



Bermuda Botanical Society

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NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2022

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

The new BBS season began with a really eye-opening, informative guided walk 'The Palms of Hamilton'. Many who attended had these comments 'I knew there were palms in Hamilton, but had no idea just how many – or how many varieties - Hat, Thatch, Palmetto, *Washingtonia*, Manila, Pigmy, Senegal, Royal, Chinese fan, Canary Isle, Coconut, Solitaire, Spindle, Petticoat Who knew? Fortunately for us our tour guide George Peterich did! Thank you for a thoroughly enjoyable, educational tour.

The Executive Committee is busy with a variety of Society activities - the third Tree Tales series is in place in the BBG Palm Collection & work on the interpretive sign, continuing work at the BBG, AGM & Plant Sale in November, a look at Bermuda's endemics with Alison Copeland in January, visiting Palm specialist Stephen Brown, beginning of February, private garden visit in March. Details on each of these given separately, perhaps there's something you would like to be involved with? We can always use additional help whether for a short one off event, or a more long term project?

AGM 3 pm Saturday November 19th, Horticultural Hall Please join us for the AGM and afterwards socialize with refreshments.

Plant Sale Saturday November 26: many thanks to those who have already offered plants, seedlings and seeds for the sale. We can still use plenty more, if you have something, please contact us at bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com subject Plant Sale

Endemic/Native Area at BBG – help with this project is always welcome, we usually work on a Saturday morning from 9 – 11 or whatever time you can spare. If you are able to go at a different time please let us know. bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com subject Endemic Area

Friends of the Bermuda Botanical Gardens (FBBG) looking for volunteers to help with specific projects – the Cacti House and the Exotic House. A calendar of work days has been established usually a Friday afternoon, 1 – 3 pm. Let me know if you'd be interested in this initiative to revitalize the BBG and I will forward the details bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com subject FBBG

Stephen Brown visit January 29th – February 5th.

Stephen will be giving a couple of presentations on Palms, the dates and venues to be confirmed. He will be staying at Kingston House, courtesy of Marlie Powell.

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BBS members are invited to host him for a lunch or evening meal and this would be a great opportunity for him to identify or confirm identification of palm(s) you may have on your property! If you are willing to help with this or transportation please email bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com Subject Palms

Memberships – thanks to those who have already paid their dues for 2022 to 2023. For those who haven't yet, you can now rejoin through BDATIX <https://bdatix.bm/memberships.html> – which should simplify things.

Look forward to seeing you on the 19th at the AGM and at some of the activities.

Jennifer Flood.



George Peterich and a Manila palm, QEII Park; a Puerto Rican hat palm and a group of Bermuda palmettos, Front Street (note how similar they look).



Puerto Rican hat palm, in flower Sept. 2007, St. Paul's Church, Paget; Bermuda palmetto in flower, July 2007.

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Why Christmas trees?

Marijke Peterich

The winter solstice always has been a moment of great festivities in human life.

The Romans celebrated the Saturnalia and one of the traditions was decorating the house with green boughs. Yule (our Christmas) is celebrated in Scandinavia. They go caroling and make Yule logs, a special cake which resembles a trunk of a tree and decorate their houses with evergreens. In the 16th century a small pine tree was taken into every house in Germany. It really got out of hand in Victorian times with trees decorated with edibles like gingerbread, nuts and fruit. In the mid-19th century Queen Victoria launched the first Christmas tree in the UK in 1848, her husband Prince Albert was, after all, German. The tree was decorated with candles, ornaments and ribbons. Of course, the candles were a fire hazard and in 1882 Edward H. Johnson a friend of Thomas Edison invented the first electric Christmas lights. By the 1900s many families had a Christmas tree and store-bought ornaments became all the rage.



Let us have a look at which trees are good Christmas trees:

Balsam Fir *Abies balsamea*

Fraser Fir *Abies fraseri*

Canaan Fir *Abies balsamea* var. *phanerolepis*

Douglas Fir *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Grand Fir *Abies grandis*

Noble Fir *Abies procera*

Concolor Fir *Abies concolor*

All of these have a good fragrance and strong branches for hanging ornaments.

White Pine *Pinus strobus*

Scotch Pine *Pinus sylvestris*

Virginia Pine *Pinus virginiana*

The pines have low fragrance but strong branches.

Blue Spruce *Picea pungens*

Norway Spruce *Picea abies* (loses its needles easily)

White Spruce *Picea glauca*

These spruces all have more or less bluish-green foliage.

Arizona Cypress *Cupressus arizonica*

Leyland Cypress *Cupressus* x *Leylandii*

The cypresses have low to no fragrance and especially Leyland Cypress is nice for people with allergies.

Red Cedar *Juniperus virginiana*

In Bermuda we see the Balsam Fir, the Fraser Fir and the White Pine as Christmas trees.

Please think about hiring a Bermuda Cedar from the National Trust or buy an artificial Christmas tree to save a tree this year.

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Tinder mushroom

By George Peterich

I have written quite a few times about mushrooms and preferably about edible mushrooms. They would have the epithet *edulis*. But this is about a mushroom that was not edible, but has been useful through the centuries and that, of course, would be *utilis*. This mushroom is not called *utilis*, but its use is fully described in the scientific name.



Recently I found a mushroom, on a tree in the Botanical Gardens (photo above, taken 21 February). It is very much like the Tinder Mushroom (*Fomes fomentarius*), that can be found on dying or dead Beech trees* in Europe (photo left, taken 30 January '22)

The Latin word *fomes* is tinder in English and *fomentarius* has the meaning “tinderbearing”. The Tinder Mushroom becomes very hard as it dries, and a fine powder can be made of it. This is the tinder that was used to start a fire. A spark was made with a piece of flintstone, that was first hit with another stone, and later with a piece of steel. Before the invention of matches it was necessary to have tinder on hand and it was carried in a small box, a tinder box. I have a specimen here, dated 1750 (photo left). The powder made from the mushroom has been used since prehistoric times.



In 1991 in the Ötztal, in the mountains of Austria, the body of a man was found that had been preserved there in a glacier for centuries. Scientist gave him the name Ötzi. Some of his clothes were still on him, as were some things that he had carried with him. He lived 5000 years

ago at the beginning of the copper age. This find provided scientists with much insight in how he lived, and particularly how things that are found in nature were used in daily life or even for survival.

Among the things that Ötzi had with him were pieces of the Tinder Mushroom, and of another dried mushroom that could be used for the same purpose. If you are curious like me, you can look for Ötzi, the glacier man, on the Internet, and you'll find out much more.

* European Beech Tree. *Fagus sylvatica*, see also “Trivium No. 41 “Latin names”

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What can we do about our carbon footprint?

Wendy McLeod

The climate crisis has reached a stage where it hurts to think about it but we should still believe that our actions are worthwhile. In fact we are all going to have to increase our efforts to lower our own carbon footprint — even the smallest of actions will contribute to keeping our planet habitable. The good news for gardeners is that we have many ways to remove carbon from our air.

Here are some suggestions from both sides of the Atlantic.

Ban peat harvesting now. Make it clear to your garden center that you don't want peat moss based potting mixes. Natural peat bogs are a great carbon sink. Peatlands cover just 3% of the planet's surface, but store twice as much carbon as all the world's forests.

Limit lawns. Smaller lawns with more space for designed for shrubs, wildflower meadows, and perennial flowers will increase biodiversity, increase carbon capture and save you money. Believe it or not, operating a petrol lawn mower for one hour releases as much air pollution as driving for 100 miles, leaf blowers are even worse.

Plant a tree - A single tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and sequester 1 ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old. At the very least every time you remove a tree from your property plant another one somewhere ... anywhere.



Protect our woodlands by engaging with local projects run by organisations like Buy Back Bermuda or the BZS to donate either labour or money to buy open space or reforest degraded land.

Reduce Food Waste - The carbon footprint of food waste is greater than that of the airline industry. The environmental consequences of producing food that no one eats are massive. The biggest proportion of food waste — about 37 percent happens at home. Some people find it helpful to have a system in which the oldest items go on the top shelf, so they will reach for those items first.

Educating your friends is a great way to multiply your efforts. Share this article with your friends and family and help them take steps to make their lives a little more climate-friendly.

Here are a couple of links I found most useful:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220610-how-to-turn-your-garden-into-a-carbon-sink?ocid=ww.social.link.email>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2022/02/22/climate-change-actions-carbon-footprint/>

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A Practical Guide to Garden Management - in progress.

What questions do you have about planting more natives and endemics in your garden? We'd *really* like to hear from you!

Lisa Greene

Have you planted with natives and endemics and native-compatible plants or would you *like* to but you're not sure how to go about it - or even start? I am working with David Wingate and putting together a Practical Guide to Garden Management, based on David's experience. It would be *very* helpful to hear from you of your experience planting natives and endemics, or what you want to know before you start.

Did it go the way you thought it would? What problems did you encounter? What do you wish you knew? What questions did/do you have? What are the stumbling blocks? What were your successes? What didn't go so well?

if you haven't planted natives and endemics, do you know people who have, or would like to? Please encourage them to send us their questions or thoughts and experiences.

Perhaps you haven't planted natives and endemics for a reason. If so, we'd like to hear about that too!

Your input will make the Guide a better resource for everyone. I do hope you'll get in touch. And let me know if you'd be willing to read a draft and give feedback.

Email your questions or thoughts to: elgreenebda@icloud.com

Trivium no 41. - Latin Names

George Peterich

When plants got their place the Binomial System, a few of them already had Latin names, the names that were used by the ancient Romans.

A few of them are:

Beech, Oak, and Elm (*Fagus*, *Quercus*, and *Ulmus*)

If you haven't renewed your membership ... Membership can be renewed at the AGM, but the Society now has a presence on BDATIX where membership can be renewed easily.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS due annually in August.

Just a reminder that, though the MEMBERSHIP form is available on the BBS Website, PAYMENTS *CANNOT* be made directly from the website. It is simply not cost effective for the Society. Please make a direct debit, giving your name from your bank account or send a cheque. Apologies for any confusion or frustration this may have caused. Many thanks to those who have already renewed.

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Mango Chutney

*Vegan, Gluten-Free, Wheat-free, Nut-free ~ Choose local organic ingredients for best results
Makes 5 cups, Prep & Cooking Time = 1 hour 15 minutes*

Ingredients:

1 tbsp avocado (or similar) cooking oil	¼ tsp ground cardamom
2 tsp fresh ginger, finely minced	¼ tsp turmeric
1 tsp garlic paste	¼ tsp ground cloves
1 red chilli, finely sliced (remove seeds)	¼ tsp ground cinnamon
2 tsp whole nigella seeds (optional)	¼ tsp salt
1 tsp ground coriander	1 – 1.2 kg peeled, diced mangoes
½ tsp ground cumin	2 c granulated white sugar
	1 c white vinegar

Method:

1. Heat oil in a medium-sized stock pot, sauté ginger, garlic and red chillies for 1 minute
2. Add spices and sauté for another minute
3. Add diced mangoes, sugar, salt, and vinegar and combine
4. Bring to rapid boil, then reduce to low. Simmer for 1 hour. Cool
5. Use potato masher to break down mango chunks if desired

This tangy, tasty chutney is an essential compliment to any Indian meal. It has a soft, jelly-like consistency. Fresh or frozen, peeled and diced mangoes can be used. Chutney stores in well-sealed jars in fridge for 2-3 months. It will last much longer if frozen or canned.

Contributed by Marlie & Jocelyn Powell, Vegan/Vegetarian chefs at Kingston House B&B



Children's Corner

Rustic Twig Star

What you need: 5 fairly straight twigs the same size, scissors, glue/hot glue gun, string/twine/wool



Tie together 2 twigs to make an upside down V.
Repeat with two more twigs.



Place one V on the table. Place the other V on its side on top of and across the first V. Tie the ends that meet.



Then fit your fifth twig to complete your star. Tie twine around each point.

Tie twine where the twigs cross, decorate!



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Events

November 19, Saturday: **AGM** 3 pm Horticultural Hall. Please join us for the AGM and afterwards socialize with refreshments. The Society is looking for people to become Committee Members as we have been working with less than the optimal number (9) for some time. The Committee presently meets once every 2 months. Agenda will be sent out before the meeting. Please come out and support your society.

November 26, Saturday: **Plant Sale** 7am - 11am at Windybank Farm Market, #3 Windy Bank, off Middle Road (just east of Store Hill), Smith's Parish. Look for the Farm Market sign by the road. The market is open on Saturday mornings for those who would like to pickup their fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, cut flowers, baked goods, jams, sauces, and a range of other products. windybankfarmbermuda.com

February: **Stephen Brown, Horticulture Agent** (Univ of Florida/IFAS Lee County Extension) will be visiting January 29th – February 5th. Stephen will be giving presentations on several aspects of palms - how to identify, why they are not trees, care, cultivation and pest management, the dates and venues to be confirmed

Assessing the extinction risk of Bermuda's endemic plants

Presentation by Alison Copeland
for

The Bermuda Botanical Society

Sunday, January 8th 2023

At Horticultural Hall, the Bermuda Botanical Gardens
at 10:00am

The 1 hour slideshow presentation will be followed by a short walk to the Botanical Society's endemic plant flowerbed in the Botanical Gardens.



February 19th, Sunday afternoon (rain date 26th): Join us for a **Tail-gate Tea** - an outdoor opportunity to plant-swap, book-swap, tool swap and catch up with fellow members. Bring your own thermos of tea (or preferred beverage). A few tea treats will be provided. Location: St. Georges, Penno's Wharf Parking Lot (enter near Godet and Young Hardware Store). Sign up: bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com. subject: Tailgate

March 12th Tour of Keren Lomas' Garden

Questions, suggestions – and help with any of the activities – would be very welcome, we'd love some feedback!

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