

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

April 2018



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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

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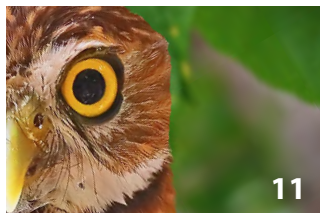
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Original oil painting done on location
at the Vallarta Botanical Garden
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www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Vallarta Botanical Garden,

This April we celebrate Easter, usher in springtime, and rejoice in a list of incredible events at the Garden. Even though we announced it last month, it bears repeating that Delta Airlines listed the Vallarta Botanical Garden as their first recommended destination in their 2018 Caribbean, Mexico and Latin America Guide describing it as “truly mesmerizing.”

In the month when we celebrate springtime we have articles for you on both the *birds* (pages 10 & 11) and the *bees* (pages 6 & 7). Last month we also had a very important survey of our newly acquired conservation preserve by an exceptionally talented group of national and international botanists (see more on pages 2-5).

Those of us who conserve and study nature are continually rewarded by a never-ending string of miraculous surprises. Once such recent surprise for me was to find a tiny marsupial mouse cowering in an elven nest while I was out gardening. This fragile and helpless looking creature reminded me of the infinite lives we touch every time we protect even a small parcel of nature.

Warmest regards from the Garden,
Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Marsupial Mouse
Photo: Bob Price



Studying Plants Along the Horcones River
Photo: Nicole Cavender

Advancing Plant Science at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

By Scott McMahan, *Member of the Vallarta Botanical Garden's Science Advisory Board and Manager of International Plant Exploration, Atlanta Botanical Garden*

This March, the Vallarta Botanical Garden's Science Advisory Board gathered in Puerto Vallarta, not just to convene their annual meeting, but to also collaborate in field research. After reviewing many of the Garden's amazing accomplishments this past year, participants began a floristic survey of the VBG's recently acquired conservation preserve land (first announced in the [June 2017 edition of The Leaflet](#)).

Our group consisted of VBG staff and representatives from multiple botanical gardens throughout the US as well as researchers from the Universidad de Guadalajara (Instituto de Botánica and Centro Universitario de la Costa). We split into teams to cover as much ground as possible including a large parcel across the Los Horcones River and another across the Highway 200. Over the next several days we bushwhacked our way all along the river, up the ridges, and along the Garden's new property line. While exploring the forest, we meticulously documented our observations and collected herbarium specimens that are currently being identified and tallied by our friends at the University of Guadalajara. Not only did we note great diversity in the tree canopy, we also found a thriving community of epiphytes including many species of Bromeliads (especially Tillandsias) and Orchids. Great effort has been made on the part of the VBG to construct a fence completely surrounding the property to protect the existing forest from grazing animals and help deter would-be poachers.

The topography of this new land acquisition is quite steep and rocky making it somewhat difficult to access. However, with a little work, creating some new nature trails that could branch from the existing Jaguar trail as well as a ridge trail across the river are certainly possible. With all of the beautiful natural river pools that will soon be accessible upriver and the healthy forest surrounding (and now owned by) the VBG, the future of this little jewel in western Mexico has just become much brighter.

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Plant Exploration Project March 5-8, 2018



Photo: Garden Staff

Top Row, Left to Right	
Participant	Home Organization
Bartolo Cruz Romero, PhD (Collaborator)	Researcher and Professor, Centro Universitario de la Costa – Universidad de Guadalajara
Tim Thibault (VBG SAB Member)	Curator of Woody Plants, Huntington Botanical Gardens
Audrey Denvir (2018 VBG Plant Exploration Project Coordinator)	Tree Conservation Project Coordinator, The Morton Arboretum
Shannon Still, PhD (VBG SAB Member)	Director of Plant Conservation and Curator, UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden
Miguel Ángel Muñoz Castro, PhD (Collaborator)	Researcher and Professor, University of Guadalajara
Rafael Guzmán Mejía, PhD (VBG SAB Communications Officer)	Retired Botany Professor, University of Guadalajara
Peter Zale, PhD (VBG SAB Member)	Associate Director, Conservation, Plant Breeding and Collections, Longwood Gardens

Top Row, Left to Right (continued)	
Participant	Home Organization
Scott McMahan (VBG SAB Member)	Manager of International Plant Exploration Atlanta Botanical Garden
Andrew Bunting (VBG SAB Vice Chair)	Assistant Director of the Garden and Director of Plant Collections, Chicago Botanic Gardens
Bottom Row, Left to Right	
Participant	Home Organization
Juan Daniel Lepe Ríos (Collaborator)	Biologist, Instituto Tecnológico de Bahía de Banderas
Robert Price (Garden Founder and Curator)	Founder and Curator, Vallarta Botanical Gardens
Nicole Cavender, PhD (VBG SAB Secretary)	Vice President of Science and Conservation, The Morton Arboretum
Alejandro Zabalgoitia (Collaborator)	Researcher, Instituto de Botánica, Universidad de Guadalajara



Taking Meticulous Notes
Photo: Audrey Denvir



Beekeeping Comes to the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Much of the beauty that we enjoy at the Vallarta Botanical Garden is made possible by the help of our pollinators. Around the world, honeybees are the single most prolific pollinator and are essential for maintaining crops we rely upon for feeding the planet. Much attention has been drawn upon honeybees in recent years due to concerns over a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder. These hard-working, hive-building, honey makers are no longer taken for granted.

Vallarta Botanical Garden volunteer David Erne has been a hobbyist beekeeper for over thirty years and has worked with beekeepers throughout much of North America and Europe. He recently sponsored the installation of two honeybee hives in the Garden. VBG volunteer and local beekeeper Talit María José León Mantecón helped him source and purchase the necessary bees and equipment. The two of them then worked with Emmanuel Pina Bernal and Luis Ángel Juárez González to install the hives on the slope of one of the Garden's highest hilltops.

These bees should complement the work of other bees naturally occurring within the Garden and form a pollination super team! The new hives are located far enough from publicly accessible areas that they are not a concern to those who stay on proper lawns, trails, and pathways. If you have any questions about the new buzz, please find David or another of the Garden's volunteers to hear the latest updates on the hives. David and Talit are happy to train others in the gentle art of beekeeping. You may request their contact information from Michaela Flores at the Garden's Membership Desk.



Courageous VBG Beekeepers: Emmanuel Pina Bernal, David Erne, Luis Ángel Juárez González, & Talit María José León Mantecón
Photo: Bob Price



Beehives in Albania
Photo: David Erne



Beehives in Kosovo
Photo: Ann Erne



Beehives in Milwaukee, WI
Photo: David Erne

"...for so work the honeybees, creatures
that by a rule in nature teach the act of
order to a peopled kingdom..."

Shakespeare, William.
1600. Henry V, Act 1, Scene 2



Roadside Honey for Sale in Macedonia
Photo: David Erne



Stone Age Skeps at a Restored Settlement of
Pileings on Lake Ochrid, Macedonia
Photo: Ann Erne



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Codos
(Cuándo están disponibles)

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Carretera Barra De Navidad Km. 24,
Las Juntas y los Veranos, c.p.48447
Jalisco, México.



Google
Reviews ★★★★★

Tel. 01 322 223 6182
www.vbgardens.org

2018 Vallarta Bird Festival

Article and Photos by Nancy Holland

Last month's 2018 Vallarta Bird and Nature Festival hosted by the Vallarta Botanical Garden was another huge success! The Garden was the main hub of activities and each morning sold-out guided birding tours radiated out from there with each enthusiastic participant observing an average of 60 to 70 different species of birds per day! Afternoons activities included presentations, a photo exhibit, and a closing folkloric dance performance involving audience participation.

Luis Morales of the [San Pancho Bird Observatory](#) provided a wonderful educational presentation to raise awareness of illegal trafficking of parrots. Jorge Novoa of [El Santuario de las Guacamayas](#), gave a presentation about the nest box sponsorship program, a short history about the macaw sanctuary, and how a nest box is built and installed—no minor task! Each day, Rohini Velasco of [CEMBAB](#) brought two beautiful rescued Military Macaws for participants to interact with and learn from. He also provided an informative discussion about ongoing studies of parrot behavior. Eduardo Lugo, of [CMFN](#), presented a new book filled with gorgeous nature photography and information about the work of Mexican photographers/conservationists.

The festival also saw a bird photo exhibit featuring the work of Petr Myska, Frank McCann, as well as a few of my own prints. Both the Vallarta Botanical Garden and the Vallarta Bird and Nature Festival thank all of the generous volunteers who made this event possible. We're now brainstorming and planning for next year to make the 2019 festival even better, so please contact me if you would like to get involved!

nancycholland@gmail.com
info@vbgardens.org

Facebook:

[Vallarta Birders](#)

[Vallarta Botanical Gardens AC](#)



Francisco García Explains Bird Migration



Art is a fun way to learn about nature!



Temporary Bird Photo Exhibit at the Garden



Mexican Bird of the Month

Glaucidium brasilianum – Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl – An Owl of a Different Color

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

Of all the natural sounds to be experienced in the Vallarta region, perhaps the Great Kiskadee (last month's "Mexican Bird of the Month") and the diminutive Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl are the most distinctive and familiar to local human residents—okay, Great-tailed Grackles notwithstanding—even if the source of the latter's repetitive vocals remains a mystery to the vast majority who hear it.

Why they are called "pygmy-owls" is pretty obvious once you catch sight of this bird; they are about the size of a human fist. However, the name *ferruginous* is less familiar to the general public, but makes perfect sense when you learn that it alludes to the compound Ferric Oxide, a reference to the bird's russet plumage, which to some observers bears a similarity to the compound commonly known as *rust*— Fe_2O_3 ... though not all individuals are all that, well, "rusty." In fact, these owls may be gray, earth toned or russet in color depending on each individual's plumage variation.

Either way, the aforementioned vocals of this owl are pretty unusual, as well, both because they utter them

nearly continuously during daylight hours, and because they may repeat them as many as 130 times in a minute, often going for more than one hundred repetitions without rest. Now that's saying something! As hard as it may be to believe, however, that is not even close to the record number of vocals owls can belt out in a minute. That distinction goes to this bird's close relative, the Peruvian Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium peruanum*) of the Atacama Desert, which calls nearly twice as fast!

In the Puerto Vallarta region, and most of the American tropics for that matter, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls are common residents of warm, lowland environments; in fact, in the far north of their range they occupy plant associations dominated by Saguaro cacti in the Sonoran Desert, but occur more typically in thorn forest, riparian stands along rivers, and even within *ranchos* and home gardens in our region.

Two relatives, the endemic Colima Pygmy-Owl and Northern (Mountain) Pygmy-Owl, also occur in our region, but mostly segregate out by altitude, with the Colima Pygmy-Owl dominating in oak forests of the

middle elevations (above 1100 m), and the Northern Pygmy-Owl—known locally as the “Mountain Pygmy-Owl” —replacing the former at the highest altitudes above 2000 m, which are dominated by pine-oak (encinal) and coniferous environments of pines and firs. However, *both* Ferruginous and Colima pygmies are common and sympatric at Vallarta Botanic Garden!

Studies have revealed that these small owls are succinct predators of insects (particularly grasshoppers and cicadas), arachnids (including venomous spiders and scorpions), reptiles (lizards), some mammals (mice) and small—and not so small—birds, ranging from warblers to quail. Perhaps the most important item in their diet is grasshoppers. Being a small predator has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage must be stealth. However, being smaller than other local owls, all pygmy-owls have “false eye-spots” on the back of their heads (see inset), two black spots that are theorized to dissuade larger predatory birds—including other owls like Mottled and Great Horned owls—from depredating them!



Nesting occurs in tree or cacti cavities, originally excavated by woodpeckers such as the Golden-cheeked, Lineated and Pale-billed varieties. Sometimes the owls drive the woodpeckers from their hard-earned homes after construction, though most move in once the original owners have moved out.

Though they are one of the most widespread American owls—occurring from Arizona to Argentina—the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl population consists of several distinct races. The North American population is sometimes considered distinct from their relatives in South America, being called the “Ridgeway’s Pygmy-Owl” or *Glaucidium ridgewayi*.

Some North American races are now considered threatened north of Mexico, where they occur in the US States of Arizona and Texas. The Arizona population—known as the “Cactus Pygmy-Owl” is now so rare that just 20 or so birds are thought to remain north of the border, with an unknown population in adjacent Sonora, Mexico; the Sonora population has declined by 30% in recent years, which is troubling. In Texas they now reside primarily on large private ranches—such as the King Ranch—in far south Texas, and the population hovers around 2100 individuals. All three populations are threatened by the infamous border wall, now under construction!



Vallarta Botanical Garden Pet Cemetery



\$200 USD

Simple Burial (No Marker)

Burial in a place chosen by Garden management and a record of burial location.
NO MEMORIAL STONE. Includes 1 a year Individual Membership to the Garden.

\$600 USD

Bridge of Dreams Slope

Burial and memorial stone in a private part of pet cemetery and record of the burial location.
Includes a 1 year Sustaining Membership to the Garden.

\$1000 USD

Chapel Valley Slope

Burial and memorial stone on the hillside of the pet cemetery visible from the Peace Garden
and a record of the burial location. Includes a 1 year Sustaining Membership to the Garden.

All memorial stones in the Pet Cemetery are made of Cantera and a personalized message will
be presented on a 30x30 hand painted tile.

**For more information, please contact
Michaela Flores at:
memberships@vbgardens.org**

We Cater Events!

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*Why not have your special event in one of the most beautiful places in the world?
There are many sites around the garden to set the stage for your fabulous event!
From a simple wedding with just a few friends, to a lavish party with all the trimmings.*



Consult the Vallarta Botanical Garden's wedding planner for more ideas.

Contact: Jesús Reyes

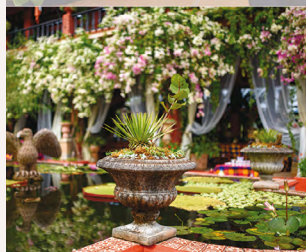
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Vallarta Botanical Garden



PHOTOS: AVE SOL



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.

Mexican Orchid of the Month

Prosthechea chacaoensis (Rchb.f.) W.E.Higgins

Article & photo by Centeotl Aragón, Staff Biologist

The common name of this highly recognizable orchid is “cockleshell” due to its distinctive form and the coloration of its labellum. The scientific genus name comes from the Greek word “*prostheke*” meaning “appendix” and is a reference to this flower’s column. Its species name refers to the Chacao region of Venezuela, but it has a wide distribution ranging all the way up from South America into Mexico. At the time of its first description by Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach in 1854, the leading orchid taxonomist of that era, it was originally referred to as *Epidendrum chacaoensis*. Its genus has since gone through subsequent name changes from *Epidendrum*, to *Encyclia*, and now *Prosthechea*. Despite its similarities to *P. baculus*, *P. fragrans*, *P. ionophlebia*, *P. radiata*, and *P. trula*, among many others, it can be differentiated by its two apical leaves, gray-green subcylindric to ovoid pseudobulbs, a racemose inflorescence with two to eight flowers and a bloom period of midwinter to early summer. It has very fragrant flowers which many visitors say reminds them of jasmine. So on your next visit here let yourself be captivated by its fragrance!

REFERENCE:

- Pupulin F. and Karremans. 2007. *Prosthechea ionophlebia* and *Prosthechea chacaoensis*; two different species, but which is which?. *Lindleyana in Orchids* 76(3): 202–208.



- World Famous Botanical Garden
- Hacienda de Oro Restaurant 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- Bird Watching
- Shopping

- Swimming in the Horcones River
- Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants
- Cactus and Succulent Plant House

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Education and Volunteer Report

By Centeotl Aragón, Vallarta Botanical Garden

The first group of students we received this past month are future nutritionists studying at the Universidad de Guadalajara's local Centro Universitario de la Costa (UDG CUC). Their teacher, Blanca Denisse, worked with me to focus on a custom-tailored learning experience to teach students about the health benefits of growing a home garden. Later in the month we also had an additional group of visiting students from the CUC led by David Bustos and a group from Mexico City's Great Union Institute whose visit was coordinated by Yolanda Rosique.

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

Total member visits to the VBG:	230
Total non member visits to the VBG:	5889
Total complimentary entries:*	30
Total participation in special events, classes & workshops:	30
Total participation in 1 pm tours:**	286
Total volunteer service hours:	102

* 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.

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE	EVENT	COST
	THE GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER	
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.



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)



From the Membership Desk



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

The beauty of the Vallarta Botanical Garden makes it a perfect backdrop for celebrating the life of a loved one and/or a cherished pet. The hillsides on either side of the International Peace Garden of Mexico in front of Our Lady of the Garden Chapel are two especially appropriate places to do so. Pages 12 and 13 of this month's edition of *The Leaflet* have more information, but I would also be happy to talk with you about this further should you be interested in creating a memorial here at the Garden.

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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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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Paypal: www.fundacionpuntademita.org/en/how-to-help

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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- Charles Schwab Account # 46789311 DTC Clearing # 164 Code: 40
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