

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

June 2017



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The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México
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Cover Photo:
Male orchid bee
Wild Mexico Series: Wild Mexico
Episode: Wild Mexico: Ep 001:
Mountain Worlds
© Louis Labrom 2016
Courtesy of the BBC



www.vbgardens.org

Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

At the onset of each summer our staff, volunteers, and visitors eagerly await the return of life-sustaining rains that transform our Garden and local mountains into a green and fruitful wonderland. It's the time when the majority of our collections are in their full glory. It's also the time when our cactus and other succulents struggle the most. In fact, we've had to considerably restrict these important collections over the years from their full potential. Our new Cactus and Succulent Plant Project will forever change what has been considered possible in our region for xerophytic landscaping. We'll have full control over the amount of water the plants receive, and the rapidly draining soil they will be planted in will provide them nearly optimum conditions.

Mexico leads the world in cactus and agave diversity and is home to a wealth of other succulents. Our state of Jalisco is home to a vast number of these incredible plants. Upon successful completion of the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project, we'll 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.

I would like to invite you to join us as one of the first visionary contributors towards 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.

Cactus and Succulent Plant Project Naming Opportunity: \$500,000 USD (\$77,000 for current project funding, \$123,000 to General VBG operations, 300,000 to begin an endowment for the perpetual curation and maintenance of the cactus house and surrounding grounds).

In friendship and common vision for a prosperous and environmentally responsible future for the Vallarta region,

Robert Price,
Founder and Curator, Vallarta Botanical Garden



Cactus and Succulent Plant Project: Displaying the glory of the desert at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

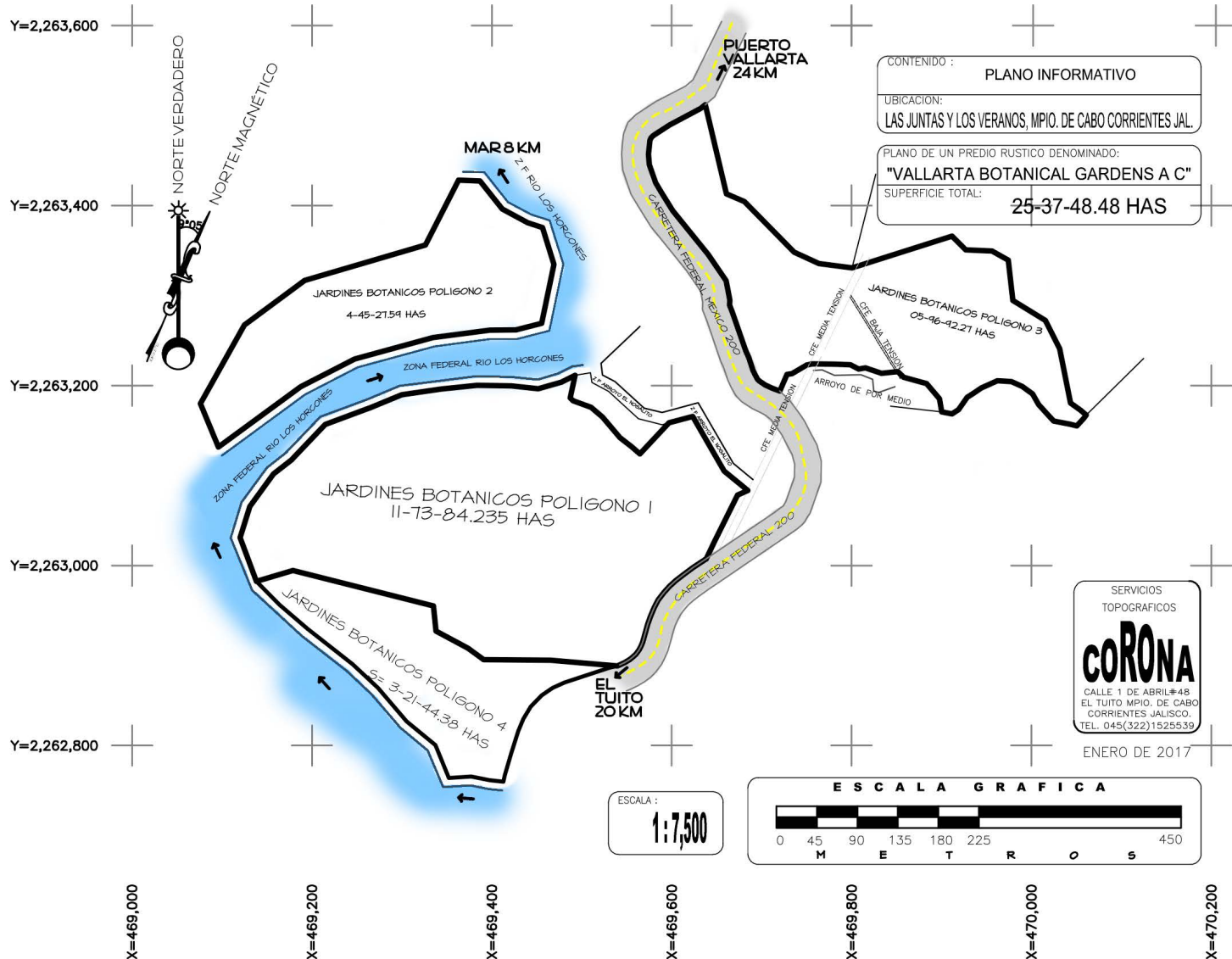
Please help us complete this project by 2018!

Cactus & succulent Plant Project:	USD
Building construction (includes permits)	35,000
Building improvements (lights, speakers...)	4,000
Plants, tezontle, & prepared soil	35,000
Internal hardscaping	6,000
External hardscaping	12,000
Total project cost:	92,000
- Funds received from SSHT	-15,000
Remaining funds necessary:	77,000

Most Recent Successful VBG Capital Projects	USD
2017 Cheryl L. Wheeler International Peace Garden	60,000
2016 Nuestra Señora del Jardín (Chapel)	160,000
2015 Daneri Vireya Rhodendron House	40,000
2014 Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids & Native Plants	300,000
<p>Please help us add the Cactus and Succulent Plant Project to our organization's great history of success. From humble contributions to a gift endowing this project for perpetuity, we thank you for your generosity and shared vision!</p>	



Cactus and Succulent Plant House
Rendering: César Amezcua



Expansion of the Garden's Preserve

By: Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Of the myriad ways we can work to help conserve our planet's precious natural resources, perhaps none is more impactful than conserving critical wild habitat. Tropical dry forest, like that surrounding the Puerto Vallarta region, is disappearing at an ever-increasing rate around the globe, threatening plants, animals, and the integrity of entire ecosystems.

Now, thanks to the generous support of Garden members, and especially to recent lead gifts by Ralph Osborne of the Garden's Board of Directors, our forest preserve has expanded from 6 to over 23 hectares within this past year and a down payment has just been made to purchase another two hectares. This, along with the developed parts of the Garden, with infrastructure and formal

landscaping, will place our organization's total terrain at over 27 hectares (nearly 70 acres). Much of this land borders the federal zone of the Los Horcones River, the banks of which are especially rich in plants as a riparian zone and of critical importance to many native animals.

The new land was purchased with funds from restricted gifts stipulating that the land never be developed, but rather stay in its wild natural state for perpetuity as a refuge for native flora and fauna. This greatly increases the Garden's value as a research center. Several leaders on the Garden's Science Advisory Board picked up on this right away and are exploring ways to help us complete preliminary floristic surveys of this new land to know exactly what we have to protect.



The Vallarta Botanical Garden and some of the surrounding forest preserve.
Aerial photography by: Greg Homel · Pilot: Cheryl L. Wheeler

Two of the foremost local threats for which we need to remain vigilant are against poaching and wildfires. Our first step to help ward off potential poachers is fencing off the land and installing signage. We're also looking into the possibility of installing motion-detected cameras, which have the dual benefit of providing us with images of the local wildlife. A few weeks ago we were harshly reminded of the destructive power of wildfires in our forests as hundreds of hectares burned for six days. The fires came to within just a few kilometers of our property and we were socked in with smoke and ash.

As forested land near the Vallarta Botanical Garden continues to become cleared for building homes, grazing cattle, and various other uses, it's more important than ever to secure additional preserve property by purchasing remaining tracts of intact forests before they are destroyed. Please feel free to contact me or any of my colleagues on the Garden's management team or our Board of Directors for more information or to pledge your tax-deductible contributions to further land acquisition. Together we can work to protect the integrity of our local wild areas far into the future!



Conservation means protecting land and resources from many threats. This photo was taken by Bob Price in April 2017 from the VBG's Visitor Center looking out past the Garden's main flagpole. Almost all wildfires in Jalisco are started by human causes and result in enormous harm to natural areas and their inhabitants. Do your best to guard against wildfires and encourage others to do the same!

Explorations in the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Article and photos by: Iván Bravo Carvajal, Executive Director, New Lifeline

Our visit to the Vallarta Botanical Garden began exactly as planned with an 8:00 am departure from the Independencia primary school in the Joyas del Pedregal neighborhood of Pitillal. Our entire group of 57 sixth graders, 5 parents and 2 teachers were very excited about starting our great adventure. We arrived at 9:45 and were warmly received by the biologist Marcos Gómez who was expecting us, as he would be our tour guide and educator throughout the Garden. After a brief welcoming and some recommendations we started with an interesting talk about edible plants, including different flowers and fruits. The students participated with a rich array of questions and answers, ending with a dynamic activity where they broke into teams to compete and practice what they learned.

Continuing our tour through the Garden, the children learned about plants diversity especially demonstrated by their flowers. The first stop was the desert area, where they clearly showed their appreciation for the variety of cacti living in different regions of the country, as well as their

roles in their ecosystems. The next area was interesting as well, as it was teaming with ornamental plants of beautiful colors to the marvel of our students who were inspired to care for such colorful life forms. We then arrived at the Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants where nature videos about birds covered some of the species that frequent the garden including Military Macaws.

At the end of the tour, the children were treated to tastes of blue corn quesadillas (a novel experience to those who were unaware of such variety) accompanied by delicious hibiscus iced tea.

As we said our farewells, Marcos gave us posters with images of native birds and important conservation messages for our teachers to continue sharing with the students. This happy group of students wish to thank the Garden's dedicated staff and its benefactors for making this, without doubt, one of the most memorable learning experiences of their young lives.





Cultivating an Ecologically Aware and Educated Community *The Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation's Collaboration with the Vallarta Botanical Garden*

By: Anne-Marie Haynes, President, Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation

Since 2012, the Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation (CCSHF) has been proud to collaborate with the Vallarta Botanical Garden in support of its educational programs. During my first visits to the Vallarta Botanical Garden I was pleased to find such a lovely tourist destination and a place to learn about Mexican native plants. It wasn't until I later visited as a chaperone for an educational visit that I realized just how much the Garden gives back to its local community and provides life-changing environmental education experiences to youths of Bahía de Banderas, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo Corrientes.

After this visit years ago, I appealed to the CCSHF board to sponsor educational programs at the VBG. They readily approved this request and since then the CCSHF has provided tax-deductible receipts for thousands of Canadian dollars that have allowed the Garden to continue developing its educational programs and benefit local youths and their families.

One of my duties as President of the CCSHF is to make frequent site visits to the beneficiary organizations whose programs and projects we support. On May 3rd, I shadowed a visit of 25 students from the *Instituto de Capacitación y Educacion Profesional* accompanied by their teachers Aida Melchor and Héctor Valdez. Horticulturist and educator Edith Cázares led the students throughout the grounds teaching them about the incredible biodiversity of their country, inspiring them and instilling within them a fascination of the plant kingdom. The level of engagement and interest that Edith was able to impress upon these young men and women was outstanding. She passed my inspection with flying colors!

I encourage my fellow Canadians to visit the Vallarta Botanical Garden and support this excellent work through purchase of a Garden membership and/or other donations. We at the CCSHF are happy to provide you with your tax-deductible receipts. For more information, please visit www.ccs hf.ca.





Puerto Vallarta International Hummingbird Festival 2017

June 1 - July 31, in the Vallarta Botanical Garden

- Hummingbird Observation
- Feed the Hummingbirds
- Learn more about Hummingbirds

Garden Admission \$150

(If you wear a hummingbird costume you receive FREE entry!)

Plants that attract Hummingbirds

- Lantanas
- Heliconias
- Hamelia patens
- Nopales
- Tillandsias
- Zinnias
- Stachytarpheta
- Salvias

Watch this recently released video by the BBC of a **Bumblebee hummingbird fight**.

Hummingbirds at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

- Cinnamon Hummingbird
- Broad-billed Hummingbird
- Plain-capped-Starthroat
- Lucifer Hummingbird
- Berylline Hummingbird
- Berylline Hummingbird
- Black-chinned Hummingbird
- Mexican Woodnymph
- Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird
- Rufous Hummingbird

Hummingbird feeder recipe

1. Mix 1 part of granulated sugar in 4 parts warm water.
2. Boil water with sugar for 1 or 2 minutes.
3. Do not add any coloring to the food.
4. Change the solution every 3 days.
5. Clean regularly.

Hummingbird Enemies
Cats and Insecticides

Mexican Bird of the Month: Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*)

Article and photo by: Greg R. Homel

www.birdinginpuertovallarta.com/birdingadventures@mac.com

After the gates to the Garden close and the sun sets, crepuscular and nocturnal animals begin their “day”. It is at this time—just before the inky cover of darkness conceals the mysterious activities of nocturnal animals—that “observers” can enjoy birding by ear and hear the onomatopoeic admonitions of our Common Pauraques, revealing their true numbers. Inevitably, they are the first nocturnal birds to become vocally active each evening.

Pauraque is not a household name, albeit! It is pronounced “Pō-rä’kā” and, according to some references, the word has its origins in the language of the Amerindian cultures that once inhabited what is now Texas’ Lower Rio Grande Valley, the only place the species occurs north of the border. The name is a derivation of the Spanish words Huaraque or Parruaca, references to the bird’s distinctive vocalizations.

I especially like, and can relate to the name many people in modern Mexico call the bird today—Tapacamino—which literally translates to “Road Cover”, in reference to their habit of fearlessly perching smack, dab in the middle of the blacktop, or just out of the path of oncoming traffic on highway berms, where the reflective retinas of their eyes glow red in the beams of driver’s headlights.

Some estimates put their population at more than 20 million, with about 7% of the population inhabiting Mexico, though most people have never seen or heard of

this bird. In fact, the Common Pauraque, which ranges in lowlands and foothills from Southern Texas to Argentina, may very well be the most widespread of the Neotropical nightjars, members of the family Caprimulgidae, which includes the more familiar Eastern Whip-poor-will, also named for its voice.

Because they are active at night, look strange and utter unusual sounds, pauraques and other Caprimulgadids, have inspired superstitious appellations throughout the ages. Nightjar and goatsucker, are two common ones, the former a reference to the European Nightjar’s nocturnal song, and the latter a reference to the huge gape of the same species, which was misinterpreted by medieval farmers, who actually thought the European relatives of pauraques snuck into pens late at night to suckle from the mammary glands of goats. Laughable today, as all birds are lactose intolerant, and all nightjars feed on insects. Have you ever seen a bird nurse its young?

During daylight hours the attractive plumage pattern of the Common pauraque cryptically blends ever so seamlessly with leaf litter on the forest floor. They even nest on the ground. Two eggs are laid and the young hatch semiprecocial, which means they can actually walk and leave the nest site soon after hatching, but still need to be fed by their parents; an adaptation to effectively avoid predation.

So the next time the sun sets, listen for the onomatopoeic song of the Common Pauraque and try to follow it to its source, flashlight in hand. You might just be treated to an audiovisual surprise you won’t soon forget!



Mexican Orchid of the Month: *Encyclia adenocaula* (La llave & Lex) Schltr.

Article by: Marcos V. Gómez Cervantes

Photo by: Mansur Kiadeh

It is rare to have the opportunity to write from a historical science perspective, but there is no better time to do it than writing about the Mexican orchid featured this month.

Encyclia adenocaula, also known as “Angelitos” or “Trompillo morado” is a native and endemic species from Western Mexico. It inhabits the oak forests from Sinaloa to Oaxaca, where they appear as lilac splashes in the tops of trees.

It’s historically interesting because it was described the first time in 1918 by the Mexican naturalists Pablo de la Llave and Juan José Lexarza, two of the first scientists that gave botanic names to the flora of Jalisco and Michoacan.

Lexarza was also a poet who unfortunately died at the young age of 39 years before being able to be published. However, de la Llave rose to the position of director of several important museums, including the former *Museo*

Nacional de Historia Natural de México (National Natural History Museum of Mexico). After discovering 50 new orchids species, de la Llave gave the scientific name for the most iconic tropical bird of the Americas, the Quetzal.

As time passed, populations of Quetzals and the *Angelito* orchid diminished greatly because of human over-exploitation. Nowadays these two species are endangered and protected by International laws.

Between April and June, you can still observe the memory and beauty of our forests coming alive and blooming in the heart of the Vallarta Botanical Garden. This is definitely an orchid you don’t want to miss.

References:

- Ruiz, B. C., Laguna, C. A., Iglesias, A. L. G., Damon, A., Marín, H. T. N. J., Azpíroz, R. H. S., & Moreno, M. J. L. (2008). Germinación in vitro de semillas de *Encyclia adenocaula* (La Llave & Lex.) Schltr (Orchidaceae). *Phyton* (Buenos Aires), 77, 203-215.

Encyclia adenocaula
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh



Give Every Month – Become a Garden “GEM”

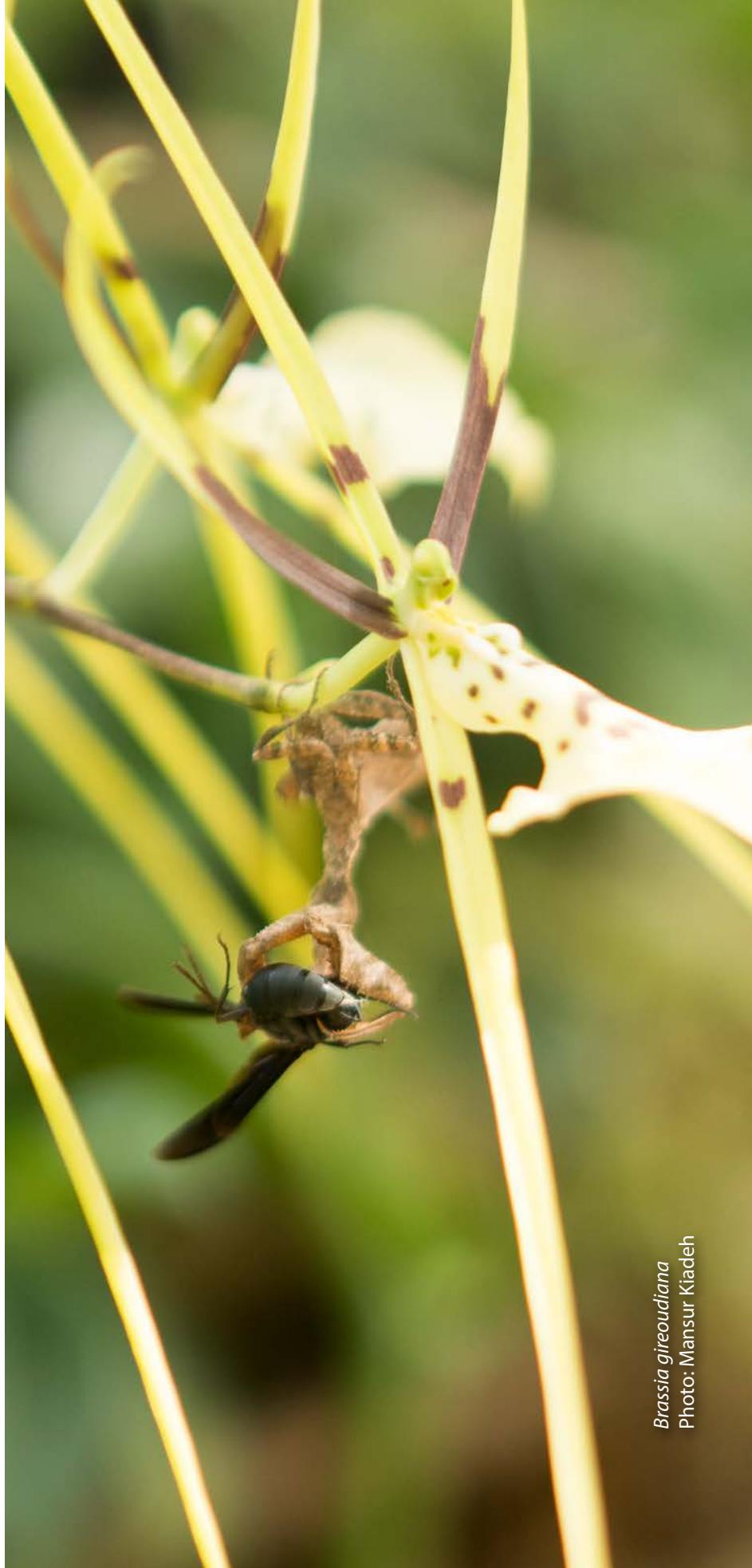
Dividing your contributions to the Vallarta Botanical Garden into monthly payments can help you better budget your annual giving and allows us a dependable monthly income to carry the Garden through the slower times of the year. A new Give Every Month “GEM” page is now up on the Garden’s website www.vbgardens.org for you to 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 up into payments over the course of three years is a commitment of only \$194 or \$139 USD per month. These gifts qualify for tax-deductible contributions in Mexico, the US, and Canada. Interested? Great! 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.



Brassia gireoudiana
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

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

Cheryl Wheeler

ART



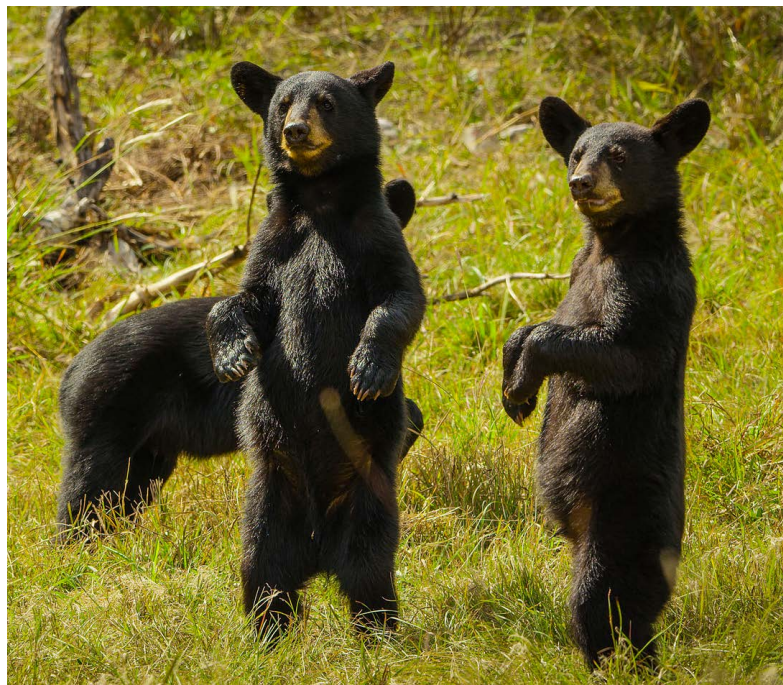
Phalaenopsis hybrids
Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

VBG Orchids In New BBC Documentary

Last month, the BBC's Natural History Unit released an hour-long documentary, *Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life*, as the first part of a new series on Mexico. This first episode, *Mountain Worlds*, includes footage of black bears, coatimundis, monarch butterflies, and resplendent quetzals. It also includes sequences of iridescent euglossine bees pollinating stunning Stanhopea orchids from footage filmed right here in the Vallarta Botanical Garden this past summer!

The initial release of this series is only available within the UK... one more reason to purchase your tickets to "travel across the pond" this summer. The world release for this series is scheduled for next year and we'll be sure to keep you posted with the latest details once we hear more. Whether you're lucky enough to watch the documentary soon or have to wait for the world release in 2018, be sure to keep an eye out for "Jardín Botánico Vallarta" (Vallarta Botanical Garden) in the closing credits!

[Click here to read the BBC article about filming orchid bees at the VBG](#) and [click here to see the video clip, "Orchid bees make their own cologne"](#) from the BBC documentary *Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life*.



Upper photo: Mexican black bears. © BBC NHU 2016

Lower photo: Male orchid bee. © BBC NHU 2016

Photos used with permission from Wild Mexico Series: Wild Mexico
Episode: Wild Mexico: Ep 001: Mountain Worlds.





Visita de ICEP Vallarta (*Instituto de Capacitación en Educación Profesional*)

Education and Volunteer Report

By Edith Cázares, Horticulturist & Educator, VBG

As with other months, during May we received several different school groups, but this time, all our visitors were enthusiastic young people from high school and university levels. We received two groups from the Instituto de Capacitación y Educación Profesional de Vallarta (ICEP), coordinated by the teacher Aida Melchor and the professor Héctor Valdez. The students took advantage of their visit to ask many interesting questions about plant diversity. We also received students from the Instituto Tecnológico de Bahía de Banderas, who were majoring in tourism. They arrived with an important interest to learn about ecotourism and how the Vallarta Botanical Garden satisfies nature lovers. We are happy to continue collaborating in environmental education of a new generation of youth.

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

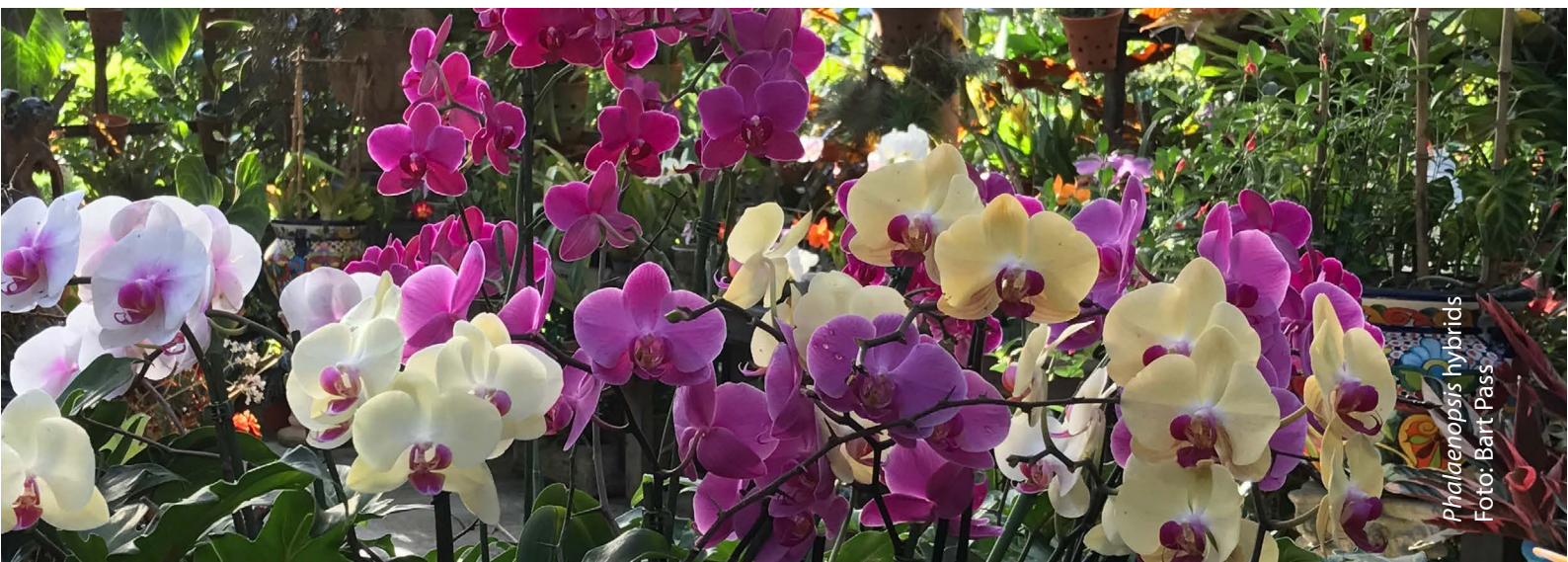
May 2017	Total member visits to the VBG:	251 people
	Total non-member visits to the VBG:	1,734 people
	Complimentary entries for organized school groups*:	164
	Total participation in daily 1 pm tours: (suspended until Dec., except when volunteers are available)	15
	Total participation in special events, classes, or workshops:	0 people
	Total volunteer service hours:	39 hours

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

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
GARDEN IS CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER			
JUNE & JULY		Puerto Vallarta Hummingbird Festival — See page 9 for details.	Included with entry
1	JUNE	Kickoff of the Puerto Vallarta Hummingbird Festival — See page 9 for details.	Included with entry
18	JUNE	Father's Day — Spend the day with "Dear Old Dad" at the Vallarta Botanical Garden	—
1	JULY	Canada Day (150 years!)	—
2	JULY	National Botanical Gardens Day (Mexico) — Celebrate nature with us on a day dedicated to botanical gardens here in Mexico. Learn about the other great gardens of our country!	Included with entry
4	JULY	Independence Day (US)	—
6-13	JULY	Frida Kahlo Week at the VBG — Look for further details in next months edition of <i>The Leaflet</i> .	—

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



Phalaenopsis hybrids
Foto: Bart Pass

Garden Hours

Open 7 days/wk

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

Daily Guided Tour

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

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



Brassica oleracea
Photo: Bart Pass



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

From the Memberships Desk

The summer rains are about to begin. As we look out at the surrounding woodlands that will soon turn from dusty brown to the vivid green of a tropical forest in summer, we're so happy to know that much of what we see immediately around us has now been secured as preserve land for our plants and animals. Lead gifts provided by VBG Board Member Ralph Osborne played a big part in making this happen, but it's important to remember that the contributions of all Garden members are essential to allowing us to further the important mission of our organization. Are you proud to be a VBG member and to see how your contributions are making a difference? Please let me know if you'd like to become more involved by joining us at a higher level or making an additional gift today. For all members at every level of support—thank you for making the Garden flourish!

Members: please always wear your membership card when visiting the Garden.

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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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 are accepted:

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Credit Card Payments:

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