

The Green Lung of Paget – the Bermuda Botanical Gardens Why We Must Work Together To Save It

Facts taken from the Botanical Gardens (BG) Park Management Plan 2004
by Val Wallace - Paget Resident – September 2006

- 1. The Bermuda Botanical Gardens are visited by 200,000 locals and visitors annually. The BG is the largest legally protected open space in the central parishes. At 36 acres, it is the fifth largest National Park in Bermuda. With the average size of Bermuda's 70 plus Parks less than three acres, this is hugely important because it is WHOLE.**
- 2. The BG is UNIQUE within the Bermuda National Parks System because of its' history, facilities, programs and dedicated staff. It has a dual role. The BG is a place of research, development and education as a Botanical Garden, and is a passive park / community centre for special events for people from all walks of life.**
- 3. The history of the gardens dates back to 1898, so the gardens are 108 years old. Starting with just ten central acres of what was already Public Gardens, 1912 saw the BG double in size with the addition of the Montrose estate.**
- 4. In 1962, three acres was lost to the hospital for a major expansion. Four years later, this was rectified by Government adding the Camden Estate of some 16 ½ acres, bringing it to its present 36 acre size.**
- 5. The BG, (largely due to its size), provides a significant ecological habitat for insects, amphibians, and land birds.**
- 6. Many trees in the BG are hundreds of years old.** The BG is home to some of the few mature Cedar trees that survived the Scale Insect Attack in 1948 – in fact, the BG provided the thousands of seedlings needed to save Bermuda's soil at the time. Today the BG has a successful Bluebird Trail, with boxes made by children attending Botanical Summer Camps.
- 7. Known as the Agricultural Station at the time, the Botanical Gardens has been home to the Department of Agriculture since its inception in 1912 – its name was changed to Bermuda Botanical Gardens in 1958. Early research at the Agricultural Station into Lily culture, onions, and potatoes helped to make Bermuda an agricultural success in the 1930's when over 3,000 acres of Bermuda was under cultivation as arable land. The legacy of agriculture continues today with vegetable trial gardens, an extensive reference library for farmers, the Plant Protection Lab, and a Quarantine facility.**
- 8. The First Agricultural Exhibition (now known as the Annual Exhibition) was held in 1922.**
- 9. It would be very expensive to move the collections and the gardens and build new facilities for them – Government House Grounds are a possibility but they are not open to the public, and many plants would be lost in the process, because they either cannot be moved physically, or they are too mature.**

Collections

Palm
Cacti
Cycad
Cassia
Plumeria
Fern
Vine
Ficus
Bamboo

Gardens

Formal
Economic
Butterfly
Fruit Orchard
Cottage
Garden of Peace
Sensory
Hibiscus
Rose
Rock

10. Formal groups with an active interest who use the Botanical Gardens on a regular basis for meetings or activities include

The Blind	Bermuda Botanical Society
Bermuda Rose Society	Bermuda African Violet Society
Bermuda Orchid Society	Bermuda Garden Club
Bermuda Audubon Society	Bermuda National Trust
Eden Project	Greenrock
Keep Bermuda Beautiful	Save Open Spaces
Bermuda Zoological Society	BotCampers
Masterworks Art Gallery	Bermuda Farmers Association
Bermuda Beekeepers Association	SPCA
Bermuda Feline Assistance Bureau	Bermuda Cat Fanciers
Bermuda Equestrian Federation	Driving Horse and Pony Association Dog
Training Club of Bermuda	Bermuda Kennel Club
Bermuda All Breed Club	Bermuda Hunt Club
Good Dog 101	International Dog Event Association (IDEA)
Bermuda Bird Fanciers	Bermuda Poultry Fanciers
Meet A Mum Association (MAMA)	La Leche League
Fun Run Group	Bermuda Fishermen Committee
Camden / Premier's Residence	Ikebana International
Lobster Fishermen Committee	Learning Through Landscapes
Bermuda Canine Education Club	Bermuda Bonsai Club
Bermuda Fruit Growers	

11. Informal users include walking clubs, cyclists, parents with young children, senior citizens (Camden Teas), Youth groups, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, School classes, tourists, taxi drivers, local amateur gardeners, Diabetes Association (DeFeat Diabetes walks), Landscaping companies, local plant nurseries (importation of plants), animal lovers (importation of pets), wedding photographers, memorial plantings, botanical artists, tai chi, yoga, joggers, neighbours, extended Bermuda families celebrating birthdays, staff and patients of the King Edward Memorial Hospital.

12. Government departments located within the gardens include Environmental Protection, Parks Department staff (including some 90 employees and their maintenance section), and Agriculture. **Future plans are for a Children's Discovery Garden, an After School Care Program, a Walk-through Butterfly Garden, a Curious and Carnivorous Plant Collection, and an Agricultural Museum**

Please take an hour of your time to do one of their fascinating hour-long tours from the Visitor Centre every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:30 a.m. (If there is public demand, additional tours can be scheduled on other days)