



Bermuda Botanical Society

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FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2010 PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear fellow members,

I would like to wish everyone a healthy, happy and hope-filled Gregorian New Year.

Our Yuletide party was a nice opportunity to meet with both long-standing and new members, plus a chance to sample some seasonal culinary treats provided by the Peterichs and others, including an amazing cake.

It is with both humility and excitement that I accept the office of Society President.

I see the Bermuda Botanical Society as a team of community-minded people who are interested in botanical sciences and the preservation of the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum.

We are a team; the acronym **TEAM** stands for ***Together Everyone Achieves More.***

We have a good executive committee who are innovative and dedicated to the society.

Bill Ingham has done an amazing job over the last several years and I intend to build on the good works which he has established. He will continue to mentor me through the end of our year (May) and thereafter will remain in an advisory role.

We have a great mandate:

“To promote botanical sciences through various community activities and act as a support group for the Botanical Gardens & Arboretum”.

It is my desire for the Society and Parks Department to be more cohesive. I would like this year to see more community events in partnership with other botanical, horticultural preservation-focused & educational

agencies to be held in both the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens.

Everyone has an opinion and we would love to hear yours.

Tell us what you think of the newsletter and Visitors' Centre: maybe you have some ideas for improvement that we have not considered? Maybe you have a talent which would complement our mandate?

If you have an interest in leadership and would *like to serve* at Board level, there are several sub committees where we have need so please submit a bio and cover letter for us to peruse; we would love to hear from you.

In the shop we will continue to offer membership discounts and additional HUGE store wide discounts. Our store inventory will be reduced and will represent a more botanical theme. If you have any suggestions for merchandise please don't hesitate to contact the Operations (sub) Committee; Marijke Peterich, Barry Gibbons or me.

I would like the Society to host a greater number of guest speakers this year, so if you know of someone who has experience within an area of the Botanical Sciences which we could learn from, please submit the information. Either email me or leave a hard copy at the Visitor's Centre.

When I think of ***Membership***, I think of ***Education, Growth, Sustainability*** and ***Preservation***. These five terms will be the additional focus of my term in office.

Yours in Service, **PAUL**

President Paul Harney -
[***bdabotanicals@gmail.com***](mailto:bdabotanicals@gmail.com)

FORMER PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This is a great time for cool weather plants. I have just planted some turnips and it amazes me how quickly they come up. Later, I read that they are one of the most nutritious plants for us, especially the greens.

The Society is very fortunate to have a very good executive at the moment. In the last newsletter, I was able to share with you that Paul Harney was elected Vice President. At the Christmas Social, I announced that he is now President. It is with confidence that I step aside and allow his great ideas and enthusiasm to take shape.

We have our audit for 2009 almost complete and then we can release both 2008 and 2009

figures. In the last newsletter you saw some really great pictures of the Fall Festival. It was a pleasure to have other organizations join us, which made the event special. While we usually hope to break even, please know that we made over \$1,000 for the Fall Festival.

My recent interest in growing vegetables was enhanced by receiving an order from Bountiful Gardens. I plan to share some DVD's on gardening some night.

See you then, and until then, keep gardening.

Bill Ingham

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Samantha Bromfield

The last six months have seen lots of changes not only to the Society's finance function but to the operations as well. We have created new committees to better manage the shop and cafe, which we are hopeful will make them run even more smoothly.

All controls I had planned have now been implemented within finance and I am very happy the way things have continued to progress and become more efficient. The goal for this year is to change our inventory system so that it can support the changes that we wish to make within the shop over the coming months.

The audit for 2009 has already been completed, and I expect to get those signed off in time for the AGM. We spent a lot of funds this year on upgrades and improvements to the Visitors' Centre, which have improved and enhanced the Society and the atmosphere for our members.

WINTER DELIGHTS

by Tour Guide

We are in the middle of winter now, but there are already signs of the coming spring. The Freesias are pushing their leaves above ground and will be in bloom soon. The Loquats are bearing fruit. We see a few yellow ones already, but they do not have the sweetness yet. On some trees one can still see some clusters of flowers.

This brings me back to something that I wrote about, the delights of the Summer. Remember the small orchid (*Nigritella nigra*) that one finds in the Swiss Alps? It has such a delicious fragrance that it is called “Männertreu” (Man’s faithfulness). Well, the fragrance of the loquat blossom is one of the finest that I know, and it is definitely reminiscent of that of the little orchid.

Then there is the Christmas Vine , *Turbina corymbosa*, a member of the convulvulaceae, about which I wrote in an article about various relatives of the Morning Glory. It starts blooming around Christmas and its lovely white flowers can still be seen the end of January. What I did not mention before is that the flowers have a lovely sweet fragrance.



Christmas vine

Finally, this time of the year my favourite of the Botanical Gardens, the Dombeya (*Dombeya wallichii*), is in bloom. It has the sweetest fragrance that makes me think of the finest vanilla ice-cream. It stands along the paved road that leads to the South Border. Take a good look at the flower clusters too. They are like pom-poms, but be careful when you sniff: the flowers are full of bees! A close look at the individual flowers reveals that this is a member of the mallow family, malvaceae.



Dombeya

Those are some of the olfactory delights. Other winter delights are in the visual sphere. Although we have no snow here, there is definitely a winter look to the landscape. Quite a few trees have lost their leaves now, revealing the shape of the trunk and the branches.. Now we can see what one of our members once called “the signature of a tree”. In Europe it is easy to see the difference between oaks and beeches, even without the leaves. Here most trees do not loose all their leaves all at one time, but a few do. Now we can easily tell apart Poincianas and Black Ebony trees from a distance. Another nice example is the frangipani (plumeria) that now shows its somewhat shocking nakedness.

I mention one more. It is quite rare, but can be seen in the Botanical Gardens. It is the Winged Elm, *Ulmus alata*, a shrub now showing its extraordinary branches that have wings of cork. You can find it close to the dombeya, but on the other side of the hedge.

There is of course much more to be said about deciduous trees. Not all of them lose their leaves in the winter and there are reasons for that. But that will probably be another story.

Editor’s note:

Here we must say goodbye to Tour Guide. We will not see him anymore in this Newsletter, as explained in the following article.

Pictures ©George Peterich

OUT OF THE BUSHES

By George!

Until now I have been using pseudonyms for these contributions to the Botanical Society's newsletter.

When I was first looking for a pseudonym, Sue Durrant was the Editor of the Newsletter and her email address had the word Epiphyte in it. I chose "Tumbleweed", an obvious antonym, actually just to amuse her.

After that, I started using "Tour Guide".

I must, so to speak, come out of the bushes now, for I want to mention the names of two people and I should not do that while using a pseudonym. The first one is Elizabeth Downing. When I met her some time ago, she asked me: "Are you 'Tour Guide' ? I said yes, tomorrow again, whereupon she gave me a satisfied smile,

The second person I must mention is Lisa Greene. I want to pay homage to her, for she has been my mentor in things botanical since the very beginning of the Botanical Society, which is now 25 years ago. Lisa has taught members of the Society to become tour guides and I am one of them. Through the years Lisa has been answering my questions about plants and trees. Years ago, when she still worked in the Botanical Gardens, I used to go and see her there in her office; later I often went to the Museum at BAMZ., where she had become the Collections Officer. Nowadays we often exchange information via the Internet, sending pictures of what we have seen as attachments to emails. I have a whole collection of them.

Recently Lisa sent me an email, in which she said that she had discovered a "new tree" in the streets of Hamilton. Not that it was really new. It was just that she had never realized what she was looking at. They were French Oaks (*Catalpa longissima*) and she realized

that because they were in flower. I went to take a look, of course, and there they were in Reid Street. This was another step forward in my knowledge too of what I see around me here in Bermuda. Then I saw some of these flowers on the ground in the driveway of my neighbour across the street. They had fallen off a really big tree and I had been looking at that tree every day for years, not thinking! A French Oak!

The more you know – the more you see!!

George Peterich

Editor's note: Here I wish to add my own tribute to George's: Lisa Greene has for years been my resource for all things botanical. Her knowledge, enthusiasm and readiness to help are beyond compare. Thank you, Lisa!



Poinciana in winter – photo © George Peterich

Mrs E. Dakin won the door prize during our sale in December. She is now a proud possessor of a pair of our new gardening gloves.

From the President's Desk: We are looking for an Assistant Treasurer. Anyone who is interested in undertaking this role is asked to contact Paul at bdabotanicals@gmail.com

FROM LISA GREENE

Thanks to all who responded to my request for locations of Barbados gooseberry plants and about fruit on night blooming cereus. There were several “new” Barbados gooseberry to add to my list, including a huge one in Dockyard. Only one or two people had reports of night blooming cereus fruit – the fruit had been on the vines in recent years. There were no definitive reports of fruit being produced decades ago which leads me to wonder why we are seeing them now.

Do you know what a ‘race’ of ginger is? It’s a ginger root.

From Outdoor Photography magazine, Nov. 2006:

“The native European honeybee evolved from bees which originated in Africa about 28 million years ago. People started beekeeping over 5,000 years ago. A single bee produces one teaspoon of honey during its life and British bees produce 25,000 tons of honey per year. A bee colony also uses up to 32kgs of protein-rich pollen per year, gathered from over 300,000 foraging trips, in which one bee may return with half a million pollen grains.

Most adult workers forage for only three weeks for the pollen, nectar and water needed to feed the colony, before their wings wear out and they fail to return to the colony.

The queen receives a high protein food produced by young workers and lays up to 2,000 eggs a day – about twice her own weight.

The hexagonal interlocking shape of honeycomb is one of the strongest lightweight structures known. The walls of the honeycomb are only 1/8” thick but can support 30 times their own weight.

Bees maintain the temperature of the brood nest all the year round at a constant 33-34°C (91-94°F) even though the air temperature outside may vary from very hot to very cold. In summer, water is collected and evaporated to cool the hive, and in winter the bees consume honey and vibrate their wing muscles to create heat, at the rate of seven watts per 1,000 bees.

A worker bee will visit between 100 and 1,000 flowers on a foraging flight, making up to 10 trips on a fine day in summer.”

Editor's note: Lisa's glorious photo-cards of Bermuda's plants are now on sale in packs of six in our Double Fantasy Gift Shop and at the BAMZ Gift Shop.

BOTANICAL GARDENS RIO

By Samantha Bromfield

Amidst the hustle and bustle of Rio's busy city lies a tropical paradise within the Botanical Gardens. Upon entering you would be forgiven for thinking that you were far away from such a busy city, as you walk along the palm lined



avenues and stumble upon a cascade of water falling high from the mountain top

The Gardens are so huge that around every corner you come across something different. At the centre of the gardens is a lake, "Frei Leandro"



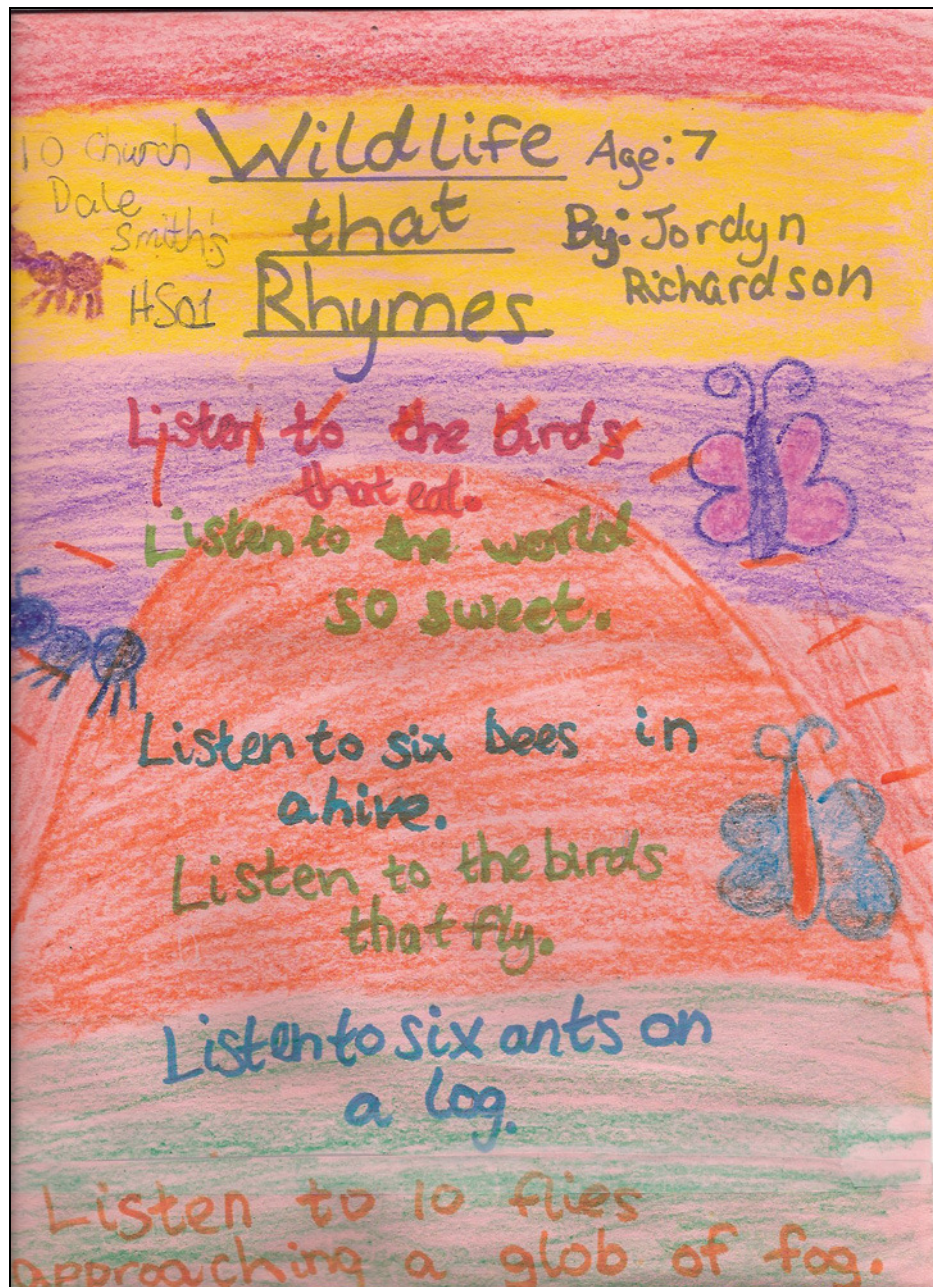
which is surrounded by mature foliage and a home to endless creatures and the perfect backdrop in the form of forest covered mountain. Take a look to your right, and there amongst the clouds you view the 'Christ Redeemer'.

There are many more things to see within in the Gardens; amongst other things there are statues, fountains and a Japanese Garden, but one of the highlights is the Orchid House. There are many

varieties of orchids housed here, but the rarer species are protected to preserve them for future generations.



Photos © Samantha Bromfield.



The winning children's poem and picture from the BZS competition, displayed at the Visitors' Centre in October 2009



UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|---|
| Sat., March 6 | 9:30 am | Lecture: Rose Propagation: the Backbone of Rose Preservation.
<i>Rose Society lecture open to all.</i>
Jack King or Hort. Hall Building. |
| Sat., May 30 | 5:30 pm | Bermuda Botanical Society AGM
Visitors' Centre, Botanical Gardens |



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