

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

December 2015



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Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México
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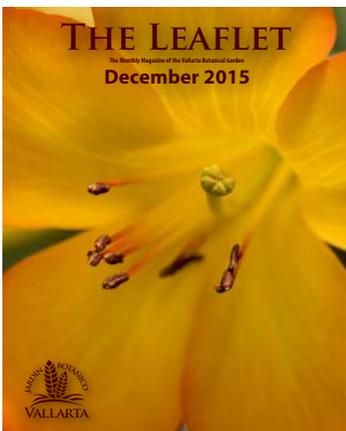
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Cover photo: Mansur Kiadeh
Vireya Rhododendron



Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

As we enter the holiday season and focus even more closely on our friends and family who bring richness and joy to our lives, I'd like to reflect on the blessings I felt a few weeks ago during the Vallarta Botanical Garden's 10th Anniversary Celebration. While surrounded by familiar faces from the first days of the Garden's founding, and fondly remembering those who are not able to join us, I also met scores more people for the first time. Their fresh enthusiasm for our project, praise for our work, and an eagerness to help make a difference with us here in Puerto Vallarta is tremendously encouraging and reinforces our commitment to a vision.

Our many visiting colleagues from botanical gardens and research centers from across Mexico and abroad underscored the synergy and spirit of comraderie in our work towards conserving natural biodiversity in an era of restoration. Our impact in public horticulture in Mexico has been receiving

lavish attention over the last few years. It appears as though this coming year our research and conservation initiatives will likely share this glorious limelight thus allowing us to expand our work even further to the benefit of Mexican native plants.

By the way, the Vallarta Botanical Garden now has *nearly* 10,000 likes on our Facebook page and *nearly* 1,000 5-star reviews on TripAdvisor. You can help bump us over the top in each of these important platforms by "liking" us and writing a raving review about your last visit here. Cumulatively, this makes a huge difference and directly impacts how many visitors come to see us and keep our garden flourishing.

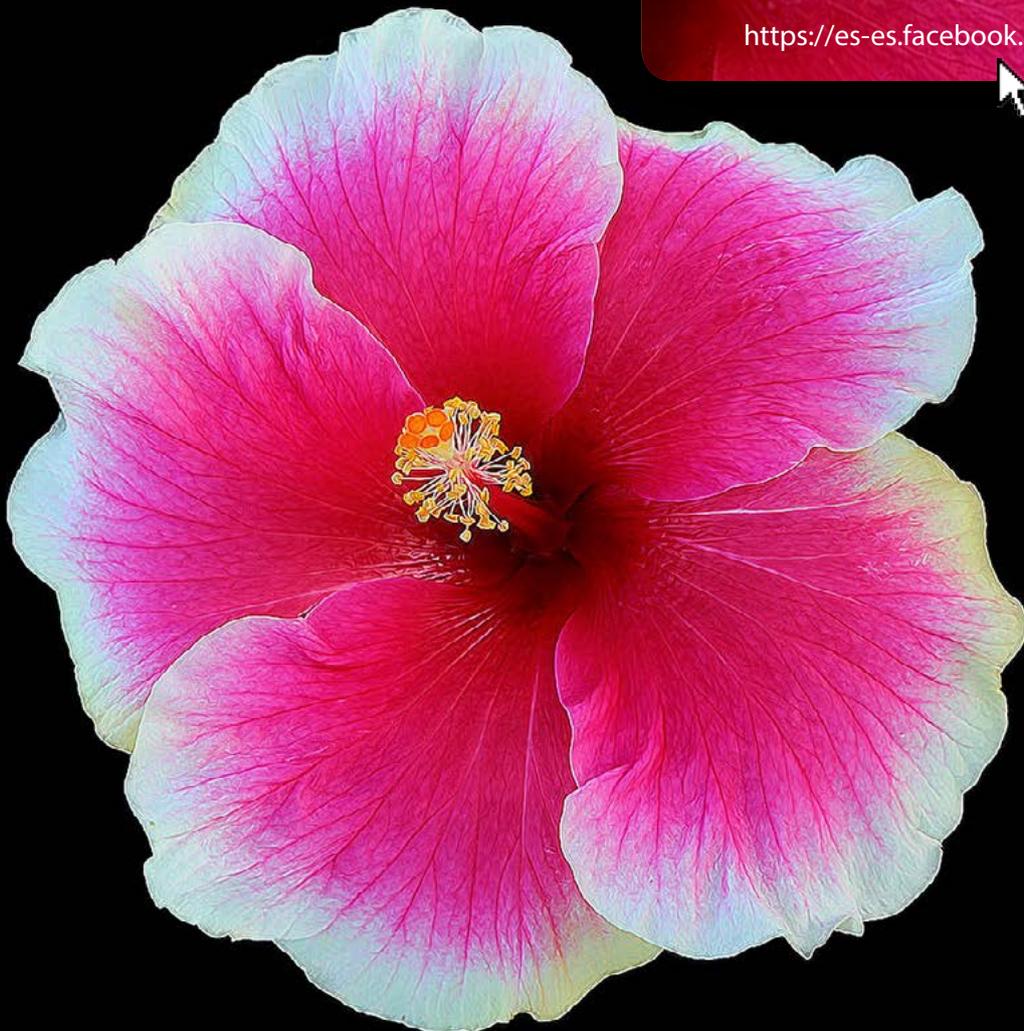
**In friendship,
Bob Price, Founder and Curator, VBG**

Do you enjoy receiving The Leaflet?

Please tell us what you like reading!

Post your thoughts:

<https://es-es.facebook.com/vbgardensac>



Mexican Orchid Of the Month

Laelia speciosa (Kunth) Schltr.

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

This beautiful plant is widely distributed and wild populations can be found in the states of Aguascalientes, Durango, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas.

It blooms from mid-April to the beginning of June and is of epiphytic habitat, in pine and oak forests at altitudes from 1,800 to 2,614 meters above sea level, and is abundant in scattered locations.

It has large flowers with individual parts mostly lilac in color. The labellum, or lip, of this flower is mostly white with tints of lilac color towards its outer margins along with purple lines and small splotches of darker purple in its three lobes.

Flower size of *Laelia speciosa* is widely variable and presents a puzzle to botanists. Even within the same host tree individual plants growing back to back to each other can be of incredibly different sizes.

Laelia speciosa has the unfortunate luck of flowering on Mother's Day—unfortunate because this plant is over collected from the wild with individual farmers often selling hundreds of these plants for this holiday each year. Afterwards, when the blooms die out, the plant itself is likely to expire as well from a combination of bad harvesting and lack of care. For this reason, please don't buy this plant from illegal harvesters who are pushing it to extinction. Back in the 1960's the forests surrounding Tapalpa, Jalisco was once a hotspot for enjoying these plants flourishing in oak groves amid beautifully mixed oak-pine forests. After years of heavy oak harvesting, mostly for firewood, the stately pines remain, yet the glorious oaks along with the *Laelia speciosas* once thriving upon them have become rare and even more important to protect.



Laelia speciosa, Photo: Lizbeth Hernández Hernández

Mexican Bird Of the Month
By Claudia María Méndez Casillas,
CEMBAB (Conservación de especies
Maravillosas de Bahía Banderas)

Cinnamon hummingbird
(*Amazilia rutila*)

The cinnamon hummingbird can be found from Costa Rica to northwestern Mexico. On the Atlantic side its northerly limit is around the Yucatan. They are prevalent in dry tropical forests and surrounding habitats. It is small even for a hummingbird and averages about 10 cm in length and 4.5 grams.

Hummingbirds have physical differences between the sexes. Male cinnamon hummingbirds are characterized by a straight red beak with a black tip, throat and ventral parts are bright tan, which gives it its common name, while the back and head are green-bronze becoming cinnamon at the rump and the wings are dark. Females, while similar have a darker upper beak and throat.

Hummingbirds feed on nectar and supplement their diet with small insects. Their nests are the smallest of all birds with diameters of typically less than 5 cm. The best way to observe hummingbirds is to cultivate beautiful tubular red flowers in your garden such as hibiscus.

Amazilia rutila,
Photo: Selene Asiul Barba Bedolla



All About the Birds

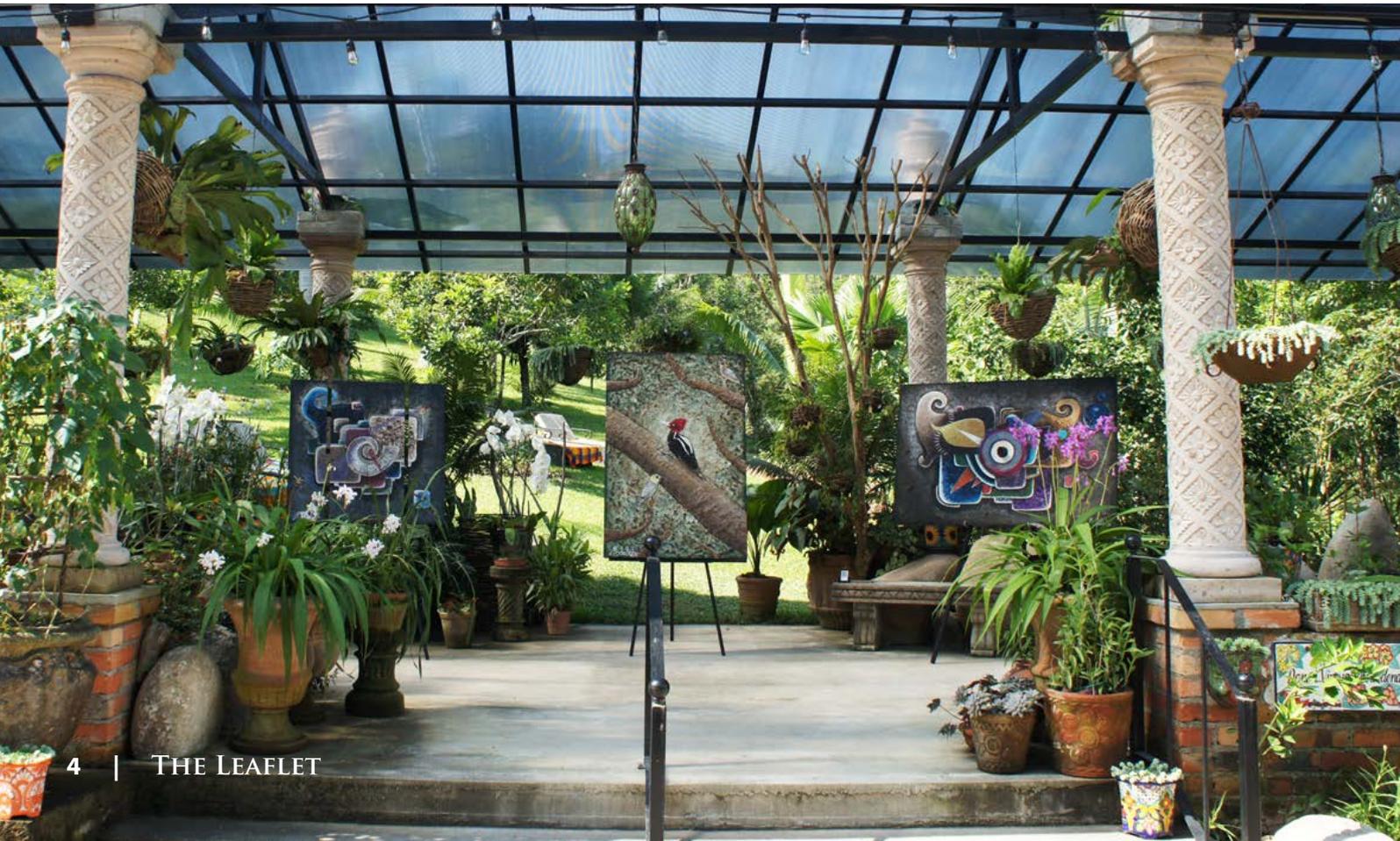
By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

This December the Vallarta Botanical Garden will once again form the extreme southern limit of a 15 mile diameter circle in which scores of volunteers will tirelessly count birds over a 24 hour period. But why all this counting? The purpose is to inventory as thoroughly as possible how many different species of birds are in our area at about this time every year and draw approximations of their populations or at least their general prevalence per number of volunteers and their placements throughout the circle. Compiled each year, this becomes an important tool in determining trends and can raise flags for conservationists and land managers of critical habitat areas if particular species appear to be in decline. The National Audubon Society started this count in the US over a hundred years ago and the results are applauded as the world's longest running and most significant citizen science project.

We invite you to become a citizen scientist too. The Puerto Vallarta region's count will be held on December 19th. Please note that this date is a change from past

years and from what was announced in last month's edition of *The Leaflet*. If you're a rookie birder or want to brush up on our local species, please also join us at the Garden on Saturday, December 12th for our Tropical Bird ID Crash Course. We'll start that day with some early morning birding (8 am to 11 am) which will be followed by a presentation by expert birders on how to maximize your efforts during "count week." For more information, please write to eventos@vbgardens.org.

Culiacan artist Abdallahy, Antonio Velázquez, recently displayed his bird-themed work at the Garden during the VBG's 10th Anniversary Celebration. His richly textured style brings depth and life to both his representational art and his abstract pieces. His abstracts in particular take specific elements of a known entity, an eye or a beak in the case of one of his bird inspired pieces for example, and feature this with an assortment of other colors, textures, and forms for a result that is captivating and gives pause for further study and reflection.



Antonio's work has been referred to as "artivism," a portmanteau of "art" plus "activism" with the objective of provoking social change. In this case, Antonio's concern for Mexican birds and their periled habitats is inspir-

ing concern amongst others in our Puerto Vallarta community. We at the VBG respect the power of art, whether in the form of paintings or colorful beds of flowers in a garden, for its ability to inspire and provoke change.



Your Legacy Lives on at the Vallarta Botanical Garden

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.

Celebrate New Year's Eve

At the Premier Private Penthouse of the Molino de Agua Building And Support the Vallarta Botanical Garden

Downtown Puerto Vallarta will be home to a New Year's Eve fundraising event supporting the Vallarta Botanical Garden (VBG), when one of the Garden's leading patrons opens his Molino de Agua penthouse for an exclusive celebration.

Our host's unique and extraordinarily beautiful oceanfront penthouse features a 4,000 square foot wrap-around balcony, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the entire Banderas Bay. The location is perfectly situated between the Los Muertos Pier and the Malecón—two of the main launch points for the New Year's Eve fireworks spectacular.

This New Year's Eve event begins at 9:30 pm (Dec. 31, 2015) and will conclude just after midnight. It offers a great opportunity for people to come together and purchase tickets as a group, or to come alone or with a friend to meet new people. Early Bird Tickets are \$90 US online or \$1,500 pesos in person, and may be purchased prior to Dec. 15. On Dec. 15, ticket prices increase to \$100 US online or \$1,650 pesos. Tickets may be purchased in person at the offices of Timothy Real Estate Group located in the Molino de Agua Building near the Cuale River or they may be purchased online at www.pvevents.net/nuevo2016.

We hosted a similar event at the same penthouse last year, which sold out, so we are encouraging people to get their tickets early. Tickets include access to the penthouse along with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres throughout the event. Because the evening's host is underwriting all costs of the event, 100 percent of all proceeds will benefit the Vallarta Botanical Garden.

For more information please email eventos@vbgardens.org.

Buy your tickets today: www.pvevents.net/nuevo2016



Living in the Era of Restoration

By Alan Heinze, Research Coordinator VBG

In 1992 Biologist E.O. Wilson asserted that the 21st century would be the era of restoration in ecology. He believed this was the means to end the great extinction spasm that the planet is currently experiencing.

I got a glimpse of this bigger picture, of what we're actually doing and how botanic gardens can play an important role in repairing and managing disturbed ecosystems, on a recent hike I took with Bob Price, founder of the Vallarta Botanic Gardens, around the south hills of the property. There, he showed me and praised the amazing hard work of a team of gardeners who had just planted around 2,000 Mexican yellow pine (*Pinus oocarpa*) seedlings; no easy task in the steep slopes clogged by aggressive vines and dense grass. Many of these saplings will grow to be mature pine trees, I hope and know this because next to them are bigger trees, not only pines but other native species like oaks (*Quercus spp.*), buttercup trees (*Cochlospermum vitifolium*) and wild papayas (*Jacaratia mexicana*), that were planted there in previous years. This reforestation work, alongside the focused efforts of plant conservation, the environmental education activities and the enhancement of beauty in our garden, have all contributed in a small but consequential way to this challenging era of restoration in ecology, one we are privileged to be a part of.



Cone of *Pinus oocarpa*
Photo: Dr. Jorge Pérez de la Rosa

Pinus oocarpa was selected to restore the area because it's considered a pioneer species adapted to different types of soil, and even has the capacity to grow in infertile and degraded sites like the southern hills of the VBG where they were planted. The egg-cone pine, as it's also known, is found naturally in Mexico and Central America and is a very common pine species particularly in its southern distribution. Local industries and farmers have used the wood to produce a variety of products ranging from popsicle sticks to railroad ties, however it's best appreciated for fuelwood, kindling (the "ocote" wood splints) and resin production. More importantly for us however, is that these pines will aid in soil recovery, create habitat for many wildlife species, and overall improve site conditions that will facilitate further restoration efforts.



Pinus oocarpa
Photo: Bob Price

We express our gratitude to the Brooklyn Bird Club for financially supporting the VBG's Pine-Oak Restoration Project through the proceeds of their annual Birdathon, and Environment for the Americas, the host institution

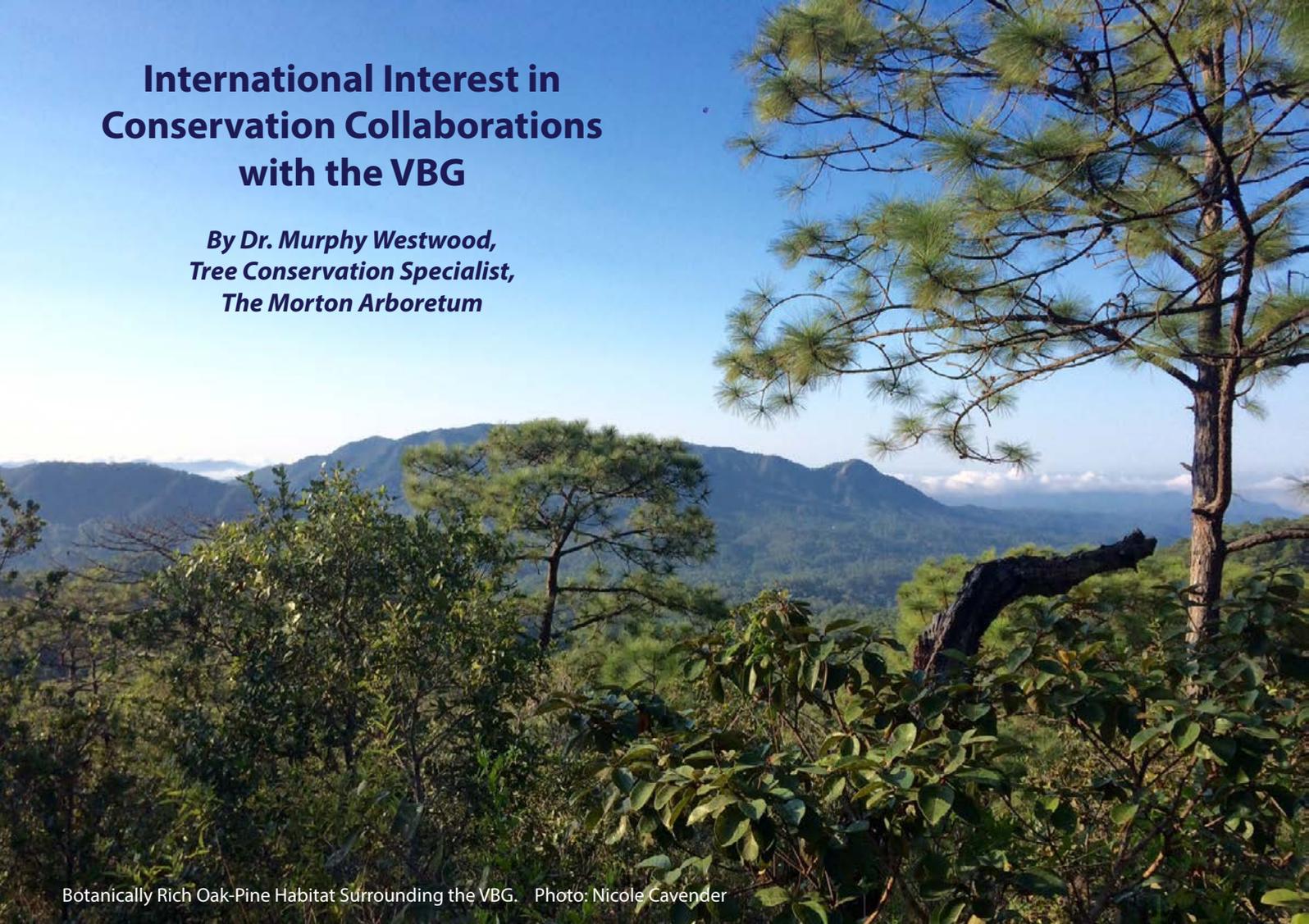
of International Migratory Bird Day, for introducing our project to a broader audience and also donating funds. We're now over half way to our total project fundraising goal of \$5,000 USD.



VBG Horticulturists Ariana & Iván take on restoration
Photo: Bob Price

International Interest in Conservation Collaborations with the VBG

*By Dr. Murphy Westwood,
Tree Conservation Specialist,
The Morton Arboretum*



Botanically Rich Oak-Pine Habitat Surrounding the VBG. Photo: Nicole Cavender

The Vallarta Botanical Garden had been on my radar ever since I began developing the Global Tree Conservation Program at The Morton Arboretum in 2013. The reason? At the Arboretum, one of our flagship tree groups is the oaks (*genus Quercus*) and the VBG sits squarely in the middle of one of the most botanically rich regions of the world for oak species. As Midwesterners, we feel we “own” the oaks because we are home to the mighty and iconic bur, white, red, and pin oaks. However, *Quercus* is actually a subtropical genus that evolved over the past ~60 million years with two centers of diversity: Mexico and Southeast Asia. Compare the number of oak species in the eastern half of the United States (about 45) to the number of Mexican oak species (nearly 200) and it becomes clear that Mexico is really the crown jewel of the genus! The Mexican oaks exhibit a wide range of fascinating morphological diversity and many species are rare local

endemics (found nowhere else in the world). In fact, our preliminary research indicates that as many as one in three Mexican oak species is threatened with extinction – hence my interest in the VBG and its prime oak-centric location! So, when Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director of the VBG, invited me and Nicole Cavender, Vice President of Science & Conservation at The Morton Arboretum, to join the VBG’s 10th anniversary celebrations (and in blustery November, no less!), we jumped at the chance.

Our weekend at VBG was a huge success on so many levels. With representatives from several different US and Mexican botanical gardens, including the president of the Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos (Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens), it was an excellent opportunity to strengthen ties and network with our colleagues across the border. To fulfill our institutional

goals, The Morton Arboretum has been looking for strategic partners in biodiversity hotspots with whom we can develop conservation projects focused on threatened oak species. Identifying these potential collaborating gardens, like the VBG, that have capacity to implement conservation activities is key to the success of our Global Tree Conservation Program. We were able to explore the oak-pine forest habitat surrounding the VBG and saw several of the local oak species. We identified many potential projects that we hope to develop and are now formalizing our conservation partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding between the VBG and The Morton Arboretum.

On a personal level, Nicole and I had a wonderful time meeting the VBG community. The garden's members are welcoming, engaging and passionate people, proud of the garden that they helped build from scratch. Our gracious hosts, Richard Ditton and Debbie DeLanoy, as well as Melinda McMullen and Duncan Kime, took wonderful care of us and showed us the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Puerto Vallarta. We would like to congratulate Bob Price and Neil Gerlowski, and the rest of the VBG staff, on the amazing accomplishments they have achieved by creating an Eden from a patch of deforested and overgrazed pasture. We see an exciting future ahead for the VBG and look forward to being a formal partner in its science and conservation activities.



Inspecting native oak seedlings in the VBG nursery:
Andrew Bunting, Assistant Director, Chicago Botanic Garden
Nicole Cavender, Ph.D., Vice-President of Science & Conservation
The Morton Arboretum
Bob Price, Founder & Curator, Vallarta Botanical Garden
Photo: Murphy Westwood

Nuestra Señora del Jardín
(Our Lady of the Garden)
A Chapel Born by Inspiration
By Michael Schultz

Chapels have enhanced the grace and beauty of many botanical gardens throughout the world serving as intentional sanctuaries integrated among natural beauty - a painting graced by wildlife memorializing God's creation.

The inspiration to build such a chapel had long been the ambition of Ruben Cota and Michael Schultz. They attribute their happiness and success in life to their spiritual devotion and vowed that one day they would repay their many blessings with a promise.

When they first visited the Gardens in 2009, they knew it would be the perfect setting to complete this promise. Presenting the idea was an easy task. Fortunately, the vision was already vested in the mind of the Garden's Curator, Bob Price, who needed no convincing to co-create a chapel on the grounds he has worked so hard to beautify through the years.

Initial construction of the chapel *Nuestra Señora del Jardín* (Our Lady of the Garden) is nearly complete. Further detailing and embellishments of the building will continue until it has reached its full aesthetic potential. The hopeful legacy of the Chapel is ingrained in its mission: to rejuvenate and inspire the human spirit to live in harmony with the natural world while promoting peace and understanding among diverse cultures and faiths providing a place to reflect, pray and celebrate life.

A place of hopes and dreams in which inspiration is lulled within the gardens that dance and delight. A promise fulfilled!

Photos during early construction of the chapel (August 2015) and nearing completing (late November 2015)





Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
		GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	
5	DEC	Volunteer Training — Join the team! Pre-registration required. Send an email of your interest to eventos@vbgardens.org by Dec. 3.	Free w/ prior registration
12	DEC	Tropical Bird ID Crash Course — Need to study up for the big count on Dec. 19th? Join us for some early morning birding (8 am to 11 am) followed by a presentation by expert birders on how to maximize your efforts during “count week.”	Included with entry
19	DEC	Christmas Bird Count (CBC) — The VBG is a regional leader in the world’s longest running and most significant citizen science project. Public CBC participation in the Garden is welcome on the 19th from 8 am to 6 pm. A special overnight option at an extra cost is also available from the preceding evening to the following morning. For more info, please write to eventos@vbgardens.org .	Included with entry
25	DEC	Christmas — Garden closed, Merry Christmas!	—
31	DEC	New Year's Eve Party & Garden Fundraiser — At the premier penthouse of the Molino de Agua Building in Puerto Vallarta. Please see page 6 for more info. Tickets available at www.pvevents.net/nuevo2016	\$100 USD or \$1650 MXN
1	JAN	New Year's Day — Garden closed, Happy New Year!	—
2	JAN	Volunteer Training — Join the team! Pre-registration required. Send an email of your interest to eventos@vbgardens.org by Dec. 31.	Free w/ prior registration



Phalaenopsis spp.
Photo: Carol Henderson

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

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

Garden Guests in the Holstein Tropical Plant House,
Photo: Gerardo Luna



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

From the Membership Desk

We want to highlight YOU! Dear members, we love to see your smiling faces visiting the Garden and hearing your wonderful commentaries about why you have chosen to support our work. We'd also love to share this by posting your photos and comments in *The Leaflet*. Please send me pictures of your visits here with a sentence or two statement about why you've become a member. You just may inspire others to do the same!

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

Can you find your name on our WALL OF BENEFACTORS?

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

Becoming a member is easy & provides great benefits:
www.vbgardens.org/memberships

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



We would like to acknowledge and thank the following supporters:

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ALAN & PATRICIA BICKELL

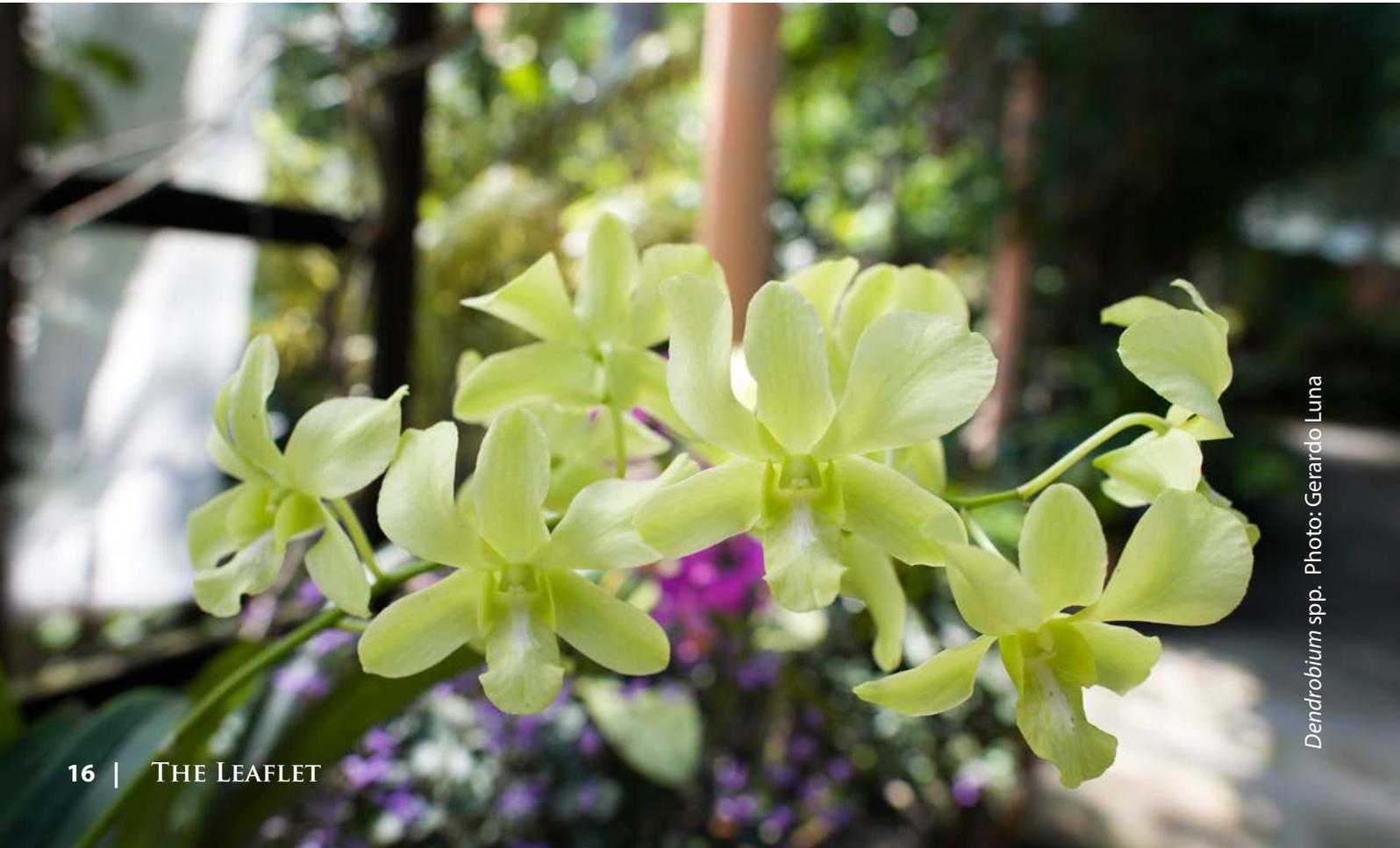
RUBEN & MICHAEL COTA SCHULTZ

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Dendrobium spp. Photo: Gerardo Luna

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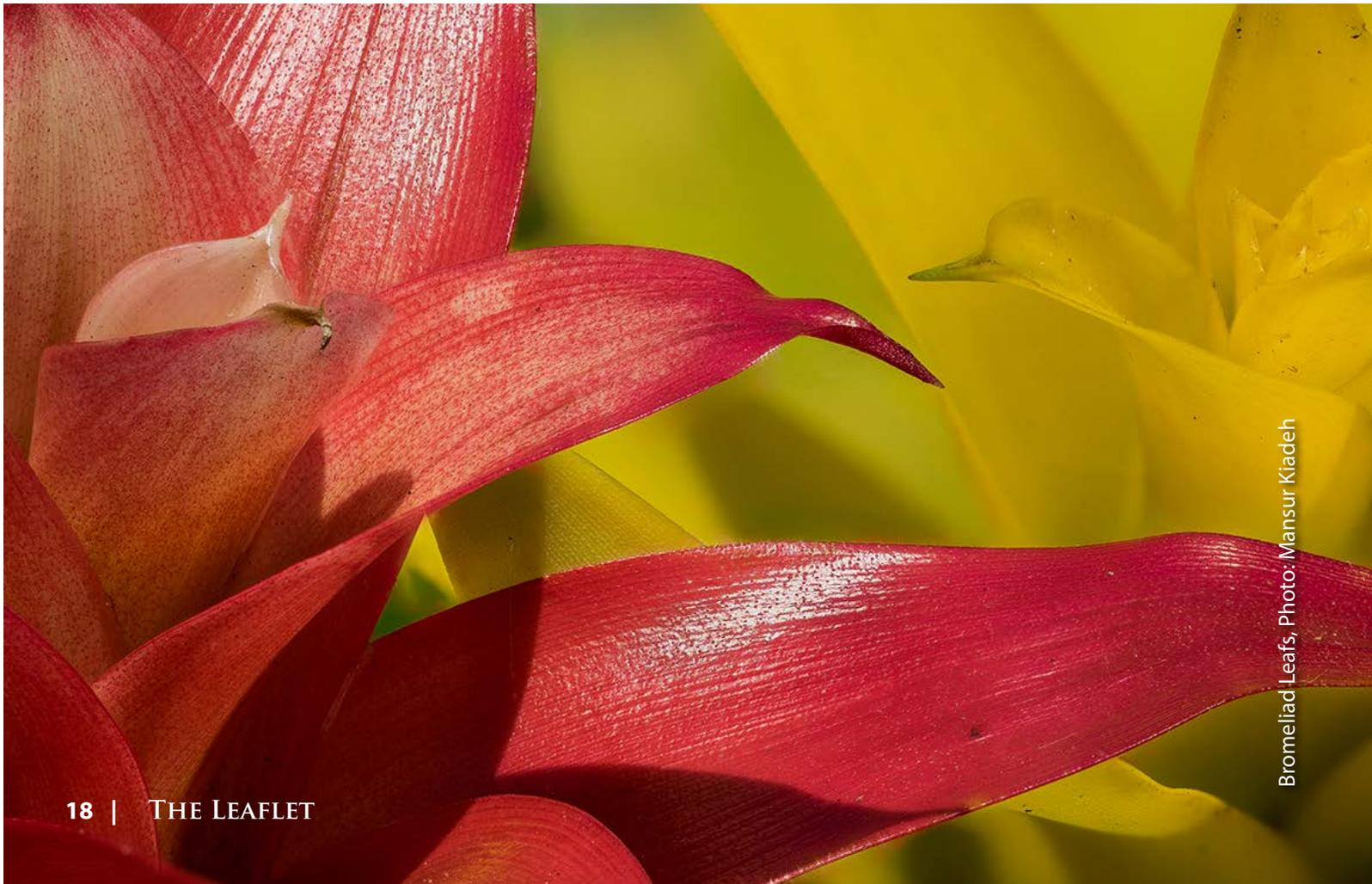
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Bromeliad Leaves, Photo: Mansur Kiadeh

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

(S) = student (I) = individual ☼ = deceased

We Also Thank the Following Foundations for Their Recent Support:

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CHARLES H. STOUT FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CLUB
MELINDA MCMULLEN CHARITABLE TRUST
STANLEY SMITH HORTICULTURAL TRUST**

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.

Wire transfers:

Bank: Banamex
Account in Mexican Pesos (MXN):
Account in US Dollars (USD):

SWIFT CODE: BNMXXMM
09840115760 CLABE 002375098401157608
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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

PayPal: www.vbgardens.org/fvbg

Donations of stocks and IRA distributions:

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