



AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TRAVEL STUDY PROGRAM

*Costa Rica:
Gardens, Rainforests
and Orchids*

February 19 – 27, 2009

With AHS Host Tom Underwood





Dear AHS Travelers and Friends,

I invite you to join us as we explore the boundless diversity of Costa Rica. For eight days we will travel through the mountains and along the picturesque Pacific coast, visiting private gardens, wildlife and rainforest preserves, botanical gardens, and other local highlights.

Costa Rica is one of the most serene countries in the world. The tremendous natural diversity of plants and animals, as well as the rich culture and friendliness of the Costa Rican people, will ensure that you will have an unforgettable experience on this magnificent tour.

The more than 500,000 plant species that are found in this small country represent nearly four percent of the total species estimated worldwide. Costa Rica has the richest orchid flora in Central America, with more than 1,400 identified species, so it is hardly surprising that the national flower of Costa Rica is an orchid.

As Executive Director of the American Horticultural Society, it is my great pleasure to join you as the AHS Host for this trip. Prior to joining the AHS, I worked for 20 years with the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and have nearly 30 years of leadership experience in the horticulture industry. Having spent most of my horticultural career in a subtropical climate, I look forward to exploring the Costa Rican landscape with you.

I am also delighted to work in partnership with Mary Kroening, who will serve as the escort for the trip. Offering over 10 years of experience with garden-related travel as owner of Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours, Mary has designed this tour with AHS travelers in mind. The itinerary is filled with once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for you to enjoy the diverse horticulture, landscapes, and culture of Costa Rica.

Sincerely,

Tom Underwood
Executive Director



AHS Executive Director Tom Underwood will be your host.





Itinerary Highlights

Thursday, February 19 – Depart for Costa Rica San José Area and Central Valley

D

Upon your arrival at the Xandari Resort & Spa, the afternoon will be free for you to enjoy the spa (advanced appointment necessary) or to explore the gardens and waterfalls surrounding the resort. We will have a welcome dinner in the evening to meet everyone.

This resort will be our lodging for the first four nights. This tropical paradise comprises 22 individually designed villas nestled on a 40-acre plantation overlooking the Central Valley of Costa Rica. At an elevation of 3,900 feet, Xandari offers a near-perfect temperature of around 70 degrees Fahrenheit throughout the year. Each spacious villa is surrounded by gardens and has a large terrace, ideal for viewing the sunset and lights of the valley at night.

Friday, February 20 – Central Valley

B, L, D

Today will begin with the exclusive opportunity to visit Linda Vista,

the PanAmerican Seed's breeding facility for flower seed production. PanAmerican Seed is one of the world's leading breeders and producers of flower seed, marketing its products to both wholesale and retail distributors around the globe. In fact, the seeds for many of America's most popular bedding plants originate from this state-of-the-art facility.

In the afternoon, we will tour a breathtaking private garden belonging to Ileana Terán, the founder and president of SACRO—Saving Costa Rica's Orchids, an organization dedicated to maintaining natural habitats where orchids grow wild. Ms. Terán has one of the largest private collections of orchids in Central America. The combination of Ms. Terán's artistic attention to detail and her love of tropical plants has created perhaps the most enchanting private garden in Costa Rica.

Saturday, February 21 – Central Valley

B, L, D

After a wonderful continental breakfast and a leisurely morning at





Xandari, we will depart for La Paz Waterfall Gardens. The La Paz Waterfall Gardens is the epitome of Costa Rica, representing the country's lush tropical rain forests, swift-flowing rivers, spectacular waterfalls, birds, butterflies, and flowers, with nearly two miles of serpentine paved trails winding through both cloud forest and rainforest, allowing visitors to experience and photograph the waterfalls and the forest flora and fauna. While visiting La Paz, you will also have a chance to explore the world's largest enclosed butterfly observatory covering 18,000 square feet with more than 20 different species



of butterflies, and one of the largest collections of bromeliads in the country. We will return to Xandari mid-afternoon to have some time to relax before dinner.

Sunday, February 22 – Central Valley

B, L, D

Our first stop today will be the famous lush gardens surrounding the Hotel Bougainvillea in the province of Heredia. These gardens are abundantly planted with tropicals of all kinds, including an incredible array of bromeliads.

After lunch, we will visit the Botanic Gardens Conservation International's Else Kientzler Botanical Garden in Sarchi, featuring more than 2,000 different plants from around the world. Spread over 17 acres, the botanical garden is nestled at the foot of Volcano Póas in Costa Rica's Central Valley. Here, you will find several diverse theme and habitat gardens, as well as an excellent collection of woody trees in danger of extinction.

Monday, February 23 – Pacific Coast Area

B, L, D

Today we depart for the central Pacific Coast to visit the world-famous Manuel Antonio National Park. En route we will tour



Orchimex, one of the most successful orchid producers in the world. With over 22 acres of greenhouses for production, Orchimex is one of the largest exporters of cut orchids in the Western Hemisphere, with dendrobiums, oncidiums, and vandas as its primary flowers for export.

We will then continue on to Arenas del Mar, our home for the next three nights, arriving just in time to view the remarkable sunsets this location is renowned for. Located adjacent to Manuel Antonio National Park, Arenas Del Mar is a beach and nature resort on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica.

Tuesday, February 24 – Arenas del Mar B, L, D

This morning will begin with a guided visit to Manuel Antonio National Park. Manuel Antonio is the smallest national park in Costa Rica, established as a national park in 1972. Its incredibly rich biodiversity and beautiful white sand beaches make it one of the country's most popular destinations. A haven for wildlife of all kinds, the park is home to three species of monkeys, including the endangered squirrel monkey as well as the white-faced monkey and the howler monkey.



Wednesday, February 25 – Arenas del Mar B

Today is completely at your leisure. You are free to explore the surrounding area or to take part in optional activities such as the exhilarating Costa Rican zip line or canopy tour. There are many wonderful optional activities at this location, and people who like to be busy will have no problem filling their day. Dinner will be on your own this evening, but we will organize a group meal for those that would like to dine with fellow travelers.

Thursday, February 26 – San José B, L, D

Prior to our morning departure back to San José, we will have breakfast at the Villa. We will also have a few surprises along the return route, including a visit to an orchid farm and a local

retail nursery. Our lodging will be back at Xandari Resort with an early afternoon arrival to allow time to explore the gardens or visit the spa. We will also celebrate our final night in Costa Rica with a farewell dinner at the private home of Ileana Terán in Tres Rios, located in the foothills above San José.

Friday, February 27 – Depart for home

B

Breakfast at the resort and transfers to airport to catch flights home.



Trip Cost & Conditions

This trip has been organized by Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours, L.L.C. and the American Horticultural Society, and both reserve the right to make necessary changes to the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances. Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours will provide details on necessary supplies and logistics for this trip when the departure date gets closer. You will receive confirmation of your reservation by mail within 30 days of receipt of your reservation. Final payment is due 90 days prior to trip departure and all invoices will be sent in advance of this date.

Trip subject to cancellation if it does not meet the minimum number of travelers by December 12, 2008.

Land-only Package Price

Single-room Occupancy **\$5,895**
Per Person Double Occupancy** **\$4,695**

**Cannot be guaranteed, and if none available, you will be responsible for single-room occupancy.

Tour price includes:

- private transportation with driver and air-conditioning
- private botanical in-country guide
- entrance fees pertinent to itinerary
- all lodging as specified above
- local taxes on lodging and meals
- tips for local guides, maids, porters, waiters, etc.
- breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D) where indicated on the itinerary
- cooler with ice, bottled water, soft drinks, and snacks on the bus at all times
- \$500 tax-deductible donation to the American Horticultural Society

Tour price does NOT include:

- round-trip airfare
- airport departure tax (USD \$26 per person)
- tips for the guide and driver
- optional tours
- personal expenses
- alcoholic beverages
- any service or activity not specified above

Passport

A passport is now mandatory to enter any foreign country and to return to the United States. Passport must be valid for six months beyond return date. Allow several months to obtain or renew a passport.

Refund Schedule

Final payment is due 90 days prior to trip departure. A full refund will be given up to 90 days prior to the departure date, minus a \$250 administrative fee. Once final payment is made, there are no refunds within 90 days of trip departure as airfare is booked at that time, and hotel non-refundable deposits have been paid. If we can re-sell the slot, we can offer a full refund minus the original deposit and airfare charges.

We must receive final payment by the deadline. We will not secure hotel and airline reservations without final payment, and those slots may be lost if not booked within 90 days prior to departure.

We highly recommend trip insurance, which includes cancellation and trip delay coverage, as well as baggage and medical coverage. Most trip insurance policies waive pre-existing conditions if you sign up for trip insurance within 15 days of sending in this registration form and paying your initial trip deposit.

Expectations of Participants

This tour will include onsite visits to private gardens, wildlife and rainforest preserves, national parks, local farms and botanical gardens. Please keep in mind that the very nature of an eco-tour will put us in out-of-the-way places. This means walking trails can be rough, uneven, or steep, and there is always a chance of encountering exotic insects and snakes.

You are traveling into a developing (Third World) country. Conditions are not the same as in the States. We stay in two beautiful spa resorts that are eco-lodge style nestled into the rainforest. However, that same rainforest that provides the up-close viewing of toucans and scarlet macaws may also bring unwanted insects up close as well. We will not lodge where mosquitoes are a problem. In Costa Rica, you will experience another culture, another climate, and see how people in another country live. The food is incredible, the culture is captivating, and the scenery is beyond belief.

We will dine in several restaurants during the tour. Although Costa Ricans are very accommodating, there are limits to meeting special dietary needs. Special foods and/or special preparation may not be available at each or any stop. Costa Ricans also serve meals at a much slower pace than in the States—so it is not uncommon for a meal to take longer than normal to be served.

Stay tuned for more details on these upcoming trips

Art and Gardens of the Netherlands

April 24–May 2, 2009

Gardens of Florence

May 22–30, 2009

Gardens of Chile

October 8–21, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE RESERVATIONS, CONTACT:

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