



Malaysian Rose

By José Abreu Deliz, HSPR President, and Héctor Méndez Caratini, HSPR Vice President

Part One: Pre-Conference Tour of Malaysia, (July 11-14, 2010) By José Abreu Deliz

After a very long trip (24 hour flight time), I reached Kuala Lumpur International Airport at night and was very tired. Clearing customs was surprisingly fast considering the huge number of incoming passengers. After customs, I was met by a City State Tour representative who arranged for my transfer to our base hotel at the “golden triangle” of the city.

Since I was one day early, I had the opportunity to wander around the area and was surprised by the size of the city, its varied architecture



Rubber tree being tapped at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, in Kepong, Kuala Lumpur.



The pre-conference tour bus and guide.

and the huge, modern shopping centers.

On the initial day of the tour we visited The Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, in Kepong, Kuala Lumpur. There we had our first “stress test”; we hiked through what was one of the first rubber plantations in Malaysia, according to one of the Institute’s staff. The trail extended for several miles ascending to an elevation of 900 meters. A canopy walk was available at the top of the mountain.

After recovering from the “stress test”, we visited the institute’s museum. It was a well kept, simple but very illustrative collection relating to Malaysia’s natural history. Later we went to a typical coffee shop style eatery for lunch; my first

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Dates to Remember

- HSPR Meeting, 10:00 am, Sunday, September 12, 2010. Home of Tita and Jorge Matta, Caimito, PR.
- HSPR Meeting, 10:00 am, Sunday, December 5, 2010. Farm of Bob and Gildreth Castro, Adjuntas, PR.

Malaysian Rose (continued)



Striking heliconia arrangement at the Putrajaya Flower and Garden Festival, Malaysia.

encounter with “fire by the oral route”. Bryan was pleased, as we found out during the rest of the trip.

After lunch, we boarded our bus to visit the Putrajaya Flower and Garden Festival, a yearly event which extends from July 10-18.

It consisted of an exuberant display of tropical flowers (this year, heliconias were the theme flower). All competitive arrangements were based on heliconias. The arrangements ranged from regular size to huge; and from simple to very complex and futuristic (including one in the shape of a peacock, covered in full by *H. wagneriana* bracts). The cultivars used for the arrangements were common to us, except for variants of *H. mariae* (like ‘Bushmaster’). We found out then and there that we were special guests of the festival organizers and were treated to a typical local dinner. A pleasant surprise!

On July 13th, after breakfast, we boarded our bus to the city of Malacca.

After a few stops to buy garden implements, etc, we reached Alor Gojah, Malacca – site of Desa Paku House and Garden (home of Mr. Mushlim Musa),



A fantastic “peacock” made with heliconia bracts, at the Putrajaya Flower and Garden Festival, Malaysia.

the first organized collection of zingiberales in Malaysia.

There we had an interesting presentation by our host regarding his collections and about the characteristics and building specifications of his unique, typical Malaccan house.

We then toured his beautiful, well kept garden and tried to identify his specimens, especially a very healthy clump of *H. solomonensis* in bloom with lots of fruits, but no seeds. After visiting the garden and buildings of the complex, we went back into the house (shoeless) for a very extensive typical, mainly



Mushlim Musa’s beautiful traditional Malaccan style house, Alor Gojah, Malacca.

vegetarian, dinner full of surprises.



Carla Black with some “potted” baobab trees at the Lion Mong Nursery, Yong Peng Johore, Malaysia.

On July 14th, the last day of the tour, we headed to Lian Mong Nursery, at Yong Peng Johore, Malaysia. There we saw an extensive collection of ornamentals ranging from small plants to

shrubs, trees, palms, and even a few heliconias. The main attraction of the day was a visit to a durian plantation, where we, especially Bryan, had the opportunity to taste many different kinds of durian varieties. After getting full on durian and mangosteen, we crossed the bridge over the South China Sea to Singapore to attend the 16th Heliconia Society International Conference.

Malaysian Rose (continued)

Part Two: The XVI Heliconia Society International Conference, Singapore

By Héctor Méndez Caratini

The HSI Conference was held from July 15-18 at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, in Singapore. Registration was held on Thursday, July 15th and the Ice Breaker Reception was later that evening, at the Promenade Terrace. Our delegation was the largest one. It consisted of seven persons: Dr. Abreu Déliz, Mr. Héctor Méndez Caratini and his wife Dr. Annette López de Méndez, Dr. Bryan Brunner, Dr. Duane Kolterman, and Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Melania Onufry. The second largest group was from Australia, with six HSI members.



HSI conference attendees receive a preview of the futuristic Gardens by the Bay project in downtown Singapore.

During the first day of talks (Friday, July 16th), several presentations regarding plants in the order of Zingiberales were given in the hotel's Canary Room. HSI President Anders Lindstrom (from Nong Nooch Tropical Botanical Gardens, in Thailand) gave the Welcome Address. Dr. W. John Kress (from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC) followed up with the Keynote Address, titled "The evolutionary mosaic of heliconias and their hummingbird pollinators".

Afterwards, Dr. Jana Leong-Skornickova (from Singapore Botanic Gardens) spoke on "The genus *Curcuma*: A beautiful nightmare". HSPR member Dr. Duane A. Kolterman (from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus) lectured on "An introduc-



A view of the Singapore skyline from the solar panels on the roof of the Marina Barrage.

tion to botanical nomenclature". Renowned Australian expert Alan Carle (from The Botanical Ark) followed up by talking about "Flowers, fruits and flavours in verdant jungles". Dr. Kress, again, addressed the members on "The evolution and classification of the Zingiberales, with special emphasis on the family Zingiberaceae".

In the afternoon session, Carla Black presented an audio visual presentation of her new discoveries, titled "The heliconias of Panama and Costa Rica". Mr. Anders Lindstrom gave his report on "Ex situ conservation of Zingiberales". Costus specialist Dave Skinner (from Le Jardin Ombragé, Florida) gave his illustrated lecture on his several field trips to Costa



A view of the amazing Singapore Garden Festival displays.

Malaysian Rose (continued)



Conference attendees enjoying the traditional HSI Gala Banquet Dinner and Auction.

Rica, Panama, Ecuador and Peru, titled “New *costus* discoveries in the neotropics”.

After the coffee break, taxonomist Dr. David Lorence (from National Tropical Botanical Garden, Hawaii) informed us on an “Overview of HSI Conservation Centers”. I gave the last two presentations of the day; the first one on “The *Heliconia* Society of Puerto Rico”, followed up by another one on “Using Adobe Lightroom® software program for archiving digital photographs on your computer”.

The next day, Saturday, we had two guided field trips. The first one to Gardens by the Bay and Marina Barrage -an impressive ongoing utopian project, scheduled to open next year in late 2011. From there, we were able to appreciate a spectacular view of the city’s skyline. The second trip was to the Third Singapore Garden Festival. It was their traditional annual flower show held at the gigantic indoor Convention Center.

On the last day of conferences, Sunday, July 18th, Dr. Suchita Jain (from the College for Women, India) started out the morning by speaking on “Ecological status of Zingiberaceae in the forest areas of Rajasthan (India) with special reference to ethnobotany”. David Lorence gave an interesting talk on “Control of BBTV in Hawaii”. Dr. Jana Leong-Skornickova spoke on “Pre-launch preview of the book ‘The Ginger Garden – Singapore Botanic Gardens Pictorial Pocket Guide 2’ with a special

surprise for all delegates: She gave us all a complementary copy of her beautiful book!

Jan Hintze (flower grower from Australia) followed up after the coffee break. She lectured us on “Collection, identification and then comes cultivation”. Greg Hambali (from Indonesia) followed up with “Breeding for better looking calatheas”. Our HSPR webmaster and newsletter editor, Dr. Bryan Brunner informed us on “*Heliconia* cultivar registration: New cultivars”. Dave Skinner gave the last presentation of the day, a “Workshop on the HSI website”. Closing comments followed.

The board of directors unanimously elected Dr. Kress as the new HSI President. It was also announced that the next HSI International Conference would be held in 2012, in Panama. Carla Black is the official HSI coordinator for this event. She will be leading the pre-conference tour to inland Panama – the site of many of her discoveries. The post-conference tour will be to Colombia – the country with the largest amount of endemic *heliconias* in the world, with over 100 different species! So, start making your plans to attend. It promises to be another great event.

The traditional Gala Banquet Dinner and Auction were held later that evening at the hotel’s Paradise Room. The dynamic duo of Victor Lee and Carol



Our sincere thanks to conference organizer Victor Lee for a fantastic HSI Conference!

Kan (from City State Travel) are to be commended for having coordinated to perfection such a memorable convention.

Malaysian Rose (continued)

Part Three: Post-Conference Tour to Borneo (July 19–28, 2010)

By Héctor Méndez Caratini

A multicultural group of twenty individuals, from six different countries, participated in this year's HSI post-conference tour titled "The Botanical Treasures of Borneo". Ten of us had previously met, in 2008, during the last HSI trip to the heart of the Peruvian Amazon. This time, there were five Australians, five



The group enjoyed excellent local food at the Top Spot Restaurant, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Puerto Ricans, three from Thailand, one from Panama, our guide from Borneo, and the rest of the group from Hawaii, California and Florida. On July 19th we arrived by plane to Kuching, from Singapore. That

night, we had a welcoming dinner at the Top Spot Restaurant overlooking the city. Ch'ien Lee, our experienced, professional guide (a naturalist and renowned

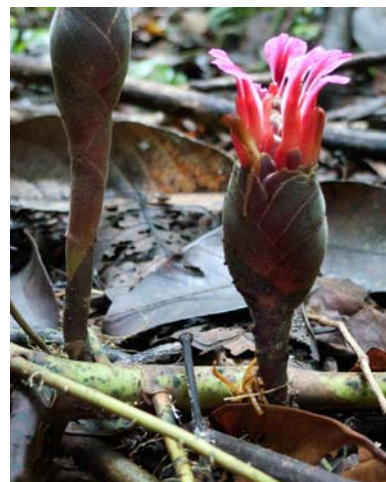


Our excellent guide in Borneo, naturalist and photographer Ch'ien Lee.

wildlife photographer from Borneo, with more than 18 previous group trips to the jungles), did a wonderful job. He led us through eight unforgettable days of walking through the trails of a virgin tropical paradise.

On our first day (July 20th) of hiking, we visited Kubah National Park. This is the place where 19th Century

Italian botanist Odoardo Beccari made his jungle camp and famous discoveries at Mount Matang. We saw lots of palms, costus and gingers. The lush tropical scenery is similar to our El Yunque Rain Forest.



Inflorescence of *Etlingera velutina* var. *longipedunculata* in Kubah National Park, Borneo.



Heading out to the Bako National Park in northwest Borneo.

Early next morning, we headed to the coastal village of Bako, where Buntal Bay fisher-



The beautiful view of the Gunung Santubong mountain from Bako National Park.

Malaysian Rose (continued)



Dave Skinner hiking through the *kerangas* forest at the Bako National Forest.

silvered leaf monkeys, long-tailed macaques, green vine snakes and wild bearded boars (*Sus barbatus*) (PHOTO: HMC bearded boars.jpg). Afterwards, we headed across the bay to a Buntal Village, to have dinner by a sea-

men took us in their small boats, to Bako National Park, in the South China Sea. There, we were able to hike through different habitats, including mangrove forest, *kerangas* forest, and open scrubland on the plateau. We saw several carnivorous pitcher plants (*Nepenthes* species), as well as an unusual amount of rare plants, such as: *Ploirium alternifolium*, the spectacular stemless Joey Palm

(*Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*), and others. Bako's abundant wildlife impressed us. We saw the endemic proboscis monkey,

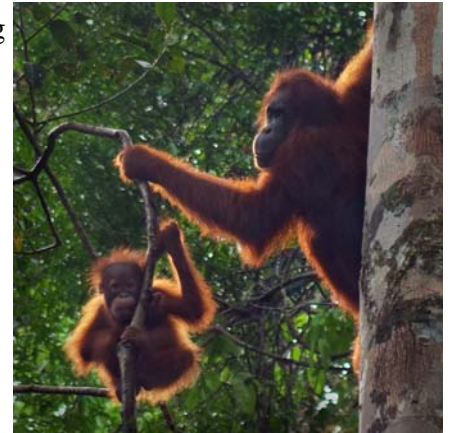


The pitcher plant (*Nepenthes rafflesiana*) growing in the Bako National Forest, northwestern Borneo.

side wharf restaurant.

On July 22nd, our van drove us to Semengoh Forest Reserve. There we were able to see the orange colored Bornean orangutans emerge from the dense forest for

their early morning feeding. It was very impressive to have been so close to these semi-wild animals, during their daily routine. On the way back, we visited the Taman Ethnobotanical Garden, full of exotic tropical palms. Later on, we had another two-hour hike



Bornean orangutans at the Semengoh Forest Reserve. "Orang-utan" means "forest people" in the Malay language.



HSPR President José Abreu negotiating a treacherous log bridge in the Borneo rainforest.

through the neighboring forest. Afterwards, we visited a local fruit market and headed to a dragon fruit and heliconia farm, owned by Mr. Voon Boon Hoe.

The next day we woke up at 4am, checked out of our hotel in Kuching, and boarded a flight to Miri. After checking in at the beautiful Borneo



Lovely wild specimens of the Joey Palm (*Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*) in the Bako National Forest.

Tropical Rainforest Resort, we were driven by bus to Lambir Hills National Park. This na-



Delicious magenta dragon fruit from the farm of Voon Boon Hoe.

Malaysian Rose (continued)



***Etlingera coccinea* inflorescence at the Lambir Hills National Park, near Miri, Sarawak, Borneo.**

hiked for another three hours through virgin rain forest, saw several spectacular waterfalls, as well as endemic palms and herbaceous plants. Among these plants were: *Etlingera coccinea*, *Hornstedtia reticulata*, *Hornstedtia leonurus*, *Plagiostachys crocydocalyx*, *Amomum coriaceum*, *Amomum gyrolophos*, *Tamijia* sp. (an endemic species), *Scaphochlamys* sp., *Boesenbergia* sp., *Amorphophallus* sp., *Homalomea* sp., *Nepenthes bicalcarata* (a native pitcher plant), *Musa campestris*, and many,



***Plagiostachys crocydocalyx* growing at the Lambir Hills National Park, near Miri, Sarawak, Borneo.**



Aerial view of the Borneo rainforest on the short flight from Miri to Mulu.

tional park is renowned as having the highest tree diversity in the world, with 1,175 species recorded in a 52 hectare plot. After lunch, we

many more.

The next morning we woke up at 6am and after breakfast, headed back for the air-

port. This time, for another short inland flight to Gunung Mulu National Park. This World Heritage Site is Sarawak's largest and arguably most famous national park. It is known for having an outstanding biodiversity, with over 3,500 species of flowering plants and an extensive limestone cave system. We checked in at park headquarters.



The unusual inflorescences of *Zingiber longipedunculatum*, Gunung Mulu National Park.

By sunset we reached the entrance to the enormous Deer Cave. There, we were able to experience the unique spectacle of seeing huge swarms of thousands upon thousands of Wrinkle-Lipped Bats (*Tadarida plicata*), spiral out for their nocturnal foraging. We returned late in the evening, fulfilled after having walked all day, to



The brilliant yellow flowers of *Etlingera fimbriobracteata*, Gunung Mulu National Park.

After lunch, we proceeded on a leisurely walk along the scenic trails of Paku River, where we were able to observe a large assortment of unusual gingers growing in the wild, such as: *Etlingera baramensis*, *Etlingera fimbriobracteata*, *Etlingera kenyalang*, *Hornstedtia tormentosa*, *Zingiber longipedunculatum*, and the unique *Amorphophallus julaiihii*.



The foul-smelling inflorescence of fly-pollinated *Amorphophallus julaiihii*.

Malaysian Rose (continued)



Hundreds of thousands of Wrinkle-Lipped Bats (*Tadarida plicata*) emerging from Deer Cave in a giant spiral formation.

trails, along the banks of the pristine Melinau Paku River, until we arrived at the entrance to the Wind Cave. There, a local guide was waiting and guided us through one of the most spectacular cave chambers in the park. Later on, we had lunch next to the Clear-water Cave, where some of our folks had a refreshing swim in the crystal-clear cold waters emerging from under the mountain.



Elder of the Orang Ulu tribe.

Afterwards, small, motorized boats drove us



The HSI post-conference group at Batu Bungan, by the Melinau River.

our park headquarters.

On July 25th, after an early breakfast, we embarked on an all day strenuous walk. This time we hiked up and down Mulu Summit

to Batu Bungan, a small Penan village, located along the Melinau River. There, we were met by members of the Orang Ulu tribe (known as the “long ear”), also meaning: up-river or interior

people. They were living in a longhouse. We bought small souvenirs from them, before having them drive us back, in their motorized canoes, to our lodge. Nothing could have been more exotic than that. That evening, Ch’ien took us for another long walk, along one of the nearby trails, to see and hear an amazing assortment of colorful frogs, stick insects (*Phoebaticus ser-ratipes*), colonies of millipedes (*Pseudodesmus* sp.), snakes, giant forest ants (*Camponotus gi-gas*) and luminescent mushrooms. The small lizards barked (like dogs) all night.

The next day, July 26th, we had another full day excursion up the Paku River Valley, into the foothills of Mount Mulu massif. There we were able to observe the impressive lowland forest, with towering emerging trees,



A colony of orange millipedes (*Pseudodesmus* sp.) .



The author in the Canopy Walkway, Gunung Mulu National Forest, Sarawak, Borneo.

Malaysian Rose (continued)

and hear the dramatic whooshing sound of the huge Rhinoceros Hornbill birds (*Buceros rhinoceros*), beating their enormous wings in flight - resembling the sounds of ancient pre-historic dinosaurs! We had lunch on the shores of a crystal clear mountain creek, before heading back to park headquarters.

On our last day in Mulu, July 27th, we woke up for an early bird 6 o'clock breakfast. Next, we walked to the entrance of the Canopy Walkway. There we embarked on an exciting 45 minute walk (¾ kilometer), swinging on cables, above the tree tops. From this high venture point, we were able to see everything that lay beneath us.

Upon our return to the canteen, for another morning cup of coffee, a young girl from Brussels informed me that a member from her European group had just had a terrible accident. The person had dived into the tropical waters of Clearwater Cave (where we had swam two days earlier) and broke his neck, when his head hit an underwater rock. While we were at the airport that afternoon, waiting for our return flight to Kuching, we saw when a yellow colored emergency ambulance helicopter arrived, to pick up the injured hiker.

The next day, we unfortunately found out, through a local newspaper, that the tourist had arrived dead on arrival to Miri's hospital. It only goes on to show how fortunate we had been, as a group, and the need to respect nature at all times. It still is a savage, untamed world out there. That night, we thanked God and had a farewell dinner at our favorite traditional Top Spot Restaurant.

After ten days full of remarkable experiences, on July 28th we all embarked on our long journey back home (to the "other" side of the planet), full of unforgettable anecdotes and memories of camaraderie. We're ALL looking forward on seeing each other again, in July 2012 in Panama and Colombia (the next HSI Conference). Hope you can join us for more action packed memorable adventures.

From Our Last Meeting

By Héctor Méndez Caratini, HSPR Vice President

Dr. José Abreu Deliz gave us the official welcome. Approximately 80 persons attended the June meeting, which was held at Isabelita and Frank Wadsworth's exotic country house in the mountains of Comerio. Isabelita gave us the formal welcome to her private botanical garden and offered us a tour of her impressive collection. She has many varieties of heliconias and bromeliads, as well as a growing collection of Musaceae (bananas). There are also over 100 varieties of tropical fruit trees growing at this 6½ acre farm.

Reily Rodríguez gave the official report of our finances. Currently we have \$2,647.00 in the account – the amount left after paying for expenses related to income tax. This is without taking into account the amount from the June meeting, in which several hundred dollars were generated from the raffle and membership dues.

Gilberto Rodríguez and Melín Rullán, our invited guests, gave us a brief report of Casa Pueblo - a pioneering communal project in Adjuntas. Their world famous Bosque del Pueblo is located at over 3,000 feet above sea level and has 150 cuerdas of virgin forest. There are several rivers which have their origins here, at their Monte Olimpia. They also cultivate a gourmet coffee called Madre Isla.

Several HSPR members responded to the call and donated Zingiberales to this meritorious project. Dr Raymond Jerome gave them a *H. ramonensis xanthotricha*; Carmen Iris Ruiz an Indonesian wax ginger; and I donated a *H. chartacea* 'Giant Sexy Scarlet', a *H. regalis* 'Barnum and Bailey', a *H. griggsiana* 'Blue Moon' and a *H. champneiana* 'Splash'. We trust other members will soon follow our example.

Bob Castro recommended that HSPR should have it's own credit card and PayPal account to pay for the society's expenses. This would be preferable to having private members pay for the services and soliciting a reimbursement afterwards. The motion was unanimously approved.

For the September meeting, I volunteered to give the

**HELICONIA SOCIETY OF
PUERTO RICO, INC.**

www.heliconiasocietypr.org

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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.

From Our Last Meeting (continued)

next audiovisual presentation on the highlights of our trip to the HSI 2010 Singapore Conference. As stated previously, the December meeting will be held at Gildreth and Bob Castro's HSI/HSPR Conservation Center, in Cerro Guilarte, Adjuntas.

For the Show & Tell session one of our members brought a hairy *H. regalis* 'Barnum and Bailey' inflorescence, as well as an "unnamed" pendent inflorescence, which had characteristics similar to a *H. magnifica* (but much chubbier). Mr. Luis Vega followed up by treating us to a very interesting, and well attended, presentation on the annonas with medicinal uses.

Lunch was followed by a succulent "lechón asao a la varita" and two "pavochones" (both roasted in situ, by local jíbaros at the farm), "arroz con gandules", and the whole gourmet country style traditional menu. We are all very grateful to Isabelita and Frank Wadsworth's generosity. Truly a memorable meeting full of friendship.

Nobody was allowed to leave the premises until the raffle concluded. Our members, and their invited guests, won many plants, including: *H. wagneriana*, *H. caribaea* 'Chartreuse', a red *H. bihai*, an orange *H. stricta*, *H. ramonensis* var. *xanthotricha*, *H. nutans* 'Purple Twister', and many many more colorful bromeliads, anthuriums and other collectables.

President's Corner

Saludos compañeros, en vísperas de nuestra tercera reunión del 2010, quiero recordarles lo importante que es la asistencia de todos.

En esta reunión trataremos de resumir los puntos importantes de la Décimo Sexta Conferencia de HSI, en Singapur. Y lo que nos incumbe como institución con intereses afines.

Quiero recordarles nuestro compromiso con proveer especímenes a la institución Casa Pueblo, en Adjuntas. Me tomo la libertad de sugerirles que nos provean una pequeña lista (no tiene que ser en papel grande) de las variedades saludables que tienes disponibles para tal obra meritoria. Hablaremos de los detalles en la reunión del 12 de septiembre.

Nos reuniremos en la residencia de nuestro entusiasta compañero Jorge Matta y su esposa Tita. Recuerden que el formato sigue siendo oficialmente "Pot Luck"/"Del Sorullo". Por lo tanto, favor de traer algo de picar.

Lamentamos informar el deceso de uno de nuestros miembros fundadores, el Dr. Bob Lankford, el pasado 23 de mayo. Qué en paz descanse.

Saludos,

Dr. José Abreu Deliz
Presidente