The next newsletter will be in 6 months so please get in touch.

To submit information about your garden you can contact Botanical Bridges through Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/botanical.bridges

You can also email: neville@belizebotanic.org

Click here to access the main site: http://thecaribbeanandcentralamericanbotanicgardennetwork.wordpress.com/

The network is here for you to share your news, garden developments and opportunities with other gardens in the Caribbean and Central America.
Nestled in the foothills of St Eustatius’ dormant Quill volcano that makes up one of the island’s National Parks lies the Miriam C Schmidt Botanical Gardens. Set up in 1999 to be a safe haven for the island’s native flora and fauna, it is managed by St Eustatius National Parks, (STENAPA). It operates with the ethos of ‘preservation, conservation, education’ and strives to use the most ecologically aware methods keeping the environment in mind at all times.

Garden areas include a sensory garden, lookout garden with views over St Kitts, Children’s Garden and fruit garden which has led to permaculture courses that will run throughout this year. Not sure if anyone else in the network would be interested but we might be covering some applied permaculture in public gardens.

Garden manager, Clair Winfeild said, “We are working to grow the Statia morning glory (Ipomoeia sphenphylla) which is the rarest plant in the Dutch Kingdom and our only endemic species. We also have a small collection of a few of the 18 orchid species that are natives to the island.”

The Clavijero Botanic Garden in Mexico was founded in 1977 with the aim of studying and conserving the native flora of the region’s Lower Montane Mesophilous Forest. Work concentrates on endangered species through research and taking specific action that contributes to the protection of the regional and national plant diversity.

Mission

1) Knowledge and use of plant diversity

The scientific collections form the raw material for research that includes: systematic botany, horticulture, ecology and long term projects such as reintroduction to habitat, sustainable use and ecological restoration.
2) Education for conservation

The garden offers training by qualified staff in the fields of botany, horticulture, plant curation, education and outreach, using the collections as a base for those areas, thereby contributing to conservation education for the region’s natural heritage.

The Collections

The Clavijero Botanic Garden covers 7.5 hectares, where more than 1000 species are displayed throughout the various sections of the garden. These include: Palmetum, Arboretum, Natural Woodland, Pinetum, Aquatics, Ethnobotanical Plants, Ornamentals, Coffee Plantation, National Cycad Collection, National Collection of Native Mexican Bamboos, spontaneous Secondary Vegetation and Greenhouses for research and quarantine.

Of most importance among the scientific collections is the National Collection of Cycads. Started 25 years ago, it contains the 55 native Mexican species, nine of which were described by the garden’s research staff. As much as 80% of Mexican Cycad species are endangered endemics.

Also, the garden has a further 29 hectares of natural woodland (Lower Montane Mesophilous Forest) called “Santuario del Bosque de Niebla” (Cloud Forest Sanctuary), where in-situ conservation strategies are being developed to coincide with the ex-situ conservation work within the garden.

Contact

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Facebook: Jardín Botánico Clavijero

Belize Botanic Gardens (BBG) is located approximately 10 miles westward beyond San Ignacio Town on the Chial Road in the Cayo District, Belize, Central America. It is nestled in the foothills of the Maya Mountains on the bank of the beautiful Macal River. Visitors from Belize and around the world come here to enjoy the beauty of the gardens and to learn about plant conservation.

The Gardens is comprised of 45 acres of gardens, arboretum and natural areas. As a not-for-profit organization, BBG exists to serve as gardens and educational grounds for the Belizean community to enjoy and take advantage of, as well as a scientific and living germplasm resource pool for botanical and horticultural institutions world-wide. The focus of our collections is native and exotic plants of Belize, as well as non-native and non-invasive plant species. We strive to educate local communities and international visitors of the importance of protecting native plants and ecosystems.

BBG is financed mainly by duPloos Jungle Lodge, through the visitation and generosity of the local community and international visitors, and through funds granted to us by various institutions. In addition, support and donations from visitors and loyal plant lovers helps us to reach our project goals and annual budget. We are fortunate to be in an area rich with tropical flora and fauna diversity.
**Education:** European Union’s Belize Rural Development Project II (BRDP II) to undertake a Professional Gardeners’ Training Program targets individuals, who are unemployed or barely employed but have deep interest in becoming professional gardeners. After completion of the training program participants are being awarded with a Certificate ofCompletion and Job Recommendation Letter.

The course includes three levels of horticulture training; small nursery establishment for ornamental plants; small nursery establishment for food plants; cut flower growing and marketing as well as a variety of 1-day workshops such as seed saving, floral arrangement and culinary herbs. Classes last 10 days for each level and will be offered eight times during the term of the project. In addition, there are On-The-Job training opportunities of 12 weeks for 2 trainees per session.

For more information and contact details visit [www.belizebotanic.org](http://www.belizebotanic.org)

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**HOPE GARDENS JAMAICA**

Spread over 200 acres of land, Hope Gardens is the largest botanical gardens in the Caribbean.

**History:** Hope Gardens was originally part of "Hope Estate", which was owned and run by Richard Hope. Hope was a commander in the British army and was gifted the estates a reward for helping Britain to take control of Jamaica from the Spanish. The original Hope Estate was a vast property, stretching from Newcastle (in the Blue Mountains) down to the sea.

The estate was originally used as a sugar estate, however, in the late 1881, 200 acres of this property were purchased by the government to establish an experimental garden for growing foreign species. It was through the botanical gardens that several exotic species such as coffee and pineapple were introduced to Jamaica. This experimental garden became what is now known as Hope Gardens.
One notable moment in the history of Hope Gardens was a visit from Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Following this visit, the Queen gave her permission for the garden to officially change its name to the "Royal Botanical Gardens, Hope"

The gardens are now maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture's Public Gardens Division and it has undergone some major restoration programs since 1996.

Special collections at Hope Gardens are a cactus garden, orchid house, ornamental pond, a "Palm Avenue" of sago palms, greenhouses, a forest garden, bougainvillea walk, zoo, fountains, bandstand, poets corner, lily pond and plant nursery.

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller and Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China, His Excellency, Dong Xiaojun, broke ground for a Chinese garden at the Hope Botanical Gardens in Kingston, on February 20. The garden, which will be sited on 11 acres at the Lilly Pond, is the first of its kind in the Caribbean, and is being developed at a cost of $240 million, the major portion of which is being provided by the Chinese government. This project marks the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Jamaica and China. The Prime Minister welcomed the project, stating that construction of the facility underscores the Government’s commitment to sustainable development, and an appreciation for the value of green spaces in cities and urban areas.
In existence since 1983, when Mrs Joan Devaux took over management of the Soufriere Estate from her father, the late Mr. André du Boulay. Mrs Joan Devaux planted the gardens that are enjoyed today by thousands of visitors.

Flowering bushes and shrubs of every type and colour were planted around and beneath the existing trees.

*Hibiscus, Ixora, Heliconia, Anthurium* and the magnificent Balisier with their exotic blossoms and equally exotic names, now brighten the gardens. Due to the tropical climate there is no “best” season to see the gardens and they can be enjoyed all year round.

Contact through the website - http://diamondstlucia.com
Located on the Atlantic coast of Barbados near to Tent bay at Bathsheba. The gardens sit on the boundary of the parishes of St. John and St. Joseph about 300 yards from the Atlantic Ocean. The East Coast of Barbados is breathtakingly beautiful and is the perfect setting for Botanic Gardens like those at Andromeda.

The Gardens are the creation of the late Mrs. Iris Bannochie who in 1954 began planting the garden on land which had been in her family for 200 years. It was not until 1964 that she and her husband moved into the home on the property. Both home and garden are chained to the rock. The garden is full of tropical plants of all descriptions and these are grouped into individual gardens. Some of the plantings you will see are Bougainvillea, Hibiscus, Heleconias, Orchids, Palms, Cactus and succulents. In the less sunny places, there are Ferns, Aroids, Begonias and other shade loving ornamentals. Giant Pleistocene boulders and water lily ponds further enhance the landscape. Depending on the time of year the rainfall and the vagaries of the slipping earth in this part of Barbados, you might discover a meandering stream heading towards the sea.

Thousands of plants have been introduced to the garden from all parts of the world. Most of them have come by way of exchange either with well known botanical gardens, or by personal plant collecting trips to other tropical lands.

The gardens themselves also have huge educational potential, with opportunities for learning in many areas related to science and the arts.

Educational activities can range from selfguided or staff guided tours, to research, plant propagation, botany, ethnobotany (looking at traditional uses of plants), plant physiology, taxonomy (plant families and origins), landscaping, gardening, field trials and a range of other topics.

The University of the West Indies (UWI), has responsibility for Research and Educational activities at Andromeda. The University’s activities are funded by The Peter Moores Foundation (UK).
Located on the northern outskirts of Kingstown are the Botanical Gardens. Peaceful, lush, green and colourful, the gardens are home to a wealth of tropical plants, flowers, trees and birds.

Occupying 20 acres, the Gardens were created in 1765 by General Robert Melville, governor of the British Caribbean islands, as a plant breeding centre and ‘to provide medicinal plants for the military and improve the life and economy of the colony’. Three acres were set aside for the establishment of a Government House. The Botanical Gardens is the oldest of its kind in the western hemisphere, and celebrated its 240th anniversary in 2005. On February 6th 2012 preparations for the restoration of the site were unveiled as part of the celebration of its 250th anniversary in 2015.

They are famous for being the destination of Captain Bligh’s second visit to the Caribbean in 1798 (his first ended in the infamous mutiny on the Bounty) when he introduced breadfruit to the island. A descendant of one of his original breadfruit trees thrives in today’s gardens.

Promoting the conservation of rare species, the Botanical Gardens aviaries are where visitors can see the beautiful St. Vincent Parrot (*Amazona guildingii*), our national bird.

St. Vincent Botanical Gardens are preparing for the 250 anniversary in 2015.
The JBA is a means to strengthen environmental culture at national and regional level, bringing science to people and contributes directly to the conservation of endangered in the Tropical Dry Forest. http://jba.unanleon.edu.ni/#

The Nicaraguan city of Leon, 90 miles west of Managua, hosts the environmental botanical garden with plants from the dry forest of the country and settled on 10 acres of land.

The botanical garden was created by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNITE) and with financial support from the Government of Norway and the technical support of the Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica.

In addition to the scientific and social issues featuring botanical garden, also serve to generate ecological and educational for students of schools and universities in Nicaragua and world tourism. At present there are about 1200 different species of plants planted in the gardens, which can be seen thanks to the network of trails designed.
The Botanical Garden is one of the most visited tourist areas both Salvadorans and foreigners entering the country, who not only enjoy the lush greenery and listen to the chirping of birds and wild animals in more than 30 small sitting areas; enjoy a fun playground and cafeteria in front of a beautiful pond decorated with aquatic plants and fish.

Collection:

The garden is home to about 3,500 plant species from around the world and our country, which date back more than a century and are distributed in 32 areas. Among the collections of plants are: *Musaceae, Gramineae, Palmae, Euphorbiaceae, Araliaceae, Proteaceae, Rubiaceae*, Medicinal Plants of deserts, *Malvaceae*, cycads, *Pandanus*, orchids, aquatic plants, *Heliconiacea, Begoniaceae*, bromeliads, ferns, *Araceae*, etc.

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