

## FLOWERING VINES OF THE BOTANIC PARK

If you have visited the Botanic Park in the past year you will have noticed metal arches that have been erected along the pathways in the Floral Colour Garden. These arches are providing a perfect way for the Park to showcase many of the beautiful vines that we can grow. Gardeners often shy away from vines because in the

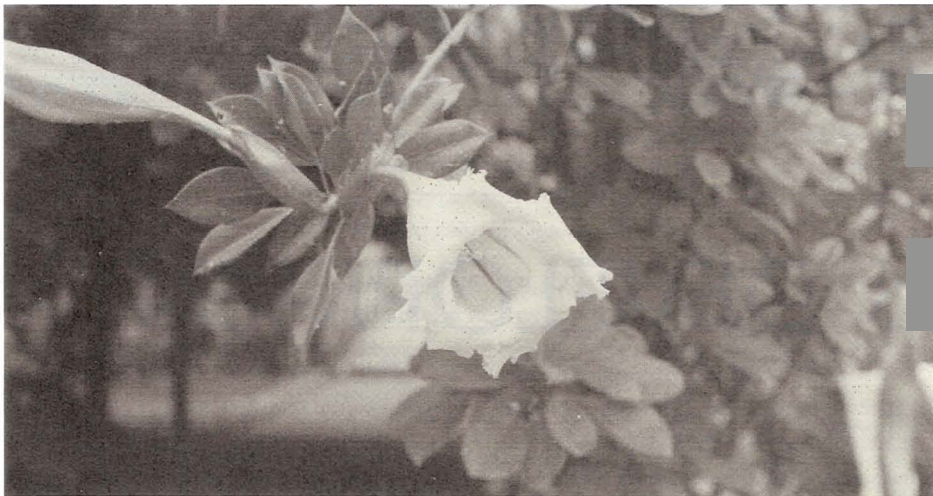
*Aristolochia grandiflora* – Known as Birthwort, Calico Flower or Dutchman's Pipe Vine, this unusual vine never fails to elicit comments from the Park's visitors. Strategically placed on the pergola over the exit door of the Visitors' Centre, the bizarre flowers are 6 inches by six inches with the lips being a mottled deep maroon over

Mexican Flame Vine climbs rapidly and covers itself with 1 ½ inch orange daisy shaped flowers. Blooming most of the year, the greatest profusion of flowers occur in late winter through early summer. This vine which is native to Colombia can be found on an arch in the Orange Garden.

*Solandra grandiflora* – Chalice Vine. A member of the Potato family and native to the West Indies, the Chalice Vine produces enormous tubular yellow flowers, tinged with purplish lines inside, that are sweetly fragrant. Able to climb brick and stone walls due to specialized aerial roots that adhere to surfaces, this vine can grow high and large. The incredibly showy flowers occur during the winter season and the Park's specimen is growing on an arch in the Yellow Garden. The Park has recently acquired a similar variegated Chalice Vine, *Solandra maxima* 'Variegata' which will be a beautiful addition to the gardens.

*Stephanotis floribunda* – Madagascar-Jasmine. Often found in bridal bouquets, *Stephanotis* is a slow growing vine native to Madagascar. Rarely growing more than fifteen feet in height, *Stephanotis* has glossy thick green leaves and produces very fragrant pure white flowers. The large cucumber-like fruit can take up to two years to ripen though they are not edible. The flowering period for this lovely vine is usually March and April and again in September and October though scattered blooms can occur anytime of the year.

*Thunbergia grandiflora* – Sky Flower. Few vines evoke more comments and admiration among the Park's visitors than the Sky Flower does when in full bloom. A huge and rampant grower from India, the Sky Flower produces masses of sky blue flowers in drooping clusters of eight to ten. The blooming season is usually March to November and requires a large structure to support its massive growth. This vine is growing on the Blue Pergola in the Blue Garden.



*The large showy flowers of the Chalice Vine, Solandra grandiflora, never fail to elicit comments from visitors to the Yellow Garden.*

wrong spot they can become a rampant weedy nuisance. A vine in the wrong location can smother trees and shrubs, get entangled in electrical wires and damage structures; however, properly placed, a vine can add great beauty and interest to the landscape.

Some of the beautiful vines now cultivated at the Botanic Park include:

*Saritaea magnifica* – This vigorous vine can be found growing on the pergola at the Park's Ticket Booth. Native to Colombia, this vine has attractive leathery, shiny leaves. The large showy flowers are mauve in colour though sometimes the colour varies to a rich reddish purple, and the flowers appear in profusion two to four times per year. *Saritaea* requires a strong support as the trunk and branches become woody with age.

a cream base. The flowers produce a faint malodorous scent to attract the flies that pollinate it. Unlike bee pollinated flowers that give pollen and nectar in return for the bee's labours, the *Aristolochia* gives the fly nothing in return.

*Merremia tuberosa* – Wood Rose. Newly planted on a lattice framework near the Visitors' Centre, this very fast growing vine produces attractive yellow Morning Glory type flowers followed by fruits that look like roses made from wood. These attractive fruits are often used in flower arrangements. Wood Rose is native to Mexico and Central America.

*Pseudogynoxys chenopodioides* – Mexican Flame Vine. When thinking of members of the daisy family, one usually does not think of vines; however, there are members of this large family that climb. The

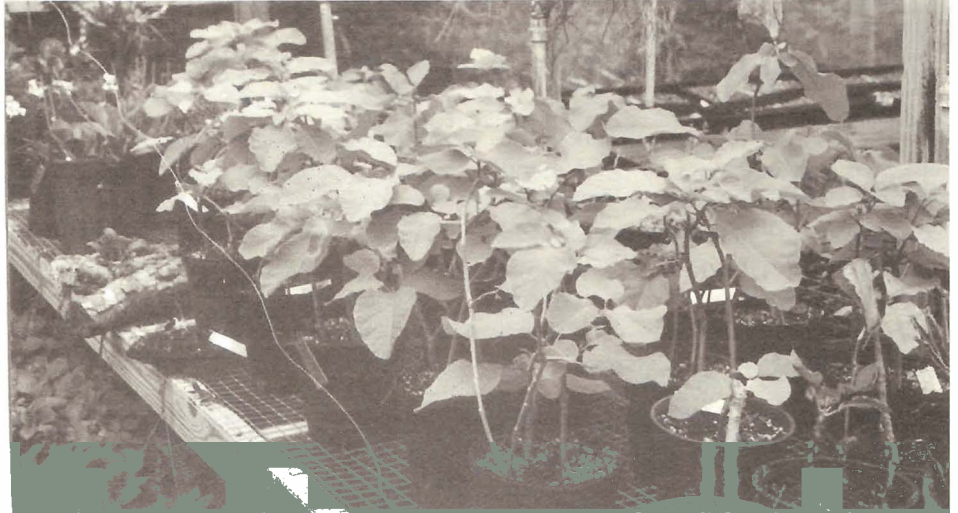
# NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

*Pisonia margaretea* is a small shrubby tree that forms suckers and thickets, and this tree is found only in Spotts and nowhere else in the world. *Pisonia margaretea* was first discovered in 1993 and named by Dr. George Proctor in 1995. In 1996 the Park collected cuttings from the 23 trees known to exist and rooted them in the Nursery. Most of the cuttings rooted successfully and the resulting plants have been growing in the Park's Nursery ever since. This year Gardener Kevin Eden has planted the majority of these *Pisonia* trees in locations within the Park that are similar to the tree's natural habitat in Spotts. It is hoped that by successfully establishing this species in the Botanic Park where it is protected, *Pisonia margaretea* will be saved from possible extinction as its natural habitat in Spotts may one day become building sites.

The Iguanas are breeding in the

Botanic Park, in the wild! For the past three years the National Trust has been releasing captive bred Cayman Blue Iguanas into the Botanic Park to the delight of our visitors who enjoy seeing them ram-

bling around. Now these released iguanas are breeding in the wild and laying eggs, so look for a new generation of young iguanas later this year.



*The rare endemic Pisonia margaretea plants growing in the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park Nursery. These plants are waiting to be planted in their permanent homes along the Woodland Trail.*

## GROUND'S DEVELOPMENT

It's been a long time coming but the Grounds in the Heritage Garden has been planted and is now open to the public for viewing. "Grounds" is the Caymanian term for an area where crops are grown, and the Grounds in the Heritage Garden is where the traditional crops that have been grown for generations in Cayman are being grown and displayed.

In Cayman, Grounds were often established where the heavy red clay soil known locally as Red Mold was found. Red Mold is high in iron, aluminum and phosphorus and its origin is a bit of a mystery. It is possible that it blew over from the Sahara over many years and settled in pockets on the island while another theory is its origin is from an ancient volcanic explosion in the Caribbean.

The Grounds in the Heritage Garden is located in a clearing behind the Rankine House where Red Mold was brought in as none exists naturally in the Botanic Park. Gardener James Miller has been busy

collecting old-time crop varieties and getting them planted out. Some of the crops that are on view include: cassava, wongola (sesame), mutton peppers, okra, pumpkin, watermelon, pineapple, sugar cane, apple bananas, bottlers, plantains, gongo peas, corn, red beans, shallots, sweet potatoes, and yams.

The development of the Grounds is an additional feature that will make a visit to the Botanic Park even more interesting and enjoyable, it adds an important educational element to the Park and growing the old varieties of crops helps to preserve them for future generations.



*Young Yams sprouting from tubers planted in the newly established Grounds. The Grounds is a new part of the Heritage Garden displaying traditional Cayman crops.*

# GARDEN TOUR OF THAILAND - 2002

The Botanic Park has organized an 14-day Garden Tour of Singapore and Thailand as part of its garden travel programme. This fabulous tour will take place in October 2002. First stop on the tour will be four days and three nights in Singapore which will include a visit to the world famous Singapore Botanic Gardens and other highlights of this Asian city/



*Participants from the Garden Cruise of the Eastern Caribbean (March 2001) assemble for a group photo while touring a beautiful private garden in Nevis. Many more lovely gardens, beautiful natural areas and other magnificent sites await the participants of the upcoming Singapore and Thailand tour in October 2002.*

state. After arrival in Bangkok, Thailand the tour will include a visit to an orchid farm, the Bangkok flower market, Chinatown and the exotic vegetable market. A tour of the Bangkok canals by long boat will be followed by visits to Phra Keo temple and the Grand Palace.

There will be a visit to the Damnern Saduak floating market, the infamous Bridge on the River Kwai and its adjacent WW II museum, Bang Pa Inn and garden (the King's summer residence which includes a full sized elephant family done in topiary. We will also tour the spectacular ruins of Thailand's early capital Ayuthaya.

We will visit Wat Mahatath which hosts the Jinaraj Buddah (considered the most beautiful image in Thailand) followed by a drive through the picturesque countryside where we will see rice fields, water buffalo and many rivers. We will climb into the mountainous region to visit Chiang Mai, the city of roses (this city is known for its crafts and great shopping).

A river raft ride will take us to Sainamphung where we will visit three beautiful orchid nurseries. There will be a visit to a wonderful umbrella factory where each piece is hand made, and we will see a demonstration of Thai laquerware making and Thai silk production from extraction from the worm to looming and production of beautiful garments. There will also be a visit to a Thai jewelry center where Thailand's famous sapphires, rubies and jade are cut, polished and transformed into exquisite designs.

On the last day there will be a visit to the mountain village of Mae Hong Son, often referred to as Shangri-La'sque.

This once in a lifetime tour is approximately CI\$2270.00 and includes: round-trip airfare from Los Angeles, first class hotels, breakfast and lunch daily, tours, airfare and bilingual guide in Thailand. Price is per person, double occupancy. Single supplement CI\$168.00. If you wish to join this tour or receive further information, please contact Andrew Guthrie at 947-9462, ext. 21 or [guthrie@candw.ky](mailto:guthrie@candw.ky)

## SHOP IN THE PARK

When buying that gift for that special person, remember to visit the Botanic Park Gift Shop. In the Shop you can find:

- our exclusive line of Orchid Jewelry
- our exclusive lead crystal glasses engraved with Cayman plants and animals
- Caymanite Jewelry
- Colourful shirts, ties, dresses, sarongs and t-shirts
- Books on gardening, nature & Cayman history
- Beautiful Posters & Prints
- Children's nature theme toys and games and so much more.

Remember that you get 10% off any regularly priced item as a member of the Friends of the Botanic Park.



## NEW BOOK CHRONICLES BOTANIC PARK

The Botanic Park is currently producing a coffee table style book about the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park. The book will chronicle the early history of the Park and how it came to be; however, the bulk of the book will feature in colourful detail the Park's many beautiful aspects. The flowers, plants and animals of the Botanic Park will take center stage in this new publication. The text is being written by Dave Martins with assistance from certain members of the local gardening community, and several local photographers have donated their time to provide beautiful photographs for this book. Texaco; Esso; and Walkers, Attorneys-at-Law have made generous donations toward the cost of producing this book.

When completed, the book will be available in the Botanic Park Gift Shop and other selected retail sites around the island. Donations are still being accepted should you wish to make a contribution towards helping bring this book to fruition.

# GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

For the Botanic Park the year 2001 started off to be an excellent year; however, the year is ending on a more somber note. Attendance rates for the first five months of the year were nearly 10% higher than attendance rates over the same period last year. In June we were dropped from cruise ship tours with the excuse that the ship passengers did not have time to visit the Botanic Park and shop in town which dropped us down to barely 1% over last year. We are hoping that on board cruise ship advertising (the first ever) which begins in December will turn this situation around. The horrific terrorists attacks in the States has reduced the rest of our visitorship to a trickle, and the worsening financial situation of Government has re-

sulted in a significant reduction in our Government subsidy. The Botanic Park is working on ideas to increase the numbers of both tourist and local visitors and other revenue enhancement activities; however, the financial situation is a difficult one. As members of the Friends of the Botanic Park, your support is needed more now than ever. Encourage friends and family to visit and become members; remember the Gift Shop when buying Christmas gifts and the Nursery when landscaping your garden; donations toward specific projects and volunteering your time will be greatly appreciated. We are all working hard to keep the Botanic Park beautiful and something that all of Cayman can be proud of.

# STAFF HONOURS

At the recent awards ceremony for the Queen's Birthday Celebration at the Legislative Assembly two Botanic Park staff were awarded the following:

**Mrs. Vernicia Watler**, Administrative Assistant, was awarded the Certificate and Badge of Honour for her many years of service to the community.

**Michael Letterlough** was awarded a medal for Junior Sports person of the Year.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

The Botanic Park receives a tremendous number of phone calls daily and this has resulted in us having to install one of those dreaded automated attendant systems. So that you can reach us easily, our phone extensions are as follows:

Tel: 947-9462  
Andrew Guthrie, General Manager — 21  
Marva Jackman,  
Retail Services Officer — 22  
John Lawrus — Garden Supervisor — 25  
Pamela Thomas — Nursery Supervisor — 29  
Vernicia Watler — Accounts — 27  
Gift Shop — 23  
Nursery — 24  
Ticket Booth — 26  
Snack Bar — 28

## CAYMAN ISLANDS TOURISM ATTRACTIONS BOARD

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Ms. Orié Lee Ebanks  
Mrs. Karen Hunter  
Mr. Kirkland Nixon  
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Mr. Denny Ebanks — ex officio  
Mr. Andrew Guthrie — ex officio  
Mr. Dave Martins  
General Manager, C.I. Tourism Attractions Board

## BOTANIC PARK SENIOR STAFF

Andrew Guthrie — General Manager  
John Lawrus — Garden Supervisor  
Vernicia Watler — Administrative Assistant  
Marva Jackman — Visitor & Retail Services Officer  
Pamela Thomas — Nursery Supervisor

## STAFF CHANGES

2001 has seen some major changes in staff. **Teddie Ebanks:** After eight years of dedicated service, Teddie Ebanks the Operations Manager has decided to pursue new opportunities. Teddie left the Park in March and we all wish him success in his new endeavors.

**John Lawrus:** In May John Lawrus took up the post of Garden Supervisor. John is a native of Windsor, Ontario in Canada and he is a graduate of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture in Niagara Falls, Ontario. John's most recent posting prior to arrival here at the Botanic Park was as a Horticulturist at the University of British Columbia Botanical Gardens in Vancouver.

**Pamela Thomas:** In September 2000 Pamela Thomas took up the post of Nursery Supervisor. Pamela is native to San Diego, California and she arrived at the Botanic Park after completing a one-year internship at the Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, USA. Pamela also managed the San Diego Zoo's retail nursery.

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