

# The Conch Call



THIRD QUARTER 2011

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

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Garden Friends,

*Opportunities. It is an "opportunity" each time we receive a visit from a Tropical Storm or Hurricane. Yes, there is damage, and it can be discouraging to pick up the fallen leaves, branches and debris – yet again, but these weather events do, undoubtedly, create opportunities to re-plant and re-new. Mother Nature reminds us that she plays the greatest role in designing and shaping our landscape.*

*Tropical Storm Irene's visit to St. Croix on Sunday, August 21 brought heavy rains and strong winds. We were very fortunate to have sustained no structural damage to facilities here at SGVBG, even though our offices were without electrical power for 5 days. There was substantial flooding of Mint Gut, reminding us that this was at one time a fairly major stream. We have spent the last few weeks picking up and cleaning up damage from this storm and assessing our new opportunities to change and improve our 16 acres of history and beauty.*

*We are also preparing for our 2nd Annual Fall Heritage Festival on Sunday, October 9. Last year's debut of this event which celebrates the rich history and in particular*

*Continued on Page 2*

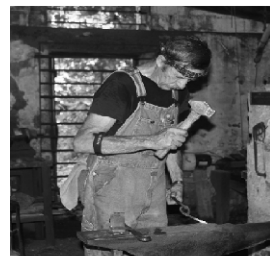
## Fall Heritage Festival

On October 9th St. George Village Botanical Garden will present its 2nd annual Fall Heritage Festival. This event recognizes the history of St. George and pays tribute to those individuals who lived and worked here. The site has been inhabited for over 2,000 years, beginning with Amerindians that made their way here from South America.



A comprehensive research study of Estate St. George by local historian George Tyson was the springboard for the Garden to initiate the Fall Heritage Festival. The study contained compelling mini-biographies of a handful of the enslaved persons at the estate. Dramatizations of the lives of these people will be performed by Per Ankh, a dance troupe that specializes in traditional dance presentations. This riveting performance is just one portion of afternoon packed with food, fun and history.

Just a few of the highlights include:



**Richard Waugh - blacksmith** ♦ **Veronica Gordon - herbalist** ♦ **Judy Bain - basket weaving** ♦ **Bully and the Kafooners - Quelbe music** ♦ **Steven O'Dea - donkey rides** ♦ **Good to Chew, Lavern Bates and Hazel St. Ange- traditional food and local drinks** ♦ **Children's games**



Do not miss this very special event remembering the people who lived and worked here. Admission (\$5 for adults and \$1 for children) includes the opportunity to enjoy the event and explore the beauty of the Garden from noon until 4pm.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Continued From Page 1

*the ethno-botanical history of the property that is known as Estate St. George was very well-received. With almost 2,000 years of well-documented human history on this site, we have much to share and celebrate.*

*It was a search for new opportunities for hunting, fishing, and agriculture that drove the early Amerindians to explore the island chain from their home-base in South America. The lush growth, rich soils, and fresh waters of Mint Gut attracted them to what is now Estate St. George. They settled this site, creating an opportunity for their families and descendents to flourish here for almost 900 years.*

*The lucrative opportunities of the sugar industry drove Europeans to start developing the sugarcane plantation of Estate St. George. For the next 200 years, it was one plant – sugarcane – that would shape the economy, land use, ethnic and social composition, and history of the entire island.*

*The institution of enslaving African workers to support this industry ultimately shaped our modern socio-economic climate in the whole region. To think, that this was all influenced by the plants*

*that were and could be grown here!*

*The Fall Heritage Festival is a perfect way to pay homage to the many resilient people who lived and worked on this land, either by choice or by force. Every one of them brought knowledge, skills, and craftsmanship that allowed themselves and others to survive in the unique environment of Estate St. George. It is an opportunity for all of us to be reminded that in spite of the many challenges of our economy and our weather, our challenges seem diminished when compared to the challenges faced by the early Amerindian explorers, European settlers, and especially the enslaved African population of previous generations.*

*Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the remarkable people and plants that shaped the history of what is now the St. George Village Botanical Garden. 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fall Heritage Festival, Sunday, October 9, 2011.*

Thank you,  
David M. Hamada  
Executive Director



### LEAVE A LEGACY

There are many ways to invest in St George Village Botanical Garden. One of the most important and least utilized is a planned gift. Your attorney can show you how easy it is to ensure that we continue to grow in the future. **Don't forget to remember the Garden!**

**If your family doesn't know  
what to get for your**

**BIRTHDAY**

**How do you expect them to  
know how to handle your**

**ESTATE?**

Did you know that we have a very special place available for a few of our friends? Under the spreading branches (and exploding seed pods) of a magnificent sandbox tree are a limited number of plots for the interment of ashes. A beautiful place to remember a beautiful life. For more information please call or visit the Garden.

## COMINGS AND GOINGS



“The only thing constant in life is change”.

François de la Rochefoucauld

We have had our share of change at the Garden this summer. Staff members have spread their wings and left us for other opportunities. Jenn Travis, our Education Coordinator has expanded her part time position with US Fish and Wildlife to a full time position. Sharon Grimes has completed her one year contract as office assistant and decided that retirement with lots of time for family and travel is more to her liking. Sharon and Jenn will both continue to be sighted at the Garden, though as volunteers rather than staff members.

Sue Bacallao and her sparkling smile can now be found in the tool department at the new Home Depot. Our loss is their gain. All three will be sorely missed and we wish them all the best in their new endeavors.

We are thrilled to welcome long time island resident Ellen Patton as new Museum Store Manager. She brings a wealth of local retail experience and loads of enthusiasm.

*What could be more appealing than getting to work in a lovely shop located on the grounds of the St. George Village Botanical Garden? I really can not think of anything better. So it is with great excitement that I have accepted the position of store manager here at the garden. Some of you may remember me from my many years as the manager of the Tradewinds Shop in Christiansted. I look forward to seeing your familiar faces again. I also look forward to meeting new members, volunteers and visitors. Please come by the store and see the wonderful selection of educational and gift items we have for sale. Over the next several months new items will be arriving just in time for seasonal gift giving.*

*Ellen Patton*



## VALUED VOLUNTEER

This edition of the Conch Call honors ALL our volunteers. As a non profit organization operating in challenging financial times we could not exist without YOU. Your investment of your skill and time is priceless. You are here throughout the year cutting back bush, guiding tourists, nurturing plants in the Nursery, filing/shredding/ typing in the office, cataloguing in the Library, serving on the Board & committees, doing a multitude of jobs before, during and after events.

Look in the mirror, see what we see - a wonderful, loyal, essential part of St. George Village Botanical Garden. **THANK YOU!**



## SOON COME

### GLAMOUR AT THE GARDEN & CHRISTMAS SPOKEN HERE

Save the dates! The winter holiday season will have a grand kick-off. Friday, December 2nd will be Glamour at the Garden, the annual auction and gala. Christmas Spoken Here is scheduled for Sunday, December 4th - vendors are already calling to sign up. Discounted early bird gala tickets will be available in November.

**Got Stuff?** When you are doing your fall cleaning, think of the Garden. We are accepting donations for our famous White Reindeer sale.

**Got Time?** Volunteers are always welcome, particularly during events. Come in or call to discuss what you can do at the Garden!



## BROMELIADS

Among the many special and beautiful areas of SGVBG is the Bromeliad Garden, which is located in the ruins of the Curing House in the Sugar Factory ruins. This collection includes members of the plant family, *Bromeliaceae*. Members of this plant family are found mainly in the Tropical regions of the Americas, and includes the pineapple and Spanish Moss (NOT a moss, and NOT from Spain!).

Bromeliads typically produce a **rosette** of leaves that can form a water-tight receptacle at the bases. Rain water is directed by the rosette arrangement of leaves towards this center receptacle and this is what gives many species the common name of "tank plants." Other Bromeliads that have evolved in more xeric environments are characterized by a grayish coating of scales (called **trichomes**) that help the plant collect moisture

and trap it under the scales, minimizing the loss through evaporation. These bromeliads are often referred to as "air plants," as they seem to take their moisture and nourishment directly from the air.

The **inflorescences**, or blooming structures, of bromeliads are often quite showy and colorful, and the inflorescence can often last for many weeks or months, far outlasting the true flowers. The leaves also are often very colorful and showy and the combination of attractive foliage and long-lasting inflorescences make many bromeliads very popular as ornamental plants.

Many bromeliads are epiphytes, growing on exposed rock surfaces and in the branches of trees. Others, such as the pineapple, are terrestrial and do grow in the ground.

Visitors to SGVBG can enjoy a sample of the tremendous variety of colors and forms in the Bromeliad family by strolling through the ruins of the Curing House in the Sugar Factory. This area includes many of the species native to the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean Basin, including the so-called Spanish Moss (sometimes known as *Old Man's Beard* in the Virgin Islands). Spanish Moss forms colonies of long chains of the individual plants, that have no roots but trap moisture from the air under the scales that give it the characteristic grey color. The Bromeliad Garden also includes a variety of ornamental cultivars that thrive in our local conditions.

Historically, the Curing House was where the **hogsheads**, or barrels, of raw sugar were stored to allow the raw sugar to cure inside the barrels and the excess moisture that drained out was molasses. Today, the Curing House serves as a beautiful setting for SGVBG's bromeliad collection, as well as many ornamental palms and a variety of beautiful orchids. Wooden rum barrels donated by DIAGEO USVI, serve as decorative reminders of the historical use of the Curing House.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MANGO MELEE SPONSORS:

VI Department of Tourism, UVI Cooperative Extension Service,  
VI Department of Agriculture, UVI Agricultural Experiment Station

A Better Copy \* A Friend \* Cruzan Rum  
JKC Communications\* Gary M. Lalor

Caribbean Country 93.5 \* Diamond Industrial Corp \* FirstBank  
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Sandi Savage \* Virginia Stevens

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**NURSERY NOOK**  
 BY LARRY SICKINGER

**We Keep on Growing**

The Nursery volunteers are looking forward to the Fall Heritage Festival on October 9th. We will have a new selection of hibiscus hybrids - *Hibiscus Rosa-Sinensis* for sale at reasonable prices. These hibiscus are currently being cared for by a noted hibiscus expert and will be on sale the day of the Festival. In addition to this we will have a collection of Desert Roses, *Adenium obesum*, in red, white and pink which are being cared for by volunteer Melissa Keyes, an *Adenium* expert. We also plan to have a collection of air plants, *Tillandsia* fresh from Florida for your flora enjoyment.

In keeping with the tradition of the Heritage Festival, please look for the *Agave eggersiana* which is endemic to St. Croix and the *Solanum conocarpum* which is from St. John and is endangered.

On the day of the sale all of our palms will be reduced in price by 25%. We look forward to seeing everyone on this special day.



**BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

RICHARD & PEGGY BODINE  
 MONETTE BOOTH

**LUNCH AT THE GARDEN**



Have you enjoyed a leisurely Lunch at the Garden yet? This collaboration between Chef Anton Doos, his students from St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center and the Garden receives rave reviews. The modest price of the lunch includes a three course lunch, garden admission, and the opportunity to walk off your gourmet lunch.

Members pay only \$20, non-members are \$25. Consider joining and receive the member price and 10% discount at the gift store right away.

The first lunch of the season is scheduled for Friday, September 23rd. Menus are emailed a few days in advance - if you are not getting emails, call or email with your address to this tasty information.

**“The best lunch on the island, and a bargain too !”**

Lunch Attendee

**If you would like to receive the Conch Call ONLY via email, please call 692-2874 or email [infoatthegarden@gmail.com](mailto:infoatthegarden@gmail.com)**



St. George Village  
Botanical Garden

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KINGSHILL, VI  
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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:**

Tuesday & Friday 1pm-4pm

Or by appointment. Call 340-718-4729

**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.sgvbg.org**

### *Upcoming Garden Events*

**SEPTEMBER**

- |    |                     |           |
|----|---------------------|-----------|
| 23 | Lunch at the Garden | 11:30am   |
| 24 | Grow & Learn        | 10am-Noon |

**OCTOBER**

- |    |                        |            |
|----|------------------------|------------|
| 1  | StoryHour              | 10-10:30am |
| 8  | 2nd Saturday           | 9am-noon   |
| 9  | Fall Heritage Festival | Noon-4pm   |
| 12 | StoryHour              | 10-10:30am |
| 14 | Lunch at the Garden    | 11:30am    |
| 23 | Grow & Learn           | 10am-Noon  |
| 26 | Lunch at the Garden    | 11:30am    |

**NOVEMBER**

- |    |                     |            |
|----|---------------------|------------|
| 5  | StoryHour           | 10-10:30am |
| 9  | StoryHour           | 10-10:30am |
| 11 | Lunch at the Garden | 11:30am    |
| 12 | 2nd Saturday        | 9am-Noon   |
| 26 | Grow & Learn        | 10am-noon  |
| 30 | Lunch at the Garden | 11:30am    |