



The 2004 Heliconia Society International Conference

By Raymond Jerome, President HSPR

The 2004 Heliconia Society International Conference was held at the Tropimar Convention Center in Isla Verde, Puerto Rico from August 3-5. The conference accomplished exactly what it had planned to do; that is, to bring together the international members of the HSI board of directors and Zingiberales enthusiasts from all over the world to share in information, ideas, and new experiences concerning Zingiberales.



Participants at the 2004 Heliconia Society International Conference Banquet.

We met many wonderful people and made many new friends at this convention. Some of our members provided transportation for many of the attendees to see the Zingiberales collections in the eastern, central, and western parts of Puerto Rico, that were not included in the convention tours. My wife Migdalia, and I had eight visitors over to our home for dinner and to see some of our collection. Héctor Méndez Caratini took four of the

visitors to see his collection in Aibonito, and Bryan Brunner took six visitors to the western end of the island after the convention ended on Thursday evening. Sherry Ballester shared her home, sleeping facilities and meals with the visitors so they could arise early on Friday and see both her and Bryan's wonderful collections. Migdalia and I took two of the visitors to Sergio and Nancy Tejedor's magnificent collection in Jayuya on Saturday. All of the visitors seemed to be enthralled with what they saw, and with the friendliness with which they were treated. Many of the visitors were given rhizomes and seeds to take back to their homes. They all seemed very grateful and were effusive in their gratitude to the members of our Society.

The lectures at the conference were mostly very enjoyable, however some were a bit technical. The conference started off with a greeting from the HSI president, Ray Baker. After his welcome remarks, he presented the new Board of Directors. Much to our surprise and pleasure, we found that Bryan Brunner is now a member of the Board of Directors of HSI. Congratulations, Bryan. We're very proud of you and know that you will do a great job in your new position.

The second lecture was presented by Alan Carle of the Botanical Ark in Australia. Alan emphasized the importance of protecting the natural rain forest habitats of the Zingiberales. He showed slides of their distribution and pointed out how

Inside this issue:

The 2004 Heliconia Society International Conference	1
Classified Ads	4
President's Corner	4

Dates to Remember

- *HSPR Meeting, 9:30 am, Sunday, September 12, 2004. Farm of Dr. Germán Charón, Corozal, PR.*

The Heliconia Society International Conference (continued)

their habitat is markedly diminishing, worldwide, because of exploitation and destruction of the rainforests. Alan showed us many beautiful slides of Zingiberales, many of which were completely new to most of us.



Garden tour of Zingiberales Gardens, Rio Grande. From left, Mark Friedrich (Florida), Glenn Stokes (Louisiana), Mark Collins (Thailand), Anders Lindstrom (Thailand), Endre Guttman, and unidentified visitors.

Elvia Meléndez-Ackerman, from the University of Puerto Rico, spoke about the diversity of *Heliconia bihai* in the Lesser Antilles. She pointed out that there is greater diversity on St. Vincent than on St. Lucia. Also, that the inflorescence forms on St. Lucia are more green, and have fewer and wider bracts than those of St. Vincent, which are more yellow, with a greater number of narrower bracts.

Richard Criley, from the University of Hawaii, discussed cut flower production in the heliconia hybrid 'Rauliniana'. They found that shoots emerging in January to April took an average of 400 days to produce blooms, while shoots emerging from September to December took only 200 days to flower. Cut flowers of 'Rauliniana' last from 4 days (older flowers) to 17 days (younger flowers). They are difficult to pack for shipping because of their unusual twisting shapes.

The fifth presentation was by Ray Baker of Lyon Arboretum in Hawaii. Ray discussed the importance of knowing the "invasiveness" of various Zingiberales before planting them. Otherwise, you may live to regret your choices. Species mentioned with weedy potential include *Heliconia latispatha*, *Costus dubius*, *C. scaber*, *C. woodsonii*, *Hedychium flavescens*, *H. coronarium*, and *Zingiber zerumbet*.

Carla Black of Panama then presented her heliconia adventures and talked about her rediscovery of *Heliconia bella*.

She showed many beautiful slides of Panama and the heliconias to be found there. Of great beauty were *H. lennartiana* and *H. ramonensis*, along with *H. bella*.

David Lorence, of the National Botanical Gardens in Hawaii, told of the importance of maintaining Conservation Centers in the face of the marked diminishing natural habitats of the Zingiberales. He told us what is presently being done to maintain these magnificent representatives of the plant kingdom in the HSI Conservation Centers.

The eighth lecture was presented by Jan Hintz, from Darwin, Australia. Jan told us about the HSI Conference to be held in Darwin in 2006, and about the wonderful sights that Australia offers to its visitors. She strongly urged everyone who is able to do so, to attend this future conference.

Migdalia Padilla, of Merlix School, then presented a lecture on tropical flower design. She explained how to cut and prepare the flowers for arrangements, how to design around the "rhythm" of the flower's shape, and how to select the colors and shapes of your flowers. She suggested using buds at higher levels in the arrangement, and older flowers at lower levels.

The second day, Wednesday, was used for tours. The visitors were first taken to Endre Guttman's Zingiberales Gardens for a short while, then to the gardens of Jimmy and Esther McFadden, El Yunque rainforest, and finally to see Eugene's collection.



Dinner at Ray and Migdalia Jerome's home. From left, Carla Black (Panama), Ray Baker (Hawaii), Ginette Lorence (Hawaii), Alan Carle (Australia), Ray Jerome, Angela Lorence (Hawaii), David Lorence (Hawaii), Suzi Carle (Australia), and Chris Dierberger (Brazil).

The Heliconia Society International Conference (continued)

Thursday was also dedicated to lectures. Mark Collins, owner of Eden Farms in Hawaii, and partner in Plant Group Co. in Thailand, presented newly introduced heliconias. Mark has collected Zingiberales in 50 countries on five continents. Among many spectacular photos, he showed slides of the new cultivars 'Barnum's Choice', 'Peach Fuzz', 'Magic Pink', 'Pink Peru', 'Pyrotechnic', 'Inner Light', 'Cherry Red', 'Yamakawa Chocolate', 'Pakalolo', 'Coppertone', 'Orange Heat', 'Colombian Orange', 'Pink Cat', 'Marmalade', 'Sun Rise', 'Lobsteroides', 'Lydia', 'White Wag', 'Satin Glory', and many others.



Post conference visit to Finca Anones, Las Marias. From left (standing), Carla Black (Panama), Jeff Chandler (Barbados), Bryan Brunner, Suzi Carle (Australia), Sherry Ballester, Tim Chapman (Louisiana), Mark Collins (Thailand), and sitting, Jim West (Ecuador), and Alan Carle (Australia).

The second lecture was another presentation by Richard Criley, from the University of Hawaii, titled "Cold and Hot Storage Affects Emergence and Flowering of Ornamental Gingers". His group found that temperature and storage duration affects flowering in *Curcuma alismatifolia*, *C. cordata* and *C. magnifica*. The shortest period to flowering resulted after 3 weeks of cold storage followed by 3 weeks of warm storage.

Mike Bordelon, of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., then spoke about the classification of the gingers. He presented beautiful slides and explained how DNA analysis is now clearing up many past misconceptions about the origins and relationships of gingers.

Elvia Meléndez-Ackerman gave another presentation, this time on the pollination of *H. caribaea* in the El Yunque rainforest of Puerto Rico. It was felt that the main pollinators of heliconias are hummingbirds, however there is a possibility

that other pollinators, such as insects, may well play a role too. One interesting conclusion of this lecture was that many of these particular inflorescences appeared to be "self-pollinating".

The fifth lecture was presented by Jeff Chandler, from the University of the West Indies in Barbados, titled "Pests, Diseases, and other Problems Affecting Zingiberales in Barbados". The problems mentioned seem to be the same ones that many of us have experienced throughout the world, such as spider mites, aphids, mealy bugs, scale, fungi, bacteria, certain beetles and their larvae, and snails.

Next, Anders Lindstrom, HSI's new president, from Nong Nooch Tropical Gardens in Thailand, spoke on the "Biogeography of Caribbean Heliconias". He discussed the extremely varied heliconias found on the various Caribbean islands, and their pollinators.

John Kress presented the next lecture, by telephone from Washington, D.C. It was a surprising and marvelous technological feat, and was perfectly coordinated. John was unable to attend the conference in person because of airline difficulties. The lecture was titled "From Cancer to Capricorn: The Tropical Zingiberales of the World". It showed the distribution of the natural habitats of Zingiberales throughout the world, with magnificent slides of the various specimens being discussed.

The eighth and ninth lectures were both given by Tim Chapman, from Gingerwood Nursery in Louisiana. His first lecture was titled "Hybridization in Zingiberales". This lecture gave examples of naturally occurring hybrids and discussed the difficulty in producing them artificially. The second lecture was titled "Commercial Trade in Zingiberales". Such worldwide trade has become a very large industry.

The last presentation was a continuation of Carla Black's "Heliconia Adventures in Panama". Her slides of Panama and its flora were again beautiful and highly informative.

The traditional HSI Banquet, with its fun raffle and auction, was held at 7:00 pm on Thursday evening. Very nice music was played by Puerto Rican musicians throughout the evening. We all had a very nice evening visiting with our new friends from around the world. All of us from Puerto Rico hated to see them all have to return home so soon. We all hope that it will only be a short time until they can return to Puerto Rico for a longer stay, to further enjoy our lovely island and the hospitality of the Puerto Rican people.

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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.

Classified Ads

Please remember that HSPR members may publish one free classified ad per newsletter, to announce or sell goods and services related to heliconias or other Zingiberales, gardening, and similar areas. Ads should be 30 words or less. Additional ads for members or advertisements by non-members of HSPR are \$10 each. Please contact the Editor for more information. Ads must be submitted by email or fax to the Editor by the 15th of February, May, August or November to be included in the following issue of the HSPR Newsletter.

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Vivero Anones — Tropical fruit trees, heliconias, ornamental gingers, and palms for sale. Excellent prices. Send email to viveroanones@hotmail.com or call 787-827-3121.

President's Corner

Sherry Ballester graciously arranged for us to have our last meeting at the facilities of the Mayaguez Zoological Park. In spite of a complete power outage that day, we all had a very enjoyable meeting together. Sergio Tejedor and I joined in giving a presentation titled "Variations Seen From Seedlings of Heliconias 'Bubble Gum' and 'Prince of Darkness'". Without electrical power, we could not show our slides of the color and form variations as we had planned, but we both brought photographs of them to show our members.

The rest of the meeting was used to discuss the possibilities of what we could do with a HSPR exhibit and sales booth at the 2004 HSI Conference, held August 3-5 at the Tropimar Convention Center in Isla Verde. We had previously been given verbal permission by the Convention Chairman to have such a booth, but after we had sent in our \$500 payment, our application was rejected.

Our next meeting, on Sunday, September 12, 2004, will be graciously hosted by Germán Charrón at 9:30 am at his home in Corozal. As usual, we will have "pot-luck" food, so please bring something to contribute, and our fun filled raffle. We will all certainly have a great time. Please plan to attend.

Best regards,

Ray Jerome
President, HSPR



Renealmia sp., El Yunque rainforest.