THE LEAFLET The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

September 2017



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Cover: *Medinilla magnifica* Photo: Marcos Gomez

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Publisher & Senior Editor: Co-Editor: Contributing Authors:

Translator: Copy Editor: Designer: Neil Gerlowski Bob Price Centeotl Aragón, Michaela Flores, Greg R. Homel Alejandra Carmona Paco Ojeda Alejandra Carmona

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Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

Attention Nature Lovers: your help is wanted in bird observation! The Vallarta Botanical Garden has stepped up to the nest site challenge for the magnificent Military Macaw by collaborating with El Rancho el Santuario, a local natural bird sanctuary, in introducing an enormous nest box at the Garden for these birds. Remarkably, reports are pouring in over the past month that a couple of Macaws have been scouting this new Garden feature and may adopt it as their own. Please join us in observing these amazing animals which we hope will choose our grounds as home for their first hatchlings. Safe observation means keeping a respectful distance, so please bring binoculars or rent a pair instead of approaching too close. Ask for additional information at the front gate or the Membership Desk upon your next Garden visit.

Warmest regards,

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Your Garden Donations at Work

Two new projects are coming together in rapid progression at the Vallarta Botanical Garden—the Cactus and Succulent Plant House (images on this page and the next), and the redesigned and marvelously improved Puente de Los Sueños (see pages 4-5). Another project, an overhaul of the front entry—thanks to another donation from Garden patrons Bob and Barbara Sypult—is due to begin soon.

Are you inspired by what you see and experience at the Vallarta Botanical Garden? The patronage of tens of thousands of visitors and the support of hundreds of members are indispensable to our operations, capital improvements, and impactful programs. It is always in your hands to choose your level of involvement and co-create with us. If this excites you as much as it does us, please share your vision for Vallarta and the Garden with our leadership today! We would love partnering with you in continued development of a beautiful and sustainable Garden for the enjoyment and benefit of our community, as well as visitors from throughout the world.



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.

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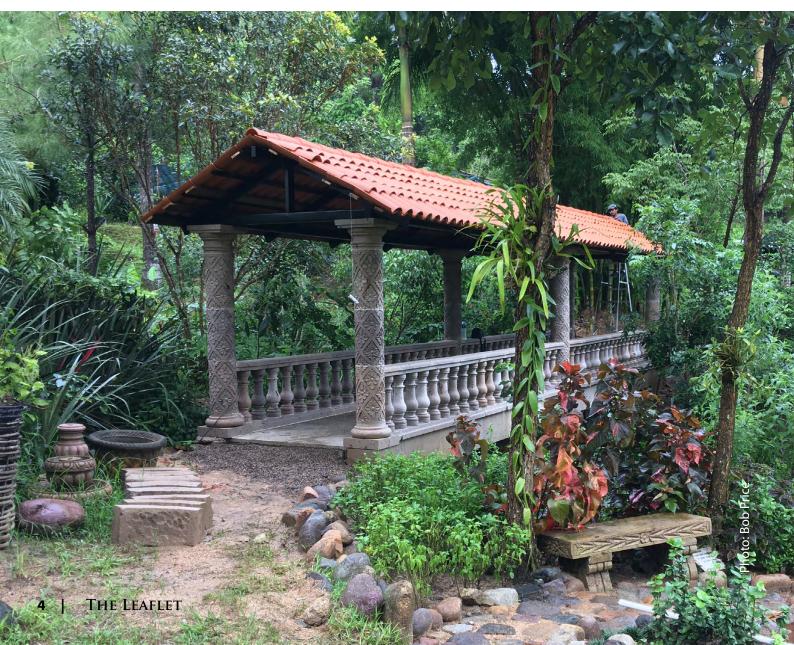


El Puente de Los Sueños—The Bridge of Dreams

The quaint little covered bridge over Arroyo La Llorona has been an iconic component of the Garden's landscape since 2005 when we opened to the public. It was originally built as a temporary structure that served its purpose. With the passing of time, however, it was clearly in need of an overhaul. After the nearby additions of the glorious Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants, the Nuestra Señora del Jardín Chapel, and the International Peace Garden of Mexico, the scale and rustic aesthetic of the old wooden structure seemed out of place.

Now, thanks to another very generous donation by Garden Guardian Members Ken Shanoff and Steve Young, the bridge is being rebuilt, not only to improve structural integrity, but to uphold the new aesthetic now visible in this area of the Garden. International landscape architect Nick DeLorenzo worked along with Garden staff and architecture interns César Amezcua and Christina Tapia on plans and guidelines that are now being followed by local contractors. The completed structure will grace one of the primary approaches to the International Peace Garden of Mexico and greatly add to the overall visitor experience. We thank Ken and Steve for their donation and invite you to behold this new addition sometime very soon.

The Bridge of Dreams



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Photo: Bob Price

Medinilla magnifica—Cascades of Showy Flowers

Every once in awhile we're introduced to a plant so extraordinary that we are completely held in awe at beholding it. Such is the case with the magnificent Medinilla magnifica. In their native terrain in the Philippine Islands they grow as epiphytes—plants that grow on other plants, but are not parasitic usually finding success in the crooks of branches substantial enough to bear their tremendous weight—which increases substantially when in bloom. The pendulous inflorescences of this botanical marvel are tremendous. They grow up to 50 cm. (a foot and a half) in length and are filled with enormous pink bracts and flowers that can range in color from pink to red and even take on purplish hues. Their fruits are grape-like berries that weigh the inflorescences down even further.



King Baudouin of Belgium, who reigned from 1951 until his death in 1993, was enamoured with Medinilla. He grew them in his royal conservatories and even had them printed in the most valuable bank note of the country, the 10,000 Belgian franc. We can easily appreciate the association of this magnificent blossom with wealth and abundance.

> Top: Floral Belgian Banknote. Right: Magnificence in bloom.

Medinilla magnifica is on Sale Now in the Garden's Nursery and Gift Shop!





Vireya Rhododendrons for Sale!

The Garden is pleased to announce that we can share newly propagated plants from our prized tropical rhododendron collection. These botanical wonders are available for the bargain price of just \$400 pesos each for some nice sized plants in an assortment of colors and flower sizes. Get them while they last.

Rhododendron delight.

Mexican Bird of the Month Buteogallus anthracites -Common Black Hawk

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

One of the most robust, visually striking and interesting raptors in the Vallarta region is also one of its most unsuspicious birds of prey. The Common Black Hawk is an impressive, large and dark raptor that enjoys an enormous range, extending seasonally from the southern half of Arizona and Big Bend region of Texas, south along both coasts of Mexico, to mostly coastal parts of Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Guvana in northern South America. Their distribution also follows the arch of the Lesser Antilles to Puerto Rico. Excepting Puerto Rico, they are absent from the rest of the Greater Antilles, where the recently-split, endemic Cuban Black-Hawk occupies their niche.

Wherever they occur, the natural history of Common Black-Hawks is definitely tied to water, but the type of water preferred varies by region. Here in Puerto Vallarta, you will find this species most commonly in coastal and brackish mangrove habitats, where they prey primarily on reptiles including venomous snakes, amphibians such as frogs, and a fairly wide variety of fish. In other parts of their range they specialize on depredating crabs, and are known colloquially as "Crab Hawks."

Their primary modus operandi when it comes to prey acquisition is to perch quietly on a prominent branch overhanging a lagoon, river, lakeshore or stream offering a good vantage point to search for suitable prey. When a target is sighted, the sharp-eyed hawk will launch suddenly into a dramatic and graceful stoop. It is at this time that their impressive but hitherto hidden white tail band is fully visible.



When soaring, Common Black-Hawks present a broad-winged, shorttailed flight silhouette and lucky observers have observed their dramatic nuptial display, where the birds lock talons in mid-air, calling voraciously all the while. Within the bounds of the USA Common Black Hawks are not very common. In fact, they are aves raras indeed! However, their global population is estimated at greater than two million strong, though they usually nest within less than 100 meters from water, making them vulnerable to nest disturbance by unsuspecting humans and their everexpanding coastal and riverine developments.

At the Vallarta Botanical Garden, Common Black Hawks are usually seen soaring overhead or encountered along the Rio Los Horcones, where they undoubtedly nest further downstream in the vicinity of Boca de Tomatlan. While enjoying the botanical delights at the Garden, don't forget to look up from time to time to survey the skies for this majestic bird of prey... and don't be surprised to see your glance returned from this sharp-eyed observer flying above you!





Mexican Orchid of the Month

Ornithocephalus iridifolius Rchb. f. Article and photo by Centeotl Aragón, Biologist, Vallarta Botanical Garden

A fine specimen of the "bird-headed orchid" (as the etymology of its name indicates), happens to be located in a very accessible area of the Vallarta Botanical Garden. However, it requires being a good observer—as surely you are, fellow orchidophiles—to notice a species whose flowers do not measure more than 5 mm. The species' habit is epiphytic (upon trees), simpodial (noted for specialized lateral growth), it lacks pseudobulbs, and the arrangement of its leaves remind me of a fan. Considering that it is an endemic species of the tropics, one could hardly blame it for such a form! If you happen to visit the Garden when it blooms—its peak is in the month of August—approach it carefully and it will welcome you with a sweet and pleasant fragrance.



PUERTO VALLARTA BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL August 15 – October 31

FESTIVAL DE MARIPOSAS DE PUERTO VALLARTA 15 de Agosto – 31 de Octubre

2017



www.vbgardens.org

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, gualify 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 inthelong-termviability 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.

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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







Photo: Jesús Reyes

Education and Volunteer Report

By Centeotl Aragón, Biologist, Vallarta Botanical Garden

Classroom visits to the Garden will begin again soon as the school year has returned with promises of learning and lifelong memories. This past August was a month of winged visits at the Garden as butterflies abounded and flew in apparent marvel at the botanical beauty around them. Visitors who joined us in peak butterfly season expressed their interest in learning about the diversity of butterfly species in our country and many shared of their inspiration to create personal butterfly gardens in their own backyards.

It is very encouraging to know that the new generations have a more conscious and responsible mindset in respect to their surroundings, their home, and our planet. We thank our local schoolteachers for their work with local youth and send them a welcoming reminder to begin planning their school visits to the Garden this season.

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

Total visits	1803
Total member visits to the VBG:	220
Total complimentary entries:*	15
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	60
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	33
Total volunteer service hours:	7

* 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	
14	Sept	Alexander Von Humboldt Birthday Celebration	
16	Sept	Independence Day (Mexico)	

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



Garden Hours

9 am – 6 pm

Open 7 days/wk Open 6 days/wk Early "Bird" Opening Daily Guided Tour 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 Membership Desk

It shouldn't come as a surprise to you that we at the Vallarta Botanical Garden are wild about our members. Last month, for the first time ever, we invested in professional membership software with the goal of improved communications and service to our members. Software is just one tool to stay in touch, and ultimately it's our relationships with our members that matter the most. Please share your feedback with me on how the Vallarta Botanical Garden and our membership program can serve you best. Our team looks forward to hearing from you and growing together. 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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If your name is missing or you find an error, please alert the Membership Coordinator, Michaela Flores: <u>memberships@vbgardens.org</u> Thank you.

(S) = student (I) = individual $\Re = deceased$

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

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- **Tax-deduction receipts** are avaiable 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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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.ccshf.ca) selecting the "Vallarta Botanical Gardens Fund."



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

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