

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

February 2018



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Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

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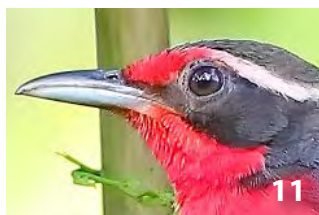
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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Vallarta Botanical Garden,

February is the month when we traditionally celebrate Valentine's Day and make it a point to tell our loved ones just how much we cherish them. For those of us here at the Vallarta Botanical Garden, our members are right at the top of our lists for those we love and cherish the most.

Your membership not only provides essential funds to keep the Garden flourishing, it symbolizes your love for our organization and is an amazing encouragement to our entire team of staff and volunteers. We show our love back during the month of February by hosting two member events including our "Salute to Vallarta!" Member Appreciation Day.

Please read on about our member events. We send our thanks and love at this time to all Garden members and supporters. For those who have not joined as members yet, we invite you to become part of the family. If you're looking for a way to show your love to others this month, the gift of membership is a great way to do so.

In appreciation and love,

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Under the Roof of the Cactus House
Photo: Bob Price

"Salute to Vallarta!" Member Appreciation Day

Saturday, February 3

Our "Salute to Vallarta!" is a time to thank our family of members and celebrate successes of the Garden with them. This is an excellent occasion to meet and socialize with other members, garden staff, board members, and volunteers. It's also a great family and friends occasion, so be sure to invite lots of others to come out to the Garden with you.

This event is free for all members and is also a perfect occasion to renew your membership or join as a member for the first time. We'll have a complimentary buffet available for Garden members (see details in forthcoming member email) and folkloric dancers and extra tours available for all to enjoy. This is a very busy day at the Garden so please carpool or take public transportation if you can. Festivities begin at 11 am. Be prepared to celebrate!



Enjoying the Garden's new Cactus House.
Photo: Bob Price



Vireya Rhododendrons in Bloom
Photo: Bob Price

Curator's Candlelight Dinner

Thursday, February 15

Our Curator's Candlelight Dinner is a special time to thank our upper-level members and is open to all Copa de Oro Members and above. It is an intimate night time Garden occasion with fine dining, music, and festivities. If you would like more information on this event or would like to join as a member, renew, or upgrade your membership, please contact Michaela Flores at memberships@vbgardens.org.

Holstein Tropical Plant House's 10th Anniversary

By: Bob Price, Founder and Curator, Vallarta Botanical Garden

Back when the Vallarta Botanical Garden was just a few years old, I was out gardening one sunny afternoon when a delightful couple stopped to tell me how much they were enjoying their visit. During the conversation that ensued they asked what else was planned for the Garden. It just so happened that we had recently drawn up plans for our first formal plant house, so I stopped what I was doing and unrolled these plans for my visitors. They asked what such a project would cost and I shared with them our estimate, mentioning of course our recently acquired non-profit status should they like to make a contribution.

Their interest was encouraging and the details of their questions were such that I thought it likely that they would make a gift toward the project. I was completely amazed though a few weeks later when I opened up a letter from them and found a check from George and Mary Ellen Holstein for the full amount to build this new garden feature.

We were able to begin construction shortly after and I soon developed a wonderful friendship with George, Mary Ellen, and their family who became members and frequent visitors to the Garden. Sadly, George passed away just a few years ago, but his legacy lives on here and is enjoyed by tens of thousands of Garden guests every year. This beloved Garden feature is brimming with beautiful plants from native Mexican vanillas to captivating orchid hybrids from around the globe. Each time that Mary Ellen visits, I'm reminded of the visionary support that her and George provided the Garden in its infancy and how their action inspired others to contribute to our work in meaningful ways.

This February, as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Holstein Tropical Plant House, I fondly remember my friend George and thank my friend Mary Ellen. Their love and belief in what we began at the Garden helped build the momentum that has taken us to where we are today and allows us to look boldly toward a bright future.



Holstein Tropical Plant House
Photo: Bob Price



Outside of the Holstein Tropical Plant House
Photo: Bob Price

Indigenous Leaders to Welcome Visiting Directors of Large Gardens

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is pleased to have two important indigenous leaders join us in welcoming attendees of the 2018 Directors of Large Gardens Conference that we are hosting in early February. Throughout the world, indigenous people serve as guardians of traditional knowledge with deep insight into life, nature, and the powers of plants to sustain life and provide healing. Conserving biodiversity can work hand in hand with conserving cultural diversity to help meet the needs of both nature and mankind.

Marakame Alfonso González Velázquez **“Xikawery”**

Alfonso, better known by his spiritual name *Xikawery* (“He who hits the target” in Wixarrika), has over twenty-five years of experience as a traditional medicine man, guide, and elder of the Wixarrika Nation, commonly known as Huicholes. They are one of the oldest ethnic groups of Mexico and although their currently held lands are in the far northern mountains of Jalisco, they trace their original homelands back here to the Bay of Banderas. Xikawery’s practice is concentrated on maintaining the sacred balance of life and nature with a focus on the ceremonially significant corn, deer, and peyote which are especially revered by his people. Xikawery has participated in many culture and nature oriented events throughout Mexico and elsewhere around the world, especially in Europe and South America where he is warmly received and appreciated. He is also an artisan, composer, performer and recording artist of traditional sacred Wixarrika music.

Victor Hugo Ochoa **“Tonatiuh” or “Miuwery Niuweme Tau”**

Victor Hugo, whose spiritual name is *Tonatiuh* (“Movement of the Sun” in Nahuatl) or *Miuwery Niuweme Tau* (“Messenger of God in the Light of the Sun” in Wixarrika), has ancestral roots from the Nañu Nation (Otomí) and Wixarrika. He has trained as a healer or medicine man with elders from the Purepecha, Nañu, Chichimeca, Wixarrika and Maya. His work as a representative of the Nañu Nation in Mexico City in the early 1990’s resulted in receipt of the Flag of Peace by the World Health Organization. Tonatiuh’s work focuses on defending human rights, the rights of indigenous communities, and the care of the environment as a guardian of the earth. Tonatiuh is also a poet, writer, musician and holistic therapist. Together with Xikaweri he participates in sacred ceremonies, in the care of our environment and promoting and imparting his culture, ancestral traditions and traditional medicine, in Jalisco and other Mexican states.





Neil Gerlowski Visiting with
Todd McGrain at his Foundry
Photo: Chris McGrath

A Visit to the Foundry of Todd McGrain

By: Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, Vallarta Botanical Garden

Earlier this month I had the privilege of visiting with Todd McGrain at the Polich Tallix Foundry in New York. Todd is the sculptor and conservationist behind The Lost Bird Project www.lostbird.org. Last year he attended the Vallarta Bird Festival, hosted by the Vallarta Botanical Garden, where he personally introduced screenings of his film by that same name and connected themes of his work to local conservation efforts. Inspired by what he saw here in Puerto Vallarta, Todd sponsored a Military Macaw nest box at the nearby El Santuario de Las Guacamayas

(contact: novoapv@hotmail.com), and reviewed a site at the Garden in consideration for a new sculpture to memorialize the extinct Imperial Woodpecker. Both Todd and we at the Vallarta Botanical Garden consider there to be great potential in commissioning and installing a work of art of such magnitude here in our grounds for so many to ponder and draw inspiration from. Please contact us if you are interested in helping see this potential project through to fruition. Todd sends his best to his friends in Puerto Vallarta and our whole community.

A close-up photograph of two pink orchids with white centers, set against a blurred background of blue and brown. The orchids have long, slender petals and a prominent, fringed white center. The background is a mix of blue and brown, suggesting a natural setting.

Celebrate Valentine's at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

February 14

Photo: Ulises Sánchez

2018 Vallarta Bird Festival, March 9 – 11

Article and photo by Nancy Holland

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Vallarta Bird Festival, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 9, 10, and 11, hosted by the beautiful Vallarta Botanical Garden.

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is situated on 64-acres at 1,300 ft above sea level in bird-rich Cabo Corrientes, just a short drive from Puerto Vallarta.

With excellent birding opportunities, guided birding tours in the Garden will be offered each morning along with guided tours every afternoon of the Garden's incredible array of native Mexican flora and exotic delights. Within the Garden alone over 200 different species of birds have been observed and documented by enthusiastic local residents and international visitors.

Bird photography workshops and educational seminars will be offered, along with exhibits, music, native dancers, and fun, all included with a daily general admission of 150 pesos or with a 3 day Happy Wren Pass (price to be determined).

For an additional cost, professional birding tours will venture from the coastal habitats to the upper elevation forest habitats in search of endemic specialties among the over 400 bird species found in this diverse region of Jalisco. There is no registration required for Garden activities but we would love to hear from you if you plan on coming. The professional birding tours do require advance registration.

The festival does not provide transportation but there are buses and taxis available in Puerto Vallarta that can take you directly to and from the Garden. The Hacienda de Oro Restaurant, on site, is open from 9am to 5pm serving breakfast and more, including oak-wood-fired brick-oven pizza and authentic Mexican cuisine.

Bring water, sunscreen, insect repellent, binoculars, and if you want to take a swim in the river, then bring a bathing suit and towel.

Contact us by email:
nancyholland@gmail.com
info@vbgardens.org

Facebook:
[Vallarta Birders](#)
[Vallarta Botanical Gardens AC](#)



Varied bunting male

Mexican Bird of the Month

Rhodinocichla rosea — Rosy Thrush-Tanager – Not a Tanager After All

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

The confusingly named Rosy Thrush-Tanager is one of the most spectacular, dynamic and colorful birds of the Vallarta region—if you could ever catch a glimpse of one! “Skulky will-o-the-wisp of the tropical forest understory,” doesn’t even begin to describe the difficulty of finding it; and neither does the word “tanager” by the way.

For decades ornithologists, birders and taxonomists have been baffled regarding the systematics of this very interesting bird, at times calling it a tanager, a thrasher, a warbler, a bunting and even an ovenbird (family Furnariidae) or some other bewildering name as the years passed. In actuality, the Rosy Thrush-Tanager is none of these, though it does have some of the characteristics, habits or both from each of these groups. Since 2013 it has been placed in its own monotypic family—Rhodinocichlidae.

Even the distribution of this species is strange and confusing, since they have an inexplicably disjunct range from the Pacific slopes of Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, to the Caribbean portions of Colombia and Venezuela. In Mexico they typically occur in widely discontinuous patches of tropical dry forests within the western Mexican states of Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, Michoacán, Guerrero and adjacent Oaxaca. They are most abundant in tropical lowlands but range to around 1,500 m (nearly 5,000 feet) in places.

In the Vallarta region they are most often recorded at the private Rancho Primavera—which is over 500 m in elevation, near the colloquial mountain hamlet of El Tuito. Other good places include Las Juntas y Los Veranos, and there are even some records for the Vallarta Botanic Garden.



Female



The species is highly monogamous, though usually it's the males that are seen by birders, as females are quite shy, keeping to the vegetative tangles... where they do participate in loud, fluty vocal duets with their male counterparts. When not vocalizing, these birds forage, thrasher-like, tossing aside leaf litter in the forest understory to discover their prey.

The few nests that have been found have been located low to the ground in tangled vegetation, and contained two to three white eggs with black scrawls and spots.

The prey of thrush-tanagers includes insects (mostly beetles), ants, arachnids (including venomous spiders and scorpions), and even some amphibians, though they also take some fruit.

The Vallarta Botanic Garden is home to at least a couple pairs of this striking and colorful bird, but most visiting birders miss them because they do not readily come out into the open. If you want to try your luck, go ahead, hit that trail, take the challenge, and see the unseeable to start 2018 off on the right foot!

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.





Bouquets to Banquets ... and many beautiful settings for your special day



Why not have your special day in one of the most beautiful places in the world?
There are many sites around the gardens where a wedding can be performed.
From a simple wedding with just a few friends, to a lavish event with all the trimmings.

Consult the Vallarta Botanical Gardens wedding planner for more ideas.
+52 (322) 223 6182 or (322) 223 6184 eventos@vbgardens.org

Mexican Orchid of the Month

***Oncidium sotoanum* R. Jiménez & Hágsater**

Article & photo: Centeotl Aragón, Staff Biologist

This beautiful orchid is a medium-sized epiphyte with oval and compressed pseudobulbs with two apical leafs. It can have one or two floral rods that emerge from the base, the inflorescence is a panicle with small, fragrant and pink flowers with a yellow callus. The story of her name is really interesting since for practically 200 years she has been known as *Oncidium ornithorhynchum*, being that *O. ornithorhynchum* is the synonym of *Oncidium pyramidale*, a yellow-flowered orchid from South America. That confusion called for a proper description of this flower as a new and separate species. Her name was given in posthumous honor of one of our greatest Mexican orchid

experts. This confusion inspires me to share a great quote by Confucius, "If you make a mistake and do not correct it, you commit yet a greater mistake." With this I wish you a year full of learning and growth. Likewise, my gratitude for your support and hope in counting on it through this New Year of 2018 which is off to such a wonderful start.

REFERENCE:

- Jiménez M., R. y Hágsater E. 2010. *Oncidium ornithorhynchum*, una especie mal interpretada y un nombre para una vieja especie: *Oncidium sotoanum* (Orchidaceae). Lankesteriana 9 (3): 411-422.



Education and Volunteer Report

By: Centeotl Aragón, Vallarta Botanical Garden

Last month we received a group of fourth grade students from the Nuevo Galicia Institute in Puerto Vallarta. The young visitors were supervised by the Biologist Angel Davish and accompanied by parents and other teachers. I always find it pleasant to have enthusiastic, energetic and curious kids here in the Garden, they strengthen our commitment of education with love and respect for the natural environment and are the hope of future generations.

It's also worth noting that we're starting off 2018 with several new additions to our team of Garden volunteers. Many thanks to each of them for their parts in support of conserving Mexico's great biodiversity and sharing this message with others.

* 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 escolar@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.

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

Total member visits to the VBG:	435
Total non member visits to the VBG:	4061
Total complimentary entries:*	60
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	0
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	408
Total volunteer service hours:	87

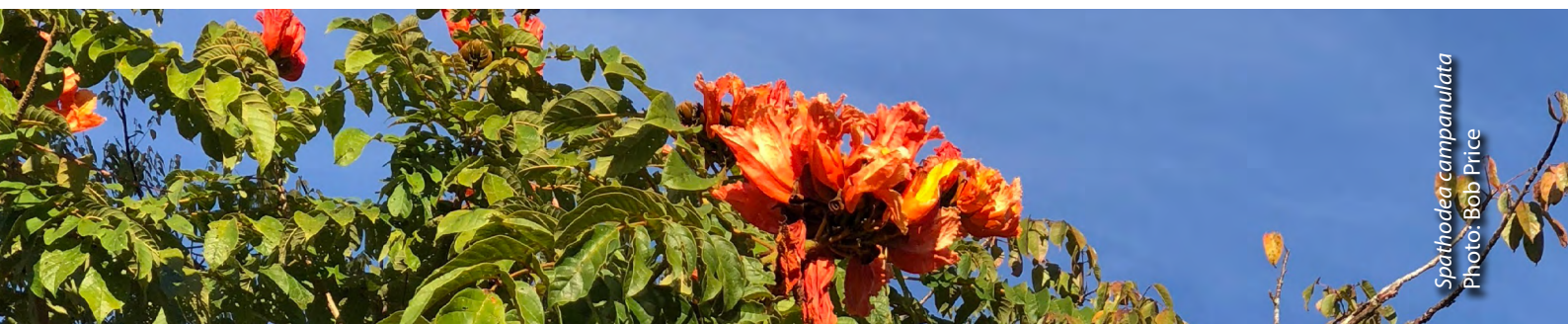
Monthly tally of visits, program participation, and volunteer service, January 2018:

Total member visits to the VBG:	307
Total non member visits to the VBG:	6097
Total complimentary entries:*	0
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	503
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	450
Total volunteer service hours:	146

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
		THE GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER	
1-3	Feb	2018 Directors of Large Gardens Conference	Private Event
3	Feb	"Salute to Vallarta!" Member Appreciation Day – (See page 2 for more information)	Free for Garden Members
5	Feb	Anniversary of Mexico's Constitution	--
14	Feb	Romance in the Garden – Celebrate Valentine's Day in Nature (Special Valentine's Day Menu – reservations recommended)	--
15	Feb	Curator's Candlelight Dinner – (See page 3 for more information)	Advanced purchase & registration required
16-24	Feb	Vallarta Flower and Garden Show	Included with entry
9-11	Mar	Vallarta Bird Festival – (See page 9)	(See page 9.)
10	Mar	Plant Sale – Garden members receive 20% off	--
16	Mar	Orchid Repotting Demo (11 am)	Free for Garden Members
25	Mar	Palm Sunday Palm Walk	Included with entry
1	Apr	Easter – (Garden remains open for all of Holy Week)	--
6	Apr	Orchids of Mexico Lecture (11 am)	Free for Garden Members
8	Apr	Garden Volunteer and Staff Appreciation Day	--
19	Apr	Curator's Cocktail Social	Advanced purchase & registration required
22	Apr	Earth Day	--

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



Spathodea campanulata
Photo: Bob Price

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)



Ipomoea
Photo: Jesús Reyes

From the Membership Desk



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

Our member drive in November and December resulted in over 100 renewals and new memberships and several membership upgrades. We also had an incredible turnout for our Chocolate Festival on January 5 with over 400 attendees. Many thanks to all who were part of these recent successes!

This month we will have two of our most important member events, "Salute to Vallarta!" (our Member Appreciation Day on February 3) and the Curator's Candlelight Dinner on February 15. Please see pages 3 and 15 for more details and please contact me if you have any questions. See you soon!

Members: Please always wear your membership card while 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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(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).
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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



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Checks may be mailed to:

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

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Please write to treasurer@vbgardens.org for routing and account numbers.

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