Articles from gardens in: El Salvador, Republic of Panama, Jamaica, Cuba, Belize, St. Vincent and Grenadians, Mexico and Puerto Rico

Please get in touch and share your gardens news!

CONTACT
Email: Neville@belizebotanic.org
Facebook Botanical Bridges
The Network Homepage http://thecaribbeanandcentralamericanbotanicgarden network.wordpress.com/
Hello All,

I hope life is treating you well and your gardens are thriving.

This is the second newsletter of the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network. I hope you find it interesting, informative and a useful way of finding out about other gardens in the region and what they are up to. A big thank you to all those who have taken the time to contribute articles to this edition.

It is exactly a year since I was in Belize working at the wonderful botanic gardens with the amazing staff. Although my time there was short it was one of the most inspirational, exciting and challenging experiences of my life. With my passion and enthusiasm I hope to facilitate collaboration and communication between the gardens of the region, sharing ideas, experiences, and challenges with the hope of enhancing botanical horticulture across the Caribbean and Central America. Through communicating with other professionals and skilled horticulturists in other botanic gardens who understand the obstacles in the way of progress, we can discuss and deliver solutions with a benefit to all.

Staff exchanges between gardens are a perfect way of building links while knowledge sharing and a priceless learning experience. I know from my time at the botanic gardens in Belize and from talking to other gardens that sourcing attractive and botanically worthy plants can be difficult. Many nurseries stock the same plants which are aimed at home owners, the tourist trade, hotels etc. I believe that the responsible and legal exchange of seeds between gardens can enhance botanical collections and enhance the visitor experience. At the same time the introduction of invasive and protected plants is highly detrimental to all.

The focus of the network is communication and sharing, please get in touch!
I have spent much of the last 14 years working with temperate and tropical plants in some of the most renowned botanical institutions in the United Kingdom: Tresco Abby Gardens, Oxford University Botanic Gardens, Bicton Park Botanic Gardens and The Eden Project. Although I have qualifications in horticulture I decided to return to studying at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London. I have just completed my first year of the 3 year Kew Diploma in Horticulture consisting of intensive practical and academic study. As it's something I feel strongly about I am focusing my dissertation on ‘Communication between Botanic Gardens of the Caribbean and Central America’ which I hope to share with you all when it is completed. At the same time I ask for your help, in highlighting problems, solutions and benefits in regards to communication between gardens. Thank you!

Neville Evans

I wish you all the best for the coming months and I hope to hear from you soon for the next edition of Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network newsletter, Botanical Bridges.

The Palm House at Kew Botanic Gardens
The La Laguna botanical garden is located in the crater of a volcano, which erupted approximately 2,200 years ago. It covers an area of 42 hectares, of which 3.2 hectares are open to the public. Here you can find more than 3,500 plant species from various parts of the world and of our country. The rest of the La Laguna Forest is a strict conservation zone, which provides water springs for the area. It is a refuge to a variety of plant and animal species. Apart from the conservation of the La Laguna Forest, the botanical garden manages conservation areas of the municipality of Antiguo Cuscatlán for its protection. In addition, it administers and protects a mixed forest called "El Amatal", a property of the state. This has an extension of 200 hectares and is located in San Diego, La Libertad, and consists of a fresh and a salt water forest.

The botanical garden was opened to the public on the 22nd of December, 1978, and was set up by a private, non-political, non-profit association in 1976. Independent of any governmental or international organization, the botanical garden consists of a multidisciplinary team, studying the Salvadoran flora. The team offers free consultation in the herbarium and library (specializing in taxonomy) to scientists, as well as students of university and technical institutions. It maintains a constant exchange with
international herbaria, taxonomic specialists and botanic gardens that collaborate in the identification of plants.

The botanical garden has a herbarium which is a place where specimens of dried plants are fixed to card (normally with flowers, fruit and leaves) and stored according to the botanical families. The herbarium has a collection of more than 33,000 specimens, including angiosperms, gymnosperms, monocotyledons, dicotyledons, pteridophytes, lichens and bryophytes. These have been collected in various parts of El Salvador and are a valuable reference for projects of scientific investigation. If you require information about a particular plant simply make an appointment Monday to Friday from 8am - 11am and 2pm - 4pm.

We offer various social services projects for students who would like to do their social hours in: herbarium management, taxonomy, garden tours, ecological tales and reforestation campaigns.

**Important Facts:**
- Total area: 42 hectares, area open to the public: 3.2 hectares
- Altitude: 805 meters above sea level; Latitude N: 13º 40´ 20´´; Longitude W: 89º 15´ 00´´
- Average Temperature: 23°C, Relative Humidity: 75%

We also offer free guidance to university students who would like to write their graduation thesis in the field of botanical taxonomy and educational tour in the park.

To gain and maintain self-sustainability, the nursery of the botanical garden sells ornamental plants, substrates, containers and fertilizers. Hours of operation are Monday to Sunday from 8am - 6pm, throughout the year. Also offers a wide variety of services including garden maintenance, 3 plant markets per year,
garden courses and memberships to the botanical garden. The profits generated by these activities are invested in the scientific section. The introduction of new technologies and the amelioration of services to the visitors, however these require major investment, which is covered by donations from other institutions, commercial companies and altruistic individuals. Their awareness of the importance of botanical investigation and the importance of the conservation of natural resources in El Salvador are a true legacy for future generations.

The Botanical Garden is open to the public year round: Tuesday to Sunday from 9am - 5:30pm. Schools may make reservations 3 days in advance and on the day of the visit present an official letter stating the objectives of the visit, at the entrance. You can find updated information about courses, events, promotions etc. on our website and social networks.

Contributions to the Botanical Garden are welcome. You can help to maintain the park by buying a membership. You can also receive our technical journal “Pankia” biannually and other publications. Ask for information at the entrance of the garden or electronically. The library is situated near the playing ground of the Botanical Garden. You will find more than 6,000 documents including books, journals and audiovisual materials. Topics include gardening, ecology, and botany amongst others. Much of the printed material is part of exchange relationships established with botanical institutions around the world, years ago. You may ask for information at no charge, but please make an appointment ahead of time.

FINCA LOS MONOS BOTANICAL GARDEN
Isla Colon, Bocas del Toro, Republic de Panama

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUzC5IXsG_4

Growing in the lush climate situated on Isla Colon, ten minutes from the historical town of Bocas, the botanical garden is set on a 9.5 hectare spanning 24 acres across a narrow part of the island. Heliconia, gingers, palms, flowering trees, fruits and spices with the open ocean to the east offering stunning views of the Bocas archipelago and westwards, a calm lagoon protected by mangroves.

“Our mission is to conserve the uniqueness of this land, to educate future generations and to give a small insight to visitors of the delights and wonders of tropical gardening!”
Since the early 20th century a small portion of this land was used for home farming until 50 years later when it was abandoned and reverted to jungle. This was how Lin and Dave Gillingham discovered it in 1998.

Gradually clearing pathways through the jungle Lin created the garden by collecting and transplanting plants from mainland mountain areas and purchasing from other nurseries.

The garden opened to the public in 2007 and features one and a half miles of gravel and concrete paths, bridges over gullies, two fish ponds, interpretive signage, a Banquet Hall and a Pavilion for events and a 50,000 gallon swimming pool. The garden is now a premier attraction for recreation, education and research.

The gently rolling hills are covered with huge tropical trees, home to orchids, bromeliads, ferns and aroids and a wide variety of wildlife. Howler monkeys, night monkeys, white faced Cappuchin monkeys, sloths, anteaters, iguanas, raccoons, reptiles and numerous bird species maintain a healthy life on the property.

The nursery propagates plants for landscaping, for horticulture and medicinal and edible plants, also those in danger of extinction from loss of habitat.

Finca Los Monos is open to researchers, students, school groups and visitors for education and recreation. The garden is sustained by plant and flower sales, landscaping consultancy, tours and special functions.

www.bocasdeltorobotanicalgarden.com         www.weddingdestinationpanama.com
Bird watching on the grounds of Hope Gardens is a rewarding and fun experience, providing one the opportunity to observe many species of birds; endemic, resident and migrant.

Endemic birds are those found ONLY in Jamaica and there are 30 such species. Many of these are resident at Hope Gardens, a 60 acre green oasis in the city. It’s close location to the Blue Mountains attracts more rainfall, which helps to keep the Garden green - most of the year and provides a lovely open space dotted with majestic trees, flowering plants and a lake. Quite a paradise for the feathered population of the Mountain Range close to Kingston.

Hope Gardens unique position is that of a Botanical Garden combined with a recreational space. Hundreds of visitors of all ages enjoy picnics, concerts and play time in the Garden, especially on the weekend.

The birds don’t seem to mind and have gotten accustomed to the human presence, which makes the time at Hope Gardens richer and more exciting. In the Garden the birds can be admired in close proximity, sitting still for photo shoots and looking down from their nests or vantage points high up in the tree tops.

Bird Life Jamaica, a group of dedicated birders, who meet regularly to watch, study and enjoy our vibrant bird population all over the island, have joined up with the Nature Preservation Foundation, the Non-Government Organization responsible for the management and operations of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Hope, as we are officially called. We meet bright and early every first Saturday each month and enjoy a cool walk through Hope Gardens, always curious to see which species will be out this time.

Amongst our feathery friends at Hope Gardens are the Jamaican Woodpecker, the Jamaican Tody and the Red-billed Streamertail, all endemic to Jamaica. The most fun however is provided by large flocks of Yellow-billed Parrots, which reside in and around the Garden and are only found in Jamaica. Visitors can’t help but smile when they hear the birds’ constant chatter from tree top to tree top and their swooping performances overhead. When the parrots are in the mood, they sit still for a while, look down on the visitors, seemingly wondering about the funny habits of us earth bound humans. That’s when the cameras and binoculars are pulled out and birding is at its best.
Bird Watching Tours take place every first Saturday of each month at 6.45am. The meeting point is at the Parade, behind the fountain. We ask for a small contribution of J$200 for the environmental fund of Hope Gardens, children are free and everyone is welcome.

By Doris Gross

THE CIENFUEGOS BOTANICAL GARDEN

Cuba

The botanic garden was founded in 1901 by Mr. Edwin F. Atkins. At the beginning it was a station for studying and investigating sugar cane and other kinds of species of economic interest, which at first were the premises for the collection of tropical and subtropical plants we have nowadays. It is the oldest botanical garden in Cuba and was declared National Monument of the Republic of Cuba in 1989. The garden holds significant collections of palms, Ficus, bamboo and others. The garden has more than 8000 plants that belong to more than 1600 species and about 130 families.

Since its foundation the garden has carried out prominent investigations about sugar cane, medicinal and vascular plants and others of economic interest. It has also developed specific projects on environmental education, control for invasive plants, conservation of threatened plants and ecology of zoological populations.

Utowana was a ship to carry out scientific investigations and it was transformed after Dr. Thomas Barbour proposal to his owner, Mr. Oak Ames. Resulting in the numerous investigations all around the tropical and subtropical regions of the planet, and numerous and important species brought to CBG in the ship are part of the collection it has today. Utowana became a bridge between the young garden and the rest of the world.

The Event will be held November 15 to 17, 2014 at The Cienfuegos Botanical Garden, Cuba.

Organizing Committee President, Ing. Leosveli Vasallo Rodríguez
Executive Secretaries, Félix Pazos Sánchez, Ba. & Rosalina Montes Espín. Eng

Topics:
- History of the Science
- Landscape building and horticulture
- Phytogeography and ethnobotany
- Biotechnology and management of phytogenetical resources
- Ecology, systematic and conservation of the biodiversity
- Management of botanical collections and invasive exotic species
- Environmental Education and the role of botanical gardens in sustainable development

Delivery of abstracts: Before September 30, 2014
The abstracts should be sent to:
Rosalina Montes Espín: montesninin@jbc.cu, Félix Pazos Sánchez: felix@jbc.cu

Abstracts are accepted either in Spanish or English and may not exceed 250 words.
Written in: Letter (21.59 cm x 27.94 cm), Arial 12, justified. If the whole paper is sent it will be published in the memories of the event, but they should adhere to the following:
Font: Arial 12
Language: Spanish or English
Space: Simple, with an extra space at the end of each paragraph or section
Title: Capital letter at the beginning, black, centered. When using vernacular names for species the scientific name should be included in parentheses.
Author(s): Capital letter at the beginning and centered. Use sub-indexes for multiple addresses of the authors.
Addresses: Bold type and capital letter at the beginning. Centered.

Official Travel Agency: Havanatur SA. Travel Agency
Representative: Albis Chailloux
albischailloux@havanatur.cu
Tele: (537) 201-9761

Registration Fee:
The Registration Fee should be paid at The Cienfuegos Botanical Garden the first day of registration.
The fee covers the right to participate in the conference, the documents, printed materials, coffee break, lunch, snacks and closing activity.
Foreign Delegates: 250.00 CUC (Cuban Convertible)
National Delegates: 200.00 CUP (Cuban peso)

Other activities:
Presentation of the first Bulletin “Utowana”.
Photo display: “Biodiversity”
Post Conference:
Workshop: “The Palms of Central Cuba”
Workshop: “The Orchids of the Guhamuhaya Mountains”

Lodging:
Havanatur Tour &Travel, has organized the following packs:
Lodging in Cienfuegos (Prices per person per night):

Jagua Hotel
Single: 88.00 CUC
Double: 67.00 CUC

Rancho Luna Hotel
Single: 85.00 CUC
Double: 65.00 CUC

Pasacaballo Hotel
Single: 51.00 CUC
Double: 42.00 CUC

Services include:
Personalized assistance.
Lodging per night with breakfast and dinner at Pasacaballo Hotel.
Lodging per one night with breakfast at Jagua Hotel.
Lodging per one night with all included service at Rancho Luna Hotel.
Lodging in Havana (Prices per person per night):

Riviera Hotel
Single: 52.00 CUC
Double: 42.00 CUC

Services include:
Personalized assistance.
Lodging per one night with breakfast.

Transfer:
Airport - hotel - Havana - airport.
Transfer Havana-Cienfuegos, Cienfuegos-Havana will be coordinated according to the needs of the clients with no less than 72 hours in advance

For more information contact the Official Travel Agency.
Summer is here and Belize Botanic Gardens is a-buzz with activity! The scent of Ylang Ylang and the song of the Kiskadee fill the air. At the heart of the garden, our new group of students, Belize's future gardeners are hard at work. They are learning to compost, prune, and mulch along with organic solutions to botanical threats like aphids, white flies and strangler fig invasion.

**A letter from a forma student on the Professional Gardener Education Program funded by the European Union:**

My name is Loany Ruiz and I live in San Ignacio. I am the single parent of a three year old daughter. I am an outdoor person and I love the environment and nature. After finishing my degree I decided to start finding a job. I saw an ad for the Professional Gardener’s Program at BBG in the newspaper and decided to apply. I became really interested after the interview. My major was in Biology and I love anything to do with plants and animals but I did not know anything about gardening when I started the program. I learned so much and realized there was so much more to learn. I ended up loving being at BBG. It was so amazing. I earned so much from the guys up there. I am currently the gardener/landscaper at Hot Mama’s pepper factory. I am in charge of the entire compound and supervise the maintenance guy as well. I work on my own and get to do the garden and factory tours for students and visitors. I am also a rescue instructor for a non-profit organization called Belize School of Outdoor Leadership Training so I garden during the week and rescue on the weekends.
I practice everything that I learned Belize Botanic Garden and learn new things every day. I have been at Hot Mama’s for over a year now. It changed my life so much because I wake up every day and go to work to do something that I love.

*Amorphophallus paeoniifolius* flowering at Belize botanic gardens
250 YEARS OF THE ST. VINCENT AND GRENADIANS BOTANIC GARDENS

This year the gardens attain their 249th anniversary and grand celebrations are planned for the 250 anniversary in 2015. A commemorative issue of stamps will be brought out depicting scenes and history. It is planned to give these celebrations, scheduled for March 2015, very wide publicity. By this means it is hoped to focus attention on so lovely an institution of such comparative antiquity in the new world and to preserve with and intensity our efforts towards its unending improvement. A complete relabeling is planned together with a thorough smartening up.

Today the National Parks Rivers and Beaches Authority aim to maintain the gardens as an attractive, alluring, peaceful, soothing retreat where one can retire to admire the many beautiful trees, flowers, lush lawns and colourful foliage plants; or just relax in a tranquil shady atmosphere. For those with deeper botanical interest there is much to feast the eyes on and exercise the intellect.

The botanic garden now concentrates on the introduction and propagation of desired ornamentals and some fruits, mangoes, avocado pears, citrus, pineapples and black pepper. Introductions of interesting plants are made from time to time to maintain and add to the collection.

There is a lovely and varied collection of Hibiscus, Ixora and Bougainvillea, many beautiful tropical trees including the dazzling yellow poui, the red Flamboyant, the immortelles, and various Cassias such as the nice little C. biflora, the showy C. multijuga, the graceful C. fistula or golden shower, and the spectacular pink apple blossoms – C. javanica and C. nodosa. The beautiful purple and white Petreas at their best in March/April, the incomparable Poinsettias, double red, pink, yellow and white. A nice collection of frangipanis (Plumeria) adorns the upper slope, supplemented by showy yellow ebonies from Jamaica, purple Jacarandas, yellow and red Cordias, the red African tulip tree (Spathodea), Kopsias;
a whole range of white, pink, mauve, red and yellow Bauhinias. Oleanders and Allamandas too add their quota, along with the bright yellow Platymiscium (roble), the rare Colvilleas, lignum-vitae and Jamaica akee (Blighia).

There is a nice collection of palms, tall and graceful, short and bushy, including the much sought after red-sheathed sealing Wax Palm. Useful trees such as mahogany, teak, samaan, red cedar, bullet, brazil nut, sapucaia nut, para rubber, castilloa rubber, and Manihot glaziovii are there. So too spices such as nutmegs, all spice, cinnamon, cola, sapote, black pepper, cloves, Vanilla, camphor and bay leaf. There are logwoods, calabash, Brownea, Albizzia, tamarind, Gliricidia, Casuarina, Angeline, breadfruit and breadnut, Eucalyptus, the leper oil tree, the strychnine tree and the much admired cannon-ball tree, a never falling favorite with strangers. The broadly spreading banyan, the variegated fig (Ficus), the true fig, the variegated Pandanus (screwpine) and the resplendent queen-of-flower tree together with the towering Sterculia, mountain cabbage palms and the monkey pot tree, about complete the lot. There too, such notable exotic as the African baobab, the Peruvian balsam, the sausage tree; the candle tree and some unidentified specimens.

Before we close the list of trees though we must mention the incomparable Mangosteen, reputed to be the best testing fruit in the world; and the one and only Spachea perforata – a tree known from St. Vincent only.

There are a good many hedge-plants including Acalyphas, Barleria, Thunbergia, Pedilanthus, Plumbago, “crotons”, Aralias, Graptoxylum, Barbados pride, Eranthemum, Casuarina and others. There are the famous travellers’ palm trees (Ravenaia), the bird-of-paradise (Strelitzia) and recently lots of Heliconias, gingers, Alpinias, and the unique Hawaiian torch lily. The brilliant Easter lilies set the paths ablaze at Easter competing with the ever-blooming and unsurpassed tropical and lotus water lilies, the water hyacinth and the yellow water poppy for pride of place. A nice collection of shade-lovers including a host of Impatiens, Anthuria, Calladia, tree and other ferns, Begonia, Xanthosoma and dieffenbachias or “dumbcanes”, about complete the list of attraction here. The highly scented ylang-ylang (Canangra odorata) and the lady of the night (Cestrum nocturnum) together with the coffee and citrus in bloom impregnate the air with a wholesome, seductive fragrance.

Recently many conifers have been added among them the lovely Italian cypresses, Arucaria, Thuja, junipers, some pine (Pinus) and Podocarpus.

More and more people visit the gardens now and they appear equally popular with locals and strangers alike. As the St. Vincent Botanical Gardens celebrates its 250th anniversary in 2015, we at the National Parks Rivers and Beaches Authority are focusing on improving the attractions and enhancing the beauty of the Gardens by introducing new plant species, and turning out more budded and grafted fruit trees and other desired plants, as well as collaborating with the Department of Forestry, to upgrade the Nicholes Wildlife Center to a more modern aviary which currently houses another of our prized national symbols, the national parrot, Amazona guildingii.
VALLARTA BOTANICAL GARDENS
Mexico

“To create Mexico’s foremost botanical garden for the propagation, study, discovery, conservation, and display of Mexican native plants for the enjoyment of Puerto Vallarta’s residents and our visitors.”

The creation of Vallarta Botanical Gardens has provided an unprecedented opportunity for our community to share the wonder of the vast diversity of Mexico’s plant species with the world. We have assembled botanical collections in a safe environment with viewing trails and have already built the most-visited public collection of orchids in the country of Mexico.

More orchid species are found in Jalisco than in any other Mexican state. A current goal is the creation of the National Collection of Mexican Orchids, the most complete collection of Mexican orchids anywhere in the country. Donations allowed the construction in 2009 of a micro-propagation lab for endangered orchid species.
NEWS: The Vallarta Botanical Garden is proud to have just hosted an important international scientific meeting and the first of its kind in Latin America. Fifty botanical garden professionals, plant pathologists, and educators met for the Workshop of the Americas of the Sentinel Plant Network.

Group photo of participants in the first The Sentinel Plant Network’s first Workshop of the Americas hosted by the Vallarta Botanical Garden.

The SPN is one of the flagship programs of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) and contributes to plant conservation by engaging public garden professionals, volunteers, and visitors in the detection and diagnosis of high consequence plant pests and pathogens.

**VBG Education & Volunteer Program Report**

This June and July have provided an action-packed kickoff to my two years of service in natural resource management and environmental education. From my first week I jumped right in and lead various events at the Garden for World Environment Day, National Botanical Gardens Day, and National Arbor Day. We also received students from schools and youth centers, including the University of Guadalajara’s local CUC campus, Escuela Los Volcanes, Peace Punta de Mita, and Corazon de Niña. I also made visits to elementary schools in El Tuito and Las Juntas y Los Veranos.

**Linda Asencio, the new Peace Corps volunteer VBG**

During my days away from the Garden, I’ve been adventuring around the region, exploring the work of other non-profit community organizations. I had the pleasure of visiting Pasitos de Luz, a rehabilitation center for disabled children, the Los Mangos Library, and Entre Amigos, an eco-designed educational facility and recycling center in San Pancho, Nayarit. I also spent time at the University of Guadalajara-
CUC campus meeting students and professors from the biology department, and while there, I even did my first radio interview to share about upcoming Garden events! Now that I had this “Go Big!” attitude, I decided to trek my way down to Guadalajara, and visited the Jorge Victor Eller T. Botanical Gardens at the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara.

My Peace Corps service is also partnered with CONANP (Mexico’s federal commission for natural protected areas), so I also helped out at the Estero el Salado, at a beach clean-up at Punta de Mita, and will be working with CONANP this August in summer course workshops all around the Bahía de Banderas, Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo Corrientes communities! I know that August will bring more adventures at the Vallarta Botanical Garden, especially as we celebrate the Avocado Festival and the Rainforest Festival.

The new orchid conservatory to aid and display the gardens orchid conservation projects

Mexico is home to over 1,200 different species of orchids. Of these, around 300 are found nowhere else on Earth! Thousands of dollars have already been raised by the Vallarta Botanical Gardens toward the construction Vallarta Conservatory of Mexican Orchids, construction of which is scheduled for completion by the end of June, 2014. This new conservatory is sure to have a positive collateral effect on tourism (the mainstay of our local economy) for the entire region. It will also connect people to plants in a profound way helping nurture a consciousness of conservation and a stronghold of environmental education.
Doña Inés Park
Puerto Rico

Since its inception in 1980, Luis Muñoz Marín Foundation promotes the study of contemporary history of Puerto Rico, protects and disseminates our cultural events and encourages the conservation of the environment and natural resources of the island through the development of the Metropolitan Arboretum Doña Inés Park (PDI), which offers a different experience of encounters with nature in a peaceful environment.

The garden serves as a microcosm of the biodiversity of our flora, promoting research, protection and reproduction of those native species that are endangered and not treated with urgency.

Inspired by the ideas and appreciation that Munoz-Mendoza had on the vital relationship between man and nature, Doña Inés Park provides a secluded ambience perfect for reflection and knowledge of native flora as well as the neighbouring countries and Caribbean islands.

There are currently about 2,250 native trees that are more than 70% of the Puerto Rican flora. We opened the park to the public in 2013, we have over 90% of the flora of the island in a planted 12 acres

Research Resources

In Doña Inés Park, undergraduate and graduate students of accredited universities will develop research projects related to the endemic flora of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. The park has a herbarium of 200 species and are identified and planted in his headquarters. These samples allow students access to biological information for the development of research related to endemic and native plants of Puerto Rico.

The Luis Muñoz Marín Foundation is building a new visitor center, which will have a space for scientific research from the Puerto Rican flora through a directed laboratory and research work related to genetic clones of individuals to a continuing rare species in danger of extinction. Also in this space will be deposited the genetic material of the Germplasm Bank, Park Dona Inés hopes to complete 50% of the identification and cultivation of Puerto Rican flora next year as part of the international requirement.
The Parque Inés María Mendoza Rivera de Muñoz Marín (whose working title was the East Park) is a project that involves the rescue of the areas surrounding the Luis Munoz Marin Foundation land to turn into a "arboretum" or collection of native trees and endemics to Puerto Rico. This conservation effort aims to develop several sections:

**Ceibas Cathedral**

Fourteen Ceibas planted with cathedral design with their massive trunks up to heaven. In the future, under the high dome of intertwined branches, as in living Gothic arcade, you can meditate on Mother Nature and the wonder of creation.

**Borinqueño Forest**

In the Borinqueño Forest were planted native trees of Puerto Rico, including especially the endemics; those that are unique to the island and do not exist naturally in any other country.

**Viewpoint**

Within the Forest Borinqueño a panoramic viewpoint stands in one of the higher areas of Doña Inés Park. El Mirador provides a spectacular area of Trujillo Alto, San Juan and Isla Verde, as well as park land and facilities with their own view.

**Crushed karst**

With its large and unique limestone vegetation, karst Seed will have a strong impact on the landscape. Striking features of the limestone hills north of the island, including the beautiful Palma de Lluvia de Puerto Rico, and also in coastal dry forests, where they literally grow on bare rock.

**Memorial to the Trees of Puerto Rico**

In the Square Monumentaria has installed a work of Puerto Rican sculptor named Carmen Blondet "Sarrazuela" dedicated to a Puerto Rican native tree not seen in Puerto Rico since the late nineteenth century. This work demonstrates the danger that looms over nearly five hundred species of trees, plants and endemic natives of Puerto Rico.

**Interpretative Trails**

Doña Inés Park is crossed by a network of simple paths for pedestrian traffic. The labeling of the trails provides a great educational value to the park, because it provides valuable information to visitors about the trees present.
The nursery

Nursery

A place of valuable trees and plants such as Doña Inés Park need a nursery area. In the nursery where seeds of many rare species are propagated and acclimatized before being taken to their final location. The Metropolitan Heart Arboretum Unique in Puerto Rico distributes trees to the El Yunque Rainforest. The Doña Inés Park Nursery (PDI) is the heart of Arboretum Metropolitan and consists of a space dedicated to the planting, cultivation and maintenance of all park trees. Another function is to serve as a center for collecting seeds for propagation of native and endemic species conserved for the PDI collection. This aims to develop an appreciation and interest in the cultivation and propagation of these Puerto Rican trees threatened by conditions environmental and uncontrolled development of cities in Puerto Rico.
BGCI (Botanic Gardens Conservation International) have created sign templates (Care For The Rare) which you can access for free from their website for professional, high quality interpretation.

Just follow the link:  www.bgci.org/usa/createsigns/