

BOTANICAL GARDEN

4th Quarter 2006

The Conch Call

President's *Message*

Dear Members:

With the Holiday season fast approaching I would like to thank all our employees and volunteers who have worked so hard throughout the year to make the Garden such a beautiful place to visit. We are open seven days a week, and maintaining our 16 acres so that visitors can come and enjoy the Garden is quite a task. Thank you all very much!

The Garden has been blessed over the last 34 years to have so many people who have cared very much about it. In particular, I would like to thank our Nursery volunteers, led by Carol Bamforth. This dedicated group is at the Garden every Tuesday and Friday morning, come rain or shine. They also open the Nursery at our events, selling plants and bringing in funds for the Garden. Throughout the year, they grow plants from seed, nurture young plants and prune and water those that are established. They play an important role in the Garden and we want them to know how much they are appreciated.

For many years our members and others have, through gifts and hard work, kept the Garden going. It's a much different world now and so much more is needed. In my mind, our challenge today is to make the people of the Virgin Islands become more aware of the importance of the Botanical Garden and show more support.

We are taking steps to make this a reality. We are working on our new marketing brochure and related materials which will aid us in presenting the Garden to individuals and corporations who may want to be of help us but don't know what is needed. I would like to thank Terri Wunschel of Grass Hut Design for all her help and expertise in the creation of the new brochure.

I wish all of our members and the people of the Virgin Islands a warm and happy Holiday season.

Sincerely, Gary M. Bourdon

Trio of events set for December weekend

The Christmas Spoken Here weekend of events promises to be an exciting three days at St. George Village Botanical Garden.

The Christmas Gala at the Garden, with its "The Magic of Christmas" theme, will kick off our big fundraiser at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, December 8. Radio personality Roger W. Morgan will auction off 10 live decorated Christmas trees as well as another very special donation from Ed and Connie Lemco: a trip by air for four to a nearby island of the highest bidder's choice. In addition to the Artistree, a perennial favorite in the live auction, local artists are creating a Jean Merwin Memorial Tree, decorated with ceramic ornaments she created many years ago. At least two of the ornaments are originals, signed by the artist in 1983. The Scale House and Sugar Mill replicas were donated by Gladys Orr from her collection; anyone who would like to add another original to this tree is asked to call the office at 692-2874. We'd be thrilled!



These two original signed ornaments will be on the Jean Merwin Memorial Tree that will be auctioned off at the Christmas Gala on 12/8.

An exciting array of items will be available for the Silent Auction, which will close just before dinner. David Trask of GSBB Catering will provide the hors d'oeuvres and sit-down dinner; Patrick Baron and Judi Fricks will entertain. Tickets are \$150; there is limited seating, so call in your reservations soon.

On Saturday, December 9, our new Museum Store at the Bodine Visitors' Center will offer a very special "Sip And Shop" day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. New merchandise, ordered specially

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The Garden makes Holiday shopping a breeze

Are you at a loss as to what to give a friend or relative for Christmas? We have two suggestions for you:

1. Buy your friend a Gift Membership. Just call us or drop us a note with the level of membership you want to give, along with their names, mailing address and phone number and we will send them their cards in the mail. This is a wonderful way to encourage your friends to support your Garden. For details of the membership levels, call the Garden at 692-2874 or visit our Web site at sgvbg.org.

2. Buy your friend one of our Gift Certificates. These can be used in the Museum Store (open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and during special events) or in the Nursery (open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 to 11 a.m. and during special events). Call the office at 692-2874 to see how you can purchase one of these certificates!



Spotlight

DENMARK

Denmark's parks & gardens are calling!

I love Denmark in the springtime! Or was it Paris? At any rate, late May in Denmark is when the floral beauty of that Scandinavian country is bursting out all over, in a variety of colors and shapes that are never seen in the tropics. In May, wherever you find yourself in that country with so many ties to our island, past and present, there is joy in the air—the long, dark winter is over, the days are long and warmer, occasionally with a little nip in the air.

A few months ago, when fellow board member Peggy Bodine suggested I work up a botanical tour of Denmark, I realized what a perfect idea it was, especially since it was to benefit St. George Village Botanical Garden. Given a limit of duration, I realized that the tour would best be centered in one location rather than moving from place to place. And, since distances are so short in that little country of 16,639 square miles—about the size of Massachusetts and Connecticut put together—you can reach everything in Denmark within one day from Copenhagen, its capital.

Working with Barbara Blank and Mary Simpson at Southerland Tours, we have received professional guidance and the opportunity to avail ourselves of their long background in travel arrangements. The hotel that we have chosen, Hotel Imperial, has a four-star rating, and was just renovated throughout; it is ideally located in the center of the city, just steps from the world-renowned Tivoli Garden. You can visit the website: www.imperialhotel.dk

There is so much to see and do in that city where I was born, and I love showing it to anyone who is interested. Its numerous spectacular parks and botanical gardens make Copenhagen perfect for exploration in that field alone, and the proximity of castles with beautiful parks and unique art museums with sculpture gardens made it very easy to fill a program of 10 full days in Denmark (with a day at each end for travel) with activities of memorable enjoyment and education about a culture that has a long and interesting history.

Even if botany is not your primary interest, there are numerous locations included in our tour that appeal to any visitor, and we do offer shopping opportunities and leisure time to enable participants to pursue their own exploration. Two-and-a-half days are set aside for bus excursions to exciting locations in the Danish countryside.

As your guide, I will give you a chance to meet many of my friends in Denmark,

who will lend their expertise to the tour and enhance the personal experience for you. Many of them love our island and visit often. We will share evening get-togethers and be shown around sites that they know well. The tour will be limited to 30 persons; all are expected to be able to get around without assistance.

The departure date is May 17, and return set for May 28, 2007. May is a perfect month to see springtime somewhere other than in the evergreen tropics. Interested in hearing more? Contact Lesley at the Garden office at 692-2874 or garden2@viaccess.net.

Don't delay! We are planning a get-together for prospective travelers for a Danish-style lunch at the Garden—open-face sandwiches, accompanied by a little aquavit to put you in the right mood for imaginary travel!

— Nina York



At the Copenhagen waterfront, the Little Mermaid, from the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, is the first attraction on the Danish tour schedule in May.

NEEDED: Helping Hands

SGVBG is looking for more volunteers to help maintain St. Croix's most beautiful garden. We are seeking individuals who can offer their talents to help with routine maintenance of our historic buildings and structures as well as the tropical plant collections. We welcome people who like to work on their own as well as those who prefer to be part of a group. Anyone with horticultural, carpentry, painting or general

maintenance experience who is willing to help SGVBG preserve the botanical heritage of our islands, please call David or Lesley at 692-2874.

We also always need help with planning and putting on our fund-raising events.



DECEMBER EVENTS (continued)

for the Holidays, will be available at attractive prices. While browsing in the air-conditioned comfort of the spacious new store, there will be goodies to eat and wine to sip. Come and meet our store staff, Deborah Kramar, Lynn Fahy and Fran Gomez, and see what they have done to transform the store from what was a big empty space a year ago to a really first-class shop. Shop on Saturday and avoid the crowds on Sunday!

On Sunday, December 10, Christmas Spoken Here will bring the Garden alive with activities for all the family. Dozens of food and craft vendors will be on hand; choirs will sing on the hour every hour from noon to 4 p.m. in the Great Hall, with the festively decorated trees still in place. Christmas crafts for children will be offered in the Pavilion at the Bodine Visitors' Center, with Santa close at hand to take requests. The events begins at 11 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. Cost is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children under 12.

For more details, call 692-2874.

Mysteries of 'bush medicine' explained

On November 8, Aziyza Shabazz gave a presentation to a small but enthusiastic group who came to the Grow and Learn workshop to learn more about the Use of Bush as Medicine. Shabazz was generous in sharing her extensive knowledge of - "bush" - yet kept it simple and easy for the novices to understand.

"Start slow and keep to one or two plants," Shabazz suggested. "Otherwise you will just get overwhelmed and you won't remember anything."

She talked about the many ways of using bush, whether as a tea or a poultice or a bath, before taking the group to the nearby Medicinal Herb Garden and Kitchen Garden for a hands-on presentation.

Shabazz will be asked to come back to give another Grow and Learn talk during the season, so more people can be enlightened on this fascinating subject.



Aziyza Shabazz, second from right, explains to an attentive group on November 8 the attributes of some local "bush" that is being cultivated in SGVBG's Kitchen Garden.

'Grow and Learn' needs your help

We are looking for speakers for future "Grow and Learn" sessions. The workshops are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 3 to 5 p.m. If you know someone who you think might be a good presenter, please contact Joanne White at jojoshumate@hotmail.com, or call Lesley in the office at 692-2874.

Some of the future topics we are looking at include:

- Natural ways to control garden pests
- Impressionist art and botanics
- Tour stories (maybe someone has a video or DVD of a recent trip that he or she would like to share with some of our members)

We will also be glad to hear of any suggestions for future "Grow and Learn" sessions. Thanks again for all your support!

*Wishing you a
happy & healthy
holiday season!*

-The Garden Staff



Garden Club formed

On September 27, 2006, the new Garden Club of St. Croix was launched at a meeting held in the Pavilion at the Bodine Visitors' Center. The October meeting included a very informative talk by Rudy O'Reilly about using native plants in the home garden. In November the club held a garden tour and planting demonstration at Birds of Paradise St. Croix, near Christiansted.

The club is sponsoring an intensive Master Gardener training program in March 2007 and is also planning a trip to Puerto Rico's Aibonito Flower Festival in July. For information, please contact the club's co-founders, Margarita Hutchison at 773-1364 or Larry Sickinger at 773-1773.



This massive crane from Bates Trucking lifted the new skylight into place atop the Great Hall on October 4. The skylight was manufactured by Rooftops of St. Croix and took several days to install. The Great Hall construction was completed in 1976 and in recent months the original skylight had begun to deteriorate. The new skylight, which includes louvered vents on all four sides to allow warm air to escape, was paid for in part by generous donations from our membership.

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Upcoming Events

CHRISTMAS GALA AT THE GARDEN "The Magic of Christmas"

Friday, December 8, 6:30 to 10 pm

SIP & SHOP AT THE MUSEUM STORE

Saturday, December 9, 10 am to 4 pm

CHRISTMAS SPOKEN HERE

Sunday, December 10, 11 am to 5 pm

GROW AND LEARN

Wednesday, December 13, 3 to 5 pm

Wednesday, January 10, 3 to 5 pm

A BOTANICAL & HISTORICAL TOUR

Courtyards & Gardens of Christiansted

Saturday, January 13, 10 am to 2:30 pm

Saturday, January 27, 10 am to 2:30 pm

The Conch Call Newsletter

A publication of the St. George Village Botanical Garden. SGVBG is a non-profit membership organization.

We welcome articles, photos, letters, and content suggestions, and reserve the right to edit.

Submit to: SGVBG, 127 Estate St. George, Frederiksted, VI 00840, email to garden2@viaccess.net or fax 340-692-6154

Visit us at www.sgvb.org or
call 340-692-2874

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Garden
Hours
OPEN DAILY 9AM-5PM

New Members

* denotes renewal member

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BENEFACTOR

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Freeman*

FAMILY/DUAL

Clayton & Barbie Kohl
John & Vickie Wessel*

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