CONCERTS

VALENTINE’S DAY CONCERT
Thursday, February 14
7:00 p.m.

FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC PRESENTS: A FILM MUSIC SPECTACULAR UNDER THE STARS
Featuring Composer James Newton Howard
Coming soon!

PLANTS AND PEOPLE

PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
Registration is requested one week in advance of each offering. RSVP to 305.667.1651, ext. 3388
Saturday, February 9
11:30 a.m.
Monday, February 18
11:30 a.m.
Monday, March 18
11:30 a.m.
Saturday, March 30
11:30 a.m.
Monday, April 8
11:30 a.m.
Monday, April 29
11:30 a.m.

PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES
Monday, March 25
10:00 a.m.

WINGS OF THE TROPICS
The world’s most spectacular butterfly exhibit is now open daily!
9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

FAIRCHILD FEATURES

GALA IN THE GARDEN
Saturday, February 2
6:30 p.m.

FAIRCHILD: THE EDIBLE GARDEN
Thursday, April 11
7:00 p.m.

MOONLIGHT TOUR AND BUTTERFLY LECTURE
Thursday, April 25
6:30 p.m.

PLANT ID WORKSHOP
Friday, March 1
1:00 p.m.
Friday, April 5
1:00 p.m.

EASTER BRUNCH
Sunday, March 31
10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Building on the Flora of the BAHAMA ARCHIPELAGO

“The Big Book” shapes a symposium examining conservation and scientific research of the islands’ flora

By Janet Mosley, Eric Carey, Dion Hepburn, Brett Jestrow and Javier Francisco-Ortega
This year marked the 30th anniversary of the publication of *Flora of the Bahama Archipelago* by Drs. Donovan and Helen Correll. “The Big Book,” as it is sometimes called, provided an historic framework this October for an international symposium on Bahamian plant biodiversity in Nassau, Bahamas.

Fairchild staff and volunteers joined researchers from around the world at the symposium, which the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) and College of The Bahamas (CoB) organized in close collaboration with Fairchild, Florida International University (FIU), Miami University of Ohio, and New York Botanical Garden. The gathering—which included lectures and field trips—provided a platform for discussing scientific research and conservation of the Bahamas’ unique flora, while fostering relationships among researchers and institutions.

Fairchild has long been an important part of research in Bahamian plants, and the latest comprehensive *Flora*, which Priscilla Fawcett illustrated, was produced at the Garden with the sponsorship of the National Science Foundation. Continuing that tradition, Fairchild was actively involved in the conference. FIU-Fairchild faculty member Dr. Javier Francisco-Ortega and Fairchild scientist Dr. Brett Jestrow were on the organizing and scientific committees. Fairchild’s participants and colleagues from FIU, University of Miami, Montgomery Botanical Center and the USDA authored six posters and two oral presentations.

The first day of talks began in the new library facilities at the College of the Bahamas (CoB), with students and faculty in heavy attendance during the college’s Science Week. The Honorable Kenred M.A. Dorsett, the Bahamas’ minister of environment and housing, began the day by calling for a re-evaluation of the importance of botanic gardens and the science of botany in efforts to tackle problems of climate change and fossil fuel dependence. He encouraged students present, especially Bahamian students, to take the lead in Bahamian biodiversity conservation. Eric Carey, executive director of the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), reitered Mr. Dorsett’s words and also called for the redevelopment of the National Botanic Garden (in Nassau) and the creation of new botanic gardens on every major island in the nation. Mr. Carey also provided an overview of the challenges conservation biologists in the archipelago face and the importance of science, outreach and education to tackle them. The CoB’s Dr. Dion Hepburn, chairman of the department of life and applied science, and Lionel Johnson, dean of pure and applied sciences, expressed the college’s commitment to plant science research and education. They emphasized the need to develop additional national and institutional ties among researchers, as there are advanced plans to change CoB into a university with graduate programs.
Examining the Flora’s influence, looking to its future

The role that Fairchild botanist and herbarium curator William T. Gillis played in the creation of the Flora was the topic of a talk by Dr. Lee B. Kass, visiting professor at Cornell University. Fairchild’s herbarium curator, Dr. Brett Jestrow, took an historic look at plant science and collecting in the Bahamas since 1963—when the Garden’s living collection of Bahamas plants was established. His talk highlighted the importance of this collection as a source of material for research worldwide and the importance of molecular studies to understand the origin and evolution of the Bahamian flora.

Dr. W. Hardy Eshbaugh, emeritus professor of botany at Miami University of Ohio, gave a lecture on the role of that academic institution in the creation of the Flora, as well as its ongoing work in Bahamian plant science. Dr. Eshbaugh is considered one of the major guiding forces in contemporary Bahamian botany, with a focus on graduate education. He recalled doing fieldwork without the Flora and explained how it improved after its publication.

One of Dr. Eshbaugh’s former students, Bahamas National Trust Botanist Dr. Ethan Fried, began his discussion of Bahamian plant endemicity by explaining that the Flora was the main reference for his research in the archipelago and that it provided a framework for his presentation. Dr. Fried discussed major phytogeographic divisions in the archipelago and changes concerning plant endemicity patterns since Correll & Correll published their Flora in 1982.

Dr. Michael Vincent, Miami University’s herbarium curator, discussed plans to update Correll & Correll’s seminal work by producing a new flora for the archipelago. The work, he explained, will build on the valuable foundation they laid three decades ago. “Science is an iterative process, it builds upon the past,” he said. “It’s important to have the past to build upon.”

Former Fairchild research scientist Dr. Dennis Stevenson, who is now vice president for botanical science at the New York Botanical Garden, looked back at what the Corrells had built upon. He presented a talk by Dr. Brian Bloom on the New York Botanic Garden’s role in the making of the 1920 Bahamian flora, which was produced by Nathaniel L. Britton and Charles F. Millspaugh.
Fairchild Director Dr. Carl Lewis gave concluding remarks for the lectures, which were followed by 15 poster presentations by botanists from Turks and Caicos, The Bahamas and the U.S. (Florida, Ohio and Virginia).

**Heading into the Primeval Forest and the pine rockland**

The second day of the symposium was spent on field trips to the National Park of the Primeval Forest and to the pine rockland preserve area located in western New Providence, home to Nassau. Pericles Maillis, past president of the Bahamas National Trust, gave a tour of The Primeval Forest, a 7.5-acre hardwood forest situated in the island’s southwest portion. Dr. Fried, the BNT botanist, lead the tour of a pine rockland area which contains a thin, but very important, layer of fresh water that is part of the Bahamian aquifer.

The two-day symposium ended with a reception at The Retreat Gardens, headquarters of the BNT and home to one of the world’s largest private collections of rare and exotic palms. Participants enjoyed a tour of the 11-acre estate, established by Arthur and Margaret “Wumpsie” Langlois. The couple donated their home to the BNT to be used as a botanic garden after Mrs. Langlois passed away. Lynn Gape, deputy director of the BNT, gave a compelling talk about the pair and the history of The Retreat as seen through Mrs. Langlois’ detailed journals.

**Laying new groundwork**

The Bahamas Environmental Fund sponsored the symposium, and one of its immediate results was the production of an educational brochure that highlights plant biodiversity issues in the Bahamian archipelago.

The success of the symposium and its celebration of the *Flora of The Bahama Archipelago* laid the groundwork for “The Bahamas Natural History Conference,” to be held March 5-8, 2013. This conference, jointly hosted by the College of the Bahamas and Bahamas National Trust, will highlight the importance of research, sound science and collaboration across disciplines in preserving and protecting the natural environment of the Bahamas Archipelago.