

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

July 2016

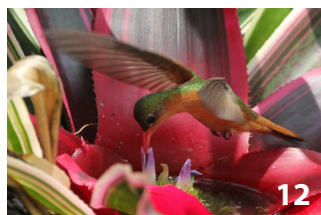
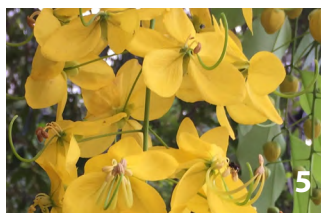


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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México

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Tillandsia ionantha
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

Peace. It should be one of our foremost quests as individuals (inner peace) and collectively as an interdependent global community (world peace). Any other goals that do not contribute towards peace are of questionable value. Even while true and lasting peace may at times seem unattainable, efforts towards it create the most rewarding journey possible and allow us to profoundly touch lives and help others.

Just as natural landscapes can restore the soul and create the perfect settings for reflection and goal setting, designed garden landscapes can provide this along with accessibility and infrastructure that cannot be found in the wild. Two of our landscape architecture collaborators have created a design for a new International Peace Garden which we would like to install at the approach to the garden's new chapel, *Nuestra Señora del Jardín* (Our Lady of the Garden).

It gives me great pleasure to unveil these plans to our community of garden supporters and invite your help to make this new project a reality! Please look ahead to the article, "Design of an International Peace Garden" to learn more and get involved. In the meantime, please plan your next trip back to the Vallarta Botanical Garden to enjoy nature and set your purposes for peace.

Warmest regards from the Garden,
Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG

Mexican Orchid of the Month

Trichocentrum oestlundianum (L.O.Williams) M.W.Chase & N.H.Williams

By Alejandra Flores Argüelles

This curious orchid is found only in Jalisco, Nayarit and Michoacán. It grows on trees or on rocks of tropical deciduous forests from sea level to 1,000 meters. It has showy, stiff and fleshy leaves up to 25 centimeters long and 4.5 centimeters wide. Despite the small size of the flowers, their intense color is sure to attract your attention; both the dark shiny red of its labellum (lip) and the contrasting

yellow and white at its center combine to form a striking touch.

It blooms from April to September and is currently flowering in the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Don't miss the opportunity to appreciate it!



Trichocentrum oestlundianum
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh



**"Peace begins with a smile."
— Mother Teresa**

Bromeliad detail
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

Give Every Month – Become a Garden “GEM”

Dividing your contributions to the Vallarta Botanical Garden into monthly payments can help you better budget your annual giving and allows us a dependable monthly income to carry the Garden through the slower times of the year. A new Give Every Month “GEM” page is now up on the Garden’s website www.vbgardens.org for you to 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 up into payments over the course of three years is a commitment of only \$194 or \$139 USD per month. These gifts qualify for tax deductible contributions in Mexico, the US, and Canada. Interested? Great! Please visit our website or call 322 223 6182 and ask to speak to the Garden’s Executive Director, Neil Gerlowski or 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.

Mexican Bird of the Month

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*)

By Greg R. Homel www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com/ birdingadventures@mac.com

It's now the rainy season and *they're everywhere!* Their cheerful admonitions ring from the extensive tropical thorn and deciduous forests of Cabo Corrientes, while the singers themselves remain elusive to the eye! When they are seen, it's usually as tiny, flitting, silhouetted forms in the forest canopy, gleaning insects from the undersurfaces of leaves within the now luxuriant and lush emerald foliage.

Initiated observers find their calls remarkably similar to a House Sparrow's chirping vocalizations. Unless that introduced species has undergone an exponential increase in numbers in the Vallarta area, and expanded away from the cities and pueblos, there must be another answer...

Behold the Yellow-green Vireo! These spritely, lemon-tinted little mites are Mexico's *answer* to the Red-eyed Vireo of the eastern half of the U.S. and Canada, and are a sight for sore eyes... unless you happen to be a leafhopper! Indeed, U.S. birders thrill to the sight of them, since they are so rare north of the border (where they occur as summer nesters in South Texas, with extralimital records west to California in the autumn).

An amazing Austral migrant (literally, from the Southern Hemisphere), Yellow-green Vireos are perhaps the most abundant Passerine (songbird) in the Vallarta region (yes, even outnumbering the adaptable Great-tailed Grackle), including Cabo Corrientes, in the summertime! They arrive in late March / early April and remain through September / October...

Consider this: Many more of these avian wonders live on the grounds of the Vallarta Botanical Garden in season than are found in the entire Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Many more! None remain for the winter, however, so they are missed by most of our human snowbirds.

So go ahead, make your day by pausing long enough to glass a Yellow-green Vireo, armed with the newfound knowledge of "who" is making all those sweet song notes emanating from our local forests. I bet you'll be glad you did!



Vireo flavoviridis
Photos: Greg R. Homel



Cassia fistula
Photo: Homero Castrejón

Golden Shower Tree

Cassia fistula

By Al Rouyer

“Spectacular” and “glorious” may be just the first of many descriptors that initially come to mind upon first seeing *Cassia fistula* in full bloom some time between April and July. Few trees are lovelier. Native to India and adjacent parts of Southeast Asia, the tree is now grown as an ornamental in many parts of the subtropics and tropics, including the Puerto Vallarta area. In India its fruit has been a staple of traditional *Ayurveda* medicine and even today the pulp of the fruit is widely used as a laxative. While technically a deciduous tree, in the tropics *Cassia fistula* is seldom devoid of leaves.

Identification: *Cassia fistula* is a medium sized tree reaching to between 9 and 18 meters feet through most specimens are closer to the shorter end. The tree generally has straight trunk with smooth, gray bark that becomes rough with age and a narrow, upright crown. The leaves are pinnate, compound, alternate, 30 to 40 centimeters long with 3 to 8 pairs of leaflets, which are ovate, 7 a 15 centimeters long and 3 to 6 centimeters wide. They are thin-textured, bright green but become dull as they age. The popularity of this tree is undoubtedly due to its gorgeous yellow flowers that bloom in pendulous clusters, 20 to 60 centimeters long; each flower is about 5 centimeters across with 5 petals of equal size and shape. The fruit is in the form of cylindrical pods, 30 to 60 centimeters long and 1.5 centimeters in diameter. They are green at first and then turn purple as they ripen. The inner pulp is licorice smelling and sweet to the taste, but if consumed by humans has a powerful purgative effect.

New Faces at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Several of you may have already met Alejandra Flores (left in photo), our new Plant Science Coordinator, who we introduced in last month's edition of *The Leaflet*. Alejandra and Jesús Reyes, the Garden's General Director, just attended a meeting of the *Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos* (Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens) where they were trained on a new standardized management plan for Mexican botanical gardens regarding plant records and permits. Since her return, Alejandra has been busy putting this plan into action.

Martha Robles (center in photo) is the newest team member of the garden. You can read about her work on the next page. Ariane Arrausi (right in photo) has just arrived for a month of volunteer service in both gardening and landscape architecture. After acquiring a landscape architecture degree in Madrid she completed an International Trainee Program at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, USA. Before returning to her home in the Basque Region of Spain she came to us to fulfill a dream of gardening in the tropics. So far, her time with us has been a dream come true for both her and the staff of our garden!



Alejandra Flores, Martha Robles, & Ariane Arrausi
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh



Martha Karina Robles Adame
Photo: Homero Castrejón

Presenting the VBG's Plant Propagation Coordinator

The propagation areas of the Vallarta Botanical Garden, including the orchid laboratory, are now managed by a new coordinator. Martha Karina Robles Adame has a biology degree from the Universidad Tecnológica de Bahía de Banderas. She is in charge of propagating an incredible variety of plants with a special emphasis on orchids. She has ample background in propagation both in vitro (in sterilized containers) and afterwards; along with pollination, breeding, and treating against plant pests and pathogens.

She worked for five years at a major commercial orchid production center as their general supervisor and lead laboratory technician. She delivered training programs at her company and developed an expertise with native Mexican orchids.

Considering the limited number of people with this unique specialization, we feel quite lucky to have met Martha and welcomed her to our team. Within her first month of work she successfully pollinated over 100 orchids which we hope to start reproducing by seed very soon. This is a long term commitment by the Garden not just to increase plants on display and for sale to the public, but to develop reserves for reintroduction to natural areas as these needs arise.

Consecration of *Nuestra Señora del Jardín*

*By Nicholas DeLorenzo, Landscape Architect &
VBG Volunteer*

Mariachi music and incense permeated the exquisite interior of the new chapel, *Nuestra Señora del Jardín* (Our Lady of the Garden) during the chapel's consecration on June 8th, 2016. Some sixty or so guests, including many family members of the chapel's patrons, Ruben Cota and Michael Schultz, gathered to celebrate the culmination of their dream to create a place of worship inspired by the architecture of the San Juan Capistrano Basilica, where they have attended for years. Their choice location for building a new chapel was the stunningly beautiful natural setting of the Vallarta Botanical Garden.

The acoustics of the space proved superb as the voices of the mariachi singers and song of their instruments reverberated from the red-brick domed ceiling and swept through the simple austerity of the chapel in joyous sounds of celebration. The ceremony was officiated by Bishop Luis Artemio Flores Calzada of the Catholic Church's Diocese of Tepic who was assisted by Father Saúl Cortes Ibarra of the church El Refugio in Puerto Vallarta and by Joaquín Humberto Famanía Ortega, Operative President of The Latino Coalition.

Speakers also described the historical nature of this consecration and the design theme of the chapel based on the San Juan Capistrano Basilica founded by Father Junipero Serra in 1776. The Bishop then blessed the chapel, the newly built altar and furnishings, and the forecourt with freshly consecrated holy water. Those who wished partook in Holy Communion. Guests were then treated to a celebratory lunch at the Hacienda del Oro Restaurant hosted by Mr. Cota and Mr. Schultz.

While this consecration was a ceremony of the Catholic Church, the chapel's mission is to serve as an inclusive interfaith center, accessible and welcoming to all.



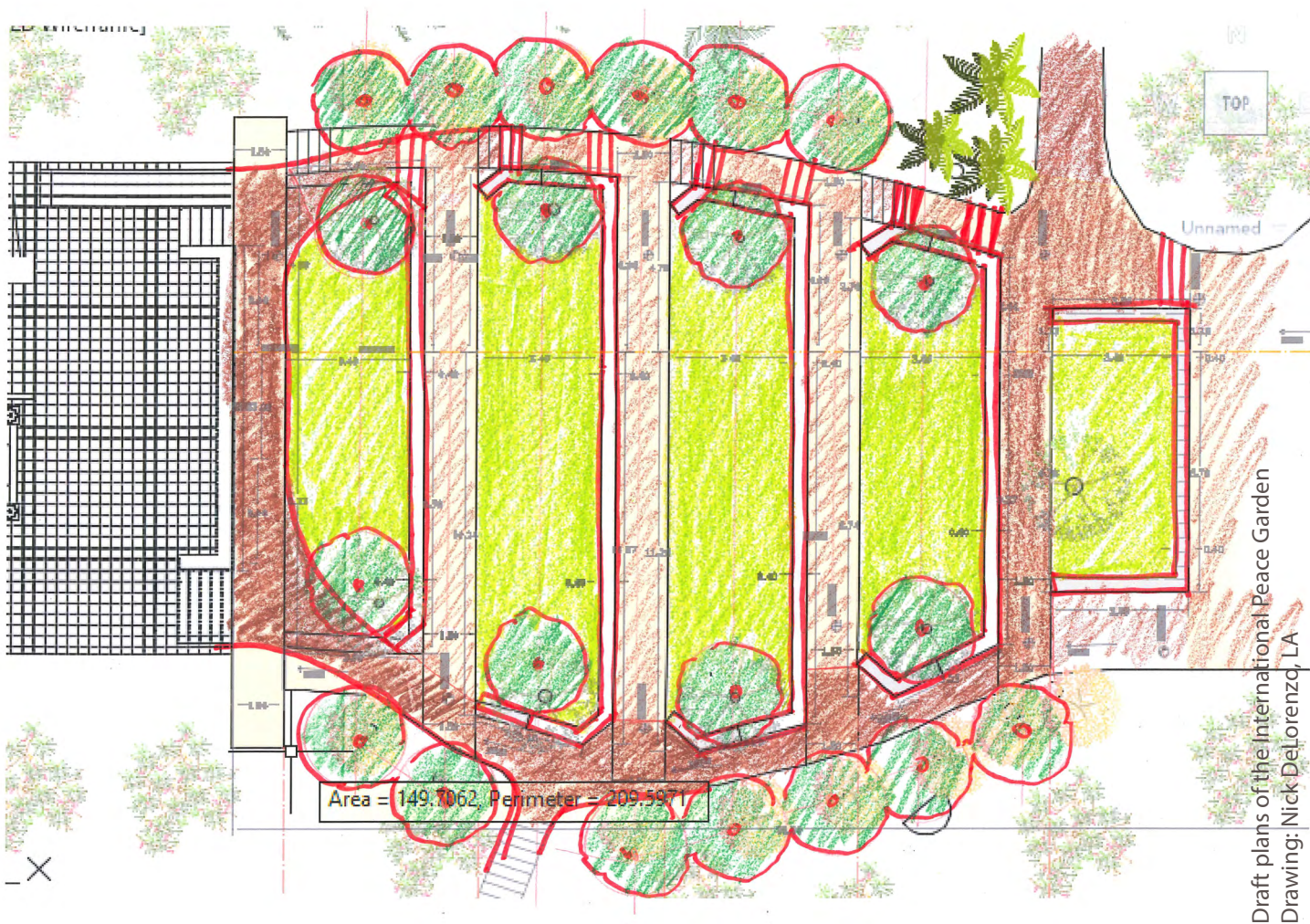
Nuestra Señora del Jardín
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh



Design of an International Peace Garden

The grounds of the Vallarta Botanical Garden are already a place of calm, solace, and healing of body, mind, and soul. The recently completed chapel, “Nuestra Señora del Jardín” (Our Lady of the Garden) has added a new element of spirituality to the garden experience. A new design by Architects Nick DeLorenzo and Cesar Amezcua will complement the approach to the chapel with space of incredible beauty and purposeful function. It will feature plants of the Mediterranean and the Holy Land along with Mexican wildflowers. A combination of shade and sun provide an inviting usable space throughout the year for activities from educational programming and family enjoyment to quiet meditation. The tiered benches may allow the space to later be used as theater seating for open-air concerts and performances. It will be a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds to come together in harmony with nature and focus on our collective power to make this world a better place.

Please contact garden management today to become part of the development of the new International Peace Garden at the Vallarta Botanical Garden! You may reach the Garden’s Philanthropy and Special Events Manager, Hillary Abrams, at hillary@vbgardens.org.





Call to Artists — Exhibit with us!

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Zaidé Gómez Carillo, Marketing Manager, Plaza Galerías

& Buri Gray, President of the Board, Museo de Arte Peter Gray

Plaza Galerías, our region's largest shopping mall, has invited the Vallarta Botanical Garden to organize another nature-based art exhibition, this time with the specific theme of "Birds and Their Habitats." The exhibit is scheduled to be featured in the mall's main events hall (in front of the Liverpool Department Store) from September 17th to October 13, 2016. Afterwards, the exhibit will travel to the University of Guadalajara's local coastal campus until mid-November and finally to the Vallarta Botanical Garden until the end of December.

This exhibition will especially focus on native and endemic birds and the fascinating flora of the habitats that support them. We hope to inspire a conservation-oriented public through engaging imaginations with stunning and creative human constructs interpreting our natural world.

Local and visiting artists are encouraged to submit pieces for consideration in this exhibition which will be selected by a committee of representatives from the Garden, the Mall, and the University. Pieces may include paintings, photos, and sculptures. For more information on the exhibition or how to send submissions, please write to eventos@vbgardens.org.



Amazilia rutila
Photo: Stephen Bolwell



Heliomaster constantii
Photo: Stephen Bolwell



Nearly 30 euglossine bees on an anthurium flower spike.
Photo: Alejandra Flores (May 2016)



BBC to Film Orchids & Bees at the Garden

Orchids are outstanding among plant life with their staggering variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and even fragrances. Some native Mexican orchids smell so good to their pollinators, that they don't even need to produce nectar to attract them. Euglossine bees, also known as "orchid bees" for their plants of choice, have complex relationships with various flowers resulting in male bees taken to practically bathing themselves in floral fragrance to attract females. Their antics, combined with novel adaptations of the flowers to pass pollen along in the process makes for an exciting spectacle.

The BBC is sending researchers and a film crew to the Vallarta Botanical Garden to capture this all for the big screen. We've been selected both as a place where these bees naturally occur and for our celebrated orchid collections. In the garden, these plants are much more accessible than where they can normally be found in the wild in the upper reaches of the forest canopy.

The BBC team will be available for a press conference at the Vallarta Botanical Garden on July 15th at 3:00 pm to talk about their work and the fascinating, colorful, and intensely aromatic world of orchid bees. The delightful spectacle of orchid bee pollination occurs throughout the year at the VBG and our surrounding forests but is witnessed by only some of the most careful, patient, and *lucky* of observers. If you have the opportunity to take your own photos of these bees, please share them with us! You may send those to photos@vbgardens.org.

Winners of a Puerto Vallarta Travel Vacation

The VBG was happy to provide a private Garden tour to Amber King and Johnathan Brantley as part of a travel vacation to Puerto Vallarta won during an event at the New York Botanical Garden. Amber shared a very complimentary review of her time at our Garden, "Botanical gardens have become some of my favorite places to visit for the refuge they provide from hectic city life. The Vallarta Botanical Garden especially impressed me by its peaceful calming environment adorned with incredible beauty. Our private tour with Neil and Steve was fantastic because their enthusiasm allowed us to learn so much about the secret world of flora. I only wish I could bottle up the wonderful aroma of all the flowers from the garden to take home with me!"

Left to right:

Steve Young (VBG volunteer), Neil Gerlowski (VBG Executive Director), Amber King and Johnathan Brantley.

Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

VBG Education & Volunteer Program Report, June 2016

By Alejandra Flores Argüelles, Plant Science Coordinator, VBG

The Vallarta Botanical Garden welcomes organized school visits every month to demonstrate a fine example of environmental conservation to local youth. This month we received two groups, the J.J. Fernández de Lizardi School and the Colegio de Educación Profesional Técnica del Estado de Jalisco (CONALEP). Furthermore, the Garden is blessed with several new volunteers to complement the Garden's staff in labor from gardening to landscape architecture.

Monthly tally of visits, program participation, and volunteer service:	
Total member visits to the VBG:	124
Total non-member visits to the VBG:	2044
Total complimentary entries*:	85
Total participation in 1 pm tours**:	35
Total participation in special events, classes, & workshops:	0
Total volunteer service hours:	153

*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 educadorambiental@vbgardens.org and should be sent at least five days prior to the requested date of visitation. 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.



Visiting students from Colegio J.J. Fernández de Lizardi
Photo: Alejandra Flores

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE	EVENT	COST
	GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	
2 JUL	National Botanical Gardens Day (Mexico) — Visit a botanical garden near you.	Included with entry
7 JUL	Mexican National Arbor Day — Looking for a native tree to plant on your special day? Check out our ever-changing selections in the Garden's plant sales nursery.	Included with entry

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



Thriving epiphytes
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

Garden Hours

Open 7 days/wk

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

Daily Guided Tour

9 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)



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

From the Membership Desk

Imagine keeping up correspondences with nearly 400 member families without fast, reliable connection to the internet. Let me just tell you that it can be quite the challenge!

My hopes are up though that the new antenna system that the Garden will connect with soon brings us connection-wise to the 21st century. It's an expensive system with an infrastructure and set up cost of nearly \$10,000 USD, but it will undoubtedly boost our ability to serve our members better and share news about the garden in a timely fashion. We're gratefully accepting contributions for this essential improvement to our infrastructure. Please write to me if you're interested in helping!

Members: please always wear your membership card when 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 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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ALAN & PATRICIA BICKELL

RUBEN COTA & MICHAEL SCHULTZ

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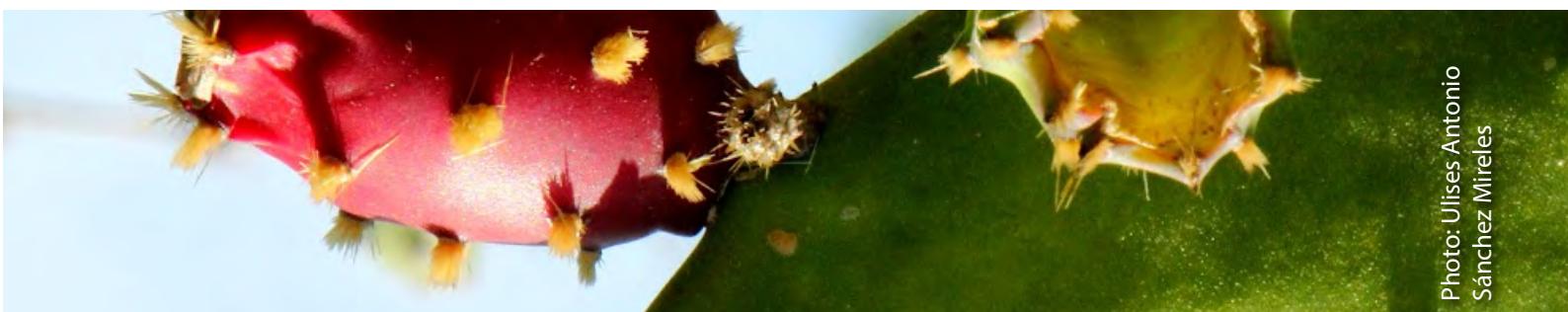


Photo: Ulises Antonio
Sánchez Mireles

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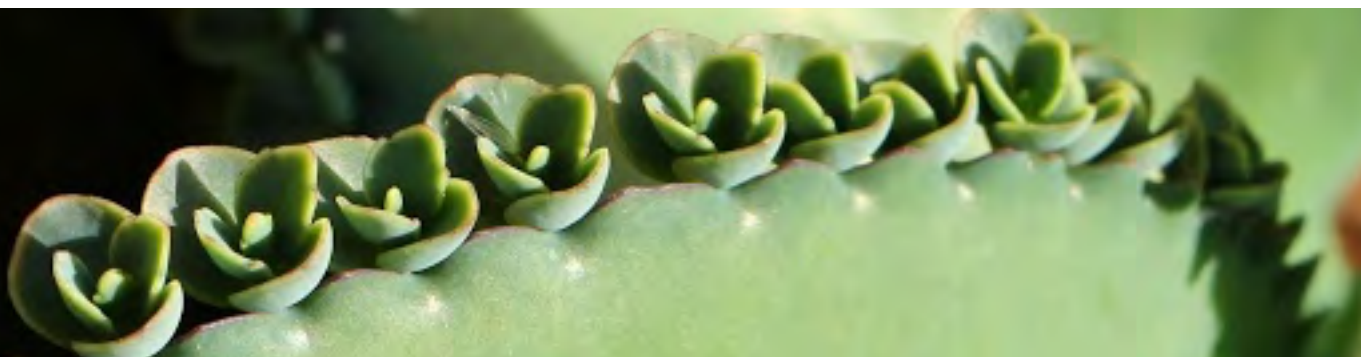
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 Michaela Flores: memberships@vbgardens.org Thank you.**

(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.

- Please provide FPM with your email and information to be included in the tax-deductible receipt (which will be sent by email).
- Please provide FPM with confirmation (copy of check) for tracking.

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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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