

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

December 2017



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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

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Photo: Jesús Reyes

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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Vallarta Botanical Garden,

Thanks to continued strong tourism in Puerto Vallarta, the generous contributions of our members and other supporters, and the hard work of our staff and volunteers, the Vallarta Botanical Garden has truly become a world-class garden destination.

Continually raising the bar of excellence and maintaining our gardens and horticultural displays in top condition requires significant ongoing resources. For this reason, effective December 1, the new Garden entry fee will be 200 pesos per person. Because of the Garden's large size you may need more than one day to explore the grounds. You will be delighted to learn your entry fee allows you to enter the botanical garden on the second consecutive day for free. Members always enjoy unlimited entry to the gardens.

The Vallarta Botanical Garden remains one of the top vacation values in the region with an incredible list of things to see and do. With the recent expansion of the Garden's native forest preserve we now have approximately 24 hectares (65 acres) of property, much of it yours to explore with our extensive trail system. New features for the 2017/2018 season include the recently completed Cactus and Succulent Plant House, the Bridge of Dreams, and the Peacewalk at the Cheryl L. Wheeler International Peace Garden.

The Vallarta Botanical Garden remains open seven days a week from December 1 to March 31. Garden entry admits you for two consecutive days and Garden membership admits you all year. Not only is the Garden full of so many things to experience, it is constantly changing from week to week with something new always in bloom or with fruit. So please come visit us soon and enjoy the bounty of nature at its finest.

Wishing you a warm and wonderful holiday season full of comfort and joy.

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Tillandsia stricta
Photo: Bob Price



Photo: Bob Price

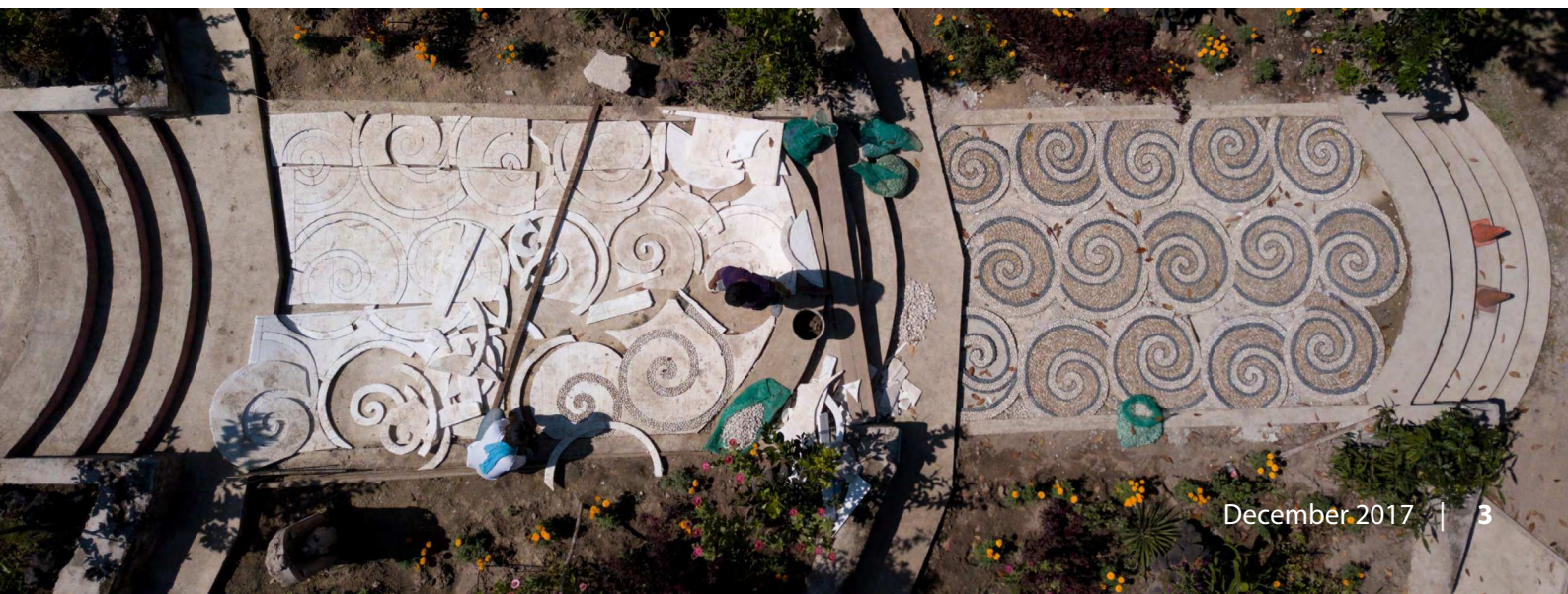
*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays
from the Vallarta Botanical Garden!*





Peacewalk

The Garden thanks Cheryl L. Wheeler for her generosity in funding the recently completed Peacewalk through the Cheryl L. Wheeler International Peace Garden of Mexico. The elegant beauty of this new feature is the perfect complement to one of the most serene and inspirational settings within the Garden. It has been finished right in time to enjoy during our favorite time of the year to reflect on peace on earth and good will toward men.





**The Vallarta Botanical Garden
Welcomes You To The
Recently Opened
Cactus and Succulent Plant House!**



Photo: Bob Price



The Cactus and Succulent Plant House
Photo: Bob Price



The Cactus and Succulent Plant House
Photo: Bob Price

The Vallarta Botanical Garden’s Membership Drive (Through Dec. 31)

Continuing through the end of the year, the Vallarta Botanical Garden is honoring our members in a new and exciting way. We’re extending special offers to encourage membership renewals and upgrades, so please feel free to invite your family and friends to join the Garden. As 501(c)3 nonprofit, memberships to the Vallarta Botanical Garden qualify for tax-deductible receipts in Mexico, the US, and Canada. Our membership staff and volunteers are happy to share with you how to make your membership payments, to qualify for tax-deductible receipts. Most importantly, our members collectively help the Garden to continue flourishing and continue achieving its mission here in our Puerto Vallarta community and beyond.

Special Offers (Through Dec. 31):

- 2 free months of membership
 - & a gift certificate (good towards purchases in the gift shop, nursery or restaurant.
-
- 2 free months of membership
 - & a complimentary commemorative tile

Who:

- Renewals at either of the following levels:

Individual Level	1,200 MXN	60 USD
Sustaining Level	1,900 MXN	95 USD
- Membership upgrades to any of the following levels:

Copa de Oro Level	12,000 MXN	600 USD
Board of Trustees	30,000 MXN	1,500 USD
Guardian Level	100,000 MXN	5,000 USD
Benefactor Level	200,000 MXN	10,000 USD

This is an exciting time of year, when we at the Vallarta Botanical Garden welcome back our friends and members. It is also one of the best times to grow and cultivate the support base necessary to continue a pathway to botanical garden excellence for the benefit of Vallartenses and our visitors from around the world. Please partner with us on achieving excellence together.



Photo: Jesús Reyes

Volunteer Spotlight: Ellen Zagory

Many of you know Ellen Zagory as the volunteer treasurer of "Friends of Vallarta Botanical Gardens, A.C." the Garden's 501(c)3 direct support non-profit in the United States. In addition to her service as a board member and treasurer, Ellen is the Director of Horticulture at the University of California's UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden. Since recently going to part time work at her home institution, she has had more time to spend visiting her "home away from home" here in the tropics. She has spent the past month volunteering at the Vallarta Botanical Garden putting her skills of horticulture to great use, making plant labels, and otherwise getting the Garden ready for a great winter tourism season and to receive our special guests in February for the Directors of Large Gardens Conference. ¡Gracias Ellen!



Vallarta Botanical Garden Volunteer Training

Calling all volunteers at the VBG!

We are delighted to inform you there will be a volunteer training day and breakfast at the Vallarta Botanical Garden on Saturday, December 2, 2017 starting at 9AM and lasting until 2PM. In addition to inviting new volunteers, all past volunteers are also welcome and encouraged to attend. Starting with a complimentary orientation breakfast (pre-registration requested), we'll share knowledge of the Garden and present opportunities for service toward our mission and vision.

Please contact me by email at:

educadorambiental@vbgardens.org.

Also, new volunteers are asked to please read over our information for volunteers on our website. Click on the "GET INVOLVED" pull-down menu and then click "VOLUNTEER".

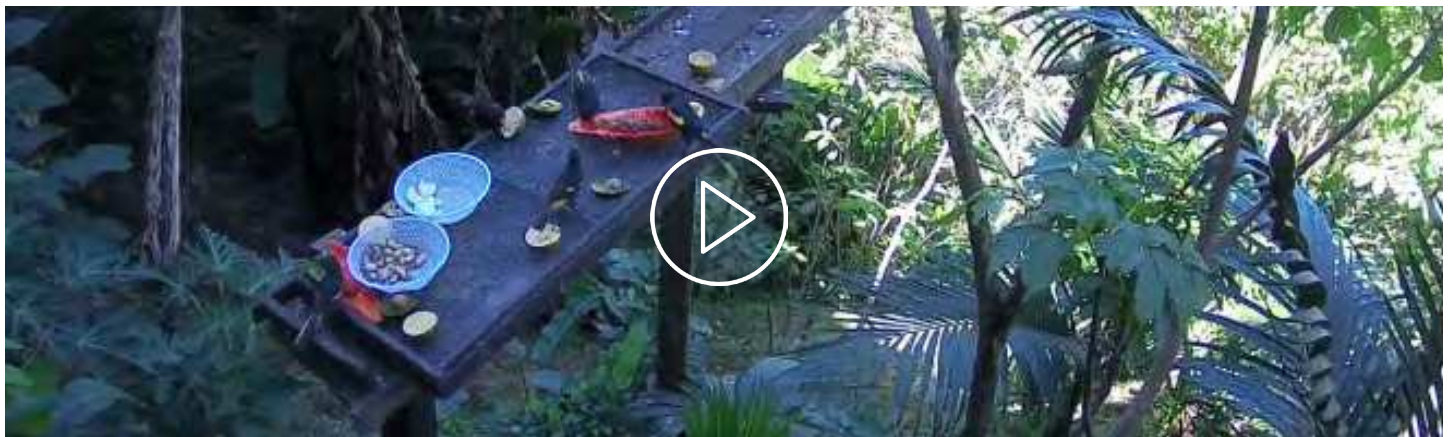
Keith Richert, VBG Volunteer Coordinator



Live hummingbird webcam at the Vallarta Botanical Garden!

Were you captivated by your experiences watching the fast-paced action and drama of hummingbirds during your last visit to the Garden? Now you can view these live online and share the spectacle with your friends and family.

The webcam is available for 24/7 streaming for your viewing pleasure:



<http://bit.ly/2zQiSYw>

2018 Vallarta Bird Festival, March 9 – 11

Article and photo by Nancy Holland

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Vallarta Bird Festival, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 9, 10, and 11, hosted by the beautiful Vallarta Botanical Garden.

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is situated on 64-acres at 1,300 ft above sea level in bird-rich Cabo Corrientes, just a short drive from Puerto Vallarta.

With excellent birding opportunities, guided birding tours in the Garden will be offered each morning along with guided tours every afternoon of the Garden's incredible array of native Mexican flora and exotic delights. Within the Garden alone over 200 different species of birds have been observed and documented by enthusiastic local residents and international visitors.

Bird photography workshops and educational seminars will be offered, along with exhibits, music, native dancers, and fun, all included with a daily general admission of 200 pesos or with a 3 day Happy Wren Pass (price to be determined).

For an additional cost, professional birding tours will venture from the coastal habitats to the upper elevation forest habitats in search of endemic specialties among the over 400 bird species found in this diverse region of Jalisco. There is no registration required for Garden activities but we would love to hear from you if you plan on coming. The professional birding tours do require advance registration.

The festival does not provide transportation but there are buses and taxis available in Puerto Vallarta that can take you directly to and from the Garden. The Hacienda de Oro Restaurant, on site, is open from 9am to 5pm serving breakfast and more, including oak-wood-fired brick-oven pizza and authentic Mexican cuisine.

Bring water, sunscreen, insect repellent, binoculars, and if you want to take a swim in the river, then bring a bathing suit and towel.

Contact us by email:
nancyholland@gmail.com
info@vbgardens.org

Facebook:
[Vallarta Birders](#)
[Vallarta Botanical Gardens AC](#)



Thick-billed Kingbird

Mexican Bird of the Month

Colibri thalassinus — Mexican Violetear

Article and photos by Greg R. Homel www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com/birdingadventures@mac.com

They finally did it! They, being the American Ornithologists Union, or AOU. What did they do you may ask? In their 2016 Supplement to the Checklist of North American Birds, the AOU split the superspecies, Green Violetear, into two distinct species—Mexican and Lesser, the former breeding in high mountains from Mexico to Nicaragua, and the latter breeding in highlands from Costa Rica and Panama, as well as throughout much of the Andes of South America, from Colombia and Venezuela to northern Chile.

Most of the birders that visit or reside in Puerto Vallarta are not familiar with this high mountain hummingbird, since it resides, well, in high mountains! The closest outlying population of this attractive, nomadic hummingbird is Cerro La Bufa, which looms ominously above the historic silver mining pueblo of San Sabastian del Oeste.

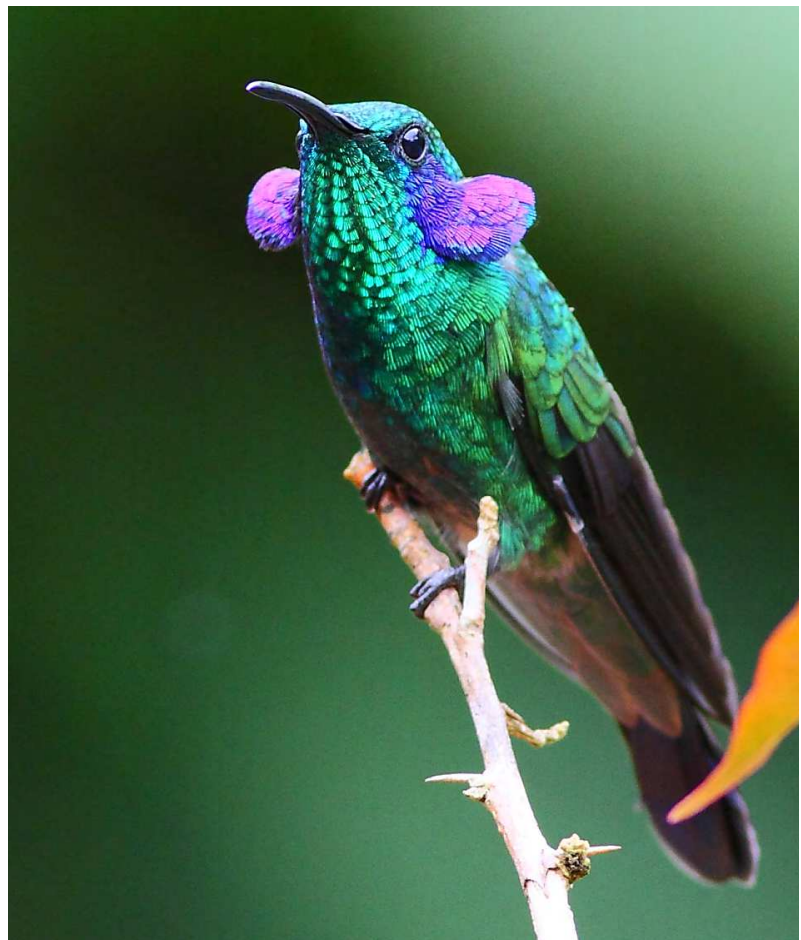
What makes the Mexican Violetear so special is its remarkable tolerance for the low temperatures that prevail in its elevated habitat of pines, oaks and junipers. This habitat is a boom and bust type of environment where food supply is concerned. In times a plenty, the ventriloquial warbler-like chipping notes of Mexican Violetears can be heard emanating from the tops of trees and shrubs near the summit of La Bufa. In lean times, however, the birds may abandon the area, and they are renowned for their ability to wander widely—which helps explain the annual occurrence of one or a few individuals of this typically neotropical beauty north of the border, where US records span from coast to coast, and from Texas to Canada. Of course, with resources at a premium, these emerald green spitfires jealously defend feeding territories from all trespassers, especially other hummingbirds, even their own kind.

The most conspicuous plumage characteristic of this lovely hummingbird is its namesake violet ear coverts, made more impressive by the bird's ability to articulate them in territorial and nuptial defense (see inset). And although one of the observable characteristics that supposedly sets them apart from the closely allied, more southerly Lesser Violetear, is a blue belly patch, not all individuals display this plumage feature, as the main photograph attests.

Like other high mountain hummingbirds, the Mexican Violetear may undergo a torpid metabolic state during cold nights, when temperatures may dip to near or below freezing, even here in the tropics. This adaptation helps them save valuable energy, as no hummingbirds feed at night.

Like all hummingbirds, the females must go it alone where nesting duties are concerned, as males take a pass on nesting duties in favor of a promiscuous breeding strategy, where they mate with any females in their territories, then galavant away to sip nectar contentedly.

No matter what we humans may think of this adaptive measure, hummingbirds apparently neither know nor care, but it has resulted in one of the largest, most successful families of American birds—with 338 species and counting, ranging from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego and associated island groups in both the Caribbean (including Cozumel and all of the Antilles) and Pacific, as far west as the Juan Fernandez archipelago more than a thousand miles off the west coast of Chile.





Become a Garden “GEM” by Giving Every Month

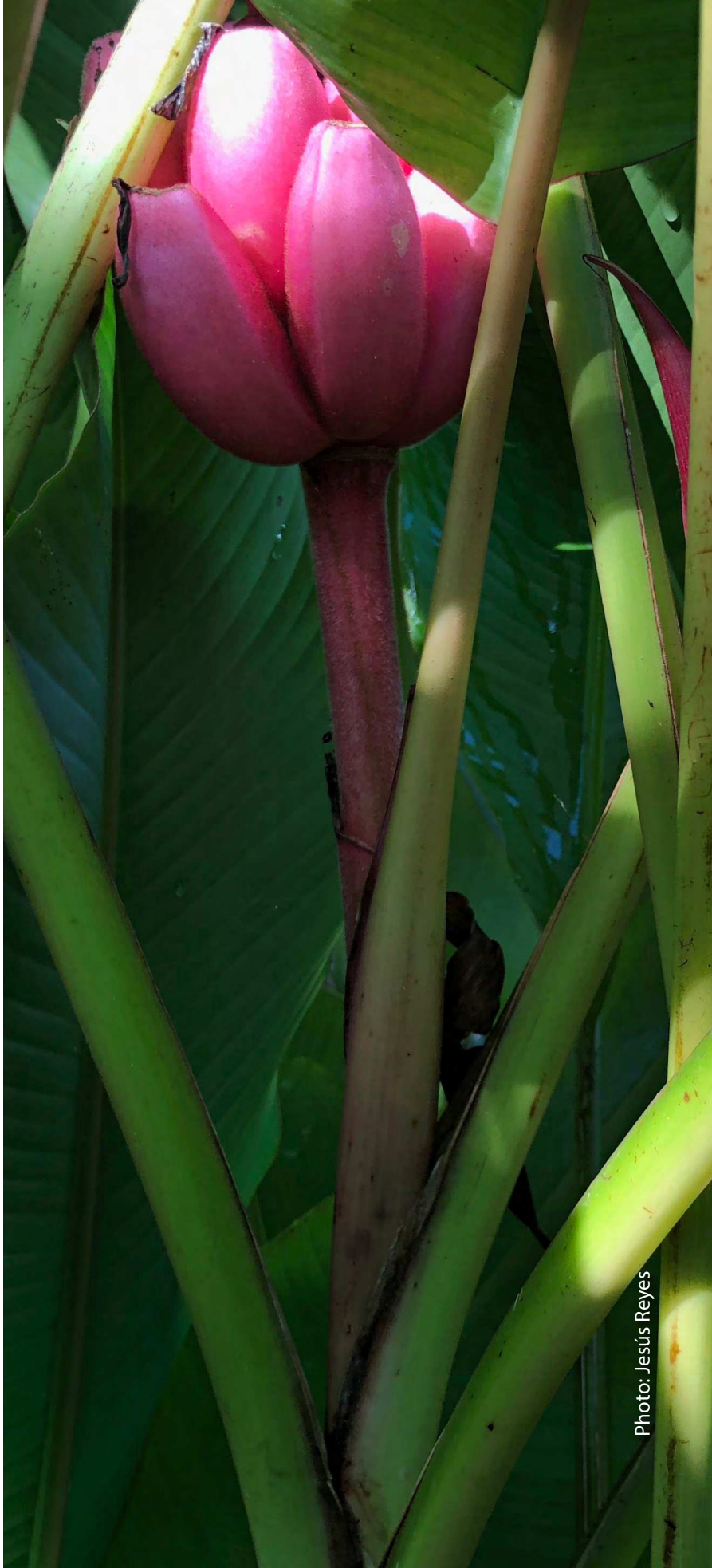
Dividing your contributions to the Vallarta Botanical Garden into monthly payments can help you better budget your annual giving while providing us with a dependable monthly income to carry the Garden through the slower times of the year. Learn more about this valuable opportunity by visiting the new Give Every Month “GEM” page on the Garden’s website, www.vbgardens.org and begin this kind of contribution today.

Commemorative Cantera Benches

Would you like to honor or memorialize someone with a permanent cantera bench at the Vallarta Botanical Garden? Benches are finished with beautiful hand-painted ceramic tiles. We can help you create a custom design with text and images of your choice. Prices are at \$7,000 USD for a Banca Real (Regal Bench) and \$5,000 USD for a Banca Distintiva (Distinctive Bench). Dividing this amount into payments over the course of three years results in a commitment of only \$194 or \$139 USD per month. These gifts, along with other honorary/memorial gifts such as individual tiles and permanent memorial stones in the Garden of Memories, qualify for tax-deductible contributions in Mexico, the US, and Canada. For more information, please visit our website or call 322 223 6182 and ask to speak to the Garden’s Membership Coordinator, Michaela Flores.

Your Legacy Lives on at the VBG

Including the Vallarta Botanical Garden in your wills, trusts, and estate planning is an investment in the long-term viability of this important natural sanctuary for Puerto Vallarta and the exquisite flora of Mexico and world tropics. A member of the Garden’s Legacy Committee would be happy to talk to you about the best options for optimizing your philanthropic potential and further blessing a community. Please write to info@vbgardens.org.





Bouquets to Banquets ... and many beautiful settings for your special day



Why not have your special day in one of the most beautiful places in the world?
There are many sites around the gardens where a wedding can be performed.
From a simple wedding with just a few friends, to a lavish event with all the trimmings.

Consult the Vallarta Botanical Gardens wedding planner for more ideas.
+52 (322) 223 6182 or (322) 223 6184 eventos@vbgardens.org

Mexican Orchid of the Month

***Laelia rubescens* Lindl.**

Article & photo by Centeotl Aragón, Staff Biologist

This month's orchid is commonly known in Spanish as "*flor de la concepción*" (flower of conception). Its natural distribution is in what used to be Mesoamerica and in Central America. It is a medium sized plant about 12 inches tall. You can recognize it by looking for rounded, flattened, grouped and superimposed pseudobulbs, as well as rigid leaves. Each inflorescence can have dozens of beautiful pink flowers with a dark stain in the throat of the labellum. The flowers of this species perish more quickly than other *Laelias*. Autumn and winter are the seasons to see them bloom, so, don't miss the opportunities waiting for you here at the Vallarta Botanical Garden.

REFERENCES:

- Hágsater, E., Soto A., M. A., Salazar C., G. A., Jiménez M., R., López R., M. A., y Dressler, R. L. 2005. Las orquídeas de México. Instituto Chinoín. México, D.F. 304 pp.





Education and Volunteer Report

By Centeotl Aragón, Vallarta Botanical Garden

The first group of young scholars whom we received in November was a group from the school of Alfred Noble in the charge of Abraham Meza, a young and dynamic biology teacher. The second visit was managed by the professor Eric Ramos who visited us with a small group of administration students from University of Guadalajara's new campus in Tomatlán. The third group, accompanied by their teacher María del Carmen Cortés, are from a class studying plant anatomy. The last visit was a group of tourism business students whose visit was coordinated by Irma Benitez.

It is a great satisfaction to be part of the formation of future adults committed to the respect and care of nature.

Monthly tally of visits, program participation, and volunteer service, November 2017:

Total member visits to the VBG:	171
Total non member visits to the VBG:	2791
Total complimentary entries:*	97
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	0
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	135
Total volunteer service hours:	36

* The Vallarta Botanical Garden is pleased to provide complimentary entry for educational programs for school groups with advanced reservations. Currently, these are only offered on Wednesdays. Requests for reservations may be delivered by email to escolar@vbgardens.org and should be sent at least five days prior to the requested visit date. Requests for reservations are granted on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to scheduling restrictions.

**1 pm tours are offered daily from December through March and otherwise only when volunteers are available.

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE	EVENT	COST
	THE GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER	
2 Dec	Volunteer Training – (see page 8 for details)	--
9 Dec	Crash Course on Birding in Tropical Western Mexico – 10 am to 11 am	Included with entry
16 Dec	Christmas Bird Count in Puerto Vallarta	Included with entry
21 Dec	Curator's Sunset Cocktail Social	Advanced purchase & registration required
25 Dec	Merry Christmas! – Garden Closed	--
1 Jan	Happy New Year – Garden Closed	--
5 Jan	Chocolate Festival at the VBG – Samples of Chocolate, chocolate tour, folklore dancers, food & drink specials – and much more!	Included with entry
13 Jan	Membership Appreciation Plant Sale – 20% Off	Discounts for members only
15 Jan	Curator's Sunset Cocktail Social	Advanced purchase & registration required
18 Jan	International Peace Garden Celebration	Included with entry
26 Jan	Orchids of Mexico – lecture 11 am	to be confirmed
28 Jan	Conference of the Directors of Large Gardens – 28 Jan - 3 Feb 2018	--

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

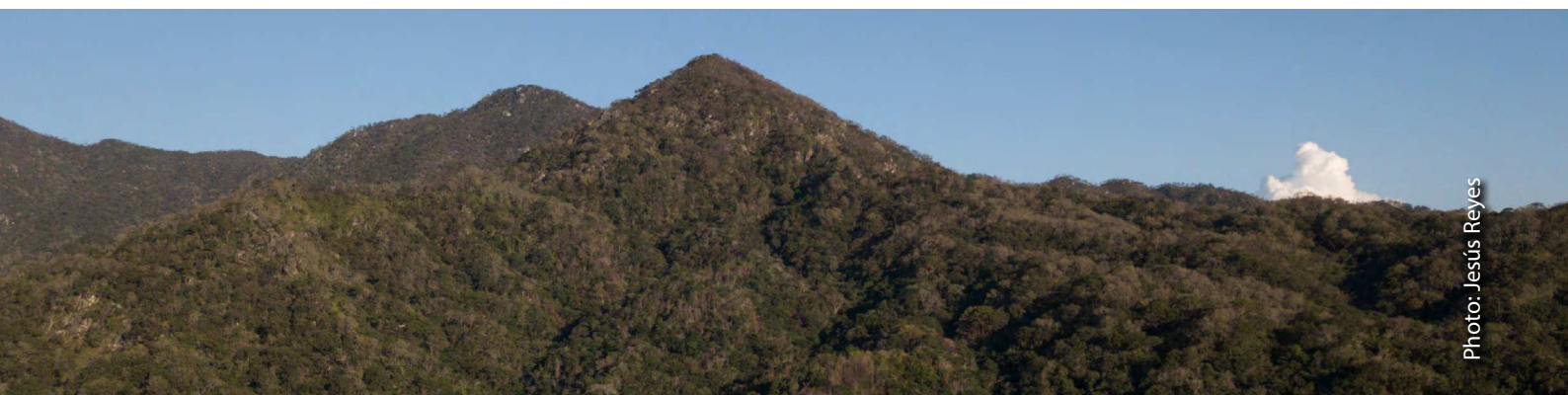


Photo: Jesús Reyes

Garden Hours

9 am – 6 pm

Open 7 days/wk

for the months of Dec., Jan., Feb., & March (except Christmas & New Year's Day)
(Closed Mondays) April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., & Nov.

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

8 am every Thursday (Offered for the months of Dec., Jan., Feb., & March)

Daily Guided Tour

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



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

From the Membership Desk

December is an especially great time to become a member or renew your membership because of the promotions we are currently offering (please see page 6). I look forward to welcoming all of our members back this season and meeting all of you who join us for the first time this year.

Members: Please always wear your membership card while visiting the Garden. This helps our staff and volunteers recognize you as members and offer valuable discounts on your Garden purchases and other important benefits.

Can you find your name on our WALL OF PATRONS?

**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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 Michaela Flores: memberships@vbgardens.org. Thank you.

(S) = student (I) = individual ☼ = deceased

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Your Donations to the Vallarta Botanical Garden are Greatly Appreciated

México



- **Tax-deduction receipts** are available for donations to the Vallarta Botanical Garden made through the *Fundación Punta de Mita* (FPM).
- **Please send an email earmarking your gift for the Vallarta Botanical Garden** to donaciones@fundacionpuntademita.org **with a copy to** info@vbgardens.org
- In this email please include your name, the date your gift was sent, and the amount of your gift.

Checks may be mailed to:

Fundación Punta de Mita, A.C.
Carretera Federal Libre 200 Km 18.05
Punta Mita, Nayarit, C.P. 63734 México.

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Paypal: www.fundacionpuntademita.org/en/how-to-help

Canada



Our educational programs qualify for **tax-deduction receipts** provided by The Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation (CCSHF)

Cheques may be mailed to:

Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation
87 Lavinia Ave
Toronto, ON,
M6S 3H9
Canada

Please write "VBG" for "Vallarta Botanical Gardens" on your cheques.

Alternatively, you may donate using a credit card through CanadaHelps.org (whose donation page is linked to the CCSHF website www.ccs hf.ca) selecting the "Vallarta Botanical Gardens Fund."

USA



Our direct support 501(c)3, "Friends of Vallarta Botanical Gardens, A.C." issues **tax-deduction receipts**:

Checks may be mailed to:

Friends of Vallarta Botanical Gardens, A.C.
759 North Campus Way
Davis, CA 95616

Wire transfers / direct deposits are accepted:

Please write to treasurer@vbgardens.org for routing and account numbers.

Credit Card Payments:

Call us w/ your card info: +52 322 223 6182

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