

# THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

## August 2017





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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

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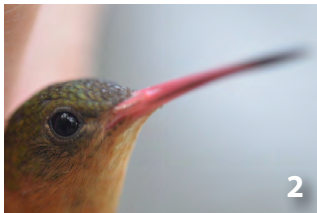
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Cover: Exploring botanical treasures in the mountains beyond Mismaloya.  
Photo: Garden Volunteer

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[www.vbgardens.org](http://www.vbgardens.org)

## Curator's Corner

*Dear Friends of the Garden,*

We at the Vallarta Botanical Garden are not just plant lovers, but also wildly passionate about nature in general. *The Leaflet* reflects this broad interest and appreciation with a range of articles from forest and garden to local wildlife, including our popular *Mexican Bird of the Month* feature by Greg R. Homel, and even occasional articles about marine life—we are, after all, in one of Mexico's favorite beach destinations!

Considering the broad range of our publication's contents, the fact that nature and wildlife are among our strongest themes, and our opportunities to inspire and educate people about both plants and wildlife even more, we see ourselves on a path for *The Leaflet* to become Western Mexico's leading nature and wildlife magazine. You can be part of this exciting journey with us. Please send us your favorite nature photos, especially those taken at the Vallarta Botanical Garden, and shots that show us fascinating interactions between wildlife and our native plants. We're interested in your articles too if you're a writer, but only if you can submit these with quality images that help us *show* stories about nature at least as much as we *tell*. With your help we'll continue our tireless pursuit of excellence even more successfully and provide the kind of content that has you waiting for each issue with even more enthusiasm—because people who care about their natural world make choices for a healthier planet.

*Warmest regards,*

Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG



Cecropia Moth  
Photo: Bob Price



## Hummingbird Researchers Visit the VBG

Article and photos by Marcos Gómez

In celebration of the Puerto Vallarta Hummingbird Festival, we had the opportunity to receive guest ornithologists (bird scientists) from the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM). Alfonsina Hernández Cardona, studying for her master's degree, and Marisol Ocampo Sandoval, who holds a Master's in Science degree from the UNAM, came to collect data for a very interesting study about the evolutionary relationship between the shape of hummingbird's beaks and the tropical heliconia flower.

We worked particularly with the Mexican Hermit Hummingbird (*Phaetornis mexicanus*), whose curved beak has become specialized for the pollination of these intriguing plants. Hummingbirds were captured with special "mist nets," measured, and then released unharmed.

On Sunday July 16, our visiting ornithologists presented an educational talk to our visitors, about their investigation's results. Thanks to this project we had the opportunity to learn more about our region's hummingbirds, and even got to touch them!

This type of collaboration with researchers and the UNAM helps support new knowledge of Mexican biodiversity and environmental education.



Plain-capped Starthroat Hummingbird ready to be studied.



A Cinnamon awaits its physical.



Collecting Heliconia Flowers.



One in the net.





## Construction Continues on the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project

Mexico leads the world in cactus and agave diversity and is home to a wealth of other succulents. The state of Jalisco is home to a vast number of these incredible plants. Upon successful completion of the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project, we will cultivate these plants to their full potential to create inspirational displays for our visitors to enjoy.

In late 2016 the Vallarta Botanical Garden received a grant of \$15,000 USD from the Stanely Smith Horticultural Trust (SSHT) to begin this project. Since then, the scope and grandeur of the project have grown with our vision for what we can do in this area.

**We invite you to join us as one of the first visionary contributors toward the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project.** Your tax-deductible gift will create a legacy of cactus and succulent plant cultivation and display at the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Together we will also create a powerful new attraction for our visitors.



The foundation is laid for the VBG's new Cactus and Succulent Plant House. Cantera columns should be installed within the next month.  
Photo: Marcos Gómez





Cactus and Succulent Plant House  
Rendering: César Amezcua



Cactus and Succulent Plant House  
Rendering: César Amezcua



## Mexican Orchid of the Month

***Prosthechea radiata* (Lindl.) W.E. Higgins**

Article and photo by Marcos Gómez,  
Propagation Coordinator, VBG

Many flowers are distinguished by their perfume, and most orchids are not exceptions. Among them, species of the genus *Prosthechea* are some of the most popular in regard to their delectable aromas. Science has decoded the chemistry of over 1,700 different fragrances produced by plants, which have inspired products from perfumes to medicines.

Compounds emitted by plants are essential oils, or scents. These are volatile substances produced mainly by flowers, but can also radiate from leaves, stems, roots and fruits.

These aromas play fundamental roles in plant reproduction, attracting pollinators to visit flowers in search of potential rewards, like nectar or pollen. In addition, there are some unusual cases, where male pollinators take baths in the floral colognes to attract potential mates.



Many factors along the evolutionary process determine the complex nature of these scents, resulting in a wonderful range of fragrances. Some perfumes produced by orchids remind us of cinnamon, chamomile, coconut, lemon or even chocolate. In this case, fragrant shell orchids, like *Prosthechea radiata*, our orchid of the month, have a sweet scent, similar to that of honey.

So, the next time you come to visit the Vallarta Botanical Garden, there is one thing you must remember to do:

Smell the flowers!

### References:

- Pantaleón Bautista, X. O. C. H. I. T. L. (2011). Análisis Químico de las fragancias producidas por las orquídeas *Prosthechea varicosa* y *Prosthechea karwinskii* para la identificación de compuestos volátiles (*Doctoral dissertation*).



Strangler Fig in Las Juntas y Los Veranos.  
Photo: Bob Price



## Mexican Bird of the Month

### ***Atthis heloisa*** - Bumblebee Hummingbird

Article and photos by Greg R. Homel

[www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com](http://www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com)

[birdingadventures@mac.com](mailto:birdingadventures@mac.com)

After the summer rains invigorate, nourish and stimulate blooming in the higher ranges surrounding Puerto Vallarta, one of the region's smallest avian inhabitants moves in, almost unseen. Behold the aptly named Bumblebee Hummingbird!

Not to be confused with Cuba's Bee Hummingbird, which holds the title of the world's smallest bird and one of its smallest vertebrates, Mexico's endemic Bumblebee Hummingbird is nonetheless among the planet's smallest feathered organisms. Weighing in at a cool 3 grams and measuring not more than 2.75"—almost half of which is beak and tail—this is an impressive little mite, indeed. They really can't be confused with any other regional species except the wintering Calliope Hummingbird, which is the smallest US and Canadian bird, though these lack the Bumblebee Hummingbird's striking orange outer tail feathers.

Their wings beat at an amazing 80 beats per second and their fiery metabolisms require an abundance of high fructose nectar-bearing, tubular flowers to fuel tiny hearts beating more than 1200 beats per minute. They may also have fewer feathers than almost any kind of bird, with some estimates counting less than 1000.

You won't find Bumblebee Hummingbirds just anywhere, though, as they prefer subtropical montane forest between 1500 and 3000m, which is strange considering their very small size and the fact that if they did not go into a nightly torpor, these liliputes would die of starvation before the next dawn, since no hummingbirds feed at night.

An abundance of flower banks to feed from, and nearby oaks and conifers to perch upon, are requisite for the species' survival requirements. In many cases, the birds even perch on oak leaves (see photo), as they are so tiny, that they hardly cause a leaf to bend or shuffle, let alone break or fall off.

Males announce their presence to all females in their territory with a very high-pitched whistled song that



is barely audible to the human ear. Some observers who can't detect these high frequencies think the birds are panting when they are actually singing their tiny heads off! Their wings make an unusual bumblebee-like buzzing sound when they fly, which may account for the name, although they are also about the size of some bumblebees, so who knows?

There are two races of this species, one that inhabits eastern Mexico's Sierra Madre Oriental and associated transverse ranges near Mexico City, and another that inhabits high mountains from the northwestern Mexican State of Sonora to southwestern Mexico's Guerrero and Oaxaca states.



The Isthmus of Tehuantepec forms a lowland geographic barrier for this species, and to the south of the isthmus, another very similar species, the Wine-throated Hummingbird replaces their Bumblebee relatives in the Sierra Madre de Chiapas into Northern Central America. There is one claimed record for Ramsey Canyon in Southeastern Arizona's Huachuca Mountains from the 1880s, though this record is highly dubious and the sole US record probably refers to a mislabeled specimen.

For the most part, this amazing little species departs the region during the dry season and is always highly ephemeral in its occurrence, since they are so reliant on fresh nectar sources; although they regularly supplement their nectivorous diet with a variety of small insects.

As with all hummingbirds, male Bumblebee Hummingbirds are not known for being faithful nesting companions. In fact, other than mating with every female in their territories, they play no role in nesting at all!

The best place to search for Bumblebee Hummingbirds in our region is the north slope of Cerro La Bufa, although they do wander to lower elevations after nesting. They even reach Cabo Corrientes, including, likely, the Vallarta Botanical Garden, although a confirmed record of this species has yet to be documented for this site. This makes the Bumblebee Hummingbird a particularly tantalizing species for Vallarta Botanical Garden visitors to search for during their next visit.







A good lunch for some caterpillars can make a gardener either grimace or grin.  
Photo: Ulises Sánchez



For more information,  
please contact:

**Fondo de  
Aseguramiento  
Ganadero**

**01 800 8321 328  
01 800 8372 031**

**Alianza Jaguar**

**311 258 4231**



# ¿El jaguar se come tu Ganado?

Conoce qué hacer para no tener pérdidas económicas  
y apoyar en su conservación.

**VEN A LA CHARLA:**  
"Ganadería sustentable, buenas prácticas y conservación de la biodiversidad".  
Impartida por ALIANZA JAGUAR A.C.

**Sábado 01 de Julio del 2017 a las 11:00 am  
en el Jardín Botánico de Vallarta. ENTRADA LIBRE**

Información y registro a través de:  
Alianza Jaguar. Tel. (311) 258 4231 E-mail. [alianzajaguar@gmail.com](mailto:alianzajaguar@gmail.com)  
Jardín Botánico de Vallarta Tel. (322) 223 61 82 E-mail. [propagacion@vbgardens.org](mailto:propagacion@vbgardens.org)  
CEMBAB Tel. (322) 209 22 29 E-mail. [cembab.grales@gmail.com](mailto:cembab.grales@gmail.com)

## The Garden Hosts Important Jaguar Conservation Talk

By Marcos V. Gómez Cervantes

On July 1, we welcomed a guest speaker –Erik Saracho of Alianza Jaguar– for a conservation-themed presentation regarding one of the most emblematic cats of the Americas, the jaguar. He shared with garden visitors and local community members about Mexico's *Fondo de Aseguramiento Ganadero* (livestock compensation fund). This program fosters a healthy coexistence of ranchers and jaguars by making up for economic losses from livestock predation by jaguars, cougars and other wild animals. This way, neither the ranchers lose their investments, nor the jaguars, their lives.

We thank Erik for his time along with Claudia Méndez and our other friends from *Conservación de Especies Maravillosas de Bahía de Banderas* (CEMBAB) for their help in coordinating and promoting this educational event. For more information, please reach us through the contacts listed on the event poster reprinted above.



## 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](http://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](mailto:info@vbgardens.org).



Passiflora at VBG  
Photo: Bob Price



## Do you have a special flower that you feel connected to when you visit the Vallarta Botanical Garden?

How would you like to experience your connection in your home?

What if you could have a painting of your favorite flower and make a meaningful contribution to the Vallarta Botanical Garden at the same time?

I am a passionate believer in the importance of supporting the Vallarta Botanical Garden as a special sanctuary for all of us in Puerto Vallarta and our visitors.

In an effort to give back to the Vallarta Botanical Garden community I would offer 50% of the proceeds for up to 15 personalized custom floral paintings to help further the Garden's mission and vision.

If you would like to enjoy your special piece of the Garden in your home everyday please reach out soon!

Contact Cheryl at: [wheelercheryl@me.com](mailto:wheelercheryl@me.com)

Cheryl Wheeler  
ART





# PUERTO VALLARTA BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

August 15 – October 31

## FESTIVAL DE MARIPOSAS DE PUERTO VALLARTA

15 de Agosto – 31 de Octubre

2017



[www.vbgardens.org](http://www.vbgardens.org)

Photo: Frank McCann



Female Sparkling Tale Hummingbird.  
Photo: Marcos Gómez



## Education and Volunteer Report

*By Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG*

July brought out record numbers of folks enjoying the first annual Puerto Vallarta Hummingbird Festival. Each day of the festival participants were treated to a guided hummingbird educational and conservation tours by VBG Biologist Marco Gomez. Approximately 2,700 garden visitors of all ages enjoyed learning about attracting and feeding hummingbirds as well as hummingbird identification. Over 13 different species of Mexican hummingbirds have been documented within our garden and forest preserve. If your school would like to make and educational visit Vallarta Botanical Garden please reserve your date by contacting [escolar@vbgardens.org](mailto:escolar@vbgardens.org)

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

Total member visits to the VBG:	70
Total non-member visits to the VBG:	1990
Total complimentary entries:*	200
Total participation in special events, classes, & workshops:	780
Total volunteer service hours:	88

\*The Vallarta Botanical Garden is pleased to provide complimentary entry for educational programs for school groups with advanced reservations. Currently, these are only offered on Wednesdays. Requests for reservations may be delivered by email to [educadorambiental@vbgardens.org](mailto:educadorambiental@vbgardens.org) and should be sent at least five days prior to the requested visit date. Requests for reservations are granted on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to scheduling restrictions.

\*\*1 pm tours are offered daily from December through March and otherwise only when volunteers are available.



## Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
		<b>THE GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER</b>	
12	Aug	<b>Plant Sale</b> - 15% off	Garden members only
15 - 15	Aug - Oct	<b>Butterfly celebration at the Vallarta Botanical Garden</b> - please contact Garden staff for more information.	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](http://www.vbgardens.org/calendar).



Photo: Ulises Sánchez

### 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)





Photo: Ulises Sánchez



## From the Membership Desk

*Michaela Flores,*  
Membership Coordinator, VBG  
[memberships@vbgardens.org](mailto:memberships@vbgardens.org)

The Vallarta Botanical Garden is pleased to announce that we received a donation to purchase “Wild Apricot” a powerful software package specifically designed to manage and develop our member program. This software helps nonprofits stay up-to-date with their member records, but most importantly will help us keep our members well informed.

### Membership Management Features:

- Application Management
- Automatic Renewals
- Dues Management
- Event Management
- Member Database
- Member Directory
- Payment Processing
- And much more!

We have started the import process of our membership database and are learning many of the functions that this software has to offer. You may have received an email from us about a renewal update. If you have any questions or notice any errors as we learn this new process, please contact us at your earliest convenience.

A big thank you to all of our members for your patience and support of the Garden and the membership desk.

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

## Can you find your name on our WALL OF PATRONS?

**If you're not yet “on the wall” we invite you to join the family that preserves the Garden forever!**

Becoming a member is easy & provides great benefits:  
**[www.vbgardens.org/memberships](http://www.vbgardens.org/memberships)**

A high resolution image of this photograph is available at [www.vbgardens.org/benefactors](http://www.vbgardens.org/benefactors)






**We would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters:**

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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](mailto:donaciones@fundacionpuntademita.org) **with a copy to** [info@vbgardens.org](mailto: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  
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M6S 3H9  
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Please write "VBG" for "Vallarta Botanical Gardens" on your cheques.

Alternatively, you may donate using a credit card through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org) (whose donation page is linked to the CCSHF website [www.ccs hf.ca](http://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](mailto:treasurer@vbgardens.org) for routing and account numbers.

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