

THE LEAFLET

The Monthly Magazine of the Vallarta Botanical Garden

May 2015



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Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México

May 2015

Vol. 5, No 5

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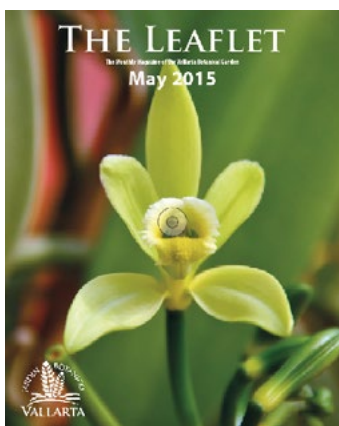
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Cover photo: Gerardo Luna
Vanilla Planifolia



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Curator's Corner

Dear Friends of the Garden,

May is a special month to honor and remember our mothers. Whether still with us in this present world or living only in our memories, mothers can epitomize the kind of nurturing love necessary for us to grow to our fullest potential.

This past month of April we celebrated Earth Day and the natural glory of Mother Earth. To the ancient Aztecs, the goddess Tonantzin represented Mother Earth, fertility, and the Goddess of Corn. To this day, many Nahuatl-speaking Mexicans refer to the Virgin of Guadalupe as "Tonantzin" suggesting a connection between pre-Hispanic beliefs and present day religious practices.

However we as individuals conceptualize Mother Earth we constantly have opportunities to celebrate her presence in the marvelous natural world. Whether by taking the time to care for and observe the plants in our gardens or by hiking through a magnificent forest, the time we take to reflect on nature can restore our souls and guide our actions to protect this planet we all call home.

In friendship,
Bob Price, Curator and Founder, VBG



Brooklyn Bird Club to Sponsor VBG Conservation Project

The Vallarta Botanical Garden's work in conservation has recently captured the attention of the Brooklyn Bird Club (BBC) who has chosen to sponsor one of our projects through their 2015 Birdathon scheduled for Saturday, May 9th in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). The BBC was founded in 1909 with a mission to encourage and promote birdwatching and conservation in Brooklyn (one of the five boroughs of New York City) and beyond. While Puerto Vallarta may be *well beyond* Brooklyn, many of the avian species observed there during the summer are migratory birds that journey to mainland Mexico along a route known as the "Atlantic Flyway." Recognizing this, the organization Environment for the Americas (the coordinators of IMBD) have served as matchmakers on behalf of our Garden and the BBC.

The project that we will collaborate on together is further reforestation work to the VBG's Pine-Oak Forest Restoration Area (along the northern slope of Eagle Hill) as well sustainable enhancement of the trail through this section of the Garden and the creation and installation of interpretive signage there. The total project costs are estimated at approximately \$5,000 USD and the BBC's goal for their 2015 Birdathon is for \$3,000 USD which would allow us to complete the lion's share of this work.

While our Garden is perhaps best noted for its collections and forest preserve of the tropical dry forest biome, the highest reaches of our property (approximately 400 meters or 1,300 feet) extend into the neighboring Pine-Oak Forests. When the property that is now the VBG was purchased over 10 years ago, about 45% of the land (and nearly all of the uppermost slopes) were overgrazed cattle pasture. Restoring this land into Pine-Oak Forest again will not only create a new conservation area, but will add to the plant diversity of our protected forests and attract animals (especially birds!) that rely on these plants for food and shelter. Oaks that we would like to plant in this area include *Quercus aristata*, *Q. elliptica*, *Q. glaucescens*, *Q. iltisii*, *Q. magnoliifolia*, *Q. planipocula* and *Q. tuitensis*. Among appropriate pines to include are *Pinus douglasiana*, *P. jaliscana*, *P. lumholtzii*, *P. maximinoi*, *P. oocarpa*, and *P. strobes*.

Reforestation work was first started in the VBG's Pine-Oak Forest Restoration Area in 2008 and while many of these trees are maturing very well, additional work is needed to remove invasive species that have also taken hold and to plant additional species as appropriate. Also, interpretive signage along this trail will serve as our region's first public educational resource for this important habitat area and the flora and fauna found in these forests. This project is a perfect fit for the 2015 IMBD conservation theme, "Restore Habitat, Restore Birds."



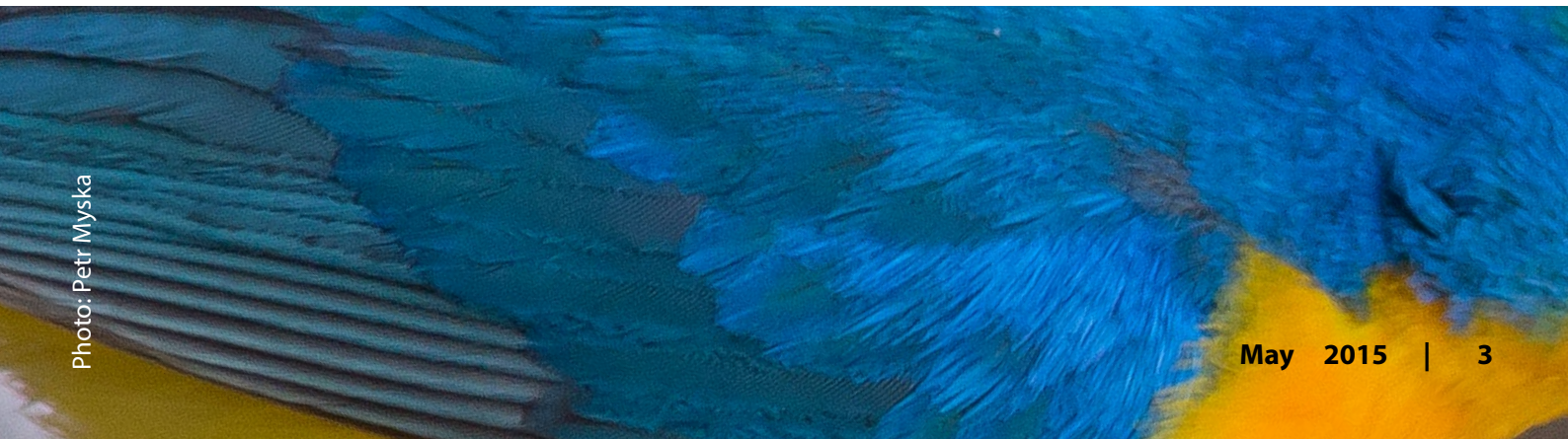
Piranga flava Photo: Petr Myska



To learn more, please contact:

Project	Organization	Website
2015 Birdathon	The Brooklyn Bird Club	www.brooklynbirdclub.org
International Migratory Bird Day	Environment for the Americas	www.migratorybirdday.org
Pine-Oak Forests & other Garden projects	Vallarta Botanical Garden	www.vbgardens.org

Photo: Petr Myska



Mexican Bird of the Month

Myioborus pictus

The Painted Whitestart (*Myioborus pictus*) is an especially handsome warbler and the only member of its genus to range into the US. It is an unusual bird in that the songs of both the male and female are considered equally beautiful. Confusingly, this bird is also commonly referred to as the Painted Redstart, but is not closely related to either the American Redstart or Old World Redstarts. Painted Whitestarts measure about 15 cm (6 inches) long, have black backs, red lower breasts and bellies, white patches on the wings, and white outer tail feathers.

These white markings seem to come into play during foraging when the Painted Whitestart flashes them to flush out insects for easy pickings.

In the Puerto Vallarta region, Painted Whitestarts are most commonly observed in Pine-Oak Forests and birdwatchers who can identify them by sound are much more likely to hear them first before seeing them.



Myioborus pictus
Photo: Petr Myska

The Sandpaper Vine — Mexico's Wisteria Look-Alike

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

Visitors to our Garden from north of the tropics are sometimes surprised to encounter beautiful native Mexican plants in our collection that look quite similar in form and color to the much more cold hardy *Wisteria* commonly used in landscaping in those latitudes. Even more surprising is that our plants, *Petrea volubilis*, while flush for most of the year with soft, delicate lavender inflorescences, also bear stiff scratchy leaves textured much like sandpaper, hence the source of one of their common names.

Botanically these plants are not even closely related. *Wisteria* is part of the legume family (Fabaceae) and *Petrea* belongs to the family Verbenaceae. The similarity is that both are woody perennial vines whose purple to lavender hued pendulous blossoms can add a great abundance of color to the landscape. In the case of the sandpaper vine, long after the bright purple petals of the actual flower blooms and falls away, the larger but more lightly-colored calyxes remain long afterwards and are the predominant showy part of this plant.



While the peak season for sandpaper vine is springtime, in prime conditions with plenty of light and humidity, ample blooms can occur from winter well into the summer making this an excellent choice for the home garden. Care should be given to where your sandpaper vine is planted as *Petrea* is a rapid climber and can grow to the point that the tree it uses for support can no longer bear its weight.

Recently, the Vallarta Botanical Garden acquired a rare white variety of this beautiful plant which we hope will bear flowers by next spring. In the meantime, enjoy the purple accents that the mature plants in our collections impart to our Garden now.



Petrea volubilis
Photo: Iván Jiménez

In Good Company: Chanticleer, a pleasure garden

By Neil Gerlowski, Executive Director, VBG

We at the Vallarta Botanical Garden are celebrating our inclusion in the 2015 list of the “TOP 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For,”* in part, by a series of articles highlighting the prestigious gardens sharing this list with us. A recent visit by Chris Woods, former Executive Director of Chanticleer, inspired us to write about the garden that he helped transition from an exclusive private estate to an enormously popular public garden in 1993.

Chanticleer dates back to the early 20th-century when Adolph Rosengarten, Sr. and his wife Christine selected a lovely setting in Wayne, Pennsylvania to retreat from the summer heat of Philadelphia. Landscape architect, Thomas Sears was employed in the earliest developments of the property, yet despite this long history of purposeful garden design, Chanticleer is anything but stagnant. A team of horticulturists takes responsibility for designing, planting, and maintaining their own areas of the garden while keeping these integrated as parts of a cohesive whole of flamboyant floral delight.

* As declared at the North American Garden Tourism Conference in Toronto, Canada March, 2015



2015 list of the, “Top 10 North American Gardens Worth Travelling For”

As declared by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council
(Listed in alphabetical order)

Butchart Gardens	Canada
Chanticleer	USA
Denver Botanical Gardens	USA
Desert Botanical Garden	USA
Fairchild Tropical Garden	USA
Huntington Botanical Gardens	USA
Jardín Botánico Culiacán	Mexico
Jardín Botánico de Vallarta (Vallarta Botanical Garden)	Mexico
Longwood Garden	USA
Montreal Botanical Garden	Canada



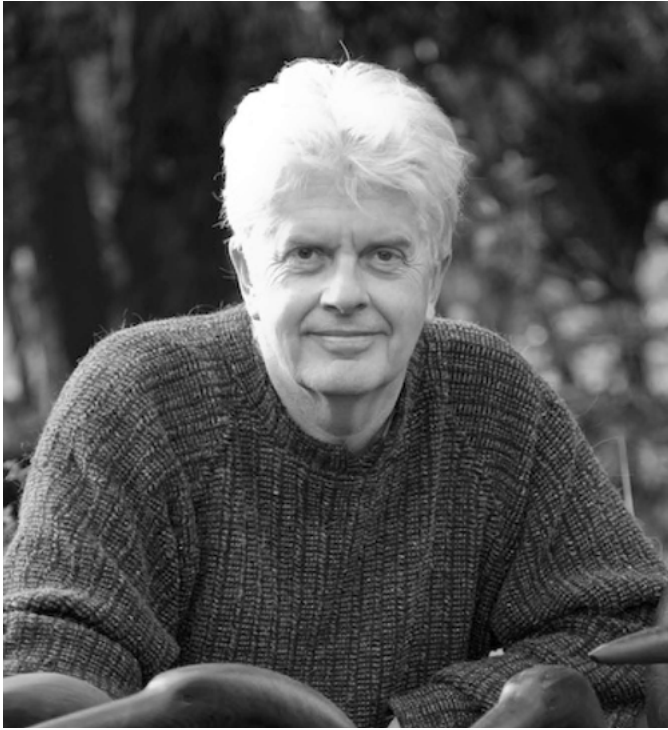


Chanticleer, alongside other public gardens from the Philadelphia Region, is leading a powerful marketing collaboration promoting their region as “America’s Garden Capital” to the mutual benefit of more than thirty different public gardens within thirty miles of each other. The Vallarta Botanical Garden has noted the success of this kind of collective branding and is reaching out to other Mexican gardens to promote our country as a floristic tropical treasure trove.

Having now moved on from Chanticleer, Chris Woods now resides in Benicia, California which he uses as his base for worldwide garden explorations and writing, among many other projects. During his visit with us we were happy to speak with him about the VBG’s design and direction and were flattered by his praise for our work. As Chris’ visit here was an inspiration to us, we’re hoping that he was equally inspired and look forward to perhaps reading more of his reflections on the Vallarta Botanical Garden in some of the many publications to which he contributes.

Photos on these pages provided courtesy of Chanticleer.





“There is something both comfortable and radical about the Vallarta Botanical Garden. The warm, home-like quality of the buildings with their welcoming furniture, books, and interior design, belies an underlying seriousness in the intent to protect and preserve endangered plants. It’s a bit like visiting your hip grandmother’s house. Comfortable furniture and a good, cooked meal, challenging conversation and profound thinking. The seriousness of habitat loss combined with guacamole and a good margarita.”

— Chris Woods, former Director of Chanticleer, after visiting the Vallarta Botanical Garden in February, 2015

Mexican Orchid of the Month — *Epipactis gigantea*

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

The *Epipactis* genus comprises about fifteen species that inhabit Europe, Asia, and Africa, with two in the Americas, one of these native (*Epipactis gigantea*) and the other introduced.

This beautiful native Mexican plant was first discovered in the state of Hidalgo. It can also be found in the states of San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Baja California Norte, and Baja California Sur. It inhabits gallery forests (those found along river corridors), the runoff of natural springs, and the margins of seasonal washes.



Epipactis gigantea Photo: Jesús Cortés

BEER

Vallarta Botanical Garden — Fun times and great memories

We'd like to share our thanks with all who made the Vallarta BEER Garden a success. For beer aficionados and garden lovers what we created for a day was nothing short of a fantasyland. Where else could you have Agave Maria Pale Ale served aside a patch of blue agaves or McSanchez Stout served among blooming vanilla vines?

Firstly, our sombreros go off to Los Muertos Brewing as our event sponsor, especially to brewmaster extraordinaire Connor Watts who treated us to seven different incredibly tasty microbrews. We also thank the musicians who donated their time and talent: Sacha and Rosalba of *No Soy Frida Ni Tú Diego*, Sarahí of *Sarah en la Luna*, and Jorge Gracia. We also thank our beer station volunteers Bernie, Pablo, Dikki, Cynthia, and Alberto for serving up the tasty brews and talking up the garden's incredible plant collections. Last, but certainly not least, we thank all of those who attended this fundraiser and supported our garden's youth education programs with their event ticket purchases.



Rosalba of No Soy Frida Ni Tú Diego
Photo: Jack Kelleher

Weren't able to attend this year? Keep posted to future editions of *The Leaflet* for Vallarta BEER Garden 2016 and in the meantime visit Los Muertos Brewing for these great beverages on tap or the Vallarta Botanical Garden's Hacienda de Oro Restaurant now proudly serving a few of these fine selections in bottles.



Photo: Jack Kelleher

Mother's Day Lunch Special

Sunday, May 10th

\$299 pesos per person*



Includes:

- Admission to the Garden
- Hibiscus Flower Iced Tea with unlimited refills or 1 other non-alcoholic beverage
- Choice of main dish:
 - Garlic-seared fish fillet served with steamed rice and vegetables
 - Chicken fajitas wrapped in *hoja santa* leaf and served with guacamole, beans, Mexican salsa and hand-made tortillas
- Dessert: rice pudding with milk garnished with vanilla bean and cinnamon
- And a little surprise gift for all mothers!

* Gratuities not included



Photo: Iván Jiménez



Member Spotlight: Rob & Rebecca Bruce

"Our visits to the Vallarta Botanical Garden are always our favorite day trip out of Puerto Vallarta without question. It's such a beautiful tranquil setting and everyone is so helpful and friendly that we're pleased to now be actively supporting this great local resource through our membership."

(Rob & Rebecca Bruce with their dog Ted)



Photo: Iván Jiménez

Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House Soft Opening — Friday, June 5th at 12 pm

The beautiful new Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House has been completed and our gardeners are busy transplanting our stunning vireya collections there now. A soft opening of this new garden attraction is scheduled for noon of Friday, June 5th at 12 pm.

More lovely vireyas are currently in cultivation and will be transferred to the Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House in the winter when we will hold a grand opening event to celebrate the completion of this project in its full glory.

Vireyas, formerly referred to as Malesian Rhododendrons in respect to where they were first discovered, has a range extending as far north as Taiwan, south to northern Australia, and east to the Solomon Islands.



Photo: Iván Jiménez



Photo: Iván Jiménez



Photo: Iván Jiménez

Vallarta Botanical Garden's Calendar

DATE		EVENT	COST
		GARDENS ARE CLOSED ON MONDAYS FROM APRIL UNTIL DECEMBER	
MAY & JUN		Peak Hummingbird Season — Best time of the year to observe and identify hummingbirds. To date, 13 different hummingbird species have been noted at the VBG.	Included with entry
1	MAY	Labor Day in Mexico — Garden remains open	Included with entry
10	MAY	Mother's Day — (Mexico, USA, & Canada) — Treat mom to a day at the Garden!	See page 10
15	MAY	Teacher's Day — (Mexico) — Invite a teacher with you to visit the Garden!	Included with entry
5	JUN	World Environment Day — The Garden will celebrate this day by the soft opening of the new Dick and Dee Daneri Vireya Rhododendron House at 12 pm. A grand opening of this structure when it is more fully stocked with plants will be scheduled for the winter.	Included with entry

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



Amazilia violiceps Photo: Petr Myska

Garden Hours

Open 7 days/wk

Open 6 days/wk

Early "Bird" Opening

Daily Guided Tour

Additional tours

10 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)

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

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)

On April 22 we celebrated the 45th anniversary of a pivotal social movement towards environmental consciousness – Earth Day!

In the 1960s, a series of events prompted millions of Americans to rally together regarding the protection of our planet and its vital natural resources. Rachel Carson's legendary 1962 novel, *Silent Spring*, illustrated the grave impact of dangerous pesticides leaking into our watersheds and the 1969 massive 11-day oil spill in Santa Barbara, California helped trigger a great concern for the environment. At that time there was no Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), no protection acts...nothing legally in place to protect the environment.

It was time to take action! In spring of 1970, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized a "national teach-in on the environment" as a way to spread awareness on these issues which helped get it onto the national agenda.

On April 22, 1970—the day that became the first Earth Day—approximately 20 million Americans from thousands of different schools and universities came together in favor of environmental reform. Not too long after, the EPA was created, followed by a wave of legislation all aimed to protect the environment. Earth Day became a success!

Now people all around the globe celebrate Earth Day as a means to inspire environmental change. As a collaboration between the Vallarta Botanical Garden, CONANP (the National Park Service), and Peace Corps Mexico, we celebrated by conducting another "teach-in" at a local elementary school in our neighboring community, El Tuito. After a lesson on the importance of protecting our earth, 1st to 6th grade students and their teachers all made pledges (see photo below) on how they can help do their part. By the end of the day, we were happy to have received 360 pledges!



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

April 2015	Total member visits to the VBG:	196
	Total non-member visits to the VBG:	3,522
	Complimentary entries for organized school groups*:	98
	Total participation in daily 1 pm tours:	139
	Total participation in special events, classes, or workshops:	415
	Total volunteer service hours:	386

*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.



Photo: Iván Jiménez



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

From the Membership Desk

I had the pleasure of my mother visiting me in Yelapa all winter long and accompanying me to the Garden several times each month, often helping me with memberships and other volunteer service. She’s gone for the summer and now that Mother’s Day is quickly approaching, I miss her more than ever! For those of you who are lucky enough to have your mother right here in Puerto Vallarta, please bring her for a visit to the Garden. Show her the vanilla vines now blooming and watch the hummingbirds with mom in the feeders from our visitor center’s balcony.

A membership to the Garden makes a perfect mother’s day gift. On mother’s day itself we are offering a great special in the Hacienda de Oro Restaurant. Reservations, while welcome, are not necessary so even if you don’t plan until the last moment—just come on out and enjoy nature with those who are dear to you.

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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Photo: Iván Jiménez

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- Cash, check, & credit card donations are accepted at the Vallarta Botanical Garden. Please visit!
- Credit card payments may be made by phone: 322 223 6182 (10am – 6pm, closed Mon. in summer)
- Direct Deposits: Banorte account # 0201383728 (account name: Vallarta Botanical Gardens A.C.)
- For questions about tax-deductible giving in Mexico please contact us: info@vbgardens.org.

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

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Routing number: 322271627
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