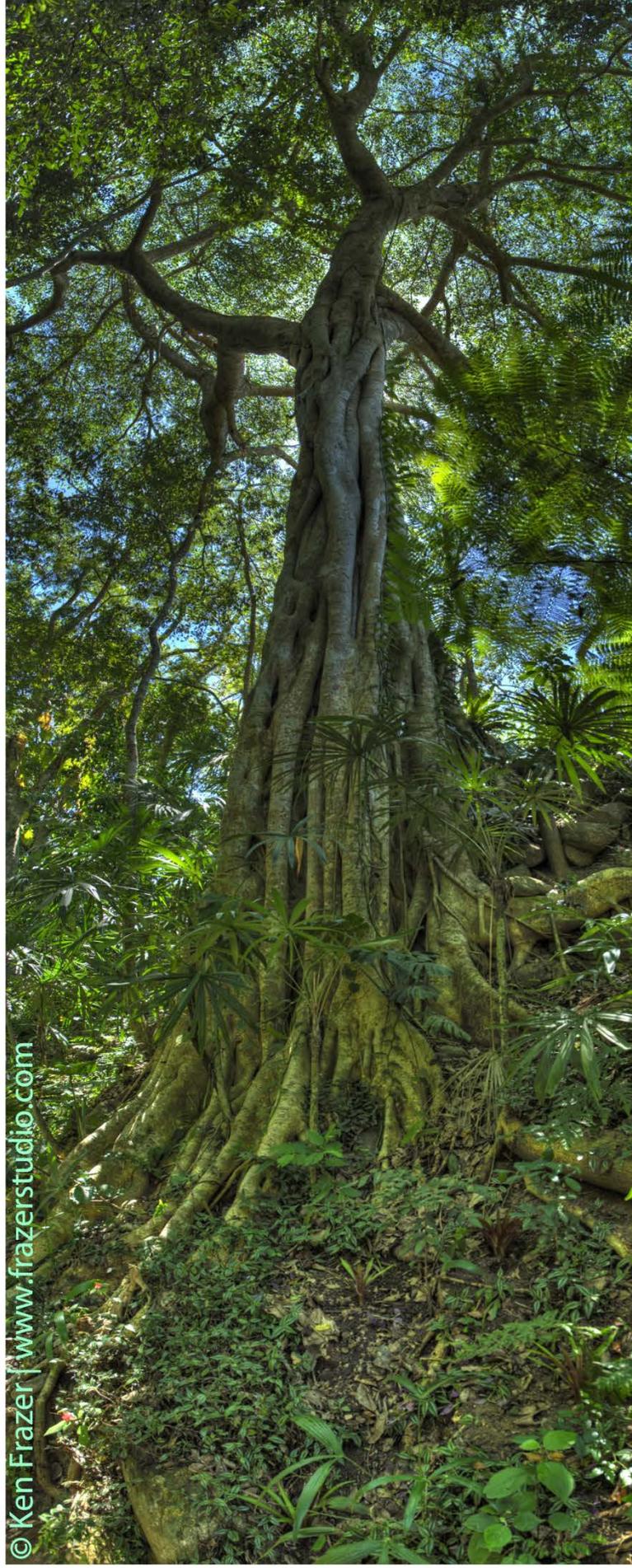


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THE LEAFLET

September 2014

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden Vol. 4, No 9

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México



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Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

Since pre-historic times, humans have used art to celebrate our natural world and communicate our connection to it. With the increased urbanization of our planet and the continued loss of critical natural habitat to desertification, commercial farmlands, mega-reservoirs and many other threats, our need to celebrate and connect to the natural world is stronger than ever. It cannot just be up to scientists and government officials to



take on the challenges in conserving our natural resources, we humans as a global community must collectively work to protect the natural treasures that we are blessed to enjoy and prevent even more from disappearing permanently. Art can help make this possible!

As announced in the July Leaflet, we are currently displaying an exhibition of Hummingbird and Orchid Watercolors by Mexican artist and naturalist Rafael Montes de Oca, whose work echoes some of the same dynamic style and attention to detail as his contemporary, John James Audubon. Originally marked for exhibition in the recently completed Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids, these works have now been moved to the Hacienda de Oro Visitor Center to better protect these historic works from excessive sunlight. We hope you'll find these beautiful pieces as captivating as we do and that they inspire you to seek opportunities to observe the wonderful diversity of both these incredible flowers and avian delights in the wild.

Lampornis clemenciae by Rafael Montes de Oca

Our next big art exhibit will commence on December 13th in conjunction with the Grand Opening of the Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids. Guadalajara-born artist, Esperanza Gama, is now busy creating special pieces for this exhibit. Esperanza's work is done on the magical *amate* paper still made in the same tradition used to create the ancient codices of civilizations including the Aztecs and Mayans. The fibers of *amate* are made from the bark of trees including species that can be found in our Garden. Esperanza visited the Garden in June and found no shortage of natural inspiration for her art in our collections, displays, and forest preserves.

We are very pleased to be receiving photos of Esperanza's newest work to share with you. We wish her the best in her labors in these upcoming months and are honored to be considered a source of inspiration for her creations. We also thank our friends at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, Illinois for collaborating with us in this unique project to inspire others to celebrate the joys of nature.

El Nadador by Esperanza Gama





Pigment on Amate by Esperanza Gama

**An exhibition made possible by collaboration
between the Vallarta Botanical Garden & the
National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, IL**



El Jardinero by Esperanza Gama

Without the direct government funding that many of the other [“TOP 10 Gardens in North America Worth Traveling For”](#) receive, we thank our members and donors for allowing us to continue our mission, “to create Mexico’s foremost botanical garden for the discovery, study, propagation, conservation and display of native and exotic plants for the enjoyment of Puerto Vallarta’s residents and our visitors.”

To those of you in Puerto Vallarta, please come up to the mountains and visit us soon; to those of you in other places, keep Mexico in your hearts!

From the Garden,

Bob Price, Curator and Founder



On the Map in a Serious New Way

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Many of you have probably already spent hours exploring the world without leaving the comfort of your own home through Google Earth (aka Google Maps). One of their amazing features includes embedded panoramic views allowing one to scroll a computer screen through a 360° view. Another is Street View which allows you to experience seamless footage of any place they’ve filmed as if you are driving right along yourself. You can even zoom into a shot of a storefront to view things in stunning detail. How much is that doggy in the window? Chances are you can zoom right onto its price tag!



Now imagine being able to surf the web for a virtual tour of the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Didn’t have a chance to hike the whole Jaguar trail during your last trip? Soon you will be able to experience it without breaking a sweat. Forgot the scientific name of a beautiful blooming orchid? Just zoom in on the plants’ name tag.

Our curiosity was piqued when we received a crew from Google Maps in early August with a futuristic jetpack-looking device with an overhead multi-lensed camera globe. Now we’re looking forward to when their imagery is processed and uploaded for public view on their website, a process which usually takes approximately four months or more to complete.



In coincidental synergy with the recent work at the Garden of the Google Map crew, our friend Paco Ojeda of [Vallarta Lifestyles Magazine](http://VallartaLifestylesMagazine.com) has been taking high resolution images by a multi-rotational tripod mount that allows for the 360° view photomontages mentioned earlier. While the work of the latest Google crew will likely not be available to view until late this year or early 2015, eleven of Paco's images are available **now** at: <http://goo.gl/0eoZi9>

Of course the hope is all of this wonderful imagery encourages people to visit the Garden in person even more and not just experience us on the web... although that's quite fun too!

We are delighted to share the Garden with the world better than ever before yet are quick to remind you that though expert photography and the latest technology can enhance the virtual visit in incredible new ways, nothing replaces a visit here in person. To see fresh blooms of delicate flowers, feel the mountain breezes, hike along our trails, and fall in love all over again with your favorite native Mexican plants is the only way to truly experience the Vallarta Botanical Garden.



Magnolia Report

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

With the description of dozens of new species of Neotropical magnolias in the past two decades, Mexico is now considered the top country in the Americas for *Magnolia* species diversity*. Jalisco state alone boasts six different species including that of *Magnolia vallartensis*, discovered in gallery forests along mountainous zones within the city limits of Puerto Vallarta, and described in 2012.



***Magnolia vallartensis* now on display at the VBG**



Mature *M. vallartensis* blooming in the wild

The Vallarta Botanical Garden, in an effort to help advance this exciting field of plant research, reached out to the international community for support. Through generous grants from Magnolia Society International and Arboretum Wespelaar in Belgium, the VBG is now coordinating research support and educational outreach about these trees along with colleagues at the University of Guadalajara’s Center for Biological, Agricultural and Livestock Sciences campus (CUCBA).

National experts met in Puerto Vallarta in March for the first ever Magnolia Symposium in Mexico to present their latest research findings. Symposium attendees then dedicated a freshly planted *M. vallartensis* alongside interpretive signs on the Isla Cuale, a public park in Old Town Puerto Vallarta. Additional saplings of this and other *Magnolia* species are now on public display at the Vallarta Botanical Garden. These new trees are only about one year old and we may well have to wait another 10 years or more before they produce their first flowers, but when they do, they are certain to compete with other botanical delights to become one of our garden’s main attractions!

Project developments since then include the creation of three additional interpretive signs to be installed at VBG soon, covering such subjects as the biodiversity of seasonally dry tropical forests, the relevance of botanic gardens in their conservation and of course magnolias. CUCBA researchers have also been on two recent expeditions in search of more *Magnolia* specimens and the beetles that pollinate them, as far north as the state of Sonora. Outstanding work on this project includes a couple of fieldtrips to collect *M. vallartensis* seeds next spring, and the funding of botanical illustrations for an upcoming book on Mexican magnolia diversity, to be published by the CUCBA researchers.

* *Sensu lato* “in the broad sense” of the term *Magnolia*.



“Life is too short for boring plants.”
– Mark Weathington,
Assistant Director and Curator of Collections
JC Raulston Arboretum, NC State University



Advancements In Educational Programming

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG



Many thanks to those who contributed images, text, translation, and design for the beautiful new educational sign at Garden's entry and last but not least a special thanks to the International Friendship Club of Puerto Vallarta for funding this project. This new sign board now allows us to regularly post fresh content featuring plants important to the Garden's collections and forest and fun-filled descriptions about what makes each of these plants so special.

Our first featured plant on the new sign board is the *Ficus cotinifolia*, one specimen of which is by far the largest tree in the Garden. You may download a high resolution preview of this sign at www.vbgardens.org/ficus-sign to read the accompanying text. Ideas of themes for upcoming editions for this sign board include Mexican Magnolias; Plants and their Pollinators; Orchids of Jalisco; and Oaks of the Americas. We also have separate interpretive sign projects in the works for orchids, bromeliads, and other fascinating plants.

Signs are just one way to engage audiences in learning about plants. One of our favorite ways to activate imaginations and captivate our visitors with the intrigue of tropical flora is by leading interpretive hikes along our trails. While our 1 pm daily tour is only officially offered from December to March—thanks to our volunteers—we've been able to make this option available for much of the summer season as well.

Our wish list of educational projects now include videos, downloadable podcasts, an online learning center and more. Thanks to the support of our members, donors, and volunteers, we are incrementally taking on these projects.



Grand Opening Festival for the Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids

Construction is complete on the new Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids! Public access to this new facility is now available even while we are adding displays, plants, and interpretive signage in preparation our Grand Opening. Originally scheduled for December 13th, 2014, we've now programmed a whole week of **Grand Opening Festivities** from **December 6th through the 13th**. Please mark your calendars accordingly!

Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids Project Costs

Building Construction	\$2,500,000 MXN	(Approx. \$200,000 USD)
	Reached in early 2014! -- Construction complete!	
Plants & Educational Displays	\$800,000 MXN	(Approx. \$60,000 USD)
	Goal: November 2014 – Please contribute now!	
1st Year Operational Budget	\$400,000 MXN	(Approx. \$30,000 USD)
	Goal: December 2014 – Please contribute now!	
Orchid Laboratory Completion	\$800,000 MXN	(Approx. \$60,000 USD)
	Goal: April 2015 – Please contribute now!	

For those who have already contributed we extend a heartfelt thank-you. For those who would still like to contribute, we invite you to [donate now](#). Tax-deduction receipts are available for US and Canadian taxpayers (our *Donataria Autorizada* is also in process in Mexico).

Contributions are still needed and matching funds up to \$50,000 USD have been extended until the end of 2014!

Please contribute to a legacy to our beloved Vallarta community by supporting this conservatory project.



Reflections on the Vallarta Botanical Garden by Emiliano Sanchez Martínez, President of the *Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos* (Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens)

“The future of the Vallarta Botanical Garden should be predicted as very promising.

This is an imminent necessity. The conservation of the biological diversity of the State of Jalisco depends on it, which in its more than seventy thousand square kilometers harbors close to 7000 species of Mexican vascular plants. This richness is equivalent to about 25 per cent of the whole cast of plants in our country.

The county of Cabo Corrientes with just two thousand square kilometers, is ideally positioned for *in situ* conservation of the Tropical Semi-deciduous Forest's exuberant vegetation, and above all, to develop well documented botanical collections that promote *ex situ* conservation of preponderant families like Arecaceae, Burseraceae, Meliaceae, Melastomataceae, Orchidaceae and others.



The Vallarta Botanical Garden will be, I have no doubt, the most pure and intense conscience of biological conservation activities in this southern portion of Banderas Bay and in all of western Mexico.”

**-- Ing. Emiliano Sanchez Martínez, President
Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens
(After visits to the VBG in July of 2014)**

Mexican Orchid of the Month *Cypripedium irapeanum* Lex.



The orchid family's *Cypripedium* genus is widely spread throughout the world's northernmost regions, yet also has representatives distributed in the Mexican states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Colima, and Durango; all bearing yellow flowers and red spots. Of these, *Cypripedium irapeanum* is one of the most beautiful for its appearance, size, and flower color. Unlike the majority of Mexican orchids that grown in clusters, *C. irapeanum* are found sprinkled about the countryside and while sometimes creating small groupings, they are always separated as individuals. This beautiful terrestrial is also known as *zapatilla de Venus* "Venus slipper" due to its swollen labellum or "lip."

These orchids are found in steep ravines in pine and oak forests with sandy soils. They appear to flower best in areas that have had both recent forest fires and two years of intense rain—not an easy combination to always find in the wild. This orchid is protected by Mexican Law as a threatened species and is difficult to cultivate once removed from its natural setting. Precisely because of this, we recommended that if you're fortunate enough to find it in the wild you leave it where it is and take lots of photos to continue admiring it for years to come.



C. irapeanum is one of the native Mexican orchids found in – *Las orquídeas del occidente de México, Volumen 1*, Jorge Roberto González Tamayo and Lizbeth Hernández Hernández, México, 2010. This impressive volume, full of meticulously written and beautifully illustrated descriptions along with accompanying colored photos, is now available at the University of Guadalajara's Botanical Institute and the Vallarta Botanical Garden's gift store.



Mexican Bird of the Month Elegant Trogon



The Elegant Trogon (*Trogon elegans*) is one of Mexico's prolifically-occurring species that occasionally crosses the US border into Arizona's southeastern "sky islands" to the instant delights of the thousands of eco-tourists that

flock there each year specifically with the hope of being lucky enough to see one. While Elegant Trogons are just as much of a delight to visitors of the Vallarta Botanical Garden they are much more common here, and Mexico is a safe and friendly eco-tourism destination. Elegant Trogons can remain silently perched for hours at a time and remain so still that even the brightly-colored males may escape the notice of careful observers. When they do burst into flight they make dramatic swooping patterns through the air before disappearing once again into the forest. This means that while many people observe Elegant Trogons, very few ever capture a decent image of one in flight.

Many thanks to Petr Myska of [VivaNatura](#) for his image of the Elegant Trogon. The second edition of his “Field Guide to the Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds and Mammals of Western Mexico” is now on sale at the Vallarta Botanical Garden for \$320 pesos, or \$288 pesos with a member discount.

The Garden is a popular birding hotspot year-round. Binoculars can be rented (only 70 pesos per pair for up to four hours) if you don’t have your own. Organized school groups receive complimentary use of the binoculars, guided birding tours, and more with advanced reservations.



VBG Education & Volunteer Program Report

By Linda Asencio, Biologist and Environmental Educator

Peace Corps Volunteer at the Vallarta Botanical Garden through a collaboration with Mexico’s Park Service (CONANP)



August was an exciting month—not just because of our Avocado and Rainforest Festivals—but because I was able to organize a summer course in my new hometown of El Tuito in a collaboration through the Garden and Mexico’s park service (CONANP). With the help of Coral Lozada, Ana Gonzalez, Mateo Rios Estrada, and Maira Perez from Vallarta’s CONANP office, we were able to facilitate some fun, hands-on activities focused on anti-littering and recycling/reusing common refuse.

Linda Asencio leading hands-on environmental education activities with children in El Tuito

Fifteen children attended our summer course that was held at the Casa de Cultura in El Tuito. Kids colored and put together a pop-up book showing how trash travels from the source and moves through the river, eventually making its way into the ocean. The following day we cut up old t-shirts to make fun bracelets using our new reused fabric. To finish up the day, children cut up and taped together 3 plastic PET bottles to make a 3-level planter. We filled them up with soil and talked about different seeds that we can plant from home.

With the new school year rolling up, I’m starting to design and organize my environmental education program where I’ll be visiting schools to do engaging environmentally-themed activities. Although I’m starting off by visiting elementary schools in El Tuito and in Las Juntas y Los Veranos, I would like to spread this message to everywhere in the Vallarta, Cabo Corrientes, and Bahía de Banderas regions. My overall goal is to teach the community how they can easily do their part to help save the planet!

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

Aug. 2014	Total member visits to the VBG:	81
	Total non-member visits to the VBG:	1341
	Complimentary entries for organized school groups*:	0
	Total participation in daily 1 pm tours:	24
	Total participation in special events, classes, or workshops:	22
	Total volunteer service hours:	459

*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 educadorambiental@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](#).



**House Hunters International Benefit Screening
Buy your tickets now!**

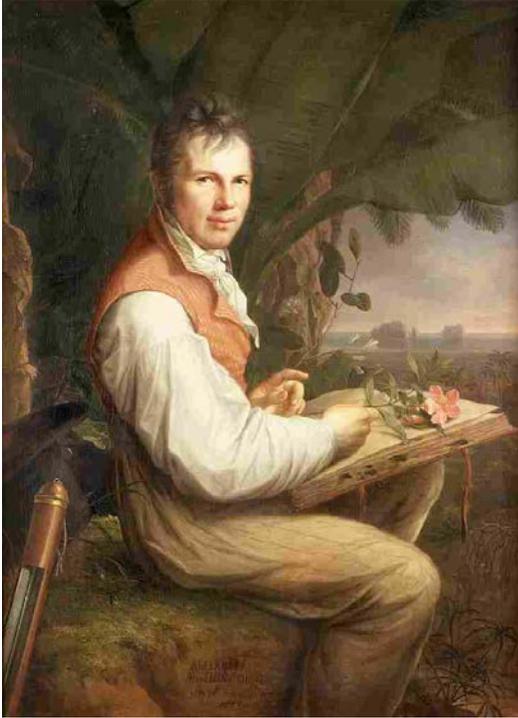


The Vallarta Botanical Garden was recently featured in an episode of HGTV's "House Hunters International" and our organization has been selected as one of the four beneficiaries to share the proceeds of the upcoming screening and charity event on Monday, November 24, at the new Mantamar Beach Club (located on Los Muertos Beach). Hosted by Timothy Real Estate Group, the party theme this year is "Gilligan's Island" and the Garden's Founder and Curator, Robert Price, has agreed to dress the part of Thurston Howell III, "The Millionaire."

Pre-sale tickets for the event are now available at the Gardens for just \$300 pesos (down from \$350 pesos at the door) and include event cover, appetizers, and a tropical welcome drink. In addition to the viewing of the new "House Hunters International" episode, re-runs from the older PV episodes will be playing and some of our favorite Vallarta friends will be decked out as ringers from the old "Gilligan's Island."

For more info, visit the ["House Hunters International" charity fundraiser Facebook page](#) or [download the poster](#).

Alexander Von Humboldt Birthday Celebration & Golden Oak Environmental Award Ceremony September 14



Many of you have noticed the Garden's statue of Alexander von Humboldt, the great German explorer who is credited with completing Mexico's first botanical surveys in a modern scientific manner. Humboldt's work is widely memorialized in Mexico in many ways, including his statue in Mexico City's *Alameda Central* (Central Park) and the honorary citizenship bestowed to him by then-President Benito Juárez.

Each year the Garden celebrates the legacy of this important botanist and explorer on his birthday. This year we are pairing Alexander Von Humboldt's birthday celebration with our annual Gold Oak Award Ceremony for modern-day environmental heroes serving the Cabo Corrientes, Puerto Vallarta, and Bahía de Banderas communities. Please share your award nominations by sending them to educadorambiental@vbgardens.org.



International Migratory Bird Day 2014 October 11

Of the 124 species of birds so far documented to have been observed at the Vallarta Botanical Garden, 18 are considered migratory birds and an additional four species may have resident populations, but may also come through as migrants. Of these, some, including the tiny Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), make incredible journeys between Mexico and as far north as places like Alaska!

Ensuring a bright future for such species requires international coordination of conservation of habitats both in their summer and wintering zones as well as suitable places for pit stops along the way. An important part of this kind of conservation work is public education—what we learn to love and appreciate, we will hopefully learn to care for. The [Vallarta Botanical Garden](#) has been generously supplied with great educational materials for our own International Migratory Bird Day Event on October 11th from our friends at [Environment for the Americas](#). Also, thanks to a grant from [Optics for the Tropics](#), we have 10 pairs of [Vortex Raptor](#) binoculars for garden visitors to use during their visits here.

Our staff and volunteers are coordinating activities for the day with local bird guides including our friend Alejandro Martínez Rodriguez of [Birding In Mexico](#). Teachers interested in bringing their classes to participate in our International Migratory Bird Day activities are encouraged to send reservation requests to educdorambiental@vbgardens.org. Since participation is limited we recommend contacting us as soon as possible; as they say... the early bird catches the worm!



Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner October 12



Each November, the Vallarta Botanical Gardens have celebrated Thanksgiving and have become a popular tradition for our friends from the US living here in the tropical paradise of Vallarta. The cooler mountain air at the Garden compared to that of Puerto Vallarta and the aroma of smoke from our brick oven evokes a sense of holiday tradition nostalgia.

We'd like to offer a similar experience for our friends from north of the next border. While Thanksgiving in Canada is traditionally celebrated on the second Monday of October, we're putting the turkey in the oven a day earlier as we've got something else planned for our Maple leaf loving friends for the following day. Our Canadian Thanksgiving Special (served from 12:00 to 5 pm) can be viewed at www.vbgardens.org/thanks-can. We're offering this for the first time for 2014 even though many of our Canadian friends are still up north. To those of you who are in Vallarta now, please come out and bring your friends.

Field Trip to the Maple Forests of Talpa de Allende October 12-13



Nearly everyone knows about the movie Jurassic Park, in which prehistoric animals were brought back to life by mad scientists. While Jurassic Park is fiction, the Talpa de Allende Region, just a few hours from Puerto Vallarta, harbors a real-deal Pleistocene Park in which unique climatic conditions allow relic species of ancient plants to continue thriving much as they did while mammoths were still munching amongst them. This includes one of the only maple forests in the world's tropics.

You're invited to join us as we explore this forest which in addition to tropical maples (*Hacer skutchii*) includes such botanical wonders as tropical American tree ferns (*Cyathea costaricensis*), Magnolia (*Magnolia pacifica*), and our state's own variety of oyamel fir (*Abies guatemalensis* var. *jaliscana*).

The price per person for this fieldtrip will depend on how many join us (the more the merrier) and whether we can find volunteer drivers with their own vehicles or if we have to rent a van. Please contact Linda at educadorambiental@vbgardens.org if you're able to join us.



Vallarta Botanical Garden's Upcoming Events & Special Dates

Date			Cost
14	SEP	Alexander Von Humboldt Birthday Celebration – all day	Included
14	SEP	Golden Oak Environmental Award Ceremony - noon	Included
16	SEP	Independence Day (Mexico) – all day (Garden remains open)	Included
1-31	OCT	Butterfly Celebration Month – all month	Included
11	OCT	International Migratory Bird Day – birding tours begin at 8 am; activities all day	Included
12	OCT	Thanksgiving (Canada) – all day; restaurant special served 11 am – 5 pm	TBD
12-13	OCT	Field Trip to the Maple Forests of Talpa de Allende – Meet at the Garden on Oct. 12 at 11 am or the Home Depot Parking Lot at 4 pm Space limited. Registration by OCT. 10 required: educadorambiental@vbgardens.org	TBD
2	NOV	Day of the Dead – evening event, more details to follow	TBD
4-13	NOV	Annual Sister City Visit from Friends in Santa Barbara – still in planning	Included
15	NOV	9th Anniversary of the Vallarta Botanical Garden	Included
20	NOV	Revolution Day (Mexico) – all day (Garden remains open)	Included

24	NOV	House Hunters International Screening Event – 7 pm at Mantamar Beach Club	350 MXN
27	NOV	Thanksgiving (US) – all day; restaurant special served 11 am – 5 pm	TBD
29	NOV	Volunteer Training – 10:30am -2:00 pm (Optional morning activities start at 8 am) Registration by NOV. 27 required: educadorambiental@vbgardens.org	Free
6-13	DEC	Grand Opening Festival for the Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids	Included
14	DEC	Crash Course on Birding in Tropical Western Mexico	Included
15	DEC	Christmas Bird Count	Included

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



Hours 10 am – 6 pm

Open 7 days/wk for the months of Dec., Jan., Feb., & March (except Christmas & New Year's Day)

Open 6 days/wk (Closed Mondays) April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., & Nov

Early "Bird" Opening: 8 am every Thursday ("Birding & Breakfast Special" offered, call for details)

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

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



Garden Amenities & Services

Visit the Gardens' Hacienda de Oro Restaurant for authentic Mexican food and brick-oven pizza. Our new menu includes delicious dishes such as fish and shrimp tacos. Hike the Gardens' nature trails and bask in tropical mountain scenery. Experience the Holstein Tropical Plant House, Tillandsia House, Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids (recently dedicated and scheduled for a Grand Opening on December 13th), Gift Shop, plant nursery and much more. You can even shop the Gardens remotely through our [online store](#). The very best of Vallarta!

Can you find your name on our WALL OF BENEFACTORS?

A high resolution image of this photograph is available at www.vbgardens.org/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



Please join us in welcoming Richard Ditton to Puerto Vallarta and as a new Guardian Level Member of the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Thank you Richard!

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

GUARDIANS:

ALAN & PATRICIA BICKELL

DEANNA "DEE" DANERI

RICHARD DITTON

CHRISTOPHER DAVIDSON & SHARON CHRISTOPH

PAM GRISSOM

GEORGEHOLSTEIN †

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VILLA SOLEADA

BILL WILLIAMS & JUAN ALVARADO

DEVIN & ELLEN ZAGORY

ANONYMOUS (2)



CASAVALLARTA
INTERIOR DESIGN



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REAL ESTATE GROUP

SUSTAINING MEMBERS:

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