



Bermuda Botanical Society

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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2021

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

A long, hot August had most of the plants in my garden struggling. However, the hosts of butterflies including monarchs, gulf fritillaries and buckeyes, dragonflies (or were they damselflies?) and bees seem to be finding plenty to sustain them. A new crop I'm trying this year, grain amaranth is thriving. What's been happening in your garden? Would love to hear about your successes (and perhaps things that didn't go so well!) Photos welcome.

At the end of June, I was invited to attend a virtual conference – BOTANICAL BRIDGES III Consolidating the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network. Theme: What manmade and Natural Disasters are facing regional botanic gardens. The meeting was sponsored by the Botanic Gardens Conservation International group (BGCI) headquartered at Kew Botanic Garden UK and hosted by Chad Washburn, VP Conservation, Naples Botanic Garden, Florida.



A young cardinal had a great time picking off the caterpillars that were reducing the leaves to lacework!

Day 1 was given to presentations by various Botanic Garden curators including Haiti, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Danny Simmons, MLA, ASLA, MAHTA, MCMI, Government Landscape Architect gave a presentation on the Bermuda Botanical Gardens. Natural disasters ranged through hurricanes, volcanic activity, and earthquakes. Common themes running throughout all the presentations were the lack of political will, the need for education, climate change, lack of funding.

Day 2 was given to presentations by 3 of the Global Conservation Consortia – Cycads, Magnolia and Quercus, all of which are endangered. The BGCI also explained their work and how they help Botanic Gardens throughout the world. Web site www.bgci.org

This was a great opportunity to learn about the work of, and create links with, other Botanical Gardens and to begin to become familiar with the work of the BGCI.

Since then, the BBG have become members of the BGCI, and have also kindly given members' access to the BBS.

Citizen Scientists: Keep a lookout for first flowerings of Allspice, *Pimenta dioica*; Bay Grape, *Coccoloba uvifera* and later this year Loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*.

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State of the World's Trees September 2021

Of the 60,000 tree species in the world, according to the latest research, 'State of the World's Trees' 17,500 are currently at risk of extinction, with 440 on the brink of extinction. The report also shows what can be done and includes the importance of Botanical Gardens in preserving these trees. See *State of the World's Trees September 2021* <https://www.bgci.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/FINAL-GTAReportMedRes-1.pdf>

Invasive Alien Species Act 2021

The information was emailed earlier last month, but if you haven't had a look, it is certainly worth familiarizing yourself with the 3 sections listed – prohibited, restricted category A and restricted category B as many of us may well have plants in the Categories A & B which have certain restrictions on them. The document can be found here:

<https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/Invasive%20Alien%20Species%20Act%202021.pdf>

We all know how devastating the Cedar blight was, and are aware of the suffocating balloon vine, *Cardiospermum halicacabum* and just how important it is to prevent any further incursions. At the Botanical Bridges III event, Christian Torres, Puerto Rico Botanic Garden, explained the efforts they have resorted to in an effort to ensure the survival of their endemic and native cacti against a lethal attack by invasive mealybugs – *Hypogeococcus pungens*. Expeditions set out to secure cuttings (sometimes from very precarious cliff tops!), which are taken back to the lab for triple cleaning with brush, water and soap then neem oil, for every single spine to ensure eradication of the pest. Then, carefully packed and sent to Naples Botanic Garden, thereby preserving a bank of living specimens.



Harrisia mealybug infestation



70 for 70 – Planting for QEII's Platinum Anniversary

Firstly, many thanks to member Felicity Holmes and family for not only collecting over 100 olivewood seedlings from Nonsuch but potting them up and presently nurturing them so those of you who kindly offered to be foster parents will receive healthy 'offspring' to continue their care until planting time.

Thanks also to Jeremy Medeiros for facilitating this and to The Garden Club of Bermuda who have partnered in this project, offering moral and financial support! Much appreciated.

Over the coming months it is hoped to plant trees at Government House, Walsingham, (Home of the original Commonwealth Green Canopy planting) then in 2022, Eve's Pond. There are also a couple of other sites that are being considered. For more information on this initiative see queensgreencanopy.org

If you have native/endemic/fruit trees you would like to donate please contact bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com subject 70 for 70

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Endemic/Native Area, BBG

The *Passiflora suberosa* has grown considerably since planting, producing flowers and fruit which hopefully will increase the ground cover. The *Stachytarpheta jamaensis*, Jamaican Vervain has thrived throughout the summer, produced prolific seed so we should see quite a few more Vervains next season. *Baccharis glomeruliflora*, Doc Bush, *Dodonaea viscosa*, Jamaica Dogwood, and *Eugenia axillaris*, White Stopper have all settled in well and look very healthy.

BBS has also been taking care of the Margaret Duperreault Memorial Garden (John Lennon Statue).

Tree Tales Series 2 is well underway and will be launched soon.

Jennifer Flood

EDIBLE WEEDS - *Portulaca oleracea*

Text and photos by George Peterich

It is no secret that I am interested in wild food.

I have written about edible mushrooms that can be found in Bermuda, but the tale here will be about edible weeds, namely purslane, (*Portulaca oleracea*).

Purslane has been much appreciated as a vegetable for centuries, but it seems that is not eaten much anymore especially here in Bermuda where it really is abundant. It grows in the wild, and in flower beds, and is eliminated when possible. It grows in the fields between planted crops, but it really appears in a field, when it has been cleared after the harvest.



Portulaca growing amid the marigolds!



I remember that green grocers sold it in the Netherlands, and that my grandfather loved it. I also remember that it was very much like cooked spinach, but tasted a bit earthy. I did not like it, nor did I ever like spinach until I got that uncooked as a salad. Since that day I am a devoted spinach eater. It is the same with purslane it's really very good raw; it has a fresh taste, especially the young leaves. Last week I spoke to my sister who now lives in a big city in Holland, and she told me that she had bought it and cooked it for her husband. He would never eat uncooked vegetables, she said. She went back to the greengrocer to take this photo for us, and he also said you can eat it raw!

In an earlier newsletter Marlie & Jocelyn Powell wrote about a potato salad with purslane. You can also use the leaves chopped and incorporated in an omelette. Thanks to the French for the *omelette aux fines herbes*.

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Trivium No. 35, Useful Leaves

By George Peterich

Leaves of plants have been food for animals since paleozoic times. *Homo sapiens* has found that there are quite a few other ways how leaves can be used.

A few examples: grape leaves are used as a wrapper to cook food in, and banana leaves can be used as an umbrella and also to cook. And then there are leaves you can smoke. (Tobacco!) There are multiple applications for fibres taken from leaves. Raffia is an example.

Here in Bermuda the leaves of Match-Me-If-You-Can (*Acalypha wilkesiana*) are used to make poultices to treat painful muscles.

There is one very special way, and that is how the leaves were used by the ancient Mayas in the Yucatan. They used the leaves of Scarlet Cordia (*Cordia sebestina*) to polish pottery. In that function they are best when they are dry, which they have in common with tobacco.



Scarlet cordia

L. Greene

In Our Garden - Pawpaw, *Carica papaya*

Words and photos by Diana Chudleigh

Pawpaw (aka papaya) plants grow randomly in our garden as their seeds are planted in the droppings of passing birds. The seed of our best fruiting pawpaw was dropped in my newly created herb garden. It spoiled the bed's symmetry, but we left it to grow and are enjoying its delicious fruit and tropical foliage. It is conveniently located outside our kitchen door and is growing near our cess pit, which may account for its fertility, but it is also on the windward, or Harrington Sound, side of our garden and subject to severe hurricane weather.

The common local name of pawpaw (or paw paw) is the subject of some discussion. It is not unique to Bermuda, as sometimes claimed. We certainly used the term pawpaw in Singapore, my birthplace. *Asimina triloba*, a fruit native to the US, is also called pawpaw but is unrelated. It looks like a mango and is said to taste somewhat like a banana.

The ripe orange fruit from the common local pawpaw plant is my favourite breakfast food and it is good for you too. Pawpaw is loaded with antioxidants that can reduce inflammation and fight disease. The green unripe fruit is used locally to make Pawpaw Montespan, a savoury dish mixed with onions, cheese, tomatoes and top round ground (for non vegetarians). It can also be used in soups and stews and is a natural meat tenderiser.

cont.



Our favourite pawpaw tree is more bushy than typical having been topped by hurricane winds & by Nigel

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Delicious ripe pawpaws are eaten like melons and improve with a squeeze of fresh lime juice.



The female fruit & flowers grow close to the trunk.

The plant was one of the earliest arrivals on the island. The seed was brought to Bermuda from the Caribbean in August 1616 on board the *Edwin* along with plantains, sugar cane, figs and pineapples. This was the ship that brought the first Indian and the first person of African descent to Bermuda.

The papaya plant is considered to be a tree, though its palm-like trunk is not woody. It is dioecious, male and female flowers being borne on separate plants, but hermaphrodite forms exist. The female flowers grow close to the trunk whilst male flowers are on long stems.

It is easily grown from seed but be careful of its long tap root when transplanting. The tip of the plant should be pinched back to prevent it growing too tall and to encourage multiple stems. The tree is fairly short-lived and may last for about five years.

The pink fleshed fruit which is found occasionally in Bermuda is grown from imported seeds, but its offspring do not breed true.

With grocery bills rising, it is a wonder that the pawpaw is not more widely grown and eaten.

BBS Shirts & Gardening Aprons

Shirts: \$30.00

Aprons: \$25.00



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Trivium No. 36

Text and photos by George Peterich

When we moved into our new home in Paget, we found a plant that was growing in a hedge with a lovely flower. It is the Gloriosa Lily, *Gloriosa simplex*. Now we have seen that there is another version. It is *Gloriosa superba*, formerly named *Gloriosa rothschildiana*).



Gloriosa simplex with broader, less crinkly petals.



G. superba with longer, narrower and more crinkly petals.



Norfolk Island pine with several seedlings



European goldfinch feeding on thistles at Soittal Pond.

Photos: Lisa Greene



Ponytail "palm" in flower

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Spiced Applesauce Cake

*Vegan, Gluten-Free, Wheat-free ~ Choose organic ingredients for best results
Makes 8-12 servings ~ Prep & Cooking Time = 1 hour*

Cake Ingredients:

2½ c G-F 1:1 flour	1½ c brown sugar
2 tsp baking soda	¼ c apple cider vinegar
1 tsp salt	½ c canola oil
½ tsp ground cinnamon	1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
½ tsp ground ginger	½ c chopped walnuts
½ tsp ground nutmeg	
2 c unsweetened applesauce	

Maple Icing Ingredients:

1½ c powdered sugar	3 tbsp maple syrup
1 – 3 tbsp water	

Cake Method: *Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease Bundt pan or large muffin tins.*

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, and spices
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together applesauce, brown sugar, oil, vinegar, and vanilla
3. Pour wet ingredients into dry and gently combine, then fold in walnuts
4. Fill pan/cups evenly and bake 40 – 45 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean
5. Cool completely before unmoulding

Icing Method:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together powdered sugar and maple syrup
2. Add water a little at a time until mixture is smooth and thick but pourable

To assemble, drizzle icing over cooled, plated cake.

Tip: To ensure walnuts are evenly distributed in cake mixture, toss in a small amount of flour before adding. Variations: ½ c raisins may floured and added with walnuts. Finely chopped walnuts can be sprinkled over the icing for a less formal appearance. This is a perfect desert for Thanksgiving or anytime!

Contributed by Marlie & Jocelyn Powell, Vegan/Vegetarian chefs at Kingston House B&B KingstonHouse@BBBermuda.com



Children's Corner

text and photos by Felicity Holmes

Did you miss entering this year's Ag Show?
Consider growing a Croton for the next one. It's easy!

Cut a woody stem about 6 inches long.



Remove the bark on two sides at the base of the stem with a sharp knife so the plant can absorb lots of water. Put it in a vase of water in a shady place for about 6 weeks until roots grow. Change the water every other day.



Put potting soil in a container (with holes for drainage). Use a pencil or dibbler to make a hole in the soil, carefully plant your croton.

Place it in a sunny location. Keep it watered and re-pot into a larger pot after several months.

You can also grow crotons from leaves!
Look at this!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WzBOLaF4fY>

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Volunteer opportunities

The BBS welcomes volunteers to join in with any of the activities mentioned in the newsletter ; as a member of the Executive or joining any of the ad hoc committees. Please contact the BBS at bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com

Activities:

October : to be announced

November 14: Tour of a garden under development - Hodsdon House, 43 Harbour Road, Paget

November 21: AGM 3 pm Horticultural Hall

Please reserve your space for visits as numbers are limited, by emailing bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com with the appropriate activity in the subject line, thanks.

Hodsdon House



Wendy McLeod's garden is not finished by any definition but it is in the process of being changed from a landscape of lawns and hedges into more of an English style garden. The property is in Paget on the water side of Harbour Road next to the Newstead. At this point of time Wendy's tour will be focussed more on the challenges of working with zero soil depth, using no dig (and no weeding) techniques, keeping maintenance low, and using a phased approach to very daunting tasks.

Wendy also has a slat house for orchids and has recently started importing and selling orchids. Her aim is to sell fully rooted orchids which are proven to grow well in Bermuda.