

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

October 2017



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Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Vallarta Botanical Garden, we need your help!

The Vallarta Botanical Garden was unexpectedly removed from the Puerto Vallarta TripAdvisor page. After 10+ years of working our listing with TripAdvisor, the Vallarta Botanical Garden had grown to earn the Number 3 TripAdvisor attraction spot in all of Puerto Vallarta. The reason TripAdvisor has given us for our removal is that we are outside the greater Puerto Vallarta Area.

However, we believe this not to be the real reason, as we are not in violation of any TripAdvisor rules available on their website. TripAdvisor singled out the botanical garden for removal and placed us on our own page in Cabo Corrientes. However, none of the other Puerto Vallarta attractions which are also located in Cabo Corrientes have been removed from the Puerto Vallarta Page—only the Vallarta Botanical Garden. All of Vallarta Adventures tourism offerings in Cabo Corrientes, including Rhythms of the Night and Outdoor Adventure were not removed from the Puerto Vallarta page. Canopy Tour Los Veranos and many other major tourism companies doing business in Cabo Corrientes have not been removed.

While we wish no fellow businesses to be removed from the Puerto Vallarta TripAdvisor Page, it seems completely unfair that we would be the only business removed from the Puerto Vallarta page. Something fishy is going on! Please write and ask TripAdvisor why all other Cabo Corrientes attractions are still on the Puerto Vallarta page while only the Garden was removed, as well as asking for the Garden to be reinstated on their Puerto Vallarta Page, and for more than 2,400 favorable reviews to be restored.

To support the Garden on this quest, please visit <https://www.tripadvisor.com/GeneralSupport>.

When you click on this link you will be asked for a password and to sign in on Facebook, Google or Email. If you don't have a TripAdvisor account, sign in with Facebook.



Photo: Jesús Reyes

FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS TO TRIPADVISOR:

1. SELECT "Report a Business" inside the green icon with the exclamation point inside the triangle. NEXT,
2. SELECT "update business information" option. NEXT,
3. WRITE your comments to TripAdvisor inside the blue box AND
4. On your written comments inside the blue box, please add the link to VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDEN TripAdvisor Listing (please see below) to your comments inside the blue box.

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g4004460-d657304-Reviews-Vallarta_Botanical_Gardens-Cabo_Corrientes.html

Thank you for taking action to support the Vallarta Botanical Garden!

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG

Guacamaya Update

In last month's Curator's Corner, we reported on a pair of Guacamayas (Military Macaws) scouting an enormous nest box installed at the Garden. Our goal has been to provide a custom-built home right on our grounds with the precise requirements of this species in mind. While recent activity by the Guacamaya couple has diminished and they may have moved on for now, we remain committed to our threatened local Macaws as an important emblematic species and key indicators of the health of our surrounding forests. The Garden has just sponsored two new nest boxes that have been installed in a beautiful natural area near the Emiliano Zapata Ejido upstream of the Garden, along the valley of the Horcones River. By doing our little part, we can help improve the chances that these magnificent birds will remain wild in our region and grace our skies with their beauty for many years to come.

Additional nest box sponsorship opportunities along with guided tours of these birds in their habitat are available through El Rancho el Santuario, a local natural bird sanctuary. If you're interested, please contact our friend Jorge from El Rancho el Santuario via phone or email: (322) 2236234 or novoapv@hotmail.com.



Photo: Greg R. Homel



Photo: Jesús Reyes

El Puente de Los Sueños— The Bridge of Dreams Project Completed

The Garden thanks Guardian Members Ken Shanoff and Steve Young for their generosity in funding the construction of *El Puente de Los Sueños* (The Bridge of Dreams) which has just been completed, and is open to the public for your enjoyment upon your next visit to the Garden. We thank all of those who dream with us and create bridges—both literal and figurative—to the bright future we envision.



Photo: Jesús Reyes

Construction Continues on the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project

Mexico leads the world in cactus and agave diversity and is home to a wealth of other succulents. The state of Jalisco is home to a vast number of these incredible plants. Upon successful completion of the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project, we will 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 invite you to join us as one of the first visionary contributors toward 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.



Photo: Jesus Reyes



Cactus and Succulents Plant Project
Rendering: César Amezcua



Cactus and Succulent Plant Project
Rendering: César Amezcua

Vallarta Botanical Garden Selected as Host for the 2018 Conference of the Directors of Large Gardens

Every year, a special invitation goes out to a group of about 65 chief executives of the largest public gardens in the US and Canada for an exclusive conference for them to meet about issues that are important to their large and influential organizations. The Vallarta Botanical Garden has been selected as the host for the upcoming occurrence of this event, the Directors of Large Gardens Conference, next scheduled for February of 2018. This will be the first time this conference will take place in Mexico. A few select directors of Mexican botanical gardens will also be in attendance.

Paul B. Redman, President and CEO of Pennsylvania's Longwood Gardens, reached out to the Vallarta Botanical Garden about the idea of hosting the conference locally. After hearing a constant stream of recent positive news about the exciting work being done at public gardens south of the border in general, and at the Vallarta Botanical Garden in particular, Mr. Redman knew this could provide an inspirational setting for the conference.

Also considering how much the region is known for its tropical paradise splendor, beautiful climate, friendly people, and rich culture, it made for an obvious consideration. Dr. Steven Windhager, Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden (in Puerto Vallarta's California "Sister City") also attended the meeting when the Vallarta Botanical Garden was selected. He shared the following with us, "This year's topic is plant conservation,

and the Vallarta Botanical Garden is a great place for that theme. The Jalisco region is so diverse ecologically, and the Vallarta Botanical Garden is doing so much to collect and conserve its most uncommon species. This will be our first meeting that will include botanic garden leaders from all of North America."

Executive Director of the American Public Gardens Association, Dr. Casey Sclar—who will be attending the conference as a special invitee—contributed the following thoughts on the impact of the field of public horticulture: "Gardens are central to conservation. They are likely safeguarding the next cure for cancer or crop wild relative that relieves famine in their collections right now. However, it is the hundreds of incredible stories—of native habitats or of cultures present and past—through which gardens reveal how plants are critical not only to our survival, but to our ways of life."

The board, staff, and volunteers of the Vallarta Botanical Garden are delighted to have this unique opportunity to share the best of their botanical collections, horticultural displays, and world class hospitality to so many top garden leaders. The relationships that the team at the Vallarta Botanical Garden will further develop during this time have enormous potential to result in powerful international collaborations for the benefit of plants and people in Mexico and beyond.



Photo: Jesús Reyes



Announcing the Vallarta Botanical Garden’s Membership Drive

Starting November 1st and continuing through the end of the year, the Vallarta Botanical Garden would like to especially acknowledge our family of members. We’re extending special offers to encourage membership renewals and upgrades and to encourage you to invite your family and friends to join the Garden as well. As a public benefit 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 though, our members collectively allow the Garden to continue flourishing and continuing achieving its mission here in our Puerto Vallarta community and beyond.

Special Offers (From Nov. 1 - Dec. 31):

- 2 free months of membership
- 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:

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



Mexican Bird of the Month

Passerina leclancherii - Orange-breasted Bunting

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

Gleaning through the pages of any field guide to Mexican birds, neophyte birders and the well-initiated alike, are thrilled to discover a constellation of colorful hummingbirds, trogons, thrush-tanagers, parrots, macaws and so on... adorning the plates. This species' richness is enough to make any hardcore birder salivate while leafing through those pages, especially if they are shivering in the midst of the bird-starved northern winter. I'm sure many have fantasized about buying a ticket and jetting their way south to the warm birder's paradise Vallartenses call home. Some even bite the bullet—I was one of them—and give in to this yen, literally and vicariously following their summer migratory birds south to their winter quarters in tropical Mexico.

Mexico is securely among the top ten most biologically diverse nations on earth. In fact, the country qualifies as a "megadiversity" hotspot, and is home to no fewer than 1,100 bird species, including significant percentages of the populations of so-called "neotropical migrants"—species that breed north of the border during the spring and summer months, only to return to the tropics during the rest of the year. This fact in itself is exciting enough, but did you realize that Mexico is home to—depending

on the taxonomic beliefs of the time—over 100 endemic bird species not found anywhere else on the planet?

To give some perspective to this figure, even Colombia, a nation with more bird species than any other—nearly 2000 strong—has about 25 percent fewer endemics than Mexico, even though it has nearly twice as many bird species.

One of the most colorful and endearing endemics—the flamboyant Orange-breasted Bunting—is also one of the smallest Passerines (songbirds) in the nation. Illustrations and photographs rarely do its tinfoil blue-on-bright orange plumage justice—though I have tried. Even its olive-green forehead is a pleasing visual surprise.

Fortunately, the non-governmental organization (NGO) Birdlife International, assesses the status of this beautiful West Mexican endemic as "Least Concern." This means that it has a range of more than 20,000 square kilometers, and within that range its population is "over 10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be less than 10 percent in ten years or three generations"! Thank goodness for that!





However, the future is not secure, and one only has to travel to Mayto (Cabo Corrientes, Jalisco), where on some mornings a casual walk or drive will flush literal flurries of these buntings, like colorful ticker tape blowing in the trade winds—to compare and contrast what Puerto Vallarta, and its Orange-breasted Bunting population must have been like before the city and satellite communities like Punta Mita (where the species was abundant in the 1980s) were built!

Aside from their stronghold of Mayto, Los Pinos Recreation area inland from Bucerias and the lower Biota Road in Cabo Corrientes, are the best nearby localities to sight this eye candy of a bird today, but occasionally they are also seen in the Las Juntas y Los Veranos region, and may very well wander to the Vallarta Botanical Garden at times. Keep your eyes peeled, and you might be the next lucky observer to sight this lovely bird!

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.



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



Mexican Orchid of the Month

Gongora galeata

(Lindl.) Rchb. f.

Article & photo by
Centeotl Aragón

In some parts of the country I'm known as vaquita (the little cow). I live at altitudes between 600 and 1,800 meters of elevation. I am an epiphytic orchid with a very special basal inflorescence that hangs like a pendulum with reddish brown flowers tinted with a yellow hue in the column. I receive a lot of visits due to my fragrance, which some describe as citric. I have a close relationship with male euglossine bees, who upon greeting me, slip along my mobile labellum. As they fall, their movement allows my pollen to adhere to their bodies. When they leave, they carry it to deposit in another flower, thus perpetuating my species.

Not only does *Gongora galeata* enjoy visits, the staff and volunteers at the Vallarta Botanical Garden await your visits where you can marvel at the beauty of this and other orchid species throughout the grounds.

REFERENCES:

- Rodríguez F., L. M.; Barney G., H. y Vásquez T., M. 1995. Notas sobre la polinización por abejas Eglosinas en *Gongora galeata* (Lindl.) Rchb. F. (Orchidaceae). La ciencia y el hombre. 19: 105-116.





Photo: Centeotl Aragón

Education and Volunteer Report

By Centeotl Aragón, Vallarta Botanical Garden

The first classroom visit we received this school season was led by teacher Aida Melchor. She invited students from her biology class at ICEP Puerto Vallarta High School with the intention of observing the flora and fauna of the garden, demonstrating to her pupils the importance of researching nature to strengthen their knowledge of the subject.

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

Total visits	829
Total member visits to the VBG:	55
Total complimentary entries:*	102
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	0
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	37
Total volunteer service hours:	84

* 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 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	
9	Oct	Canadian Thanksgiving (Garden closed Mondays)	--
14	Oct	International Migratory Bird Day	--
1	Nov	Beginning of the VBG's Membership Drive	--
2	Nov	Day of the Dead Celebration at the VBG	--
15	Nov	12th Anniversary of the Vallarta Botanical Garden	--
20	Nov	Anniversary of the Mexican Revolution (Garden closed Mondays)	--
23	Nov	Thanksgiving (US)	--

* 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

We are always working hard to display our love and appreciation to the Vallarta Botanical Garden's members. We've also set goals for growing our membership base and cultivating deeper levels of support for those who are already part of our family of members. With this in mind we are offering special incentives for a membership drive from November 1 until the end of December. Please see page 8 for more details on this program, or ask me about it the next time you visit the Garden or by calling me at 322-223-6182. Thanks!

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




We would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters:

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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).
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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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