## THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

April 2015



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Cover photo: Iván Jiménez Cattleya aurantiaca

## The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

## Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México April 2015 Vol. 5, No 4

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## www.vbgardens.org

## **Curator's Corner**

## Dear Friends of the Garden,

To our great joy, the Vallarta Botanical Garden has been honored once again as one of the "Top 10 Gardens in North America Worth Travelling For" by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council. Our Director of Operations, Jesús Reyes, was present at the award ceremony of the Garden Tourism Conference in Toronto, Canada to receive this important recognition on behalf of our garden and express our entire community's heartfelt gratitude to the panel of judges that included us in their selections.

Considering the importance of tourism in Vallarta, our Garden's position as one of the top Vallarta area attractions on TripAdvisor.com and our presence in a "TOP 10" list of prestigious gardens, we are proud of our role as a tourism generator to the benefit of our region. Garden tourism is a powerful and growing market and communities that learn to embrace, promote, and support their public gardens are thriving like never before. Those who have shared our dream to provide a world-class botanical garden to the Vallarta region will undoubtedly join with us in celebration of the wonderful distinction that this award represents.

Yours in friendship, Bob Price, Curator and Founder, VBG

## 2015 list of the, "Top 10

## North American Gardens Worth Travelling For"

As declared by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council (Listed in alphabetical order)

Canada
USA
Mexico
Mexico
USA
Canada



## 2005: The Humble Beginning of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Set your vision as high as you dare and pursue it with all possible vigor and tenacity. Don't mind the naysayers they will eventually tell people it was their idea.

2015: 10th Anniversary Year of the Vallarta Botanical Garden



www.vbgardens.org

## **Mexican Bird of the Month**

Campephilus guatemalensis

The Pale-billed Woodpecker, native to Mexico and Central America, can be found in the uppermost parts of trees in intact tropical forests. It is a large bird up to 38 cm (15 inches) in length and 244 g (.5 lb). Its pale beak along with the absence of black and white facial lines can help distinguish this species from the similar looking Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*). Both of these species are predominately black with flashy crests, red heads and white lines running from the neck down the back.

Pale-billed Woodpeckers require forests with large old trees for foraging and nesting and will disappear from forests that are heavily impacted from timber cutting.



## Mexican Orchid of the Month — lonopsis utricularioides By Miguel Ángel Rubio Padilla, Biologist, UDG CUCosta

These delightful tiny epiphytes are a standard of the American Tropics with a natural distribution from southern Florida, Mexico, and the Caribbean to as far south as Peru and Brazil.

*lonopsis utricularioides* is found from sea level to about 1,000 meters and thrives in a variety of plant communities including tropical jungle, tropical mountain forest, and even land converted to agricultural use such as coffee plantations and orange orchards.

During its blooming period (from February to June) lucky observers will note its loose branched inflorescences filled with small but beautiful flowers often predominantly lilac or pink and sometimes with purple veins in the petals and sepals, must noticeable on the proportionately enormous labellum (flower lip).



## In Good Company: The Huntington Botanical Gardens By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

We at the Vallarta Botanical Garden are incredibly delighted to be included for the second time in the list of the "TOP 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For" and all the more because of the prestigious gardens that share this list with us. We'd like to highlight our fellow "TOP 10" gardens starting with this issue of The Leaflet.

This past month of March I had the opportunity to visit several gardens in southern California including those of The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. These incredible gardens were founded in 1919 by railroad magnate Henry E. Huntington and his wife Arabella, whose legacies also include Huntington Beach in Orange County. The 120 acres of gardens are divided into over a dozen different themes including the famous Japanese Garden, Desert Garden, and the recently completed Chinese Garden which opened to the public in 2008. Walks through the Desert Garden and Jungle Garden are especially rich in native Mexican plants.

### 2015 list of the, "Top 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For"

As declared by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council (Listed in alphabetical order)

Butchart Gardens	Canada
Chanticleer	USA
Denver Botanical Gardens	USA
Desert Botanical Garden	USA
Fairchild Tropical Garden	USA
Huntington Botanical Gardens	USA
Jardín Botánico Culiacán	Mexico
Jardín Botánico de Vallarta (Vallarta Botanical Garden)	Mexico
Longwood Garden	USA
Montreal Botanical Garden	Canada



Quite incredibly, Jim Folsom PhD, the director of the Huntington Botanical Gardens, and his wife Debra had a cruise to Mexico scheduled the week after my visit at the Huntington and were happy to pay an instant reciprocal visit to the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Collection interests of our two gardens overlap quite considerably especially in regard to magnolias, oaks, orchids, cactus, and agaves leading to a natural opportunity for mutually beneficial collaborations.

Ithank the Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) for funding the majority of this trip for both me and our Garden's research coordinator, Alan Heinze, to attend a workshop of the International Plant Sentinel Network focused on plant pests and pathogens that pose threats to both the US and Mexico. Botanical gardens coordinating their efforts through organizations such as the BGCI multiply their power to make a meaningful impact on plant conservation.





## The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden— The Vallarta Botanical Garden's Sister Garden

## By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Since 1972, Puerto Vallarta and Santa Barbara have been officially tied as Sister Cities and a few years ago the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (SBBG) and the Vallarta Botanical Garden made a beautiful symbolic liaison as Sister Gardens. We now offer reciprocal benefits to our members and have participated with exchanges including those for fundraising raffles and by hosting visitors for each other. Collaborative opportunities for the future are likely to include staff exchanges to improve our horticultural practices and inventory work in plant communities that overlap the interests of our collections, conservation programs, and research.

This past month, the SBBG's Executive Director, Steve Windhager PhD, hosted me for several days in his home as I visited his garden as well as Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The SBBG will celebrate its 90th anniversary this coming year of 2016 along with the grand opening of its new visitor center now under construction. The SBBG was among the first botanical gardens in the US established with a mission strictly focusing on native plants and provides an incredible resource to those looking to explore California's rich and diverse flora. Any visit to Santa Barbara should include time especially reserved to experience the wonders of nature at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.







## *Ursulea tuitensis*— local representatives found in surprising locations

### By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Those of us who have lived in Mexico for any amount of time will continually find our compañeros (comrades) in a variety of places until the farthest corners of the earth. Nonetheless, last month I was taken by surprise to see a group of fellow Jalicienses (inhabitants of Jalisco State) in the surreal landscapes of Ganna Walska Lotusland in Montecito, California. In this case it wasn't a group of people that I met but rather a cluster of plants in Lotusland's Upper Bromeliad Garden. These plants, known by the scientific name of Ursulaea tuitensis, are endemic to a tiny range of mountains surrounding the Vallarta Botanical Garden and our nearby town of El Tuito. Ursulaeas are an incredibly rare plant with only one other species in their genus—Ursulea macvaughii—native from southern Jalisco to Michoacán. Considering that Montecito is the neighbor of Puerto Vallarta's Sister City of Santa Barbara, it's even more appropriate that we have such excellent representation by such unique botanical ambassadors.







"I first joined the Garden as a member back in its earliest days. I always bring my friends to see the lovely plants, drink a fresh vanilla mojito, and swim in the refreshing river. If you've already been to the Garden before, a quick look at their exciting calendar of events is sure to give you new excuses to plan yet another visit."

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## **CLOSED MONDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER**

As part of its commitment to our Puerto Vallarta Community, the Vallarta Botanical Garden remains open year-round, only closing for Mondays from April until the end of November as well as Christmas and New Year's Day. Please plan your visits accordingly. The next Monday that we will be open for is December 7th, of 2015. Come see us any other day of the week!



## SEMANA SANTA—Beat the crowds at the beach by visiting the Garden instead! March 29 – April 5

Anyone who has visited Puerto Vallarta during Semana Santa (Holy Week) knows that the beaches can be packed with people this time of the year. The Garden on the other hand remains a relative oasis of tranquility. Why fight the crowds on the beach then when you can visit the Garden instead? This year we are open every day of Semana Santa including Easter Day. If you need your beachfront fix, keep in mind the sandy shore of the Emerald Pools of the Horcones River accessed by our River Walk Trail. The Vallarta Botanical Garden is just a little beyond the beaches, but always far beyond your most imaginative expectations!

## Vallarta <del>Botanical</del> BEER Garden Saturday, April 18, 1:00 – 6:00 pm

Our Sister Garden of Santa Barbara has a variety of fun events that inspire people to connect with plants and show their camaraderie as a community. One of their more popular events in recent years has been their Santa Barbara Botanical BEER Garden which pairs craft microbrews with specific places within their garden. For example, it's a rare treat to drink your favorite red ale among a grove of redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*). When you add live music and a group of friends to the mix you can see why their latest version of this event sold out a month before the big day.

While we don't have redwoods at the VBG, we do have local plants that we can easily associate with some of the delicious craft beers from Puerto Vallarta's own Los Muertos Brewing who will sponsor our upcoming Vallarta Botanical BEER Garden. Imagine for example, drinking a cold pour of Agave Maria Amber Ale among blue agaves (*Agave tequilana*), and you have an idea about just how enjoyable a beer festival at a Mexican botanical garden can be. Garden volunteers will serve samples at brew stations and point out a bit about what makes each of the different beverages so special and why we paired each with a particular place within the Garden.

## Advanced Ticket Purchase Required. \$500 MXN for non-members and \$450 MXN for Garden members.

Tickets are available at both the Vallarta Botanical Garden and Los Muertos Brewing.

Please note: the Garden closes to public at 12:00 noon on the day of this event.





## VALLARTA <del>Botanical</del> Garden

## Sample your favorite local brews STUNNING NATURAL SANCTUARY

# ENJOY GREAT

SAT 18 April S April S ATTHE Vallarta Botanical Garden 13:00 to 18:00 Los Muertos Brewing is sponsoring this "funraiser" in support of the Vallarta Botanic Garden's educational programs for local youths, so part of enjoying yourself is the satisfaction of contributing to a worthy cause.

Advanced Ticket Purchase Required: \$500 MXN per person.

Available at the Vallarta Botanical Garden & Los Muertos Brewing (in Old Town Puerto Vallarta)

## Note:

- 🖈 Minimum age: 18 years.
- General admittance limited to 250 tickets.
- ★ 50 designated driver tickets also available.
- ★ Garden closes to public at 12pm on the day of this event.

Visit Us! vbgardens.org losmuertosbrewing.com



Event Sponsor

## Do you know what mushrooms are? By Iván Jiménez, Biology Intern at the VBG

Carl Linnaeus, the father of modern taxonomy, originally categorized mushrooms as plants. Noticeably absent from mushrooms though is the presence of chlorophyll which allows plants to produce their own food. This prompted the eventual categorization of mushrooms into their own kingdom: Fungi.

The principal difference between these organisms and the other principal kingdoms of life forms is that while plants mainly receive their food through their own photosynthesis and animals ingest their food, fungi get their energy by absorption. This makes fungi a fundamental part of the cycle of organic material decay. All kinds of sizes in fungi exist from microscopic colonies inhabiting skin to colorful cornucopia-like groupings found in forests.

Mushrooms are principally composed of by hifas—lines of cells which form a web. These stay in the soil all year and what we see with our eyes is only their fruiting body. These fruiting bodies take on a variety of wonderful forms that can help us distinguish between different species. That's why mushrooms can only be found in brief times of the year following narrowly-defined environmental conditions. These conditions allow mushrooms to release spores to reproduce their next generation. As with plants and animals, mushrooms are important components of our natural environment.



Pollination Photo: Iván Jiménez

"Nature teaches more than she preaches." — John Burroughs

## Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

l	DATE	EVENT	соѕт
5	APR	Easter — Garden remains open	Included with entry
6	APR	GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	
6	APR	Volunteer & Staff Appreciation Day — Gardens closed	
18	APR	Vallarta Botanical Garden — Botanical Garden Special Event 12:00-6:00 pm Advanced Ticket Purchase Required (Available: VBG & Los Muertos Brewing) Garden closes to public at 12:00 noon on the day of this event.	Non-members: \$500 MXN Members: \$450 MXN
22	APR	<b>Earth Day</b> — Celebrate the wonders of our planet at the Garden	Included with entry
21-26	APR	Vanilla Blossom Expo at the VBG — Daily vanilla flower hand-pollination demonstrations at 1 pm	Included with entry
1	MAY	Labor Day in Mexico — Garden remains open	Included with entry
10	MAY	<b>Mother's Day</b> — (Mexico, USA, & Canada) — Treat Mom to a day at the Garden!	Included with entry

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



Garden Hours Open 7 days/wk Open 6 days/wk Early "Bird" Opening Daily Guided Tour Additional tours

## <u> 10 am – 6 pm</u>

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) can be reserved in advance www.vbgardens.org/tours

## **VBG Education & Volunteer Program Report**

## By Linda Asencio, Biologist and Environmental Educator Peace Corps Volunteer at the Vallarta Botanical Garden through a collaboration with Mexico's Park Service (CONANP)

Spring has now arrived along with beautiful blossoms of native Mexican plants. I've been busy capturing many of these inflorescences on film as a means to identify plants for the Garden's Curation Database—which we're excited to announce now has over 500 documented plants! We are working to increase this number into the thousands by the end of 2015.

Many plant species look nearly identical to their relatives except for when they're in bloom. Great examples can be found in the virtually countless numbers of naturally occurring orchids in the VBG's collections and forest preserve. Many of them look alike before and while budding, when they shoot off their first closed inflorescences. Once these buds open we have an optimal window of time to complete the identification process.

Other exciting news from the Garden includes the success of our recent Capomo Harvest Festival when visitors learned about and sampled this important native fruit. I'd like to especially thank Lynnette, Rosemary, Walter, Carla, and Monika for volunteering for this festival. Next month we invite you to join us for Earth Day (April 22) and our annual celebration of most people's favorite orchid – Vanilla – during the Vanilla Blossom Expo at the Garden April 21–26. Should be tasty!



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

Mar. 2015	Mar. 2015 Total member visits to the VBG:	
	Total non-member visits to the VBG:	4,669
	Complimentary entries for organized school groups*:	434
	Total participation in daily 1 pm tours:	266
	Total participation in special events, classes, or workshops:	643
	Total volunteer service hours:	247

\*The VBG is happy to provide complimentary entries, guided tours, and educational programming for organized school groups with advanced reservations as one of our services to the Bahía de Banderas, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo Corrientes communities. Reservation requests should be sent to <u>educadorambiental@vbgardens.org</u> at least 5 days before the requested date of your visit. Requests are granted first come, first served and are scheduled around other events and programs already on our calendar.





Michaela Flores, Membership Coordinator, VBG <u>memberships@vbgardens.org</u>

## From the Membership Desk

April heralds in the beautiful blossoms of native vanilla for our visitors just as the ever-popular Philippine Jade Vine is dropping the last of its exquisite flowers. While plants provide the incentive for many to visit the garden, we realize that not everyone is into flowers. Those of you looking for something a little different this season may wish to join us for the first-ever Vallarta Botanical BEER Garden when Los Muertos Brewing will provide samples of their tasty craft cervezas for a novel "funraiser" event complete with live music.

Whichever excuse you find to visit the Garden whether for the first time or the hundred and first, I look forward to seeing you here. If you're not yet a member, I hope your experience causes you to fall in love with the Garden and that you consider joining our family of members who are making our beloved Puerto Vallarta even better.

Members: please always wear your membership card when visiting the Garden. This helps our staff and volunteers recognize you as members and offer discounts on your Garden purchases.

## **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 <u>www.vbgardens.org/benefactors</u>



We would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters:

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