

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

July 2017



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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

This past May, Jesús Reyes, our General Director, and I had the pleasure of attending the Chelsea Flower Show while in London pursuing the goal of connecting the Vallarta Botanical Garden with philanthropic support organizations and individuals in the United Kingdom. The Chelsea Flower Show, the signature annual event of the Royal Horticultural Society, is perhaps the most famous flower and garden show in the world and has been steadily growing its enormous base of support and massive audience for over a hundred years. Displays at this show run a broad array of different themes, designs, and selections but a central connection to each is a determined pursuit of excellence and a desire to connect people to celebrate the benefits of plants and beauty in our lives.

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is also hard at work in pursuing its determined path to excellence. As horticulturalists creating living works of art, we continually reimagine our landscapes and displays for an ever-changing visitor experience to delights our guests and members. I hope you enjoy the photos from the Chelsea Flower Show that I've included in this edition of The Leaflet. As always, I thank the Vallarta Botanical Gardens family of supporters for allowing us to pursue horticultural excellence here in Western Mexico.

Warmest regards,

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Chelsea Flower Show
Photo: Bob Price



Chelsea Flower Show
Photo: Bob Price



Chelsea Flower Show
Photo: Bob Price

Tricolor
high yielding variety for
cooking and eating

Wentworth
high yielding variety for
cooking and eating

Kenya Mite
Hungary 2005

Reddish
French variety, in the
market since 1900

Children's Choice
Encourage youngsters with
quick growing, interesting
varieties

Mountain Tundra
Scotland 2008

Apache
Scotland 1988

Pink Gyron
Scotland 2009

Vanessa
Scotland 2012

June
The Netherlands 2008

Red Emma
Scotland 2012

Beaumont
early growing variety
for early harvesting

Beaumont
early growing variety
for early harvesting

Gourmet
Something a little different
for a special treat

Asperges
France 1872

Peachblossom
USA 1923

Jazzy
The Netherlands 2009

Mountain Rouge
The Netherlands 2008

Pink Fir Apple
France 1850

Etoile du Nord
France 1900



Chelsea Flower Show
Photo: Bob Price



Chelsea Flower Show
Photo: Bob Price



Mexican Orchid of the Month

***Encyclia spatella* (Rchb F.) Schltr.**

Article and photo by Marcos Gómez, Propagation Coordinator, VBG

Between 2001 and 2003 a group of scientists researched the number of plants that were sold in the markets located in the center of Veracruz. This study registered the informal trade of different epiphyte plant species, such as bromeliads, ferns and particularly orchids.

Some of these species were not native to Veracruz, but were brought from other parts of the country. Among them, was our orchid of the month, *Encyclia spatella*, which is originally from the west coast of Jalisco and Colima.

We are talking about a tiny brown flower with a soft apple-like perfume smell. Like other epiphyte species, it's found attached to the trees, where it blossoms from June to August, with a big inflorescence of one-meter long.

According to this research in Veracruz markets, the illegal trade of plants, just in this state, is equal to the total legal exportations of orchids from Mexico. It's also similar to the volume of all cacti confiscated in Mexico, United States,

Germany and France airports together.

National laws protect only 4% of Mexico's total flora, and exclude species like *Encyclia spatella*. These are some of the reasons why epiphyte plants have the highest extinction and eradication rates.

The problem is complex and stems largely from limited employment opportunities and insufficient awareness regarding the impact of illicit trade of our precious natural resources.

Come to the Vallarta Botanical Garden to meet *Encyclia spatella*, and help us spread the word that biodiversity conservation is a task for us all.

References:

- Flores-Palacios, A., & Valencia-Díaz, S. (2007). Local illegal trade reveals unknown diversity and involves a high species richness of wild vascular epiphytes. *Biological Conservation*, 136(3), 372-387.

Mexican Bird of the Month

Euphonia affinis - Scrub Euphonia

Article and photo by Greg R. Homel

www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com

birdingadventures@mac.com

It's hard to believe... but some of Mexico's largest, most majestic and ecologically important trees—including strangler figs (genus *Ficus* sp.)—start their lives in the gullet of one of the country's tiniest birds, the Scrub Euphonia. This process usually takes place in the high forest canopy, unseen, except by the most observant humans strolling below.

Flocks of these delightful, bumblebee-colored birds, descend to flit and feed on fruiting trees and shrubs—especially climbing figs and mistletoes—lured by the sweet-tasting fruit, which is later “deposited” on a branch in the forest canopy.

It's a matter of Russian Roulette, but some of the undigested seeds within the fruit, affixed by a sticky resin, will eventually germinate and start a process whereby one tiny seedling may kill (they literally smother, or “strangle” their woody hosts to death) and envelope an entire tree, then add insult to injury by using its matrix like a wooden skeleton, to support their eventual gargantuan bulk!

Euphonia is a New Latin word, meaning “clear-voiced”. And although I often say, “never trust a bird name to accurately describe most birds”, this time around, the committee that named this group did get it right! However, they didn't get the bird's origins right until quite recently! Sure enough, the euphonias initially mystified ornithologists as to their place in the avian family tree, even if they captured birders attention with their striking colors. Up until quite recently, however, they, and their congeners, the Chlorophonias, were thought to be specialized, extremely small tanagers, and placed in the family *Thraupidae*.

That mystery has been partially solved using the process of electrophoresis, so the entire lineage



has been moved to the Family *Fringillidae*, which includes finches, crossbills, siskins, goldfinches, and even Hawaiian Honeycreepers.

Scrub Euphonias are one of two local euphonia species, and the one most likely to be seen at lowland and foothill localities. The Vallarta Botanical Garden is at the upper elevational extent of the species range in the Vallarta region, even though they are strictly Neotropical and range from northern Mexico to Costa Rica. There are two distinct populations of Scrub Euphonia, one that occurs throughout the Gulf and Caribbean slopes, spilling out onto the south Pacific coast of Mexico into Central America, and another isolated population restricted to the Mexican States of Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima and Michoacan.

The latter, which is sometimes considered specifically distinct, was described in 1889 and is known as “Goldman's Euphonia”, *Euphonia affinis goldmani*.

Veiled Lady visits the Vallarta Botanical Garden

The summer rainy season brings a constant parade of wondrous delights to the Vallarta Botanical Garden and our surrounding forests. One of the more incredible-looking miniature marvels available to the lucky and observant are “veiled lady” mushrooms (*Phallus indusiatus*). Below this mushroom’s cap (which has a form somewhat reminiscent of a morel) hangs a spore-laden indusium resembling a lacy skirt. This species is found in tropical regions throughout much of the world, including Asia where it is sold for top dollar in markets as a delicacy.

Mycology, the study of fungi, is a distinct discipline from botany, the study of plants, and the two are totally separate biological kingdoms. Mushrooms are the aboveground fruiting bodies of fungus whose mycelia (vegetative bodies) thrive in decaying wood and soil rich in organic matter. Finding a fascinating mushroom in the forest can be the highlight of a hike, but we recommend resisting the temptation to eat them unless you go with a mushroom identification expert and learn how to properly harvest and prepare them. While some species are edible and even medicinal, others have powerful toxins that can be quite harmful to humans. As with any study of our natural world though, careful observation heightens our appreciation and enjoyment of our planet.



Lace cap mushroom at the Garden
Photo: Bob Price

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 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.



Nopal blooms are excellent hummingbird attractors.
Photo: Bob Price

Cactus and Succulent Plant Project Groundbreaking has begun

Mexico leads the world in cactus and agave diversity and is home to a wealth of other succulents. Our state of Jalisco is home to a vast number of these incredible plants. Upon successful completion of the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project, we'll cultivate these plants to their full potential to create inspirational displays for our visitors to enjoy.

In late 2016 the Vallarta Botanical Garden received a grant of \$15,000 USD from the Stanely Smith Horticultural Trust (SSHT) to begin this project. Since then, the scope and grandeur of the project have grown with our vision for what we can do in this area.

We would like to invite you to join us as one of the first visionary contributors towards the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project. Your tax-deductible gift will create a legacy of cactus and succulent plant cultivation and display at the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Together we will also create a powerful new attraction for our visitors.







Anthurium vetchii in Holstein Conservatory
Photo: Bob Price

Do you have a special flower that you feel connected to when you visit the Vallarta Botanical Garden?

How would you like to experience your connection in your home?

What if you could have a painting of your favorite flower and make a meaningful contribution to the Vallarta Botanical Garden at the same time?

I am a passionate believer in the importance of supporting the Vallarta Botanical Garden as a special sanctuary for all of us in Puerto Vallarta and our visitors.

In an effort to give back to the Vallarta Botanical Garden community I would offer 50% of the proceeds for up to 15 personalized custom floral paintings to help further the Garden's mission and vision.

If you would like to enjoy your special piece of the Garden in your home everyday please reach out soon!

Contact Cheryl at: wheelercheryl@me.com

Cheryl Wheeler
ART





Dr. Felix Montes harvests chocolate at the VBG
Photo: Bob Price



Photo: Marcos Gómez

Education and Volunteer Report

By Marcos Gómez, Propagation Coordinator, VBG

June was a busy month for us as we received a large number of school students from all grade levels. As this was the last month of school before summer vacation, many visits to the Garden were reserved to complement classroom learning. We covered an assortment of different topics from plant propagation to sustainable tourism.

We also offered a series of hummingbird tours at the Garden in conjunction with the Puerto Vallarta International Hummingbird Festival. These tours, which meet at the Visitor Center at 1 pm, are offered daily until the end of July.

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

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Total visits | 1743 |
| Total member visits to the VBG: | 261 |
| Total complimentary entries*: | 766 |
| School program participants: | 105 |
| Total volunteer service hours: | 30 |
| Colibri tour participants: | 208 |

* 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.

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

| DATE | EVENT | COST |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| | THE GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER | |
| 1 - 31 | Jul Puerto Vallarta International Hummingbird Festival 2017 - please contact Garden staff for more information. | 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.



Asclepias sp.
Photo: Bob Price

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

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



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

From the Memberships Desk

The seasonal rains have returned to our forests triggering the sequences of events that collectively define our summer. Trees leaf out so thoroughly that the forest floor is eclipsed in shade, plants provide their greatest bounties of fruit, and butterflies and other insects multiply and fill the landscape with astounding abundance. As the forest relies on a steady supply of summer rain to thrive and produce to its full potential, we at the Vallarta Botanical Garden rely on the generous support of our members to flourish and continue developing our horticultural vision for the good of our community and visitors. We thank you, our members, for nourishing the work that we do through your committed contributions.

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 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



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**If your name is missing or you find an error, please alert the Membership Coordinator,
 Michaela Flores: memberships@vbgardens.org. Thank you.**

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

We Also Thank the Following Foundations for Their Recent Support:

**BROOKLYN BIRD CLUB
 CHARLES H. STOUT FOUNDATION
 INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CLUB
 MELINDA MCMULLEN CHARITABLE TRUST
 STANLEY SMITH HORTICULTURAL TRUST**

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.

Wire transfers: Bank: Banamex
Account in Mexican Pesos (MXN):
Account in US Dollars (USD):

SWIFT CODE: BNMXXMXX
09840115760 CLABE 002375098401157608
09849002101 CLABE 002375098490021017

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

Donations of stocks and IRA distributions:

- Charles Schwab Account # 46789311 DTC
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- Chase Brokerage DTC # 0352
Account # 7422361



Thank you for your generous contributions!

Phone: 01 52 322 223 6182 (international calls) **or** 223 6182 (local calls)

Email: info@vbgardens.org

Web: www.vbgardens.org