



Bermuda Botanical Society

P.O. Box HM 2116, Hamilton, HM JX,
Bermuda

bermudabotanical.org

bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com

MAY NEWSLETTER 2025

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

After an extremely busy, informative, and enjoyable visit from Chris Collins in February, a lot has been happening. Fungi Tour with Larry Millman at Cooper's Island gave participants a fascinating look at Bermuda's fungi and their intricate life. A brilliant presentation by Society member Alison Copeland on her PhD work, Bermuda's Invasive Plants to a full house at BZS. A visit to the garden of Toni Butz with its collection on unusual trees and plants, followed by a delicious, traditional afternoon tea (the photo doesn't even begin to do it justice!) prepared by Marlie and kindly hosted at the house of Bente Ahern.



Triangle palm.

BBS presence at the 2025 Agricultural Exhibition, a great display highlighting several of Bermuda's most invasive species. Thanks to the team lead by Marlie and Jade who created lovely seed kits for children, Lisa for the excellent posters and information sheets, and all those who so generously gave of their time to make it a success. Over 80 children's quiz entries give an indication of how well attended the BBS Education Display was attended!

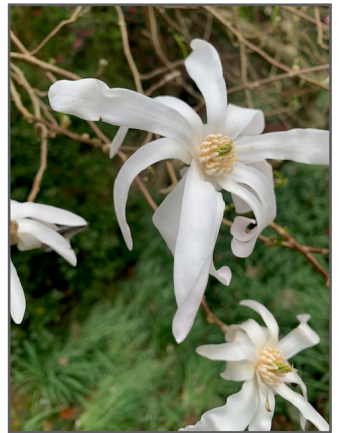
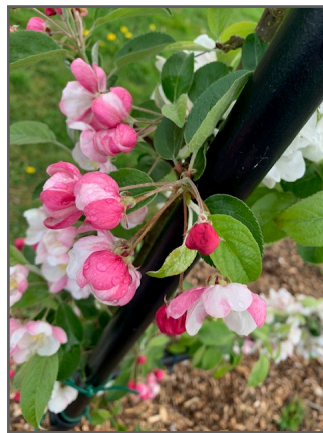
A visit to Trunk Island at the beginning of May saw the ongoing work that is being undertaken to develop the ecosystem as a microcosm of an older Bermuda. Other volunteer events included the second visit led by Rose Society members to weed, prune and plant at the Camden Rose Garden – and am getting reports that members of the public are commenting on how good the roses are looking now! and of course, the regular work on the Endemic/Native area at BBG by a very dedicated team.

Many thanks to the dedicated committee members, general membership and the numerous volunteers who contribute time, expertise & money to make all this happen.

"To encourage and support the study and promotion of the botanical sciences within Bermuda"

SPRINGTIME IN DORSET UK

A visit to Dorset in April allowed me to enjoy displays of magnolia, camellia, rhododendrons, azaleas, bulbs and acers. Should you be travelling to UK next spring can highly recommend the following – very different - gardens: Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens which also included 100 year old palms, Compton Acres, established 100 years ago on Dorset heathland but despite being incorporated into the suburbs of Poole has survived and thrived, and Kingston Lacy a National Trust property.



Clockwise from top left: Tulip borders at Compton Acres, view of Japanese Garden at Kingston Lacy, magnolia, apple blossom, azalea and rhododendron at Abbotsbury Semitropical Gardens.

Jennifer Flood

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2025 Annual Bermuda Agricultural Exhibition BBS stall

Text - Jade Lovell, Photos - various

As has become a tradition, the Bermuda Botanical Society once again created a small, unique botanical haven at the Bermuda Agricultural Exhibition at the Botanical Gardens April 24, 25 and 26. The theme this year being 'Invasives'.

Despite some early hiccups with no tent followed by the wrong tent, eventually we were able to set up our stand with the assistance of our wonderful member volunteers.

Over the 3-day event a steady stream of visitors found our stand and we were kept pleasantly busy interacting with both adults and children, answering many questions on Bermuda's endemic, native and invasive trees and plants.

Many children, from preschool groups on Thursday, older children on Friday, and families on Saturday walked by our stand, the children participating in our simple yet effective short ID quiz, each child then receiving a growing kit containing 6-pack seed tray, potting soil, and packet of vegetable seeds (donated by Animal & Garden House) and assembled by us. In addition, as a Citizen Scientist Project to grow an endemic tree, we gave away many Bermuda olivewood seeds with growing instructions. The seeds having been gathered by Keren from her healthy olivewood tree. There was also an attractive flowering display of Petunias donated by Tulo Valley and for sale at a nominal price.

Our wholehearted thanks go to Marlie for all her work to ensure this event ran smoothly, Peter Lee for supplying all the specimen trees and plants, Lisa Greene for her display of invasive plants - five samples with information cards, and our dedicated volunteers, Cheryl Stafford and Lyn Vaughan, who worked all three days of the show as well as Emma Law, June Sousa, Janet Simpson, Karla Hayward and Keren Lomas, who cheerfully engaged with each passing visitor from preschoolers to retirees.



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Focus on invasives

Text and photos - Lisa Greene

Below is one of the information sheets displayed at the Agricultural Exhibition.

Chinese fan palm

Invasive introduction

Scientific name: *Livistona chinensis*

This palm aggressively self-seeds, grows quickly and pushes out, or take up space, for more desirable plants. Its fruit are eaten and spread by pest species such as kiskadees and rats.

It is important to be able to correctly identify your palm. Key features of the Chinese fan palm include spines on the mature leaf stalk, drooping tips of the leaves, the blue/green egg-shaped fruit with orange flesh, and the C-shape at the end of the upper side of the leaf stalk.

- Pull seedlings if they are old enough to distinguish from Bermuda palmetto seedlings. If you are unsure about the identification of your palm seedlings or young palms, let them grow a bit more.
- Juvenile Chinese fan palms - remove the leaves and dig out the stump with a mattock.
- Mature palms can be killed by cutting through the trunk anywhere below the leaf crown (the growing centre). **There is no need to use herbicides.**

If you are unable to remove your mature palm tree consider:

- cutting out the leaf crown, leaving the trunk in place and growing a vine up it. The trunk will take approximately 2-3 years to rot and collapse. Monitor the process to avoid it falling and hurting someone or damaging other plants or structures.
- cutting off the fruit before they mature.

A Bermuda palmetto is a good replacement choice.



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BBS Annual morning work trip to Trunk Island, Saturday May 3, 2025

Text and photos- Jade Lovell

On a clear spring morning 13 BBS volunteers gathered on the Aquarium dock in anticipation of our working visit to storied Trunk Island.



Greeted by Captain Trevor Rawson, Trunk Island Project Coordinator, and First Mate John Norsworthy, we boarded the BZS 'Callista' for the short and scenic boat ride to Trunk Island, at 7 acres, the largest island in Harrington Sound and now a living natural history museum. But before landing we were treated to very special close views of White-tailed Tropicbirds (Longtails) nesting in burrows both natural and man-made along the coastal cliffs. As we approached the dock Trevor pointed to 3 Yellow-crowned Night Herons 'fishing' off the dock, Green Herons, Snowy and Little Egrets in nearby trees, and a blue Parrotfish and a Cowfish near our boat – what a delightful start to the morning.

Once on shore we assembled to hear the program Trevor has planned for us which included removing young Bermuda Palmetto seedlings growing beneath the old, endemic Bermuda Palmetto trees, some believed to be over 200 years old. The seedlings, their origins carefully noted, we then potted into one-gallon containers to later, when well rooted, be replanted where a dense palmetto forest would once have existed.

Trunk Island is a magical place where time seems to stand still, the sounds of modern Bermuda unheard. Small birds flit through the trees, graceful Longtails glide effortlessly over the island, and always there were glimpses of the blue, blue waters of Harrington Sound. Bermuda Botanical Society look forward to returning next year to continue assisting Trevor and his team in this worthwhile cause of creating a conservation hub and refuge for Bermuda's endangered species.



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Portuguese Toast

Vegetarian~ Choose local organic ingredients for best results

Makes 1 serving, Prep Time = 5 minutes, cooking time = 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 large Portuguese roll “papo secos”, day old is best
- 2 fresh eggs
- 1 tbsp avocado oil
- 1 tsp salted butter + 1 tsp salted butter
- Maple syrup

Method:

1. Beat eggs and pour into a shallow plate with rim
2. Cut crust off top and bottom of bun, cut bun in half longways
3. Soak all sides of bun until all egg is absorbed
4. Heat oil and butter in flat ceramic pan over medium flame
5. Grill 1st side of bun until golden, flip over, turn down heat, cover with lid
6. When 2nd side is golden, remove and serve with butter & syrup

Variations: Classic Portuguese toast uses cinnamon and sugar, but this recipe works well as a hearty breakfast offering. Don't substitute bread as Portuguese bread will become crispy on the outside and the inside is almost custard-like. If desired, a little sprinkle of powdered sugar and topping of favourite colourful berries elevate this dish.

This is a very popular item on our breakfast menu. It's especially good for school children's breakfast or before a big day of sailing, or other sporting event as it's easy to digest, with protein to keep you going and sweetness for a burst of energy.

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





Children's Corner - from Jocelyn Morrison

"Eeeeyew.....Let's make a Rot Pot."

How to make a mini-composter at home.

What you need:

*A Clear bottle e.g. recycled juice bottle or large mason jar

*Garden soil....not potting soil

***Shredded** plain (not shiny) paper, old envelopes, newspaper, light card e.g. toilet roll (these are your **BROWNS/Nitrogen**)

*Vegetable and fruit peelings (e.g. apple cores, banana, kiwi and avocado skins.) Coffee grounds.

*Grass clippings, leaves, petals, crushed eggshells and weeds without roots.

(These are your **GREENS**)

Water in a spray bottle

*Scissors, a marker and a brown 'sandwich' bag

*A rubber band



How to put it together:

1. Carefully cut around the top of the bottle and remove.
2. **First** place 2cm=4cm in depth of garden soil into the bottom.
3. Next put on top a layer of shredded papers (**browns** - these are **nitrogens**)
4. Next a layer of grass cutting (**greens** - these are **carbons**)
5. Repeat, making layers of **browns** and **greens**.
6. Wet the top with the water and give it a little shake. You will see the layering.
7. Now for the brown bag: Place the cut end or piece of brown bag over the top and secure with the rubber band. Poke some hole in it to allow air (including oxygen) to flow.
8. Make a mark all the way around at the level of your top layer.



****Your pot is ready to rot!****


Now find a sunny place and leave it. A covered porch or kitchen counter work well. Come back to observe it every few days to check if anything has happened. Give it a shake. If it looks dry, spray it or sprinkle water on top.

If you can be patient something will definitely happen! ... and if you take the top off you will know you have a Rot Pot ... it will smell!

Continued

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INTERESTING FACTS:

1. When you add your compost to your garden you are feeding the soil, making it strong and healthy. It acts as a nutritious food for both soil and plants.
2. Compost and soil are **not** dead. They are living things. They need AIR, WATER, NITROGEN AND CARBON.
3. There are more micro-organisms in one teaspoon of soil than there are people on the earth!!!

4. Worms make fantastic compost.
5. (Find out how to make your own WORM FARM)
6. Putting compost in your soil feeds the soil and makes it strong and healthy.
7. Important: DO NOT use meat, bone or cooked food scraps.

Find out more fun things you can do in the garden:

*Growinghealthykids.co.uk

*Helpingninjas.com

*<https://edgeearlylearning.com.au/worm-farms-for-kids/>

*<https://gardensthatmatter.com/make-simple-worm-bin/>

*The Agra Living institute - agraliviing.com

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zj27wnb>

The Importance of Soil:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqFwPPS7QX8>

*Re: Department of Public Works for Garden composters "Earth Machine"

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Endemic/Native Area group will be meeting Saturday May 31st, June 7th and 21st, 9 am – 11 am. Volunteers welcome, helpful if you have your own gardening gloves.

Rose Garden: Date to be announced

BBG will be looking for volunteers for various activities. 'Behind the scenes' work is taking place which should provide a solid foundation for the enhancement and maintenance of the Gardens, along with regaining accreditation as a Botanical Garden. These activities will be sent in separate email.

BOOK CORNER: Raising Hare by Choe Dalton Jennifer Flood

Whilst not strictly botanical, the following was a delightful read about a little-understood and vulnerable animal. The book highlighted the need to preserve and better understand entire ecosystems.

“When lockdown led busy professional Chloe to leave the city and return to the countryside of her childhood, she never expected to find herself custodian of a newly born hare. Yet when she finds the creature, endangered, alone and no bigger than her palm, she is compelled to give it a chance at survival.”

Events - A couple of interesting events before the summer break –

early June Visit to private garden

July 3 BBS very first art show celebrating Bermuda Plant life
Time: 5-7 pm
Venue: Bermuda Society of Arts
Please add this to your diary and look forward to seeing you there.

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