

The Conch Call



FIRST QUARTER 2013

ST. GEORGE VILLAGE BOTANICAL GARDEN~CONSERVATION, EDUCATION & PRESERVATION

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Garden Friends,

With the end of the year 2012, we finished a year of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the St. George Village Botanical Garden. It was a good year for SGVBG, in spite of the many challenges we faced in our community with the “slow” economy, the closing of the refinery operations at HOVENSA, and the resulting loss of many of our valued supporters, volunteers, and participants at our various activities.

We certainly miss our good friends who have left, but it has made us value all the more the many businesses and individuals who continue to help support our mission of Conservation, Education, and Preservation of the ethno-botanical heritage of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Even with the impact of the world-wide economic “slow-down” and the changes in our local economy, SGVBG has managed to successfully continue telling the important story of the people and plants of the U.S. Virgin Islands to our local school children, island residents, cruise ship passengers, Danish tourists, and visitors from around the world.

Our support comes in a multitude of forms. Our members and supporters provide the financial and material resources that make it possible to maintain our facilities and the educational and research collections – from historic artifacts and structures, to the living plant collections, to the Library and Herbarium collections. The dedicated army of volunteers that help SGVBG run the plant nursery, care for our garden areas, lead tours, organize and administer our various events are also essential in allowing us to continue to offer valuable educational opportunities for our residents and visitors.

It is also a continuation of the rich heritage of the important “people and plant” interaction that is the common theme throughout the 2,000 year history of the property. The basic purpose for any botanical garden is to help people understand that plants are

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Art in the Garden Party Saturday, March 23



Last year’s elegant Garden Party was so well received that this year we are combining our traditional Art in the Garden artist’s reception with *Art in Bloom* (floral interpretations of

original art) AND an afternoon champagne Garden Party.

You still have time to create or purchase a potentially prize-winning chapeau! This effervescent event will take place Saturday, March 23 from 3-6pm. In addition to the art sale and Art in Bloom auction, there will be displays by the Bonsai, Hibiscus and Orchid Societies.

Chef Anton Doos and the culinary students from St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC) will provide a scrumptious selection of hors d’oeuvres.



hat ti tude [**hat-i-tood**]

can be defined as the manner of wearing a hat which shows the personality, a mood, feeling or the disposition of the wearer.



Photographs of 2012 Garden Party courtesy of

Lindsay Kammerzelt

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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important. Fulfilling that purpose is made much easier with the well-documented history of Estate St. George providing a great opportunity to remind everyone that the human history of St. Croix is greatly influenced by the plants that provided food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and materials for everyday life. So far in 2013, our valued volunteers have helped to build new benches in our plant nursery, lead tours for island visitors, cleaned and maintained garden paths, weeded and cared for garden areas, and much more.

The St. George Village Botanical Garden could not continue to interpret the stories of the people and plants of this region without our volunteers, members, and other supporters! In helping us to tell these stories, each and every one of our supporters is part of the history and heritage of the people and plants of Estate St. George – THANK YOU!

We do a great job with the limited resources we have, but we are always hoping to do more! Please contact our office to see how we can best utilize your interests, energy, skill, talents and resources!

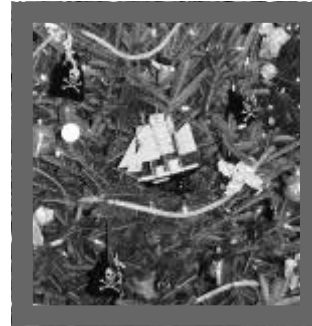
Please take some time to visit and enjoy St. Croix's most beautiful 16 acres of history and flora – YOUR garden, the St. George Village Botanical Garden.

Sincerely,

David. M. Hamada

SPECIAL THANKS TO SOMEWHERE IN TIME GALA & CHRISTMAS SPOKEN HERE SPONSORS:

Diageo USVI



Denali Asset Management

A Better Copy A Friend

JKC Communications Capt. & Mrs. Stiles Stevens

Caribbean Country 93.5

Innovative

Marshall & Sterling

Amelia & Dan Musser

Owen Johnson Electric

Art in the Garden

Saturday, March 23

GARDEN PARTY

3pm-6pm

Champagne Artists' Reception

Art in Bloom Exhibit and Auction



Art Sale

Hat Contest

Bonsai, Hibiscus &

Orchid Society Displays

\$40 per guest/\$35 thru March 8

Sunday, March 24

Art & Plant Sale

11am-4pm

Art in Bloom Exhibit

Hibiscus Show

Bonsai & Orchid Society Displays

Paletteers painting *en plein air*

Chalk Art

Food for purchase

\$5 per person

THANK YOU!

With the end of 2012 we say "Thank You" for the time and energy given by two members of the Board of Governors, whose 2nd 3 year terms expire this year – Marilyn Chakroff, and Sandi Savage.

All of the members of the Board of Governors of the St. George Village Botanical Garden give unselfishly of their time and resources to help keep our Garden growing.

Sandi Savage, who has served as the President of the Board of Governors for the last 2 years continues a legacy of support that began with her parents, Walter and Ruth Howard. The Howards were volunteers for many years, and the Howard Fern House and Garden was created as a result of a generous gift from Ruth Howard. Sandi has continued to support SGVBG as a volunteer, chairing fund-raising events, helping to weed and water in the Howard Fern House, and serving several terms as a member of the Board of Governors throughout the last 30 years.

In addition to the legacy of support started by her family, and continued by Sandi, as President she decided to ensure the long-term financial security of SGVBG. To this end, she has led the effort to establish a separate charitable foundation that will be responsible for managing an endowment fund with the sole purpose of supporting the Garden!

The St. George Village Botanical Garden is indebted to Sandi Savage and her family for demonstrating an unwavering commitment to our mission of conservation, education, and preservation of the ethno-botanical heritage of the Virgin Islands!

While we say "good-bye" to Sandi as President, and a member of the Board, we look forward to continuing to work with her as she supports our many activities and finishes the administrative work of creating the Endowment Fund.



**Annual Meeting and
Volunteer Party**
Sunday, February 24
Noon in the Great Hall
RSVP 692-2874



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

SANDI SAVAGE, PRESIDENT
LARRY SICKINGER, VICE PRESIDENT
SANDY RADCZENKO, TREASURER
CAROLYN FORNO, SECRETARY
NATHAN BISHOP
GARY BOURDON
MARILYN CHAKROFF
RICHARD MAHURT
MAX MCINTOSH
ROBERT QUINN

BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RICHARD & PEGGY BODINE
MONETTE BOOTH

EDUCATION

Spring into History by Saskia Corke

With the advent of a new year behind us, the Garden is still offering its education programs you know and love.

Join us for our bimonthly StoryHour reading every first Saturday and third Wednesday of the month. StoryHour strives to bring a new literary outlet for our preschool aged children and introduce them to the natural world. Join us under the kapok tree as a guest reader shares a botanical themed story; participants pay only regular admission fees (members are free!).

This February, in our monthly Second Saturday workshop, our young participants discovered the sweet mysteries of chocolate: where it comes from to how it's made. The students were even able to make their own chocolate fudge to enjoy at home, as well as a chocolate concoction similar to the same drink enjoyed by the Spaniards centuries ago. In March, Second Saturday participants will learn about the water cycle: how water is everywhere around us and the greater impact it has on our island. As spring comes upon us, our April Second Saturday participants will dive into the history of the Botanical Garden and the history of St. Croix when we discuss prehistoric arts, artifacts, and culture from the various South American tribes that once settled these lands.

This migration started over 2 millennia ago from the lower Orinoco River Valley of Venezuela. Several factors from population stress to cultural differences probably contribute to this emigration. They used large canoes carved out of tree trunks and moved up from Venezuela to Trinidad along the curve of the Antilles. Around 50 to 100 AD is when it's believed that the first humans began arriving to St. Croix and St. George. A small western portion of the Botanical Garden and surrounding areas were once part of a large 23 acre prehistoric village which extended from the base of the northern hills of the Garden and then south along Mint Gut. Materials found at the St. George's site, when analyzed, showed the land was settled around 100 AD and then abandoned in 900 AD.

Settlement began in a period called the Saladoid times—a name drawn from their distinct pottery style of white on red, originally found in a site in Venezuela called Saladero. This distinct pottery style became known for its beauty and artistic technique distinguishing it for other indigenous groups of the Antilles. The styles, aesthetics, and symbolisms of their ceramic crafts and artifacts bear testimony to the skills and artistry of these South American settlers.

The St. George site is an example of the areas the Saladoid people preferred to inhabit—large inland areas with forested-sloping terrain near fresh water supplies. The Saladoid often liked to settle in areas that were rich in usable natural resources such as water and natural protection. They developed a strong agricultural system—cassava becoming a diet staple. Their diet also included mollusks and shellfish as well as turtles.

This human influx into the islands also brought several new plants, animals, and customs. It's hard to imagine how exactly vegetation looked like 2,000 years ago on the site of the present day Botanical Garden; many of these plants and trees can now be found throughout the Caribbean and the tropics. The plants found around village sites would have been used for food, poison, dyes, tools, and building materials.

As the site on St. George was being abandoned, St. Croix was entering into a transitional period called the Ostionian period. This was when cultures began to diversify. Settlements became smaller and more dispersed. The ceramics and art became less sophisticated than that of the Saladoid.

Learning more about the people who came before us can help us to understand more about who we are. Hopefully, participants will gain a great appreciation for these ancient cultures through exploring the garden grounds, seeing actual pottery pieces in our Garden museum, and creating their own ceramics inspired by these South American settlers. Please come out to learn more about our amazing history at another family fun and informative Second Saturday workshop—always the second Saturday of every month.

Not to be forgotten, Grow and Learn is every fourth Saturday of the month. If you are interested in presenting a topic contact us at the garden. We'd love to have you here!

If you are interested in a private workshop on the Garden for adults, students, or children, the Education program still offers private workshop on various topics. Whether you want to learn more about soil, observe pollinators in action, or make your own soap, a private workshop or seminar is a great way to spend the day. Call or email if you would like more information.

Do you have an idea for future workshops or programs? Or would you like to be a guest reader at a Story Hour? Email [sgvbg.edu@gmail.com], call [340.692.2874] or visit us Monday – Friday between 9 am and 4 pm.

WISH LIST

GREAT NEWS!



- Repair of gutters on Great Hall (\$28,000)**received \$25,000 grant**
- Repair of Great Hall Doors and cane-bolts (\$12,000)
- Metal handrails for stairs in factory ruins (\$2,500)
- Replacement of exterior light fixtures in Great Hall (\$7,800)
- Leaf Rakes – both metal and plastic tines (\$20-25 each)
- New desktop computer for Administrative office (\$1,200)
- Circular saw \$250 - **fulfilled**
- Digital projector (\$700)
- Repair of chain-link fence along east and south borders of the Garden (\$4,500)
- 3 Energy Star rated refrigerators for Great Hall Kitchen, Manager’s House, and Visitors’ Center (\$750 each)
- 18” Chainsaw (\$900)
- 6 Round tables for Visitors’ Center events (\$700)
- Gift Certificates in any amount from local hardware stores

The St. George Village Botanical Garden has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust to be used to repair and replace the failing rain-gutters of our landmark structure – the Great Hall.



The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust supports education and research in ornamental horticulture for organizations primarily in

North and South America. SGVBG has received support in the past from this Trust to fund support staff and we are grateful that they have decided to continue and increase their support with this grant.

The Great Hall was built in 1976 to provide the Garden with a multi-purpose space for offices, a gift shop, and a beautiful venue for meetings, parties, and fundraising events. Unfortunately, 36 years of the tropical climate and weather events have taken their toll, and the rain-gutters had become inefficient at collecting precious rain water and were allowing the escaping water to stain and damage the historic walls of the row-houses that had been incorporated into the Great Hall when it was built. The water was also damaging the doors, electrical fixtures, and even the tile floors of the restrooms.

*The time to
repair the roof is
when the sun is
shining*

John F. Kennedy

The St. Croix business, Rooftops, has generously worked with us over the years to patch many of the leaks until we were able to secure the funding for the replacement and repair of the failing systems. We look forward to working with them as we finally correct these problems!

Many thanks to the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust AND Rooftops of St. Croix for helping to ensure the safe and effective use of the Great Hall!

The cost is based on SGVBG carrying out some of the work. Once the exteriors gutters are removed, we would be responsible for the cleaning and repainting of the fascia boards around the perimeter of the roof. This was to help keep the cost of the project lower. It's well over 500 feet of fascia board, and while we can have our two grounds workers help with this, we would like to be able to organize a few volunteers to help with the process so we can get through it as quickly as possible after Rooftops removes the old gutters, and before they install the new ones.

TripAdvisor.com

As more and more people research their vacation online and create their itinerary in advance, it is important that we remind friends and island visitors to post their comments on sites like TripAdvisor. The comment below was recently posted.

Thank you Marilyn L from Kansas!

“Historic St George Botanical Gardens”
Reviewed February 8, 2013 NEW
Being a garden lover, I found the setting of the Botanical Gardens with the plantation ruins to be quite an experience. The grounds were gorgeous and very well maintained. We strolled through the Gardens at our leisure and were able to take awesome photographs.



**St. George Village
Botanical Garden**

127 Estate St. George, Frederiksted, VI 00840

Hours

Open Every day except Christmas; 9 am—5 pm

1/2 Price Admission for St. Croix Residents every
Sunday; STX Children (Under 12) Free on Sunday

HERBARIUM HOURS:

By appointment. Call 340-692-2874

LIBRARY HOURS:

By appointment. Call 340-692-2874

NURSERY HOURS:

Tuesday & Friday; 9 am-11am

MUSEUM HOURS:

Monday through Friday; 9 am – 5 pm, and on weekend
days when a cruise ship is in port.

MUSEUM STORE HOURS:

Monday through Saturday; 10 am – 4 pm,
and during special events.

Tel (340) 692-2874 Fax (340) 692-6154

infoatthegarden@gmail.com

www.sgvgb.org

Upcoming Garden Events

FEBRUARY

20	StoryHour	10am
22	Lunch at the Garden	11:30am
23	Grow & Learn	10am-noon
24	Annual Meeting & Volunteer Party	noon

MARCH

2	StoryHour	11:30am
5	Lunch at the Garden	11:30am
9	Second Saturday	9am-noon
15	Lunch at the Garden	11:30am
20	StoryHour	10:00
23	Art in the Garden Party	3pm-6pm
24	Art in the Garden	11am-4pm
26	Lunch at the Garden	11:30am
30	Grow & Learn	10am-noon

APRIL

6	Story Hour	11:30am
12	Lunch at the Garden	11:30
13	2nd Saturday	9am-noon
23	Lunch at the Garden	11:30am
27	Grow & Learn	10am-noon

Yoga Saturdays at 10:30