



# Where to See Heliconias in Puerto Rico

*By Germán Charrón, Member HSPR*

In July of 2002, at the Heliconia Society International Conference in Thailand, I was approached by an ex-member of the HSI Board of Directors, who congratulated me on our group of four from Puerto Rico, which was the largest delegation from any one country. He wanted to know more about the Heliconia Society of Puerto Rico and its members.

I proceeded to tell him that our group numbered over 50 interested members, many of them academics and professionals in horticulture, medicine and other sciences. We also have members who have commercial nurseries and cut flower farms. Our members are very serious in the propagation and conservation of heliconias, and we have active programs of exchange and donation among ourselves and with public institutions.



**HSPR members tour the heliconia collection at the farm of Dr. José Abreu.**

We welcome our new friend to visit our island and see the diversity of heliconias growing in Puerto Rico. The following

tables list the largest known collections of heliconia species and cultivars on the island, divided roughly by geographical location. Each of these farms contains over 100 different types of heliconias.

Eastern Region	
Name	Location
José Abreu	Cidra
Salvador Alemañy	Aguas Buenas
Rafael Benítez	Fajardo
Kelly and Susan Brooks, Judy Nelson	Patillas
Janet Crespo	Naranjito
Endre Guttman	Río Grande
Libera Hardin	Río Grande
Raymond and Migdalia Jerome	Carolina
Mariposario Las Limas	Guayama
Bari and Amelia Villanueva	Río Grande

Central Region	
Name	Location
Germán Charrón	Corozal
Héctor Méndez Caratini	Barranquitas
Sergio Tejedor	Jayuya

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## Dates to Remember

- HSPR Meeting, 9:30 am, Sunday, March 14, 2004. Farm of Bari and Amelia Villanueva, Río Grande, PR.
- Heliconia Society International Conference, August 3-7, 2004, San Juan, PR.

Western Region	
Name	Location
Luis Alemañy	Las Mariás
Emilia (Sherry) Ballester	Las Mariás
Bryan Brunner	Maricao
Guillermo Oliver	Maricao
Noel Rivera	Sabana Grande
Paul and Beverly Yoshioka	Rosario

## New Ginger Gardens at the Singapore Botanic Gardens *By Calvin Chin, Contributor, Singapore*

Gingers, a general name given to the family Zingiberaceae, are the main focus of the newly opened Ginger Gardens at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Gingers are mainly found in the old world tropics, from the foothills of the Himalayas to the northern tropical state of Queensland Australia.

The idea for this specialized plant display was conceived around 2001 and focused on a few main themes. It had to look agreeable for the public taste with the usual mix and match of form, colors and texture. It also had to appeal to the serious



*Licuala cordata* at the Singapore Botanic Garden's New Ginger Gardens.



Variegated *Alpinia zerumbet* with *Licuala grandis* and *Cyrtostachys renda* at the Ginger Gardens.

botanist with its collection of rare species, and to eventually hold up as a conservation venue. There was also the need to communicate the history and usage of gingers and related families to the local people of South East Asia with highlights on the ethnobotanical aspects. In fact, the emblem of the garden is the inflorescence of a widely used ginger in South East Asia, *Etlingera elatior*, or Kantan in the local Malay language.

### The order Zingiberales

Although the focus is on the family Zingiberaceae, all nine other families in the order Zingiberales are represented in the gardens. At the time of writing, there was an approximate count of 250 species currently growing in the gardens.

### Garden planning

The 1 hectare display was sited next to the established and well known National Orchid Gardens. This plot of land was chosen as it would be easy for visitors to drop by with a newly constructed coach drive-in. One of the main problems encountered was that the land had very wet areas and was

## New Ginger Gardens at the Singapore Botanic Gardens (continued)

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poorly drained. Most gingers, although they need moisture, cannot tolerate swampy conditions. On the positive side, there were also some existing mature palms and trees for shade.

### Delight to the senses

At the center of the garden stands a man-made waterfall. This feature not only reproduces the soothing sound of gushing waters to calm frayed city nerves, but also lends a fine spray that maintains constant high humidity to the nearby growing gingers and aroids, which seem to relish being next to the waterfall.

### Refocus on endemic plants

The garden is finding renewed interest from the locals as well as the scientific community. City folks are now discovering the plants that their forefathers used while living off the jungle for daily needs. It is now one of the key attractions of the Singapore Botanic Gardens and will probably continue to improve as the garden and the plants mature.

### Singapore Botanic Gardens

The Gardens at their present site were founded in 1859 by an Agri-Horticultural Society. Planned as a leisure garden and ornamental park, the Society organized flower shows and horticultural fetes. In 1874, the Society handed over management and maintenance of the site to the government. The scientific mission of the Gardens evolved when the colonial government assumed management and deployed Kew-trained botanists and horticulturists to administer the Gardens.



*Heliconia pogonantha* x *H. mariae* 'Dinosaur' growing at the Ginger Gardens.

For more information:

Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG)  
1 Cluny Road  
Singapore 259569

<http://www.sbg.org.sg/>



*Costus erythrophyllus* at the Ginger Gardens.

## From Our Last Meeting

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We would like to thank Héctor Méndez Caratini and family for hosting our Christmas meeting. Neither rain nor shine (or in our case, the FOG) stopped us from having one of the best gatherings of the year. After the meeting, the new Board of Directors for 2004-2006 was elected as follows: Dr. Raymond Jerome, President; Dr. Paul Yoshioka, Vice-President; Mrs. Mary Strow, Treasurer (re-elected); Mrs. Enilda Cabrera, Secretary; Mrs. Amelia Villanueva, Mr. Bob Castro and Dr. Sergio Tejedor, Officers.

## HELICONIA SOCIETY OF PUERTO RICO, INC.

**President:** Dr. Raymond Jerome  
**Past President:** Mrs. Emilia (Sherry) Ballester  
**Vice President:** Dr. Paul Yoshioka  
**Treasurer:** Mrs. Mary Strow  
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# HSPR

*Promoting Zingiberales in  
Puerto Rico since 1996.*



*The Heliconia Society of Puerto Rico, Inc. was founded in 1996. The objectives of the society are to stimulate and promote the enjoyment and understanding of Heliconia and related plants of the order Zingiberales through education, research and communication, and to interact with the Heliconia Society International and other institutions which share similar interests, purposes or objectives.*

## New President's Message

I wish to express my deep appreciation to all of you for your friendship, kindness and support in electing me as the new president for the Heliconia Society of Puerto Rico for the next two years.

I will try to have very enjoyable and educational speakers for our future meetings and strive to stimulate more interest in growing heliconias in Puerto Rico.

I also want to thank Sherry and all of the officers and board members of the last two years for the wonderful job they have done, and give special thanks to Bryan Brunner for his excellent work on producing our grade A+ quality Newsletter.

We all look forward to working together to have exciting, enjoyable, and educational programs in the future.

Thank you again for everything,

Ray Jerome



*Globba pendula* 'Silver Comet'

## Past President's Corner

Our next meeting will be Sunday, March 14, 2004 at 9:30am. It will be hosted by Bari and Amelia Villanueva at their farm in Río Grande, next to the Caribbean National Forest (Carr. 186, Km. 22.1 Int., El Verde). **Please note:** There are no structures on the farm, or electricity or running water yet. We're asking the members to **please** bring their own chairs. If you want to bring refreshments, water, coffee, or a covered dish to add to the pot-luck lunch, let us know by calling Amelia (787-762-5949) or Sherry (787-827-3121). And don't forget those wonderful plants for the RAFFLE!

We look forward to new and better things for the HSPR. Dr. Bryan Brunner, who has done a wonderful job as editor of the Newsletter, is also in charge of our future website. We'll soon be accessible online for the whole world to see!

This year, we'll have the opportunity to meet heliconia lovers from other countries during the HSI Conference in San Juan during the first week of August. We hope everyone can attend this very important event.

And finally, my deepest gratitude to all those members and friends who helped me during my two years serving as President of the HSPR. They shared their precious time and ideas, and the vision for a stronger HSPR. Nothing would have been accomplished without them.