

August 2014

# Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden

*A Garden in a Valley on the Ocean*

A non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to the preservation of nature and its beauty

Dan Lutkenhouse, Founder



*Garden Co-Founder Pauline Lutkenhouse with Pat Sajak and Vanna White*

## HTBG on film and television

If you watch "Wheel of Fortune" regularly, then you know that the highly popular game show often leaves its familiar studio surroundings for exciting destinations across the country. You may also be aware that "Wheel of Fortune" is coming back for a third time to the Big Island of Hawaii.

Less known is the months of preparation it takes to make it all happen. Months ahead of auditioning contestants, Wheel of Fortune takes the time and expense to scout locations suitable to highlight the destination they are visiting. Hosts Pat Sajak and Vanna White are then (continued pg 2)

## HTBG on film and television

(continued from Cover) brought in to film promotional videos for the show and to give the TV audience a taste of what each location offers.

This year, the producers chose Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden as one place to showcase the lush natural beauty of Hawaii Island. Kona based location scout Nancy Erger first reached out to HTBG in January, and made her first exploratory walk through soon after.

Several subsequent visits also included producers and coordinators, who chose the best spots to film and also worked out the logistics of moving around a crew of over 40 and all the equipment they would need to film in three different areas. This was no easy task considering the terrain of our Garden Valley, and getting inside requires traveling down trails that descend about 90 ft. to the valley floor.

Because of this, tight shooting schedules and a large crew, HTBG was closed on Wednesday May 14th, to best accommodate the shoot. Fortunately, it was perfect day for filming and the crew and the Garden staff worked seamlessly together to move equipment and people to their posts and the filming proceeded efficiently over the course of several hours.



Seeing their operation up close was really quite impressive too. The whole team worked together effortlessly and although focused on their work, many took the time to stop

and pay respect to Garden Co-Founder Pauline Lutkenhouse who had come to watch. Executive Producer Harry Friedman spent a while speaking with us and Pat and Vanna also made time to chat and take pictures with us. All of us at HTBG express our thanks to Mr. Friedman and the entire team for choosing the Garden to promote Hawaii Island and the show, and also for the professionalism and class they showed throughout the process.

"Wheel of Fortune" will host and record the shows in September at the Waikoloa Hilton Resort. The Shows are scheduled to broadcast in November, the weeks of 11/3/14 and 11/10/14, and in February, the weeks of 2/9/15 and 2/16/15. Scenes from the Garden will appear throughout these weeks with a special closing segment about HTBG tentatively scheduled on 2/9/15.



Executive Producer Harry Friedman and Garden President Pauline Lutkenhouse

### More about HTBG in Television and Film

Also in May 2014, we were fortunate to host Dr. Niobe Thompson, a Canadian documentary filmmaker, anthropologist, and environmentalist. At the time, the Polynesian double-hulled voyaging canoes Hokulea and Hikianalia were in Hilo, one stop on their 47,000 nautical mile journey.

Niobe and his team came to film the canoes and the crew as part of what promises to be a fascinating PBS documentary "Human - The Miracle of a Species" which should air sometime in 2015. The film will explore how, in a time of natural disaster not witnessed since the extinction of the dinosaurs, humans emerged to settle the planet.

Niobe and team came to the Garden and spent the better part of two days shooting tropical scenes to be included in the film. We are glad that we could play a small part in this important study of our human origins.

## HTBG on film and television

In 2013 We were thrilled to host award-winning PBS documentary filmmaker David Grubin and his crew. Working on a documentary about dying languages and efforts to save them, they came to Hawaii to investigate the successful resurgence of the Hawaiian language and the impact it has had on the Hawaiian People.



Award-winning PBS documentary filmmaker David Grubin and his crew on the Ocean Trail

They used their time in the Garden to film some establishing shots and scenic shots with the narrator to use with voice-overs.

We would like to thank Mr. Grubin for allowing the Garden to be a part of this important film and wish him much success with this project.

We were also visited in summer 2013 by Mezamahi TV from Japan. Mezamahi is Japanese for alarm clock and it is a morning tv show along the lines of "Good Morning America."

They came to Hawaii Island to film several three minute long segments about the island's highlights. We are grateful that they chose to film here and for the exposure the Garden will have on Japanese TV.



Mezamahi TV filming at the Garden Gate

In October 2013, World Media came to the Garden and filmed a two minute spot for their Official Best of Hawaii 2013 TV production. They chose Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden as the Best Botanical Garden in Hawaii! The Official Best of Hawaii - 2013 aired on KGBM Hawaii and on KCBS or KCAL Los Angeles in December. ■

### Staff Update

At the end of June, the staff of HTBG gathered together to bid a fond farewell to Mr. Michael DeMey, who after twenty years as our Orchid Specialist has decided to retire to spend more time with his beautiful wife Mary Anne.

Michael has not only been instrumental in the development and maintenance of our Orchid collection and display, but has personally trained each of our shuttle drivers to do our cruise ship excursions. He has also had a hand in almost every project we have done over the years. We will miss him greatly and wish him well in the next chapter of his life.

The good news is that we have already have our new Orchid Specialist! For the past two months, Gardener Ryan Atiz has been training alongside Michael, learning everything he knows. Congratulations to Ryan, we know that you will continue to keep our orchid display as beautiful as Michael did for the delight of all who visit.

## The Cannonball Tree *Couroupita guianensis*

*Couroupita guianensis* of the Lecythidaceae Family, otherwise known as the Cannonball tree, delights our visitors each summer with large colorful flowers and huge spherical fruit resembling rust colored Cannonballs.

This tall, fast growing tree from South America and Trinidad is cauliflorous; the flowers and fruit emerge from the trunk on numerous interlacing and leafless stems up to four feet long. The tree has evolved into this habit to facilitate pollination by bats and Carpenter bees.



The flowers are in clusters and have six pink-red forward curving petals. Numerous stamens and staminodes (male parts) inhabit a petal-like column that is bent over like a taco shell. Inside the shell, is a centrally located blunt pistil (female part) surrounded by stamen. At night the flowers are fragrant and attract bees or bats that will pollinate the flower as they move inside the structure.

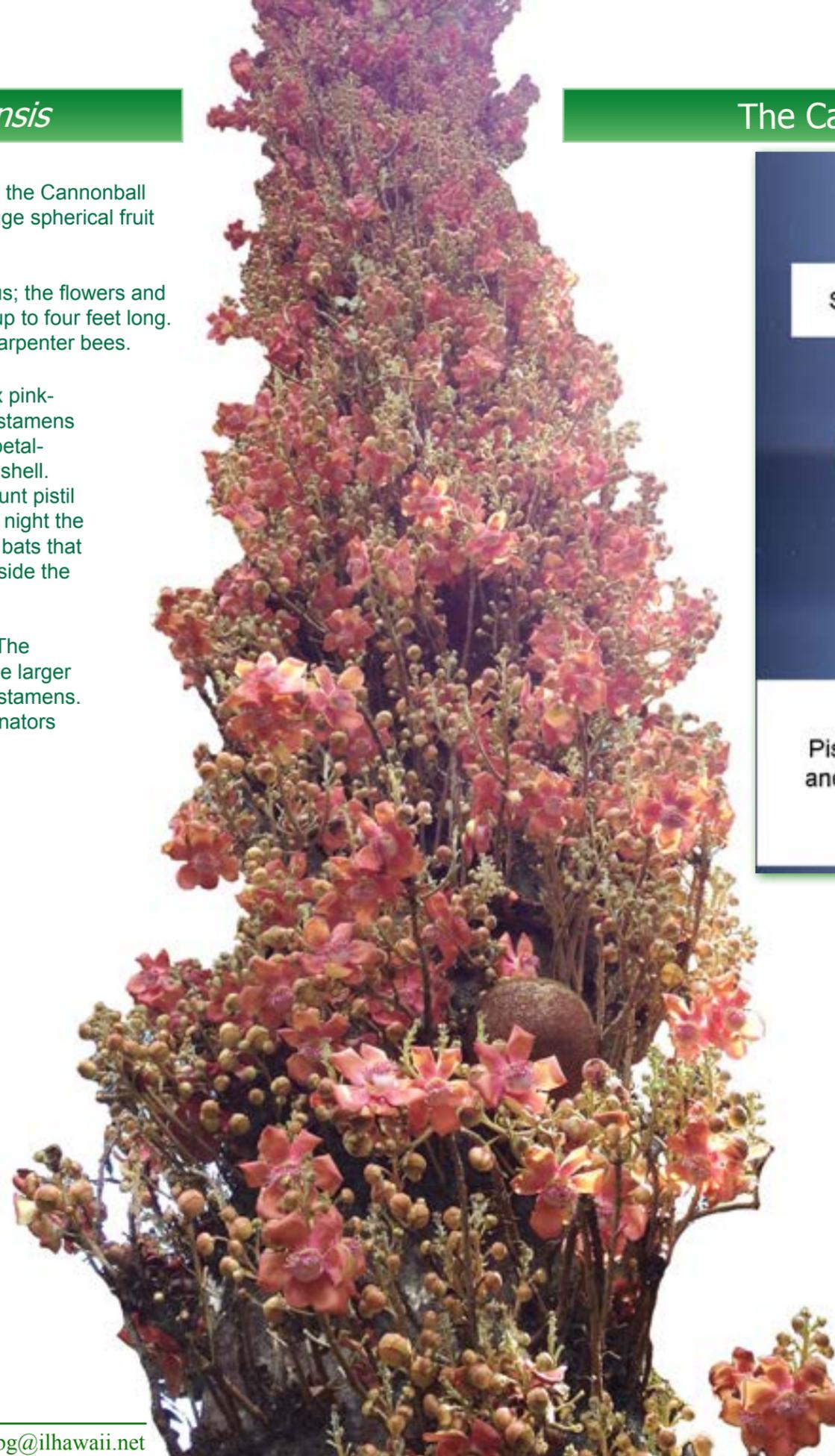
This structure is peculiar only to members of the Lecythidaceae family. The flowers have no nectar; instead the pollinators feed on the pollen from the larger sterile staminodes while getting coated in viable pollen from the smaller stamens. Typically only one or two flowers per cluster will produce fruit as the pollinators must carry pollen from another tree for proper fertilization.

Not only are the fruits cannonball shaped, they also have a tendency to make artillery like sounds as they sway in the wind or when ripe, fall to the ground from as high as 100 ft. When they fall, they often burst open revealing many seeds in a green pulp that emits a skunky kind of odor. The odor attracts animals that will eat the pulp and seeds and disperse the seeds through their dung. The fruits are not eaten by people, but extracts are used by Native Amazonians to treat a variety of conditions, including inflammation, malaria, skin conditions and toothache.

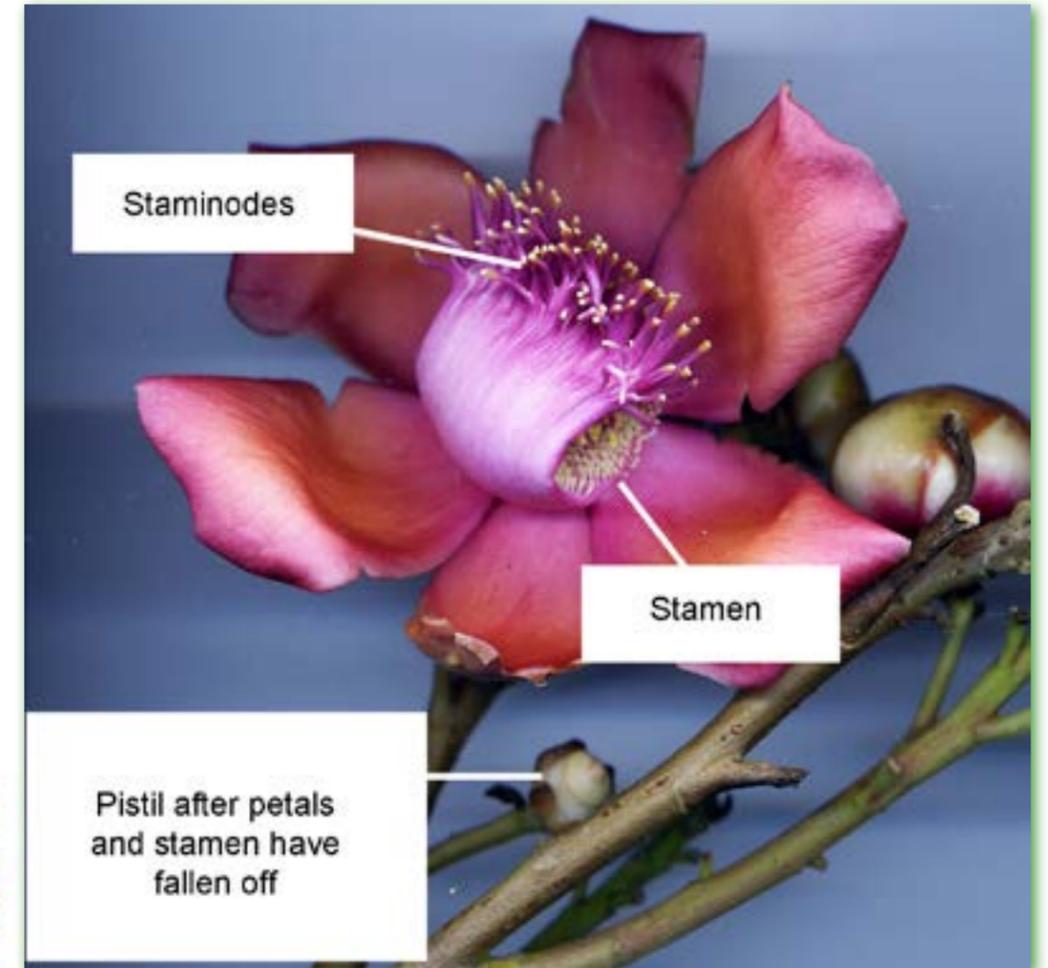
Our Cannonball Trees are located near the Orchid Garden on the Torch Ginger Trail and its fanciful flowers and fruit can be seen most times of the year.

Although native to the western hemisphere, there is evidence that the tree has been in India for thousands of years and today can be found growing near Hindu temples. It is also found in Thailand where it is confused with the Bodhi tree, *Ficus religiosa*, where the Buddha sat as he reached enlightenment.

*Couroupita guianensis* is one of only three species in the genus *Couroupitia*. There is also *Couroupita nicaraguensis*, which we have recently acquired, and *Couroupita subsessilis*. ■



## The Cannonball Tree *Couroupita guianensis*



## Garden Collections Updates

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Back in 1990, Garden Founder Dan Lutkenhouse planted three specimens of *Phenakospermum guyannense*, the South American Travelers Tree, here in Onomea Valley.

Also called “The Big Palulu” or “Patuju Gigante”, the plant is a monotypic genus native to Northern South America. It used to be in the Musaceae (Banana) Family but is now more accurately placed in the Sterlitziaceae (Bird-of-Paradise) Family.



*Phenakospermum guyannense*

While common in its native environs, the plant is not often seen in cultivation. *Phenakospermum* is clumping or slightly running and resembles a giant upright Heliconia sometimes 30 to 40 ft tall. Its banana-like leaves, among the largest in the world, have been used as roofing material by the Amazonian people.

This past Autumn marked the first time that the plant has revealed its truly remarkable inflorescence at HTBG. Large stalks emerged conspicuously above the leaves reaching a height of twelve feet. Boat-shaped floral bracts, very similar to the bracts of the related Bird-of-Paradise, appeared distichously (on opposite sides), 5 or 6 on each side, along the stalks.

The real flowers emerge from the bracts just before dark and are receptive for just one night, but the inflorescence can produce flowers for as long as two months. If the flowers are pollinated it will produce seeds that look like Halloween Candy similar to Bird of Paradise seeds; black with orange hair on them. The seeds are not considered safe for human consumption.

When the flowering is done and seed set, the individual trunk will die off, but the clump will live on with several trunks still actively growing.

Another long awaited inflorescence we have recently seen comes from a rare and very special palm, *Pelagodoxa henryana*.

This palm from Vanuatu, Marquesas and Fiji Islands is extinct in the wild, existing now only in ex situ collections, and private collections. It is a very attractive palm with large, undivided, pinnately ribbed leaves as long as 10 feet and as wide as 3 feet. It reaches a height of about 35 feet.

This year marks the first time the palm has set seed at HTBG. The round fruit has a cork-like warty skin that is tan colored at maturity. We plan to germinate the seeds and plant them to increase our valuable population of these rare and endangered palms.

## Garden Collections Updates



*Pelagodoxa henryana* fruit



*Pelagodoxa henryana* fruit maturing

Heliconia Society Conservation Center

Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden has been approved as an official Conservation Center for Zingerberales by the Board of Heliconia Society International. The Zingerberales include Cannaceae, Costaceae, Heliconiaceae, Lowiaceae, Marantaceae, Musaceae, Strelitziaceae, and Zingiberaceae. Many thanks to David Lorence and David Skinner of HSI for making this happen.

The Garden is now one of twelve institutions involved in an international effort to maintain and document living collections of these plants for scientific study and to ensure against species extinction by providing long term and safe environments across multiple locations.

This partnership will also facilitate the sharing of rare tropicals between gardens and has already benefitted our Costaceae collection thanks to a generous donation of nearly thirty new species from Mr. Skinner. Thanks again, David!

Plant Database

As of this printing, The searchable database of our tropical plants includes 1,522 accessions from 85 different families. The plant database is available for the public at <http://www.hawaiigarden.com/search.php>.

You can search the database three ways.

The first box is a pull down list of all of our plant families. Choose a family then click “Search by Family”

The Second box has the option of searching by Genus, Species, Genus and species, Common name, or Country/Region of Origin. For example: *Areca, elegans, Africa, South America, Colombia.* Enter a name and then click “Search.”

The Last box is a pull down menu to search by Garden Area. Pick an area then click “Search by Location.” ■

## Special Thanks

The Garden extends special thanks to Brooks and Beverly Bauer, The Vance Wall Foundation, Steven J. Borick and all of our recent donors and members whose generous giving allow us to continue our dual mission of conservation and education.

The Garden would also like to thank Mr. Jim West who surprised us by stopping by unannounced and gifting the Garden seeds and starts for many rare tropical fruits from his farm in Ecuador.

Finally, Thanks to the over 700 Hawaii students that used our free education program in 2013. You are why we are here!

## In Memory of Dr. Yoneo Sagawa

The Garden lost a longtime Board member and dear friend, Dr. Yoneo Sagawa, on December 10, 2013. He passed unexpectedly in his sleep at home. He was 87 years old.

Yoneo was from Hawaii Island, born in Olaa on Oct. 11, 1926. He received a B.A. in Zoology and M.S in Botany from Washington University, St. Louis and a Ph.D. in Cytogenetics from the University of Connecticut.

In 1964, he became a Professor of Horticulture at the University of Hawaii, Manoa until he retired in 2009. He was well known in horticulture and the orchid world in particular. He penned many articles for scientific journals and was a sought after consultant for orchid propagation all over the world.

With HTBG he was a trusted advisor who traveled from Honolulu to Hilo for every Board Meeting and he

provided the seed money for the establishment of the Garden's Fruit Tree Orchard.

Soft-spoken but always giving of his time and knowledge, Dr Sagawa was a tremendous asset to HTBG and many others in the world of Horticulture. He will be missed.

A personal note from Pauline Lutkenhouse:

"Best Friends Dr. Yoneo Sagawa and Dan Lutkenhouse enjoyed a special friendship lasting 30 years. Yoneo was a true, respectful, giving and cherished friend, and Dan loved him

Each time Yoneo was chosen to bestow his knowledge in awarding a PHD to a young person from another country, he invited the youngster to live in his home; another example of this compassionate human being.

It was our privilege to share Yoneo's gift of friendship."



### GARDEN MEMBERSHIP

Has 1,137 members as of August 1, 2014. Our thanks to all of you who so generously support our preservation of Onomea Valley.

If you'd like to become a member or purchase a membership as a gift, please call us at 808-964-5233 or visit our website [www.hawaiigarden.com](http://www.hawaiigarden.com). Your membership is 100% tax deductible.

Dan Lutkenhouse, Founder  
Pauline Lutkenhouse, Co-Founder & V.P.

David Tan, Executive Director  
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### Board of Directors

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Jeremy Tubera - Maintenance  
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Camren Sylva - Security

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