

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

August 2015



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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México

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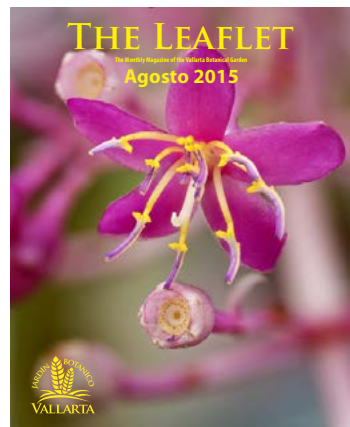
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Contents

- 1** Curator's Corner
- 2** 10th Anniversary Celebration
- 4** Mexican Orchid of the Month
- 4** Mexican Bird of the Month
- 5** Pine-Oak Project Update
- 6** Denver Botanic Garden
- 8** *Magnolia rzedowskiana*
- 10** Vireya Rhododendrons
- 12** Bromeliad Adventures in Novo-Galiciana
- 14** Contribute to YOUR Monthly Magazine

Features

- 15** Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calender
- 16** Membership & Support
- 22** Donation Information



Cover photo: Mansur Kiadeh
Medinilla magnifica



www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

In a world where truth can be stranger than fiction, we're in constant awe of the wonderfully strange workings of nature and the miracles of life. One particular annual phenomenon never ceases to amaze us each time we experience it—the transformation of our local forests with the summer rains.

Following our long dry season, which usually lasts from roughly mid-October through mid-June, Puerto Vallarta's rainy season builds to a crescendo each August and September with terrific concerts of pattering rain and booming thunderclaps. While rainstorms can become nearly daily occurrences this time of year, those new to the tropics are surprised to find that most of these days start out with clear blue skies and brilliant sunshine. As the day progresses the clouds gather and grow as if in preparation for a celestial battle until their eventual bursts of exciting precipitation.

The forests of our region appear as if rejoicing with these gifts of life-sustaining water. Deciduous trees that wait nakedly each winter dawn their lush and glorious cloaks of verdant foliage and grow with astounding intensity. Vines that cling as dusty cobwebs during the dry season leaf out and crawl through the canopy like lizards looking for places to bask in the best light.

At this time when our forests celebrate their fullest potential, we invite you to the Garden to experience this phenomenon for yourself. And don't let a little rain deter you; storm watching along the Hacienda de Oro balcony is just as fascinating of a pastime!

In friendship,
Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG

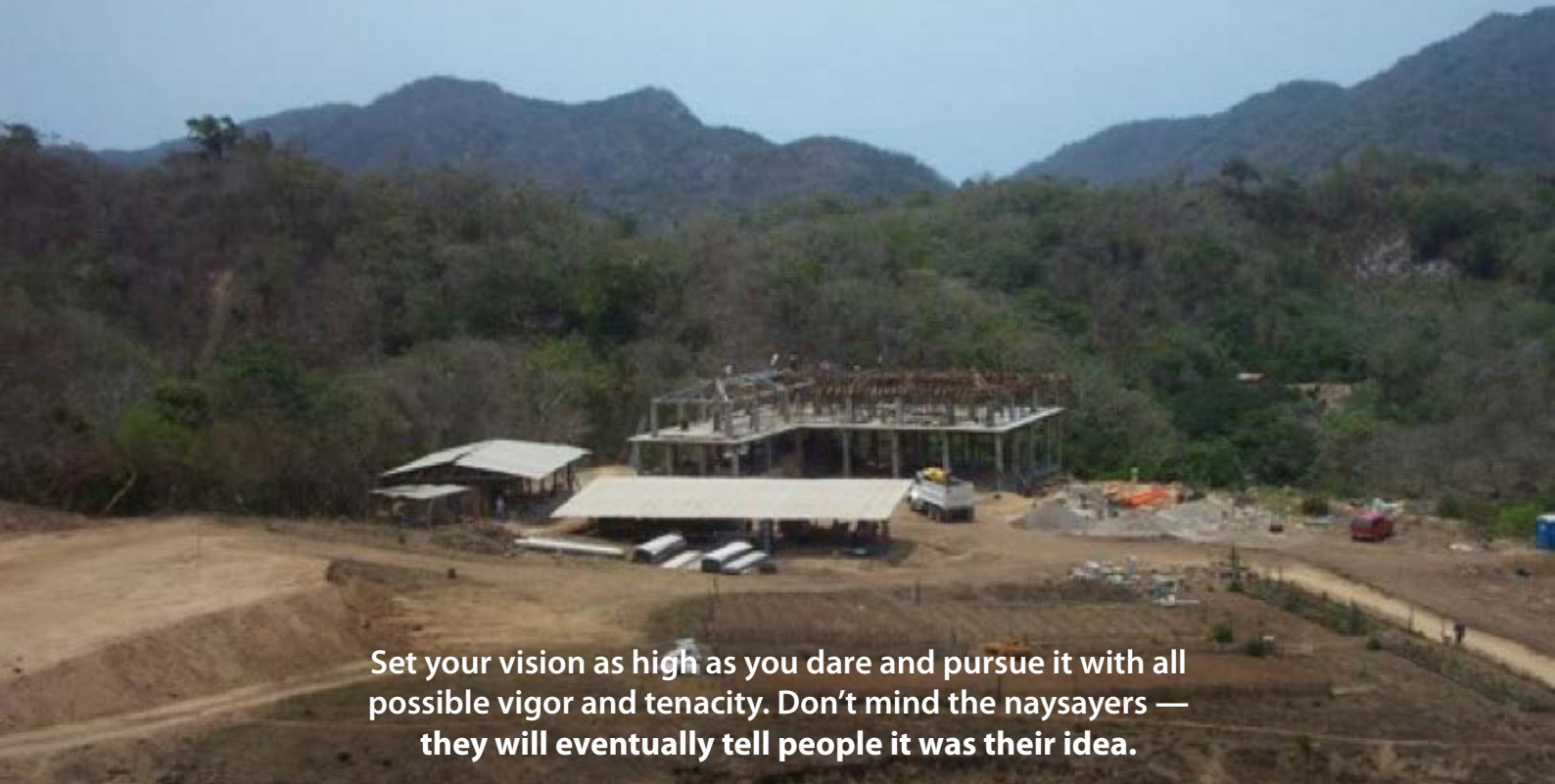
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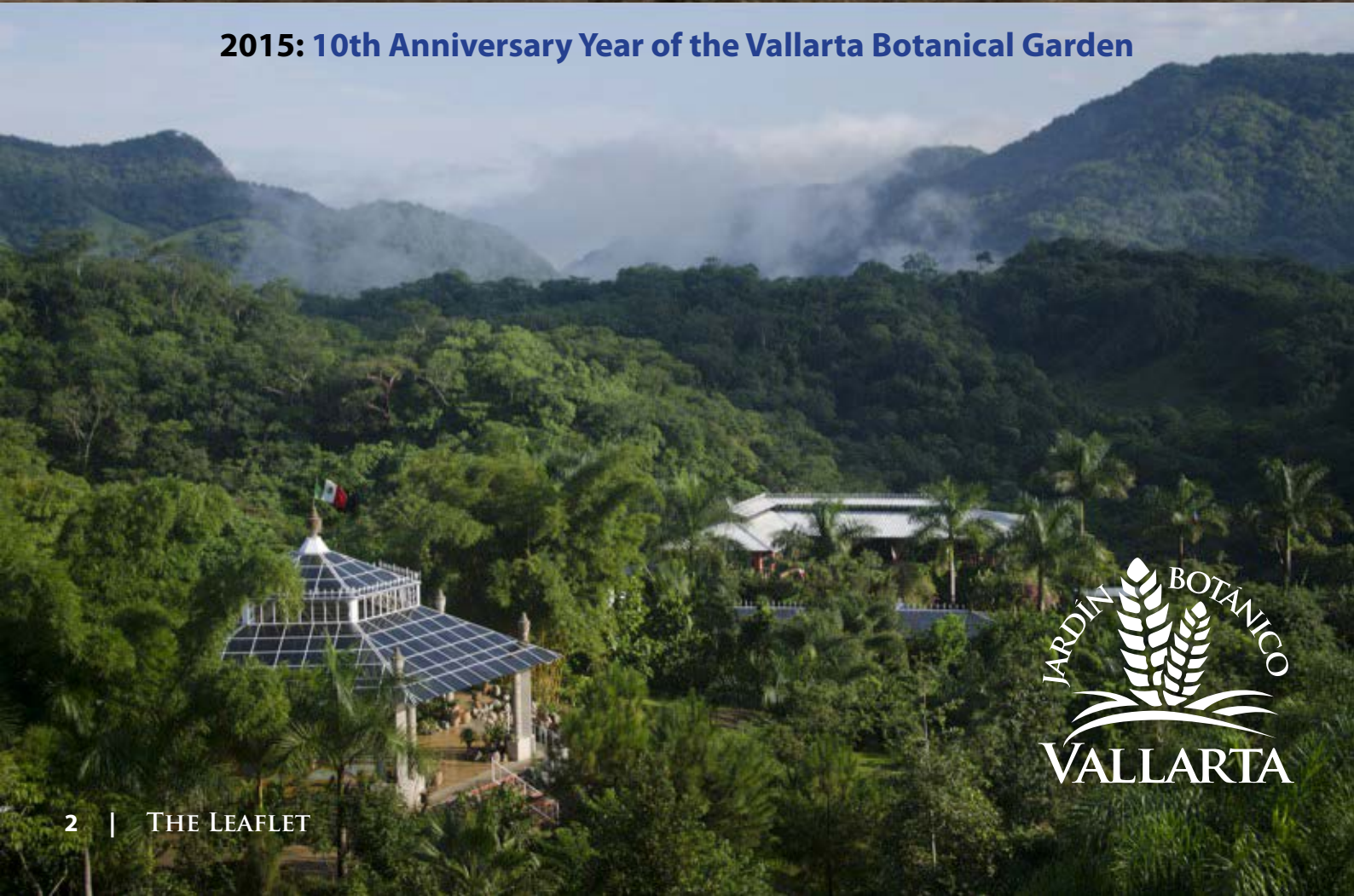
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2005: The Humble Beginning of the Vallarta Botanical Garden



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



10th Anniversary Celebration

The Vallarta Botanical Garden’s advances in the past ten years are truly extraordinary and could only have come about from the support of the extraordinary community we have in Puerto Vallarta, Cabo Corrientes, and the surrounding region. This community has supported us by believing in a bold vision of creating a botanical wonderland and an inspirational setting for our guests to marvel in the mysteries of nature.

Now we’re inviting our community to celebrate with us! We’re planning a full weekend of events at the VBG on November 14th and 15th to include guided hikes, open house experiences, captivating talks by dynamic guest speakers, live music, and a birthday cake big enough for everyone to have a piece.

If you’d like to be part of making this a truly unforgettable experience, please check in with the Garden’s Event Committee Chair, Neil Gerlowski neil@vbgardens.org or Vice Chair, Sue Keevil info@pvseadive.com. We’re still in need of volunteers (especially plant experts for tours and our open house) as well as event sponsors.

Event sponsorship opportunities are as follows:

	New Sponsors	Current Copa de Oro Members & Above	Event Sponsorship + Copa de Oro Membership
Reaching Roots Sponsor	1,000 MXN 62.50 USD	800 MXN 50.00 USD	8,300 MXN 518.75 USD
Strengthening Trunk Sponsor	3,000 MXN 187.50 USD	2,400 MXN 150.00 USD	9,900 MXN 618.75 USD
Golden Bough Sponsor	5,000 MXN 312.50 USD	4,800 MXN 300.00 USD	12,300 MXN 768.75 USD
Crowning Canopy Sponsor	10,000 MXN or more 625.00 USD or more	8,000 MXN or more 500.00 USD or more	15,500 MXN 968.75 USD

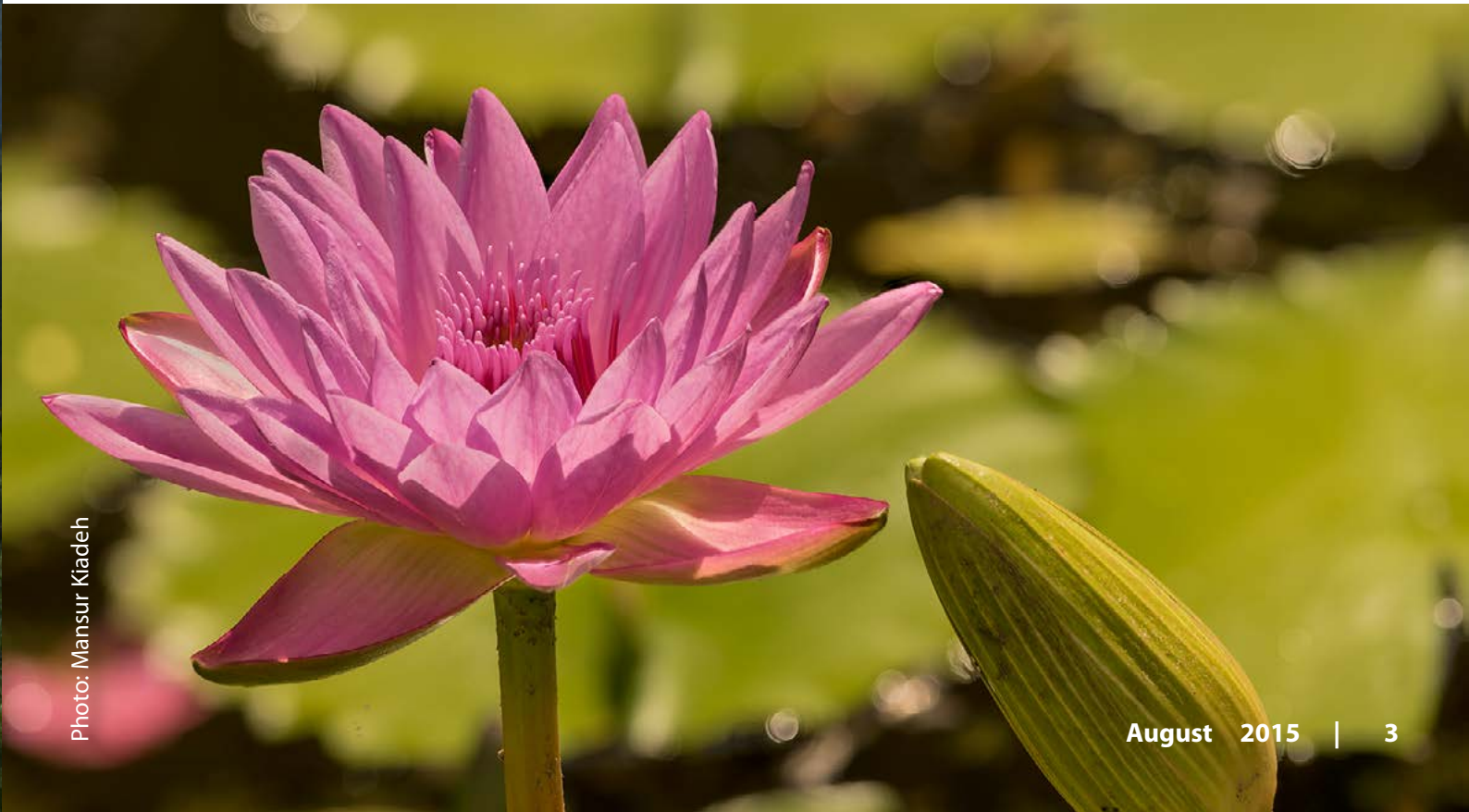


Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

Mexican Orchid Of the Month

Bletia roezlii

By Lizbeth Hernández Hernández
Biologist & Co-author of
"Las orquídeas del occidente
de México, Volumen 1"

The start of the rainy season brings on the sprouting of many beautiful terrestrial orchids, among the loveliest of which is *Bletia roezlii*. This solitary plant, which grows to almost a meter tall, bears one or two spear-shaped pleated leaves tinted red along their inferior surfaces. Its flowers have green sepals along with two of the petals while the labellum (lip) has bright crimson veins radiating from its center.

Its distribution extends from the state of Sonora to Central America. In Jalisco it is especially abundant in the western part of the state as well as the Santiago river basin and its tributaries at an elevation of 600-2000 meters.

Bletia roezlii is relatively easy to cultivate. Its corms (bulb-like tubers) can be placed in pots with good drainage, covered with topsoil mixed with river sand. They will do well in partial to full sun with infrequent watering in the winter and spring. Frequent watering should begin when its first shoots appear each summer.



Mexican Bird Of the Month

Megarynchus pitangua

Following along after the Great Kiskadee and Social Flycatcher covered in the past two articles of the Mexican Bird of the Month, the **Boat-billed Flycatcher** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) has an overall similar appearance. Like the others it has a black head, white eye stripes, olive-brown upper parts, and brilliant yellow underneath. The dead giveaway to help you identify this species is the massive size of this bird's black bill. As reflected in its name, this bird spends much of its time catching insects mid-flight. It also augments this high-protein diet with tropical fruit...or maybe that's just to wash out the taste of all those raw insects! But what's with the exceptionally large bill?

Does it specialize in insects that are too large for the Great Kiskadee or Social Flycatcher? We're not sure ourselves, but if your observations can help us learn more, we at the Garden would be delighted to hear from you.



Pine-Oak Project Update

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Our friends at the Punta de Mita Foundation are continuing the fundraising work started by the Brooklyn Bird Club (BBC) towards the VBG's Pine-Oak Restoration Project. The goal of this project is to increase the amount and diversity of Pines and Oaks on the flanks of the Garden's Cerro de Águila (Eagle Hill). Mexico leads the world in both pine and oak diversity and until now our state of Jalisco has been particularly rich in both. Now development pressure and climate change threaten this diversity and the wildlife that depend on this unique habitat. This means we at the VBG have a unique opportunity to harbor a concentration of a diverse array of these plants and attract some incredible wildlife, especially birds, to this project zone.

We will again work with our friends at Environment for the Americas to organize an International Migratory Bird Day event for this coming October 10th to provide educational programming and promote awareness especially for those birds that return to or through our area each winter. This date will also mark the end of the Punta de Mita Foundation's fundraising for this campaign. Should you like to contribute, please reference the various options for sending your tax-deductible donations listed on the back page of The Leaflet.



Military Macaw
Photo: Frank Mc Cann

**In Good Company:
Denver Botanic Garden**

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director of the VBG

We at the Vallarta Botanical Garden are celebrating our inclusion in the 2015 list of the “TOP 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For,” in part, by a series of articles highlighting the prestigious gardens sharing this list with us. When temperatures climb during Puerto Vallarta’s summer some of us here may daydream a little about cooler places and suddenly a garden in a mile-high city sounds mighty enticing. The Denver Botanic Garden (DBG) provides just such a high altitude oasis along with boasting North America’s largest collections of plants from cold temperate climate around the world.

The colorful history of the Denver Botanic Garden echoes the exciting past of a once rough and tumble pioneer town turned modern metropolis. In 1951 the Botanical Gardens Foundation of Denver was formed and contracted famed landscape architect Saco R. DeBoer to create an elaborate 15-year master plan in Denver’s City Park. Unfortunately “night diggers” took advantage of this unfenced park to steal the new garden’s valuable plants.

2015 List of the, “TOP 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For” <i>As declared by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council (Listed in alphabetical order)</i>	
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 Gardens	USA
Montreal Botanical Garden	Canada



In 1959 an old cemetery became the chosen site to relocate the young garden. Although the majority of the interred were relocated in 1893, graves were uncovered as recently as 2010 during a renovation of the garden's irrigation system.

The DBG's collections are especially noted for their representation of plants from the world's steppes—those dry, cold, grasslands especially famously occurring from eastern Europe through Asia, but also found several areas such as the Patagonia region of South America, as well as in North America such as much of the natural preserves around Denver. These native plants are especially showcased for their conservation needs and for how they can be elegantly incorporated into gardens as drought resistant alternatives to some of the more typical landscaping plants commonly found in area nurseries. We at the Vallarta Botanical Garden love this combination of capturing imaginations with faraway flora while also spotlighting amazing local plants that can otherwise be taken for granted.



*As declared at the North American Garden Tourism Conference in Toronto, Canada March, 2015
Photos on these pages provided courtesy of Denver Botanic Garden.



Magnolia rzedowskiana

**By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG
and Alan Heinze, Research Coordinator, VBG**



We send our congratulations to our friends José Antonio Vázquez-García, Reyna Domínguez-Yescas, Roberto Pedraza-Ruiz, Arturo Sánchez-González, and Miguel Ángel Muñiz-Castro for their recent article published in *Acta Botanica Mexicana* of the newly described species *Magnolia rzedowskiana* found in the eastern Sierra Madre Mountains. This species was named in honor of the great Mexican Botanist Dr. Jerzy Rzedowski Rotter, originally hailing from Poland. Jerzy was imprisoned by the Germans in a concentration camp during World War II and later moved to Mexico in search of a more peaceful future. He has become one of Mexico's most respected pioneering botanists collecting and thoroughly documenting over 50,000 specimens during his illustrious career.

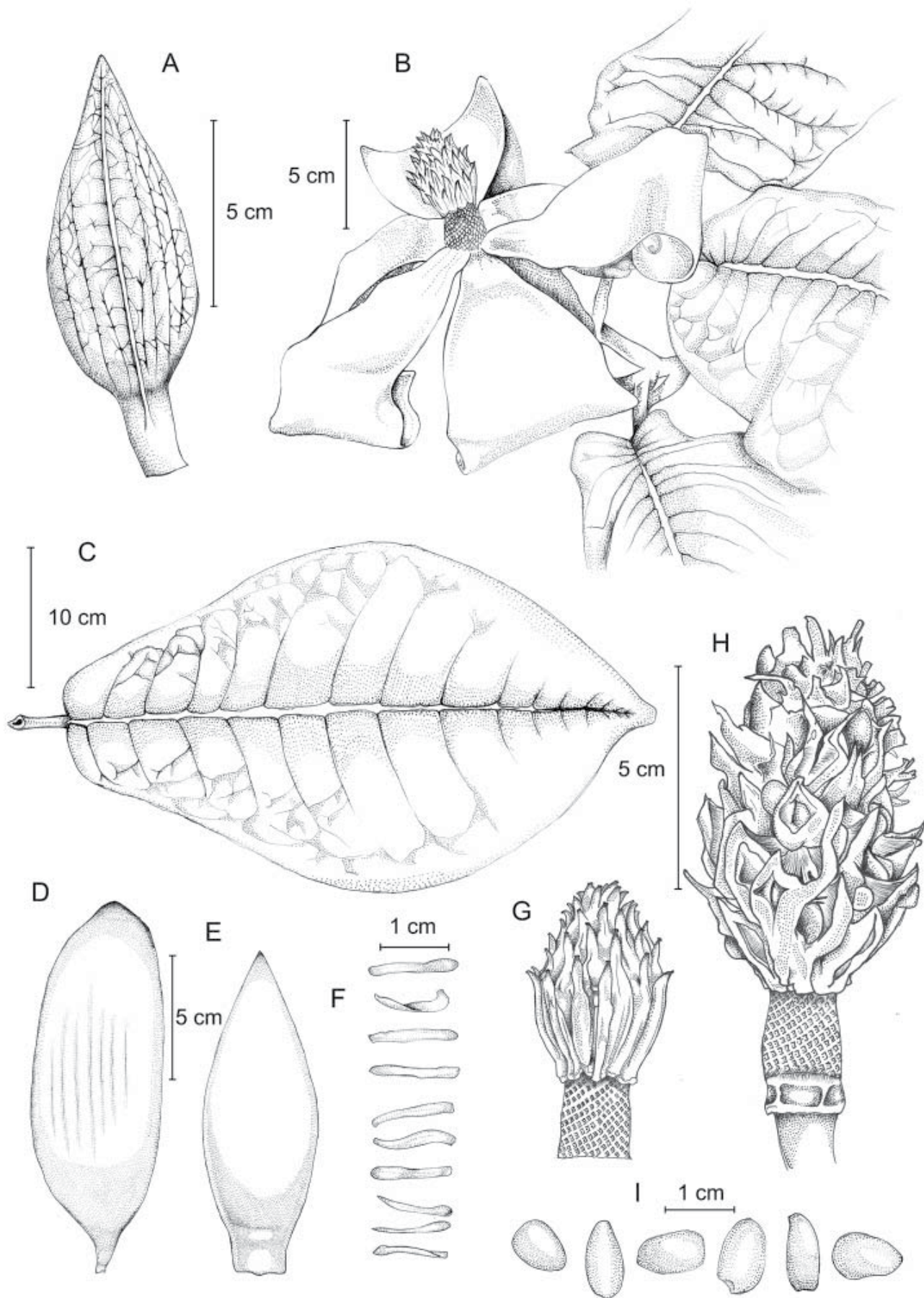
Magnolia rzedowskiana, along with other newly described Mexican *Magnolia* species such as our local *Magnolia vallartensis*, brings this country's species tally for this important plant family (Magnoliaceae) to over 30, making it a contender for the leader in *Magnolia* diversity in the Americas. The Vallarta Botanical Garden helped coordinate a recent magnolia project sponsored by the Magnolia Society International and the Arboretum Wespelaar, which among other successes resulted in the botanical illustration found in the recent publication and reprinted here in this issue of *The Leaflet*.



Magnolia vallartensis in the VBG's Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants. Photo: Gerardo Luna.

Following page: Botanical illustration of *Magnolia rzedowskiana*

A. floral bud; B. flower in terminal branch; C. leaf; D. exterior petal; E. sepal; F. stamen; G. gynoecium; H. polyfollicle; I. seeds. Drawing by Edgar Esaú Vázquez Verdejo. Reprinted with permission from *Acta Botanica Mexicana* 112: 25 (2015).



¡Viva Vireya!

**By Dee Daneri, Former Executive Director,
American Rhododendron Society**

In 1822 a new plant was discovered in Sumatra. It appeared to be a rhododendron, but grew happily as an epiphyte. Until that time rhododendrons had been unknown in the tropics. The plant was named Vireya, after Julian Joseph Virey, but its taxonomic place would be argued for many years.

In 1929 gold was discovered in New Guinea, and with it many new relatives of the strange Vireya began to appear. By 1961, 122 new species had been discovered.

Dr. George Argent of Edinburgh Botanic Garden has devoted his life to the study, collecting, promotion and cultivation of Vireya. In 2006, he published *Rhododendrons of subspecies Vireya*, which recognized 313 cultivars.

Today we acknowledge that over one-third of the species of rhododendrons in the world are indeed of the subspecies Vireya.

Native Vireya are found in high elevations in Southeast Asia, from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, to Papua New Guinea and Borneo. The plants have also been introduced to the Hawaiian Islands. Shortly after Vallarta Botanical Garden opened its gates, it was discovered that our latitude of 20 degrees north is indeed the same as the Panawea Vireya Garden in Hilo, Hawaii. Our elevation is also ideal for growing these remarkable plants.

"Recognizing that the overwhelming majority of the world's biodiversity, both discovered and undiscovered, is in tropical areas, and that life on earth hinges on this biodiversity, the importance of Dr. Argent's work becomes quite evident."

In less than 200 years after the first discovery of Vireya in Sumatra, and only nine years after Dr. Argent's accepted classification, we are pleased to welcome Vireya Rhododendrons to the Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House at the Vallarta Botanical Garden.



Viva iVireya!



Vireya Rhododendron
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

Bromeliad Adventures in Novo-Galiciana

By Andy Siekkinen*

As a researcher of Mexican bromeliads I have been fortunate to explore many regions of this amazingly diverse country—usually by way of small country roads seldom seen by the average traveler. Typically much of my fieldwork is scheduled in the dry season when it is both easier to find bromeliads and to hike around. This year I came in July to study flowers of species that I've discovered during previous trips. Starting in Puerto Vallarta, I was happy to have Bob Price, founder of the Vallarta Botanical Gardens (VBG) join my adventure through parts of Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán.

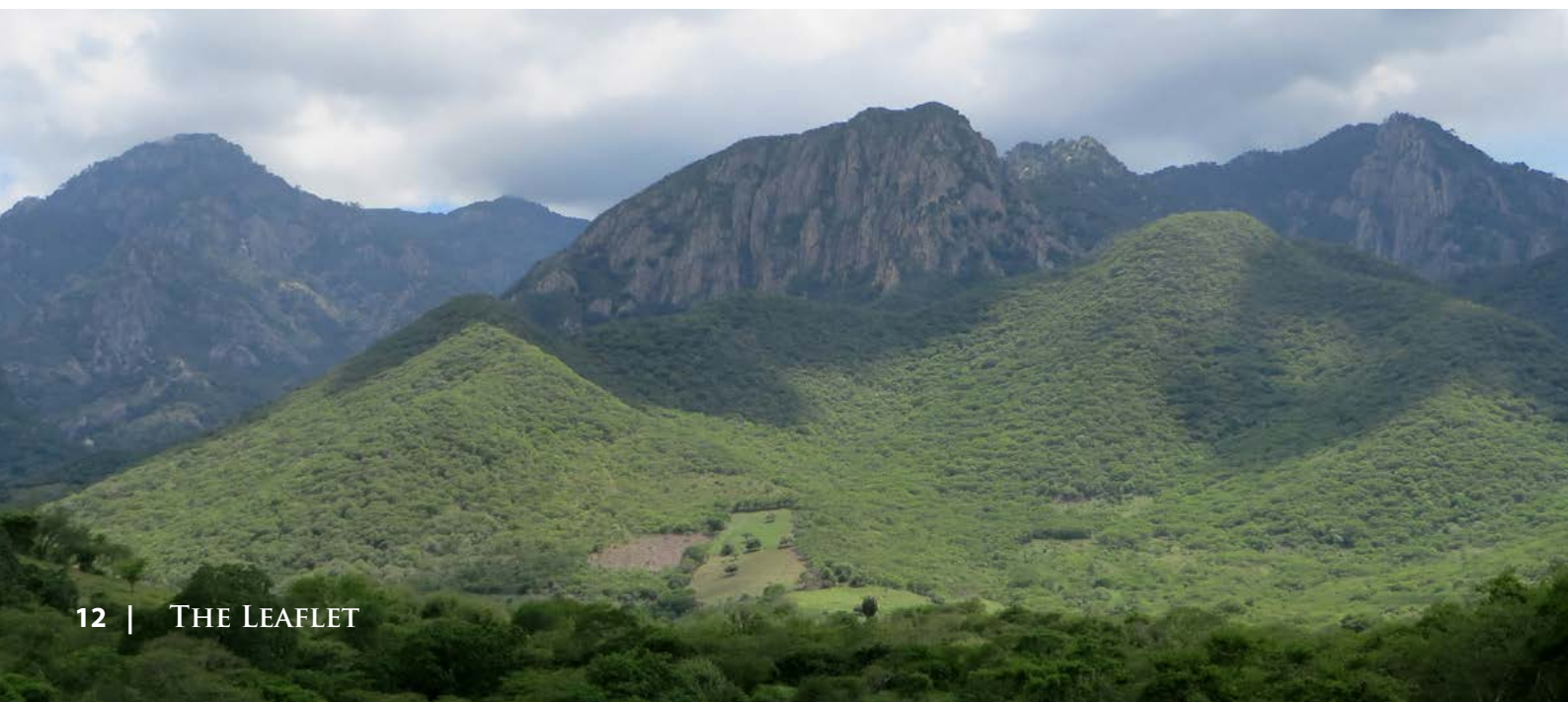
Along the way there was no shortage of fascinating plants. The particular plants that I was searching for were mostly of the genera *Tillandsia* and *Hechtia*, two extremes of the bromeliad family (Bromeliaceae). *Tillandsia* are commonly called 'atmospherics' or 'air plants' and typically grow on trees or rock faces compared to *Hechtia* species which are typically spiny, succulent plants found in soil or on rock formations. *Hechtias* are almost entirely a Mexican genus with over 95% of known species native to the country. As this genus is studied more closely there will undoubtedly be many more Mexican species described in the coming years. Among the many *Tillandsias* that captivated our attention on this trip is the variable *Tillandsia capitata*.

This trip was very successful for my *Hechtia* research as we were able to document and measure flowers of 2 undescribed species that I had found on previous trips, flowers of 3 described species, as well as discovering an additional 2 new species. Upon returning to the Garden I had time for a solo day trip which also proved fruitful as I found yet another new species, this latest one being the closest yet known native *Hechtia* to the Garden. While still taking in the success of this recent adventure I am already dreaming of my next visit to Jalisco and the Vallarta Botanical Garden!

* Andy Siekkinen is a Director for the Bromeliad Society International (www.bsi.org), a researcher studying the taxonomy and genetics of Mexican bromeliads, and a tour guide (www.eagle-eye-adventures.com).

Photos (by Andy Siekkinen) clockwise from below:

1. Beautiful mountains in southern Jalisco showing rocky peaks that likely are home to many more undescribed species.
2. *Tillandsia capitata* is a variable species found throughout much of Mexico as well as into Central America and the Caribbean. This great form has reddish-maroon leaves and yellow or orange bracts when flowering and is only known from southern Jalisco.
3. A new species of *Hechtia* that needed to have its flowers measured from on this trip. This is when they were bright and colorful during the dry season when they were discovered on a trip with Bob Price in December 2013. This very small species grows on weathered limestone that is very sharp. The tall columnar cactus is in the genus *Neobuxbaumia*. A new species of *Tillandsia* is also found growing with this *Hechtia*.





Contribute to YOUR nature-focused monthly magazine, *The Leaflet*

What do you like best about The Leaflet?

What could we include to make it even better for you?

We'd love to hear your feedback and we'd love to receive your submissions of articles and photos. Images—perhaps more than anything else—give life, color, and flavor to our publication and we're always happy to receive fresh and creative perspectives from garden members and guests. Articles can be submitted to editor@vbgardens.org and photos can be submitted to photos@vbgardens.org.

This past month of July we had a group of photographers visit from the club Photo Walks PVR. We can't wait to start sharing some of their photo submissions with you.



Send your garden photos to:
photos@vbgardens.org



Photo: Alberto Casillas

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
		GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	
16	SEP	<i>Día de la Independencia (Independence Day) Mexico</i> — Garden remains open.	Included with entry
10	OCT	<i>International Migratory Bird Day</i> — Learn about the birds returning to winter in Mexico.	Included with entry
17-18	OCT	<i>Chocolate & Vanilla Celebration</i> — Discover the joys of Mexico's gifts to your taste buds through food, beverages, and demos/presentations by guest chocolate experts.	Included with entry
1	NOV	<i>Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)</i> — A cultural delight of memorials, flowers, and other offerings to the departed.	Included with entry
14-15	NOV	<i>VBG's 10th Anniversary Celebration</i> — A full weekend of events to include guided hikes, open house experiences, captivating talks by dynamic guest speakers, live music, and more!	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.

Photo: Gerardo Luna



Garden Hours

Open 7 days/wk

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

Daily Guided Tour

Additional tours

10 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

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

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



Photo: Gerardo Luna



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

From the Membership Desk

Rejoice in the grandeur of Puerto Vallarta's tropical rains at the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Wet weather is only an excuse for the faint-hearted and those with a spirit of adventure will be more than amply rewarded for getting out of the city and jumping in to nature.

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 www.vbgardens.org/benefactors



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Foto: Gerardo Luna

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 Michaela Flores: memberships@vbgardens.org Thank you.**

(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).
- Please provide FPM with confirmation (copy of check) for tracking.

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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 can be sent to:

Routing number: 322271627

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Call us w/ your card info: +52 322 223 6182

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