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5th Floor, Hunt Library
Carnegie Mellon University
4909 Frew Street
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Contact: Archives
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The FAIRCHILD
TROPICAL GARDEN
BULLETIN



Left to Right: HAROLD F. LOOMIS, WILSON POPENOE, ROBERT H. MONTGOMERY,
DAVID FAIRCHILD

VOLUME 6

JANUARY - 1951

NUMBER 4

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN NEWSLETTER

This experimental Newsletter it is hoped will help improve the Garden's communications and public relations program. Noteworthy items not generally covered in the bulletin but of timely interest to Garden members and the community are included. As members of the Fairchild Tropical Garden your comments on this Newsletter will be welcome.

Summer at Fairchild Tropical Garden has been busy for the staff and the numerous volunteers who have braved the heat and mosquitos to help hold the "fort" during the "Off" season.

Gordon Fore, President of the local Bruce Parnell Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society, has led an ambitious group of workers from this chapter in putting together what will be one of the finest hibiscus shows this area has seen. Located in plots 87, 91-92, many spectacular hybrids can already be seen showing off.

Adding color to the Garden very soon also will be a day lily collection donated by Dr. and Mrs. Clyde C. Wooten in memory of their late son, David, who was killed in Viet Nam. This display will be in plot 52 near the tram route, and will feature plants selected for performance in this area.

A collection of rare species of hibiscus from Australia along with some spectacular hybrids with dinner-plate size flowers are being accumulated and donated to the Garden by Dr. Menzel of Florida State University and Dr. Samuel McFadden of the University of Florida.

Added color will soon be seen from various donations of orchid collections received during the summer.

Mr. Charles R. Murphy has again given us a nice group of hybrid Cattleyas, most of these being awarded plants. A group of awarded Cattleyas also were received from the University of Florida's collection. Dr. Tom Sheehan sent almost 200 meristem plants which should add a good deal of sophistication to our displays.

Betty von Paulsen answered our plea for more color in the Garden by donating 2000 terete Vandas which will adorn the north wall of the Rare Plant House. Also one can see a group of semi-terete Vandas from Betty's collection on the rock steps leading down to the lower waterfall and pool. Besides these, many of the Garden's other orchids have also come from the von Paulsen collection.

Some very special rare orchids were added earlier this spring with the aid of Mrs. Norman B. Woolworth who for the second year has given us this means to add some of the "extra" items that can make a truly fine orchid show.

The Bigler Orchid House has been reworked this summer turning the area into a fern glen with orchids displayed on the east wall. Virginia Ault and her assistants from the new Fern Society have been grooming plants and working on labels for this new fern area.

More than 20 cultivars and species of Platyserium are now on display in the Rare Plant House. This collection is becoming more complete and should be noteworthy with a little more work.

The collection which has been improved most during the summer has been the Begonias under the direction of the S. S. Deckers. Lenard and Bess Cocroft have been helping the Deckers produce a fine Begonia show which has grown off the display benches and into the landscape of the Rare Plant House. This is an excellent example of a plant society's (Miami Begonia Society) involvement in the Garden.

Another society starting a program with the Garden is the Bromeliad Society. Pat Reinmuth and crew have been supplying some much needed help in the bromeliad collection.

Many changes apparent in the Rare Plant House have been due to the efforts of the bunch from the Miami Junior League. Almost a dozen of their group have been pouring energy into these improvements and the mundane tasks of upkeep as well.

Summer classes also produced a crop of workers who added much to summer improvements. From the Fern and Orchid classes came eight persons who have come back time and again to help when they could, potting, cleaning, and moving things around as alterations were being made to the growing areas.

Mrs. Porter Dietrich held the reception table alone this summer greeting guests and answering questions of the summer visitors. She will need many helpers this fall and winter to fill this needed position as visitors become more numerous.

The woodworking master Ben Pitt, son of the late Gerard Pitt, has added his touch to the decor of our displays. Most of our orchid display woodwork has been his handiwork.

Across from the aquarium in the foyer this fall will be seen a very fine terrarium. This terrarium was donated by Mike Micheal who has also given the Garden some extremely valuable time this summer in reworking our orchid growing range.

Kathy Koopman came to our rescue during and after summer classes being "Girl Friday" to the teaching staff and helping with much of our orchid rework.

Maria Adams with her nursery crew has spent the summer helping Felipe at the nursery. Maria says that Megaskepasma erythrochlamys is going to be a "hot" item on the next plant distribution. This plant and many others are enjoying the environment provided by the new research greenhouse completed this summer.

The season for fall warblers is here. The advance guard has been filtering in through trees and shrubs for several weeks, and the main body must be expected soon.

Most of the birds will be wearing their dullest plumages, the mating colors of spring at least partly obscured by the cryptic tones of fall and winter. At this

time, most individuals in this family fit easily into the broad category of "confusing fall warblers," and may be dismissed as such by all but the most avid and experienced watcher.

But not in the case of the American redstart. This is one of the species that advertises its identity year round. The adult male wears a costume of brownish black above, white below, with orange windows in wing and tail and a band of orange beneath the wing. The female plumage is dark olive gray above, white below, with yellow patches. It is the female dress that predominates, at the ratio of three to one, as it is shared by the adult females, the immature females, and also the immature males.

Redstarts are often the first of the migrating warblers to be noticed in the Garden. Sometimes appearing as early as the first days of August, some members of the species may still be with us into October.

The outermost twigs of the lower branches of the taller trees form the preferred feeding grounds of the redstart. It employs a fluttering, erratic flight, with tail outspread, as it pursues winged insects and thread-dangling caterpillars. The continual flaunting of the bright wing and tail patches explain its Latin American name of mariposa, or butterfly.

* * * * *

Please don't forget our Ramble!

If you or your friends have any items, large or small, to contribute to our Ramble we have plenty of storage space to receive them now.

Donations can be dropped off any day at the Garden from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. If bulky, phone 667-1651 in advance so we can help you unload, or if we will need to pick up larger items with our truck.

We are looking for used books, furniture, clothing, antiques, etc. We cannot accept heavy appliances such as stoves and refrigerators because of the difficulty of handling them. We also cannot accept old bed mattresses.

Remember, proceeds from the Ramble are very necessary to maintain and improve your Fairchild Tropical Garden. The Ramble will be held on December 3 and 4 this year.

Your Ramble Committee

* * * * *

Steve Manis, who has been working in the anatomy lab for two summers and part-time throughout the school year, leaves to start college at the University of Montana. Sara Solomon, volunteer for the summer in the herbarium, has returned to Florida State University where she is a botany major.

The volunteers in the herbarium (Dr. Gillis's "butterflies") have been for the most part vacationing. We eagerly await the return of those who have been away to join those who have been herbarium-bound all summer. A set of 807 specimens for the herbarium was received on exchange from the National Arboretum, and now awaits mounting. Butterflies are needed.

In June, the great mystery tree outside the herbarium window bloomed for what we think is the first time. The flowers clinched our supposition that the tree is in the Mahogany family, but still unresolved is "what species?"

* * * * *

It's fun to watch visitors sniffing one hibiscus bloom after another trying to discover which variety is giving off such a delicious fragrance, all the while ignoring the true source, the straggly looking tree standing nearby - the "Ylang-Ylang" or *Canaga odorata* from Southeast Asia. The flowers are certainly not conspicuous, being at first almost the same shade of green as the large glossy leaves. Later, however, they become yellowish and develop their outstanding fragrance. The six petals are long-pointed and hang laxly. Take a magnifying glass when you visit the tree in plot 18 and note the dark red patches at the base of the three inner petals and the little zig-zag green lines all over the pistil.

This particular specimen is a memorial tree in honor of our founder Robert H. Montgomery.

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN
10901 Old Cutler Road
Miami, Florida 33156



DR. WILSON POPEAOE
ANTIQUA, GUATEMALA
CENTRAL AMERICA

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN

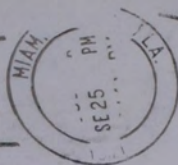
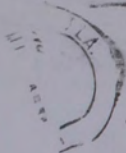
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FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN

10901 OLD CUTLER ROAD

MIAMI, FLORIDA 33156



DR. WILSON POPEHOE
ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA
CENTRAL AMERICA

A botanical illustration on the left side of the page. At the top, there is a large, textured orange shape, possibly a piece of fruit or a woven basket. Below it, a branch with several green leaves and a single red, heart-shaped fruit hangs down. Further down, another branch with green leaves and a red fruit is shown. At the bottom, a cluster of four red, round fruits hangs from a stem. The illustration is done in a simple, line-art style with some color washes.

Kampong Notes

Coconut Grove, Florida

March 15, 1972

Vol. 7, No. 1

BITTER OR NOT BITTER?

by Dr. William T. Gillis

It all started with a pie. The pie was an antidesma pie made for guests at a dinner party at The Kampong; the remainder went with me to the Fairchild Garden for dessert to be shared at lunch. Several of the luncheon group complained that the pie was "bitter". To the rest of us, this observation was extraordinary, inasmuch as we found the pie much to our liking . . . somewhat like a raspberry pie without the seeds.

This incident started a whole chain of events: the picking of more antidesma berries, mashing into juice, cooking into jelly and, of course, more pies. These were shared with personnel at the Garden, guests at The Kampong, students in University of Miami biology classes, and parishioners of the Norland United Methodist Church where I am organist. Surprisingly enough, one-quarter of all those who eat any of these products of the antidesma tree find them tasting bitter, always in the back and sides of the tongue, and upper palate (where the bitter taste buds are). The rest find the berries taste like blueberries, raspberries, huckleberries, grapes, and assorted other flavors . . . but all pleasant.

The antidesma is really *Antidesma bunioides*, a native of the Philippines which Dr. Fairchild liked very much. This is borne out by the number of trees of it that he planted at The Kampong. These trees are all fully mature now, and producing tremendous quantities of berries. No other tree is more showy in fruit than this one which bears its fruits in cluster, like grapes: they change from green to red to purple-black in the ripening process. In Occasional Paper No. 10 of the Fairchild Tropical Garden, Dr. Fairchild described the tree from which he brought seed to the United States as being "loaded down with half a ton of fruit". Nearly all of the trees presently growing in America came from one tree at the Makiling arboretum. The seeds are usually not fertile, but grow easily if they sprout. They are reported as hardy as far north as Daytona Beach and Orlando, Florida.

A breakfast at The Kampong may well start with a question, "Would you like antidesma juice for breakfast?" Usually the guest knows nothing about this unusual fruit. In the Philippines, it might be called "bignai" or "bignay"; in Java, "booni", "wooni", or "Boorneh". But antidesma jelly is the name of the specialty of the house at The Kampong. The scientific name indicates that it was used by native peoples in the Philippine area as a cure for snake bites - (probably a decoction of the leaves).

It was suspected that this difference in ability to taste the fruits as bitter or sweet was probably inherited. So I set to work to gather data as to how many persons reacted one way as opposed to the other. Among all the persons tested, it appears to be bitter for 25% of them. It's truly inherited; this means - by the laws of heredity - that the carrier for the bitter taste is present in about half of the population and expressed in half of these. We have yet to prove this conclusively as yet.

Not long ago, Dr. Robert Henkin of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, stopped by, having heard about this strange fruit. His chief interests are in the inheritance of tastes and this antidesma problem fascinated him. He was particularly intrigued by a fruit whose taste substance was not affected by cooking it (as in the jelly or pie) and was still effective in the fresh fruit. He went back to Washington laden with bottled juice and jelly from The Kampong to try on a battery of volunteers there. We should have much more information on the inheritance pattern shortly.

Botanically, *Antidesma* belongs to the same family which came up in a previous issue of Kampong Notes - (Vol. 5, No. 1, for December 15, 1969), the Euphorbiaceae. This is the spurge or poinsettia family, noted for its poisonous species. Few members of this family are eaten, but those which are, are commonly grown for their edible parts: *Manihot* which is harvested for cassava or tapioca, and *Phyllanthus acidus*, the otaheite gooseberry. For those who find antidesma bitter, it might be difficult to convince them that it is not among the poisonous ones!

As this is written, the antidesma trees once more come into flower. And so another vintage of juice, jelly, and pie is on its way. Perhaps we should try what is done in the Philippines: wine!



Cluster of *Antidesma* Fruits

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Mrs. Florence Nugent, on the right, who sold The Kampong property to the Fairchild's in 1916. This picture was taken in the summer-time, obviously up north. Does any reader know the identity of the other woman?