



# Bermuda Botanical Society

P. O. Box HM 834, Hamilton HM CX, Bermuda  
Tel: (441) 236-5291 • Fax (441) 236-8970 • Email: bdabotanical@logic.bm

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2011

### From the President's Patch

#### September 4<sup>th</sup> 2011

As summer draws to a close the fall howls around the corner bringing longer nights and cooler temperatures.

The cherries are all but finished and now dragon fruit are beginning to ripen on the tendrils.

One thing gives way to another in this beautiful bouquet of life.

It is with sorrow that I received the resignation of one of our dedicated volunteers Ms. Madeline Ray.

She has been a real sunbeam in our Visitor's Centre, the Café and Retail Store.

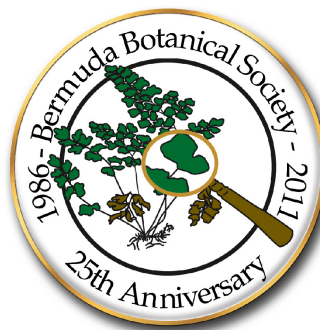
Madeline, thank you very much for all of your years of volunteer service to the Bermuda Botanical Society and friends of the gardens, we appreciate you.

You will be missed...pop by and see us sometime.

At the AGM in June a proposal was made that the Bermuda Botanical Society convene a Special General Meeting to consider changing the Constitution to eliminate, as its objective, the support of the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum and to invite to the Special General Meeting, key government leaders, such as the Ministers of Tourism, Conservation Services, Environment, and such key ministers as the Executive should determine. This SGM has now been scheduled for October 6, at 6:30 pm in the Visitors' Centre.

It is my hope to have input from as many members as possible as we rewrite the Bermuda Botanical Society Constitution and determine how the Society should proceed as we head on into the next 25 years of service.

In the interim we have had special BBS pins made to celebrate the Society's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There is one for every member, and one for a family membership – inquire at the Visitors' Centre to receive yours.



Yours in Botanicals,

*Paul*

Paul L.S. Harney  
President 2011



## LOOKING BACK

The original heading for this essay was “Looking Up”, for that’s what it was about, but much time has passed. However, the subject is still looking up, or rather looking around. It was written in the last week of Spring, and what an unusual Spring it was here in Bermuda! After all the draught, just before the summer, things started to come back to normal again.

I was looking up from under a Poinciana tree. There were patches of green against the sky, and I wrote: by the time you read this the canopy will be almost completely closed, and whether the trees are in bloom can hardly be observed from below. Actually the flowers are really not meant for us ground dwellers, but for those critters that fly overhead. Just imagine the Poinciana trees in their natural habitat, a dense forest. The best place for the flowers must be on the top of the tree. Another example would be the African Tulip tree.

Looking up, in town: The last week of spring was also the time when some of the mahogany trees were getting their new leaves. I always look out for that, for they are so pretty then. For just a few days the trees are clad in fresh, tender leaves that have the softest tones of pinkish brown and green. You have to be there at the right time: this is an *ephemeral phaenomenon* ( I love my Greek!)

Looking around in the field:

The delicate Knotted Hedge Parsley (*Torilis nodosa*) along the roadside or along arable fields, with the lovely white umbrels, has changed completely. The plants are now an unattractive brown and in the place of the flowers there are now hundreds of tiny brown burrs, that stick to your clothes, your dog and even your shoelaces.

The more you look, the more you see!

**GEORGE PETERICH**

\*\*\*\*\*

## BBS PLANT SALE

**Saturday 29 October 2011**

**8.30 am (members), 9.00 (non-members), closing 12 noon**

**J. J. Outerbridge Building, Botanical Gardens**

**Yes, we ARE holding our annual Plant Sale this year, it’s now just eight weeks away.**

Once again we ask members to contribute by providing plants, setting-up

and stewarding of the sale and, last but not least, just coming and buying.

If you have any unusual or interesting plants now is the time to be preparing

them in order to have them in optimal condition by the time of sale.

We like to have our plants as close to nursery-quality as possible. Obviously, nurseries can bring their plants out for sale only when looking their best, an option we don't have, since ours is a one-day event. **But presentation is still important!**

Plants should to be actively growing with a root system but not pot-bound.

It is no good popping a cutting or seedling into a pot the week of the sale! The size of pot should be in proportion to the size of plant.

We ask that plants be labelled if possible. Flowering plants like Hibiscus, Roses, and Frangipani do not sell unless the flower colour is known. Likewise, unidentified palm seedlings

are not sought after. For some reason, cacti and succulents do not sell well unless exceptional in variety or quality.

**Drop off times for plant donations will be 9.00 am to 12 noon on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 October. Or call me at the telephone number below to make other arrangements.**



Donations of ceramic or terra cotta containers, gardening books, tools etc. are also welcomed.

Is there an able-bodied member willing to help with moving benches and tables on the Thursday morning?

**NIGEL CHUDLEIGH**  
e-mail : [nchudlei@ibl.bm](mailto:nchudlei@ibl.bm)  
Tel. : 293-0128

\*\*\*\*\*

## **LUCILLE SOUTHERN**

BBS mourns the passing, earlier this year, of Lucille Southern, in her 91<sup>st</sup> year. Lucille volunteered at the Visitors' Centre from the nineties until 2002. She was excellent at the cash register, remembers former VC Manager Lyn Vaughan, and would often talk about her granddaughters Kelly and Julie. She was also passionate about playing bridge.

We offer our condolences to her family and friends.



## CORN, THE THREE SISTERS AND MAIZE MAZES



**The Three Sisters growing in Jamestown**  
**Photo: Diana Chudleigh**



**Maize Maze at RHS Gardens, Wisley**

Maize, *Zea Mays*, also known as Corn or Sweet Corn, is the world's third most widely grown food staple, after rice and wheat. It was first domesticated in Central America between 3,000 to 10,000 years ago. Maize did not occur outside of the Americas before the time of Columbus but is now grown worldwide, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where it has largely replaced sorghum as the staple food crop.

Maize is thought to be descended from one or more of four species of tiosinte still to be found in parts of Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. They belong to the grass family, *Zea* genus, but maize and tiosinte are the only known members of that family that have separate male and female flowers on the same plant. Maize and tiosinte differ in that maize depends upon human intervention for the seed to be harvested and sown, since the kernels do not shed themselves from the cob. (Does that make maize the world's least invasive plant?) On the other hand, tiosinte seed does self-shed and thus self-propagate.

Sugar-rich varieties of maize, called Sweet Corn, are usually grown for human consumption, while Field Corn varieties are used for animal feed, biofuel (ethanol) and in industry.

Even before the Europeans had arrived in the New World, the native Americans had developed many

different cultivars of maize for different purposes, climates and localities.

The Powhatan Indians of the Chesapeake Bay area engaged in a sustainable cultural practise of which today's Permaculture proponents would be proud. They would make a hillock of soil and then hollow out the peak, throw in a fish head or other animal residue (organic fertilizer), then plant a mix of maize, climbing beans and squash seeds - "***The Three Sisters***" - ***see picture previous page.*** The maize stalks provided support for the beans while all three vegetables benefited from the nitrogen-fixing ability of the beans. The contribution of the squash was to shade the surrounding soil and inhibit weed growth. Irrigation was by filling the hollow with water, thus efficiently applying the water to the root zone only.

Since maize grows tall and thin, it lends itself to creating, in only a couple of months, entertaining mazes. A few years ago I visited one such at the marvellous Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Wisley in England - ***see picture on previous page.*** If you have opted to receive your Newsletter by email, and therefore in colour, you may spot the red and white bi-coloured flowers of the runner beans,

co-planted with the maize, following the practice pioneered by the native Americans.

## **NIGEL CHUDLEIGH**

[nchudlei@ibl.bm](mailto:nchudlei@ibl.bm)

**(Ed.:** In September 1945 my family and I, refugees from Soviet occupation, were sent to a Displaced Persons' camp in Germany. Food at that time was very hard to come by, and the supplies of wheat and rye bread had run out. For the following three years we were supplied with plentiful supplies of maize bread, which was dry and tasted stale and would stick in our throats. Imagine my surprise to find that cornbread is a greatly appreciated side dish in the Western world!)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **LARYX DECIDUA 'PENDULA'**

While in Estonia last month, at the Pirita Nunnery, I was drawn to a conservation project involving a cultivar which was labelled *Laryx decidua 'pendula'*. What is astonishing about the large specimen is that the lower, drooping branches have needles and cones, but the high branches which form the canopy have maple-like leaves. My cousin told me that the needles are an early form of the leaves, and are deciduous, dropping in the winter, while the 'cones' are the flowers of the tree. The Internet shows only trees with the drooping conifer-like branches. Does anyone know anything about this tree?







Helle Patterson [helle@northrock.bm](mailto:helle@northrock.bm)

\*\*\*\*\*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Horticultural Trade Association (UK) and Reading University compiled a database of scientific evidence on the positive effects of plants. In a publication of the Plant For Life Campaign, research results show:

Gardening for one to two hours a day can reduce heart disease.

Greener views out of windows can help increase scores in tests of concentration, impulse inhibition and delayed gratification - which are predictors of delinquency, drug abuse and poor school grades.

Apartment buildings with high levels of greenery have 52% fewer crimes, 48% fewer property crimes and 56% fewer violent crimes. Excerpted from Horticulture Week, 2004.

Honeybees may provide plants with a protective buzz.

Pest caterpillars eat less when pollinators zoom by. The buzz, buzz of foraging honeybees zipping overhead can keep caterpillars below from getting enough peace and quiet for a full meal. In tests, bee flight-path distractions took such a toll on dining that caterpillars ate only about a third of the leaf area they consume in a bee-free zone. Earlier research showed that pests eating at plants make the plants less attractive to pollinators, but "this new study turns that idea on its head," says researching Jeff Conner. The

pollinators are making plants less attractive to pests.

Excerpted from Science News 2009.

Air pollution "silences" fragrant plants.

A study by the University of Virginia has shown that common pollutants from power plants and cars rapidly bind with flower scent molecules. Once these molecules are bound together, the flower aroma is diminished or destroyed. The dire conclusion of the study: Pollution has made it increasingly difficult for flowers to lure their pollinators, which may lead to decrease pollination rates. Landscape fragmentation may aggravate the situation further for flowering plants and their pollinators, which rely on scent to locate isolated flower patches beyond their line of sight. The insects may end up spending more time searching for pollen sources and less time foraging. Less time foraging means less pollen is moved and fewer flowers (and fruit) develop, a losing proposition all around.

## LISA GREENE

*(Lisa's beautiful note cards featuring local flowers are available from the Visitors' Centre Gift Shop and from the BAMZ Gift Shop.)*



## NEED SOMEWHERE TO HOST YOUR NEXT EVENT??

Look no further....

The Visitors' Centre still has dates available for rent in 2011  
For more information or to book our space please contact  
[botanicalrentals@gmail.com](mailto:botanicalrentals@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thurs., Oct. 6	6:30 pm	<b>SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING</b> <i>(This meeting replaces the one originally scheduled for Sept. 15)</i> To determine the future of the BBS. Visitors' Centre, Botanical Gardens
Sat., Oct. 29	8:30 am	<b>PLANT SALE (members)</b>
	9:00 am	<b>PLANT SALE (general public)</b>
Thurs. Nov. 24	7-10 pm	<b>President's Annual Thanksgiving Dinner \$20.00</b> Visitors' Centre.
Sat., Dec. 10	4-6 pm	<b>Annual Christmas Party for Members &amp; Volunteers</b>