BOTANICAL BRIDGES

The Caribbean & Central American Botanic Garden Network
Hello,
I hope you are all well and your gardens are flourishing.

Here is the latest of the newsletter for the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network for you to read. There are some great articles here from garden from around the region. Please do get involved and share your garden news, problems and solutions which will benefit everyone. The next newsletter will be in 6 months.

You can follow the network at
https://thecaribbeanandcentralamericanbotanicgardennetwork.wordpress.com/
and Botanical Bridges on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/botanical.bridges

I hope to hear from you soon,

Kind regards

Neville

Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network
Neville@belizebotanic.org

Primera convocatoria para Congreso Regional de Botánica

The Natural History Museum of El Salvador is organizing a congress of botany from 28 to October 30, 2015; with the participation of herbaria of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, an important point is the activation of the network of herbaria of the region.

More information of congress:

congresobotanicaelsalvador2015@gmail.com

La Asamblea Legislativa, el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, la Secretaría de Cultura de la Presidencia, la Asociación Jardín Botánico La Laguna y la Universidad de El Salvador, invitan a botánicos a participar en el “Primer Congreso Regional de Botánica”, a realizarse del 28 al 30 de octubre de 2015.

Este evento científico tendrá como sede San Salvador, El Salvador, donde se desarrollarán:

a) Conferencias magistrales
b) Simposios
c) Carteles
d) Mesas redondas
e) Consolidación y fortalecimiento de la Red Centroamericana y del Caribe de Herbario.

El Congreso tiene como objetivos:

- Contribuir a la difusión del conocimiento sobre la flora de Centroamérica y el Caribe.
- Fomentar la integración de la comunidad botánica y afines, para la formulación y desarrollo de acciones hacia la conservación y el manejo sostenible de la flora de Centroamérica y el Caribe.
- Estimular las relaciones internacionales entre botánicos e instituciones centroamericanas y el Caribe que trabajan en Botánica.

**Summit Gardens, Panama**

Rot resistant fence at summit
Parque Summit is expecting more than 250,000 visitors this year. Our terrain is hilly, not flat. To avoid eroded hillsides, we need barriers to keep visitors on the paved paths. We were looking for a barrier that is economical, lasts longer than wood and bamboo, and is aesthetically attractive. For durability and low cost, we like these concrete posts which we fabricated on site.
We are hoping that these will last much longer than previous wooden fences. The vibrant yellow color of the polyester rope fades to something more natural in a short time.

We used 4 in diam PVC for the molds, cutting 1 in holes in the PVC for the rope before we cut the PVC in half vertically. We inserted ¾ in PVC in the holes to leave a space for the rope to pass. Each post has ½ in rebar to reinforce it. The cement mixture must use very fine gravel and be quite liquid, or it will not pour well, and there will be voids when you take off the mold. We left the molds on for 3 days to a week, as the cement is very slow to cure when it is encased in PVC. When the molds came off, we formed the crowns with a mixture of cement and JAMO. Finally, to make the posts more resistant to rain, we painted them with very liquid (about like evaporated milk) JAMO.

Yes, we varied the height of the posts, as a 200 meter run of the same height seemed very boring. I will be happy to supply more construction details to anyone who is interested.

Marianne Akers  akers.marianne@gmail.com

Please share your solutions to some of the problems and issues you face at your gardens for the next newsletter. Neville@belizebotanic.org – Thank you.

Hope Gardens – an oasis of peaceful greenery and tropical splendour in the heart of Kingston, Jamaica.

The Gardens started life as part of Hope Estate, which was a vast property stretching from Newcastle, in the Blue Mountains, right down to the Sea – it was owned by Major Richard hope. In 1655, as a commander in the British Army, Major Hope helped wrest control of Jamaica from the Spanish and was later gifted the estate as his reward. Hope Gardens started out as a sugar plantation, which was later transformed into an experimental garden for growing foreign trees and a large variety of plants.
It was through this effort coffee and pineapple was introduced to Jamaica; the Blue Mountain coffee is still one of the world’s most expensive coffees up to this day. The importance of England’s famous Kew Gardens cannot be overemphasized, as they helped to establish nurseries, brought in their expertise and valuable plants.

Many ‘exotic’ species were collected from all over the world in those days, and this way Sir Peter John Grant important the ‘Bombay’ mango from India in 1900. Now considered the ‘King of the Mangoes’ in Jamaica. Famous pirates, such as Captain Bligh, collected breadfruits and other species and dropped them off on the island, many of which ended up at Hope Gardens, for research and botanical experiments.

Plants came on ships from as far as Madagascar, Mauritius, Hispaniola and all over Asia. Some of the old, large trees at Hope Gardens today can speak of this journey...if they could just talk!

More recently, in 1953, Queen Elizabeth visited the Garden and gave permission to officially change its name to ‘Royal Botanical Gardens, Hope’.

By Doris Gross
Hope Gardens, Kingston Jamaica
May 16, 2015
Birds—Connecting Communities and Conservation

July 25-29, 2015
Knutsford Court Hotel, New Kingston, Jamaica

Join us to network, share information and learn about the latest work to conserve Caribbean birds and nature.

Presentations by renowned scientists and experts
Symposia and Workshops - Invited paper sessions
Field Trips - Round-table discussions and more

Early Bird Registration and Call for Papers now open!

For more information visit: 2015meeting.birdscaribbean.org
Belize Botanic Garden Update

1. Renovation of Orchid House: we have changed the displays inside our native orchid house. We have installed over 100 native species inside. Pictures are included! We are also getting ready for orchid collecting trips.

2. We are also carrying out training programs on Horticulture topics such as Vegetative Propagation, Bird and Plant Identification, Flower Arrangement, Organic fertilizers and Landscape design and maintenance.

3. We have developed "Student Beds." With the help of E.U funding we have gotten students to practice their planting and designing techniques by preparing a large bed in the gardens. Pics included

4. We are about to start our aquatic garden project. We are going to make our pond into a live and active garden. Hope you like what you see!

The Student Beds.
The Gardens

The Native Orchid House
The Vallarta Botanical Garden -- Flora From a Not-So-Distant Coast

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, Vallarta Botanical Garden <www.vbgardens.org>

While politically and geographically within North America, the region surrounding the Vallarta Botanical Garden (Jardín Botánico de Vallarta) is closely tied to Central America both culturally and through its amazing tropical forest biodiversity. The Vallarta Botanical Garden (VBG) is located just south of the popular Pacific Coast tourist destination of Puerto Vallarta at approximately 20°27’ north latitude; a line that enters the Caribbean a little north of the City of Veracruz and continues on passing through the Yucatan Peninsula, the Island of Cozumel, and Cuba.

Geographically, we are separated from the Caribbean by both the eastern and western ranges of the formidable Sierra Madres along with a vast and largely desertous central plateau. Nevertheless, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (which is largely interpreted as the division between North and Central America) serves as a natural passage between Mexico’s Caribbean and Pacific Coasts. As a result, there is great overlap in the flora of these zones despite the imposing physical barriers lying between them in a direct line. We are also tied by some of the same challenges in plant conservation (habitat loss, invasive species, plant pests/pathogens ect.) We welcome the camaraderie that other gardens in the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network have extended towards us and look forward to collaborating together for a sustainable future for our collective natural resources, many of which we are blessed to share.

The Vallarta Conservatory of Orchids and Native Plants at the Vallarta Botanical Garden - Photo by Krysia Jędrzejewska-szmeck."
Sustained Plant Conservation in the Insular Caribbean (Dominican Republic)

Capacity building, seed banking and plant propagation for the conservation of the plant genetic diversity in the Insular Caribbean.

Seed collecting in the Dominican Republic (Image: T. Ulian, RBG Kew)

Plant diversity and endemism in the Caribbean Islands hotspot are both very high, with a total of 13,000 species estimated to occur in the Caribbean region and 6,550 considered as single-island endemics. Of an estimated 2,500 genera of seed plants in the Caribbean, 204 angiosperm genera are endemic to the Greater Antilles.

Unfortunately, human impact has been heavily modifying and often degrading the natural environments in the insular Caribbean over the past 200-300 years. Many plant species are under threat from mining and quarrying, fire, agricultural development, tourism, introduced animals and exotic plant species, and many of these threats extend into protected areas. Plant conservation and ecological restoration activities - in parallel with habitat protection and management initiatives - are therefore necessary to safeguard plant species from extinction.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of regional institutions to contribute to the conservation of the high plant diversity and endemism of the region.

The main components of the project are:
1. capacity building in seed conservation;

2. *ex situ* conservation of priority plant species;

3. plant propagation and the development of propagation protocols for reforestation and

4. research on seed storage behaviour.

The project has its hub in the Dominican Republic, where it has been developed jointly with the Jardín Botánico Nacional "Dr Rafael Maria Moscoso" (JBN) since 2007 and counts on the support of the University of Pavia in Italy (an ENSCONET partner) since 2010.

In the Dominican Republic, Kew has provided training and advice for *ex situ* conservation, seed bank design and for seed testing (orthodox vs. recalcitrant species), and 97 collections of 68 species have been banked. In Cuba it has provided training to manage seed collections for ecological restoration.

Funding has been provided through the MSBP to allow fieldwork and capacity building and this has been enhanced in 2010 with a grant from the Council of Milan (Italy) under the Lombardy region, where the University of Pavia is located.

The project intends to extend its *ex situ* conservation programme and training activities to Puerto Rico and to create synergies with ongoing activities in the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean region.

Project partners and collaborators:

Cuba, Empresa Nacional para la Protección de la Flora y la Fauna (ENPFF), Santa Clara. Villa Clara

Dominican Republic, Jardín Botánico Nacional Dr Rafael Maria Moscoso (JBN)

Italy, Earth and Environmental Sciences Department, University of Pavia

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**The Antigua/Barbuda Horticultural Society/ at the Agave Gardens**

We are here to introduce gardening to a wide variety of our society to educate, teach, conserve and to achieve excellence in plant knowledge, garden design and an appreciation of plants. Liaise with other Botanical Gardens in the Caribbean and register with the RHS in an effort to attend and compete at the annual Chelsea Flower.

We are open to anyone who is passionate about gardening, horticulture, who wants to learn, and share his or her knowledge. ABHS is a not for profit organization Structured to meet once monthly and with a bi-annual executive board

The Agave Garden is developing to display the flowers; plants, medicinal herbs, trees and landscape of Antigua with a West Indian style. The Garden will offer a serene escape from busy lives and an opportunity to become more aware of the natural beauty of Antigua.

The Agave Centre is nearing completion; the design is attractive, reflecting traditional West Indian architecture.

We are indebted to our many friends and members.

with donations in cash and kind and our special grant, we are particularly grateful to the Global Environmental Fund, Small Grants Project for their generous donation.

Work in Progress
• Reception / refreshment area
• Botanical gift shop/library,
• Horticultural information service

The surrounding gardens are laid out, and garden beds are being planted. Donations in the form of cacti and succulents trees, benches, sculptures, and a small fountain will be gratefully received.

The established Medicinal Herb Garden continues to be developed and maintained.

The second installment of the grant, is expected be received very soon. This will enable the completion of the Agave Centre’s utility facilities, a slat House/green House and Gardens.

To become a "Friend" there is a suggested range of annual membership subscription fees as follows:

Donate on line info@antiguahorticulture.com or send checks to Antigua Horticultural Society. P.O. Box W212, St. John’s Antigua WI

Corporate: $1000.00, Family: $350.00, Individual: $200.00, Child under 15: $25.00

www.antiguahorticulture.com
https://www.facebook.com/AntiguaHorticultureSociety
Or telephone 268 725 5507 Please join us!

Turks Cap, Barrel cacti (melon cactus) is a genus of cactus with about 30-40 species. They are native to the Caribbean.

I hope you enjoyed this edition of Botanical Bridges from the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network
https://thecaribbeanandcentralamericanbotanicgardennetwork.wordpress.com/

I hope you we contribute with you news, issues and practical solutions to the next edition in 6 months time.