

# *Suncoast Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Club*

## *Meeting Notice*

**Next Meeting:** June 12, 2013  
**Where:** Big Room Nokomis Community Center  
234 Nippino Trail East, Nokomis, FL 34275  
**Agenda:** 6:15 pm Plant Sale and Tasting Table  
7:00 pm Introduction and Presentation  
9:00 pm Questions and Clean-up

**Speaker:** Dennis Cathcart

**Topic:** Singapore and the Gardens by the Bay

The French Impressionist painter Claude Monet once referred to his garden at Giverny as his most beautiful masterpiece. If he were alive today and able to paint Singapore's Gardens by the Bay, perhaps he would concede they too are a beautiful masterpiece.

Gardens by the Bay rivals anything the world has so far seen in terms of innovative, technologically advanced modern gardens. Gardens by the Bay is a park spanning 250 acres of reclaimed land in central Singapore. The park consists of three different waterfront gardens: Bay South Garden, Bay East Garden and Bay Central Garden. At a cost in excess of one billion dollars, Gardens by the Bay is an integral part of a strategy by the Singapore government to transform Singapore from a "Garden City" to a "City in a Garden."

We are fortunate to have as our June speaker Dennis Cathcart of Tropiflora Nursery in Sarasota. Dennis Cathcart's presentation, *Singapore and the Gardens by the Bay*, is a spectacular story of this incredible project that rivals some of the world's most celebrated green spaces. His association with the Gardens began a number of years ago when he was approached by the people behind the Gardens development about supplying plants for the Gardens. After years of sending the Gardens in excess of 300,000 plants, it culminated in June of 2012 when Dennis and his wife Linda attended, by invitation of the Singapore government, the grand opening of the first phase of the Gardens.

Dennis and his wife Linda own and operate Tropiflora Nursery, established in 1976, in Sarasota. Tropiflora, which has more than 200,000 square feet of greenhouses situated on 6 acres, remains one of the largest collector oriented exotic plant nurseries in the United States. Their stock of exotic plants runs well over 7,000 varieties with an inventory in excess of one million plants.

Dennis and Linda, in their work with exotic plants, whether it is collecting, studying, photographing, writing or speaking, have made trips to more than 27

countries from the Caribbean and Latin America to Australia, South East Asia, Africa and Madagascar. Dennis has lectured throughout the United States as well as Australia, New Zealand, Venezuela, Brazil, Bahamas, Philippines, Java, Singapore and Thailand.

Dennis will bring a nice assortment of plants for purchase at our meeting.

***Some highlights of the Gardens by the Bay that will be included in the presentation by Dennis Cathcart***

**Supertrees.** The Supertrees are gigantic structures, 125 to 160 feet tall with a concrete core and a steel skin of pipes and cables. They are vertical gardens, covered with 163,000 plants, mostly bromeliads with some aroids, orchids and ferns, all from Tropiflora, including 1,000 pounds of Spanish moss. Voltaic cells on the trees create electricity for nighttime lighting and biomass generated is burned underground and the heat produced is vented through the trees, creating wind.

The two glass covered, cooled conservatories house all kinds of plants, from alpine to tropical. To supply the specific light and humidity conditions for each type of plant and habitat, the domes have moveable shading systems that respond to inside temperature and brightness throughout the day as the sun and clouds pass overhead.

**Cloud Forest.** The Cloud Forest is a cool-wet climate conservatory similar to a Tropical Montane region. It is about 2.5 acres in area with a height of 190 feet and is maintained at 73 to 77° F during the day and at 62° F during the night with an average relative humidity of 80%. Its focal point is Crystal Mountain that reaches almost to the roof and has a 100-foot tall waterfall and a below ground grotto and river. The dome houses native sculptures from Pacific island cultures and a Lost World garden of carnivorous plants.

**Flower Dome.** The Flower Dome is the cool-dry climate conservatory similar to a Mediterranean climate. It is 3 acres in area, 190 feet high, and maintained at the same temperatures as the Cloud Forest but with a humidity of 70%. Outside it is surrounded by a bromeliad covered berm and inside is an "ocean" of blooms in a valley surrounded by vegetation covered hills. It features a Cactus Garden and abundant pieces of driftwood supplied by Tropiflora.