



# Bermuda Botanical Society

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## NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2011

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the Special General Meeting on 6 October we adopted our **new constitution** and elected the **Executive Committee** for the current year. For those members not on email, a copy of the new constitution is attached to this newsletter.

Subsequent to the SGM we learned that last year's secretary, Marijke Peterich, had indicated a willingness to rejoin us, which offer we were most happy to accept.

At the first meeting of the **Executive Committee** we elected officers and assigned responsibilities, which are as follows:

Nigel Chudleigh, President, Plant Sale, Scholarships  
Helle Patterson, Vice-President, Newsletter  
Marijke Peterich, Secretary  
Samantha Bromfield, Treasurer, Membership  
Peter Lee, Events, Plant Sale, Scholarships  
Nigel Turini, Events  
George Peterich

Past-President Paul Harney has agreed to manage our website, [www.bermudabotanical.com](http://www.bermudabotanical.com), and we look forward to it being updated and enhanced.

On 15 October **Keren Lomas** very kindly opened her unique garden to members and even invited us to take cuttings and collect seeds! **Thank you Keren!**

We were then immediately into our annual **plant sale**, the major event of our year. *See the separate report in this newsletter.*

As those on our email list already know, we reluctantly decided to **cancel the Thanksgiving Dinner**, a decision not taken lightly. This event was first held last year on the initiative of past-president Paul Harney to celebrate our 25th. anniversary. With our annual **Volunteer appreciation Christmas party** due to take place on Saturday 10 December, we didn't think it makes sense to have two social events so close together. We also felt it would put too much demand on our limited volunteer and other resources.

Regarding the **Volunteer Christmas party**, I should emphasize that this is for ALL members, not just our valued volunteers. Please come to appreciate our volunteers and enjoy some good cheer!

***Nigel Chudleigh***  
President, 2011 / 2012



View of Castle Harbour from Keren's garden  
Photo: Nigel Chudleigh

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Happy November everyone! Seems like “welcome to the winter” would be a good phrase as I write this, although we still have a number of weeks to go!

I am pleased to say that I have been appointed by the Executive to continue as Treasurer for another term. Now that the Café and Gift Shop will close, the position will almost disappear, but I will take on the membership to keep me busy!

At the Special General Meeting I presented the August 2011 Financial Statements, which were accepted by everyone present. Unfortunately we still made a loss for the year of \$15k, however this was a huge improvement

on 2010. As I explained at the SGM, the main problem is that our sales in the Café and Gift Shop are not covering our overheads. We did manage to reduce costs, mainly due to the reduction of staff numbers and reduced opening hours.

We will continue our blowout sale in the Gift Shop until our last day of opening, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Please stop by to pick up some great Christmas bargains!

In the meantime, wishing you all a happy thanksgiving.

*Samantha Bromfield*

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## NATURE INSPIRED DESIGN

### Excerpted from Conservation, Fall 2011:

“A gentle breeze. Twirling seed is a prototype for efficient ceiling fan.

The seedpod of a sycamore maple tree rotates on its own as it falls, thanks to the balance between the weight of the seed and the length of its wing. The shape of the seedpod has inspired a quieter, more efficient fan. A single, aerofoil-shaped blade can match the airflow of conventional flat-bladed fans while operating at a lower speed. The bio-inspired fan reduces turbulence, wind noise and energy use.”

<http://www.sycamorefan.com>

### Excerpted from BBC Wildlife magazine, Aug. 2011:

“Broad Bean [aka Fava Bean], Red-blooded roots.

Evolution, the great improviser, reuses ancient molecules in new ways as circumstances demand. Plant roots might be the last place you’d expect to find blood pigments, but if you cut open a bacterial root nodule you’ll find a bright red stain that looks suspiciously like blood. This is leghaemoglobin – the vegetable equivalent of the haemoglobin pigment in our red blood cells that transports life-supporting oxygen. But, in bean root nodules, oxygen acts like a poison. It inhibits bacterial nitrogen-fixing enzymes – the plant’s built-in fertilizer factory that converts atmospheric nitrogen into nitrates used for growth. The solution? Leghaemoglobin locks the oxygen away where it can do no harm.”

### Newsflash! (or at least it was for me)

The flowers of snowberry (*Chiococca bermudana*) are fragrant! Diana Chudleigh, who has a lot of snowberry in her garden, pointed out, to a group of us debating the positive aspects of snowberry, that fragrance should be added to the list.

Snowberry is a low-maintenance, ornamental shrub, good for an informal garden because it tolerates everything from full sun to shade and can be planted under trees – as long as the shade isn’t too deep. It can be planted at the edge of a property or in a rock garden. A bonus is that it increases the garden’s biodiversity by attracting catbirds, cardinals and vireos who eat its pretty, white fruit.



Photo: Helle Patterson

Snowberry is flowering now, so get out and experience the fragrance for yourself.

*Lisa Greene*

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## **GROWING POTATOES IN CONTAINERS**



Home gardeners are often advised against growing potatoes, *Solanum Tuberosum*, on the grounds that they take a lot of space and one can buy them cheaply in supermarkets. Personally, I think harvesting one's own potatoes is one of the great joys of home vegetable growing. Freshly dug potatoes are far superior to the store-bought imported variety. And they don't have to take a lot of space since they can be grown very well in containers. Any sunny space sufficient to place the container would suffice.

All the garden centers in the UK are stocking potato grow bags as more home growers realize they can grow 'super spuds' in very little space. But one can also use any large plant pot of, say, 5 gallon capacity or even a heavy duty 30-gallon trash bag. Here's how you do it:

First you need some old potatoes that have been kept in storage too long and are sprouting. Failing that, you'll have to 'chit' some fresh ones. Chitting is the process of placing the tubers in an old egg carton somewhere warm and bright, like a window sill, until the eyes start to sprout. You can plant unchitted potatoes but they may take a while to sprout. Commercial growers always use "seed" potatoes, which are certified disease-free, but this is an unnecessary expense if the growing compost is not to be used again for potatoes.

Second, locate where the container is to be placed. It must be sunny and preferably sheltered, though one can always move or protect the container if a storm threatens. Next, ensure the bag has adequate drainage holes and fill

the bag or container about one third full with good potting compost. Place two or three tubers, depending on size, evenly spaced on the mix with the eyes facing up. Large tubers may be cut in two but each piece should have at least two eyes. Cover with a couple of inches of the compost. If using a bag, roll the sides down to just above soil level. Water well. The compost needs to be kept moist but not soggy throughout the growing period.

Third, once there is 6 to 8 inches of top growth, start adding more compost, burying all but the top 3 to 4 inches of foliage as you go. If you are using a bag, unroll the sides as you go upwards.

Finally, once the foliage starts to die back, wait a couple of weeks and then harvest and enjoy! Our potato season runs from October to May.

This is very similar to the method of growing tomatoes which I described in an earlier newsletter.

Of course, potatoes and tomatoes are both in the solanum or nightshade family, so may be expected to have similar growth habits. This is also similar to the practice of earthing up used when potatoes are field grown.

A high potassium, low nitrogen liquid feed during active growth may be beneficial.

***Nigel Chudleigh***

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*For those of you who don't receive our news via email, here is an update on the Larix decidua "pendula" I wrote about in the last newsletter: I contacted the Estonian Dept. of Agriculture and received the following reply:*

"Thank you very much for the letter. I know this tree very long time. Yes it is a Larix decidua 'Pendula'. It had two branches but one of them has been sawn. I think the maple has grown from the seeds in suitable hole in the larchtree. But we will check it.

Best wishes, Heldur Sander

Researcher of trees, urban forestry etc." I am awaiting further details as to where the roots of the maple are hidden.

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# 2011 PLANT SALE

## HELD SATURDAY 29 OCTOBER 2011



Photo: Nigel Chudleigh

I am pleased to report that we equalled last year's net receipts of close to \$6,000, which funds our scholarships. This result was quite gratifying considering the present depressed economy and that it rained during the last hour or so of the sale.

It is always pleasing how many of our members pitch in, whether it be as helpers with setting up and breaking down, as contributors of plants, or as stewards on the day who handle the cash, give expert advice to shoppers and generally make themselves useful. ***Thank you all!***

Our grateful thanks to the following organisations and non-member individuals who helped us in so many ways:

The Parks Department,  
Georgette Caines, Exhibition planner, Botanical Gardens  
Neville Richardson, Curator, Botanical Gardens

Keith Freeman, Manager, Tulo Valley nursery  
Stuart Smith and Joe Pereira, Save Open Spaces  
Robert and Gillian Hollis, Hollis, Seedlings  
Julie Greaves, Aberfeldy Nurseries  
Leandro Stefanich )  
Kayuntae Ming ) volunteers  
Na'zyia Saunders )

I am often asked : "What happens to all the unsold plants?" The answer is that many go back to their providers; a lot are passed on to other charitable plant sales - the National Trust, SPCA, Christ Church, Warwick; some I take home to grow on for next year, or for other plant sales, and just a few plants end up as compost with the potting mix and pots recycled!

***Nigel Chudleigh,***  
***Plant sale organiser***



Plant sales volunteers Leandro Stefanich, Sam Bromfield, Peter Lee and Helle Patterson  
Photo: Lisa Greene

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## **NIGHT-BLOOMING CEREUS**

In a past issue of this newsletter I recounted finding my very first fruit of the Night-blooming Cereus (*Hylocereus undatus*). Those who have not yet seen one should hurry to Palm Grove, where there are several specimens to be seen, including the one pictured here:



*Helle Patterson*

*For the convenience of those who have not yet renewed their membership for 2011-2012, a renewal form is included. If you have already renewed, or are a Life Member, please ignore the following page:*

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Our Goals: To encourage & support the botanical sciences within the community & promote further development of the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum.

Your membership contribution is important to us. It helps the Society to further our goals.

We support the following programmes:

- **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** To assist Bermuda's horticultural students.
- **LECTURES, WORKSHOPS & TOURS** A winter/spring programme on botanical themes to educate and inform our members and guests.

As a member of the Society, you will receive the following benefits:

- **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER** with news of the Society and advance notice of events.
- **DISCOUNT** on lectures and tours.
- **MEMBERS' DISCOUNT** at Brighton Nursery (membership card required).

PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT & RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY COMPLETING THE FORM BELOW. THANK YOU!

### 1) PERSONAL DETAILS

*New Member:*

*Renewal:*

Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: (required only for new members or change of address) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to receive your newsletter by e-mail? YES NO

### 2) FEES & DONATIONS (Please tick relevant choice)

\$5 SENIOR

\$500 LIFE MEMBERSHIP

\$5 JUNIOR

\$1,000 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

\$10 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

PERSONAL DONATION AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$20 FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 3) PAYMENT METHOD (Please tick one box & complete payment details if paying by card)

CASH ENCLOSED

CHEQUE ENCLOSED (Please make payable to the Bermuda Botanical Society)

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD (Visa/MasterCard only)

NAME ON CARD: \_\_\_\_\_ CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Please call the Visitors' Centre on 236-5291 or email botanicalmembership@gmail.com

FOR OUR RECORDS:

Payment Rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_ (register button #7) Date card issued \_\_\_\_\_ Entered in D/B \_\_\_\_\_

For Credit/Debit payment print receipt & send to member with membership card.

## Calendar of Events

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|----------------|--------|---|
| Sat. Dec. 10   | 4-6 pm | Volunteers' Christmas Party.<br>All Society members welcome!<br>Visitors' Centre, Bot. Gdns.  |
| Thurs. Feb. 23 | 6 pm   | Plants of the Eastern Caribbean—slide show by Diana Chudleigh<br>Visitors' Centre, Bot. Gdns. |