Co-author of "Las orquídeas del occidente de México, Volumen 1"

On this occasion we present a beautiful plant so far only known to one classic place in the State of Jalisco. It is found in rich, rocky volcanic soil in oak forests, 2,550 m above sea level. In general, *Govenia jouyana* is distinguished from *G. liliacea* (Lex.) Lindl. by leaves of unequal size, white ovules, immaculate petals, and tiny rusty spots on the underside of the Labellum numbering from 45 to 50.

As far as we know this plant is only encountered in the area of Tequila, so we can categorize it as a species in danger of extinction due to wildfires in the forests it inhabits, hikers who may inadvertently trample these delicate flowers on weekend hikes, and the intentions to exploit much of this land for cultivation.

I don't want to miss the opportunity to mention that the Dr. Salvador Rosillo de Velasco is, to date, the orchidologist who has most thoroughly explored the hills of Tequila in his collection excursions measured best by his love of studying orchids.



Photo: Alain Jouy
Govenia jouyana

The Vallarta Botanical Garden— Making a Tourism Difference in Puerto Vallarta

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

In mid-March, the Canadian Garden Tourism council will host the North American Garden Tourism Conference in Toronto in conjunction with Canada's premier annual floral festival, "Canada Blooms." This year the newly formed International Garden Tourism Network will also act as a participating organization and bring in many new speakers through its wide and growing influence. Conference leaders asked the Vallarta Botanical Garden to participate by presenting how our garden has made a tourism difference in Puerto Vallarta.

From our perspective, we have served as a successful local model of sustainable eco-tourism while spotlighting our region's abundance of truly incredible Mexican native plants. Nearly ten years after the Vallarta Botanical Garden opened to the public our work continues to inspire others to enjoy and care for their natural world. While our garden has enjoyed the benefits of increased recognition internationally and by our local community, we are helping our region as a whole become known as a world-class garden destination.

It is hard to calculate the overall results to our local economy from tourism generated by our Garden, the improved livelihoods of those who benefit from our thriving tourism industry, and increased quality of life to those who frequent the VBG. Quite clearly though, the VBG and our family of supporters is making an incredible positive difference here in Puerto Vallarta as is best evidenced by the ever-increasing flow of visitors to our Garden and their wonderful commentaries.

This month of March, the VBG's Operations Director, Jesús Reyes, will be representing us at the upcoming North American Garden Tourism Conference. He will present to an international audience of leaders in the garden and tourism industries about the difference the Vallarta Botanical Garden has made in Puerto Vallarta and how our work continues to bring great benefits to our local communities and México in general.



photo: Ivan Jiménez

The Vallarta Botanical Garden— A Popular Puerto Vallarta Attraction

As of this moment, the Vallarta Botanical Garden is listed in TripAdvisor.com as number 5 of 181 “Things To Do” in Puerto Vallarta with just shy of 1,000 incredibly complementary visitor commentaries.

Here is a sampling of comments from a few of our most recent 5 star TripAdvisor reviews:



“Beautiful change from the Beach”

“I am not a botanist, but this place is beautiful.”

“Awesome!”

“Must stop”

“A wonderful experience”

If you haven't yet left a [TripAdvisor](#) review for the Vallarta Botanical Garden, please do so today.



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Encyclia suaveolens

Since I first visited the Vallarta Botanical Garden and learned about their project I loved it. Their team is working hard to protect the environment and teach kids how they can do something about it, besides that they bring more tourism. As a business owner this impacts my sales and is good for all who live in this beautiful place. Thanks amigos for your amazing work.

— Mario Jiménez, Puerto Vallarta Resident and Business Owner

The Case of the Missing Burrito

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Who says scientific names have to be difficult? A beautiful little succulent found within our collections and displays is officially known to botanists as *Sedum burrito* in reference to its pendulous branches that reach down like the tails of small donkeys. What botanists don't yet know is just where this plant comes from.

A recent discovery in the wild of its closest relative, *Sedum morganianum* (known by the common name of burro's tail), may now put botanical sleuths one step closer to honing down on the native range of *S. burrito* as well. Since the first documentation of *S. morganianum* in 1935 from plants in a Vera Cruz nursery, botanists have scoured nearby mountains and canyons for decades in search for a wild population of these fascinating plants. The secret has eluded them until 2010 when a Vera Cruz rancher took botanists to a canyon within his property with a healthy population of *S. morganianum*.

Sedum burrito (described in 1975) is now one of very few popular ornamentals whose place of origin remains a matter of conjecture and speculation. Hopefully, a diverse and wild population still exists for us to learn more about this plant and conserve its habitat.

For those of you who would like to have your own little burrito, we have a selection of *Sedum burrito* available for purchase in the Garden's Nursery. Unlike its namesake animal that doesn't make a great house-pet unless you own a ranch, *Sedum burrito* can grow from a small pot on your windowsill or as a hanging plant on your patio or balcony. For those who are reluctant to take on many plants because of travels that take them away from their homes or condos—have no fear—as a succulent, *Sedum burrito* is suited to enduring long dry spells without harm and will do just fine on its own until your return.



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Sedum burrito



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Petrea volubilis

"Podrán cortar todas las flores, pero no podrán detener la primavera."
(You can cut all the flowers, but can't hold back springtime.)

— Pablo Neruda

A Salute to Vallarta! Membership Appreciation Day 2015



2015 Curator's Candlelight Dinner



Learn to Sketch Birds

Free Artist Workshop

At the VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Friday-Sunday, March 6-8

2-4 pm

**Meet in the Hall of Flowers Ballroom
in the Hacienda de Oro Visitor Center**

Participants will learn a quick technique for capturing the essence of a bird on paper and have opportunities to practice under the instruction and coaching of Christine Elder, an experienced bird artist.

Adults and children of all ages and abilities are welcome.

Any one can learn to draw! Come join the fun!

Christine Elder is a professional artist & naturalist living in Oregon. She also co-leads birding tours with Paradise Birding.

**Simply show up with pen/
pencil and paper, and enjoy!**

We have extra pencils and paper

This event is concurrent with the Vallarta Bird Festival (March 5-8), but participants are not required to register with the Bird Festival.

This workshop is complimentary with regular garden admission of just \$80 MXN per adult or adolescent.

Paintings by
Christine Elder



Mexican Bird of the Month — *Columbina inca*

The Inca dove, despite a name referring to the ancient empire that spread from what is now Columbia to Chile, has a natural range much farther to the north from the southwestern United States to Costa Rica. Along this range it is only found along the Pacific side including our state of Jalisco. Given their current rate of expansion to the south, their “empire” may one day include that once ruled by the Inca people.

Inca doves are a slender bird of 16.5-23 cm and covered in grayish brown feathers that form a distinctive scaled pattern. Their long rectangular tails are edged with white feathers.

“Early Bird” Opening at the Vallarta Botanical Garden every Thursday

For those who aren’t able to join us for the Vallarta Bird Festival, have no fear: all year long we offer an “early bird” opening every Thursday at 8:00 am at no additional cost to the standard Garden entry fee. We have binoculars available to rent each day and there are usually volunteers available to help with identification and pointing out special places to find particular species. Enjoy the Garden during the quiet morning hours for your best birding opportunities.

4TH ANNUAL VALLARTA BIRD FESTIVAL MARCH 5 - 8 2014

- Islas Marietas “Mini Galapagos”
- Field trips to Mangroves, Coastal lagoons, Wetlands, Tropical forests, Jungles thorn forests, Pine & Oaks forests, Tropical ecotones, and pine evergreen forests
- Workshops: Birding by ear, Shorebirds Identification, & Bird Identification for KIDS
- Bird merchandise and Optics Expo
- Photo Exhibit



www.vallartabirdfestival.org
INFO OR CALL 322 293 7052



Photo: Petr Myska
Columbina inca



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Centurus chrysogenys

Dedication of the Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House

Saturday, March 14, 12:00 - 12:30 pm

Join Vallarta Botanical Garden Patron and former Executive Director of the American Rhododendron Society, Dee Daneri, for a dedication of the Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House currently under construction. Scheduled for completion and a soft opening in June, this structure will soon host the

only collection of Vireya Rhododendrons in Mexico as well as a lovely selection of accompanying plants. While work continues, the frame of this building's roof is scheduled to be completed in time for our dedication.



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Vireya Rhododendron



Photo: Gerardo Luna

Capomo Harvest Festival — Saturday, March 21

By Alan Heinze, Research Coordinator, VBG

Capomo, also known as breadnut, is both the name of a native tree (*Brosimum alicastrum*) and its fruit. Capomo berries are covered by a thin edible tissue which is an important source of food for a variety of wild animals like deer and bats. Cattle will also consume the fruits and local farmers are therefore keen to maintain capomo stands, generating multiple environmental services to all. The nutrient rich seeds are harvested, processed and commercialized by local

families, who value these forests for their beauty and the livelihood they provide.

Come learn about this incredible native forest crop during our Capomo Harvest Festival on March 21st. Gather capomo from the forest floor and learn about nutritious and delicious recipes that you can prepare at home to include this tropical superfood into your diet.



Capomo Nuts

Palm Sunday Palm Walk

Sunday, March 29, 1:00 pm

Dr. Felix Montes of the Tropical America Nursery will lead us on a fact-filled exploratory walk of the VBG's Palm Collection noting both native species of interest as well as exotics that make excellent landscaping choices. As a long-time contributing member of the International Palm Society, Dr. Montes is highly regarded for his tropical palm

expertise by public garden staff throughout the US and Mexico as well as gardeners of private hotels and estates. On Palm Sunday, his palm growing advice and personal attention is complimentary to Garden visitors as part of his generous gift of time to our Puerto Vallarta gardening community.



Photo: Gerardo Etna
Chrysothrix spp.

Beer VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Saturday, April 18, 1:00 – 6:00 pm

Puerto Vallarta will now have its own version of an event that has become wildly popular in our Sister City of Santa Barbara—the annual Santa Barbara Botanical BEER Garden—pairing craft microbrews with special places within the garden. Los Muertos Brewing of Old Town Puerto Vallarta is sponsoring the Vallarta Botanical BEER Garden event with brew stations for participants to both learn about these tasty beverages and talk with Garden staff and volunteers.

Come participate in a **“funraiser”** and make new friends while supporting educational programs at the Garden with the proceeds of sales from this entertaining event.

Advanced Ticket Purchase Required. \$500 MXN for non-members and \$450 MXN for Garden members. Tickets are available at both the Vallarta Botanical Garden and Los Muertos Brewing starting on Friday, March 13th.

Please note: the Garden closes to public at 12:00 noon on the day of this event.



VBG Education & Volunteer Program Report

By Linda Asencio, Biologist and Environmental Educator

Peace Corps Volunteer at the Vallarta Botanical Garden through a collaboration with Mexico's Park Service (CONANP)

Fellow Garden volunteers and I have continued marching on with the VBG's curatorial process and now have nearly 500 plants accessioned and linked to records in the Garden's database. While the full database is a rather unwieldy beast with over 30 different fields of information, we are now working on a user-friendly binder for garden visitors that will at least link our accession numbers to each plant's scientific name. From there, curious visitors can make their own take-home lists to research these plants online to their heart's content. We're certainly far from perfect in our identification so if you believe that we've misidentified any plants, please bring this to my attention!

For those who prefer less research and more time enjoying nature, we have some great activities for you this month including our Capomo Harvest Festival and Palm Sunday Palm Walk. Even if you only visit the garden to explore on your own, a new adventure of outdoors discovery always awaits for those whose hearts are open to the natural world.



Biology students from CU Costa, February 2015

Monthly tally of visits, program participation, and volunteer service:

Feb. 2015	Total member visits to the VBG:	290
	Total non-member visits to the VBG:	4,674
	Complimentary entries for organized school groups*:	123
	Total participation in daily 1 pm tours:	265
	Total participation in special events, classes, or workshops:	1,803
	Total volunteer service hours:	260

*The VBG is happy to provide complimentary entries, guided tours, and educational programming for organized school groups with advanced reservations as one of our services to the Bahía de Banderas, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo Corrientes communities. Reservation requests should be sent to educadorambiental@vbgardens.org at least 5 days before the requested date of your visit. Requests are granted first come, first served and are scheduled around other events and programs already on our calendar.

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
5-8	MAR	Vallarta Bird Festival — More info at: www.vallartabirdconservancy.org	See note
6-7	MAR	Free Workshops: Learn to Sketch Birds — 2:00-4:00 pm	Included with entry
14	MAR	Dedication of the Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House — 12:00 - 12:30 pm	Included with entry
19	MAR	Curator's Sunset Cocktail Social (Copa de Oro Members and above) — 6:00 - 8:30 pm	See note
21	MAR	Capomo Harvest Festival — Guided hike at 1:00 pm, info both with volunteer docents — 12:00 – 4:00 pm	Included with entry
29	MAR	Palm Sunday Palm Walk — Walking tour at 1:00 pm	Included with entry
5	APR	Easter — Garden remains open	—
6	APR	GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	—
6	APR	Volunteer & Staff Appreciation Day — Gardens closed, details to follow	—
18	APR	<i>Beer</i> Vallarta Botanical Garden — Botanical Garden Special Event 12:00-6:00 pm Advanced Ticket Purchase Required (Available: VBG & Los Muertos Brewing) Garden closes to public at 12:00 noon on the day of this event.	Non-members: \$500 MXN Members: \$450 MXN
22	APR	Earth Day — Details to be announced	TBA
21-26	APR	Vanilla Blossom Expo at the VBG — Details to be announced	TBA

* Some activities subject to change. The most current calendar, often with links to further event information, can be viewed at www.vbgardens.org/calendar.

Photo: Iván Jiménez



Garden Hours

Open 7 days/wk

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

Daily Guided Tour

Additional tours

10 am – 6 pm

for the months of Dec., Jan., Feb., & March (except Christmas & New Year's Day)

(Closed Mondays) April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., & Nov

8 am every Thursday

1 pm (Offered for the months of Dec., Jan., Feb., & March)

can be reserved in advance www.vbgardens.org/tours



Photo: Iván Jiménez
Anacheilium trulla



From the Membership Desk

What a great time for all during our “Salute to Vallarta!” Membership Appreciation Day this February. It was a pleasure to have so many of you join us on this special day! For those who have yet to join us as a member, please consider doing so at this time.

While spring is in the air you can become part of the family that brings great beauty and joy to our beloved Puerto Vallarta community. Your membership not only provides great benefits including unlimited entry and discounts, but also provides the means by which we create positive change for the Vallarta Region!

Members: please always wear your membership card when visiting the Garden. This helps our staff and volunteers recognize you as members and offer discounts on your Garden purchases.

Michaela Flores, Membership Coordinator, VBG, memberships@vbgardens.org

Can you find your name on our WALL OF BENEFACTORS?

**If you’re not yet “on the wall” we invite you to join
the family that preserves the Garden forever!**

Becoming a member is easy & provides great benefits:

www.vbgardens.org/memberships

A high resolution image of this photograph is
available at www.vbgardens.org/benefactors



We would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters:

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