The Florida Native Plant Society in partnership with the Florida Keys TREE Institute present

The Plants of Central and Northwest Cuba

November 15-22, 2015- 8 days, 7 nights
Pinar del Rio, Vinales Valley, Zapata Swamp, Cienfuegos, Havana

Join Raul Verdecia, one of Cuba’s native plant specialists to experience Cuba through a humanitarian exchange program by our 501-c-3, nonprofit organization. Share a true “People to People” exchange of culture and the environment. This exceptional program will include visiting the magical UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Biospheres of Cienfuegos, Zapata Swamp, Vinales Valley, Pinar del Rio, and remarkable Havana. While there, you will learn about the gardens, environment, art, music, architecture, while having an opportunity to personally interface with the plant people of these regions!

Raul Verdecia Perez, lead scientist and botanist at Las Tunas Botanical Garden, is one of Cuba’s leading authorities on plants. Raul is responsible for naming the new found species of palm, Coccothrinax torrid, in 2006 and is currently working on confirming yet another new palm species. Cuba has over 6,000 species of plants with about half being endemic to Cuba. He co-authored the Feb 2014 update on the “Flora of Cuba”. Raul will lead participants to see plants in the wild. There will also be local specialists involved along this magnificent journey to some of Cuba’s richest plant communities.

The package includes: a complimentary conference call briefing 4 weeks prior to the journey, special travel visa, approved license, round trip non-stop charter air service direct Miami-Havana, private air-conditioned motor coach, medical insurance, hotels, luggage handling, transfers, permits, entry fees, English speaking guide, bottled water daily, tips and meals for those stated on the itinerary. We take care of obtaining all of your documents, travel plans and guide you through the whole process! We travel on a US Department of Treasury approved license. There are a limited number of seats available for this rare chance to visit this distinctive island. Our team has worked in Cuba for over 12 years. (SEE ITINERARY BELOW)

Price:
$3499.00 per person double occupancy (limited to 28 participants)- Not included: some meals, tips for guide and driver, Cuba departure tax of $30.00 & baggage fees charged in Miami.
(Add $300.00 for single supplemental) -limited rooms available-
Charges accepted on line via Paypal. Go to www.cubajourneys.org. $125.00 discount if paid by check.

*******Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is available upon request only thru our representative*******
Includes a donation of $250.00 per person to the FPNS
Trip Application Form for Nov 15-22, 2015 trip

Instructions: In order to make your reservation and hold a space, fill out the trip application below and a non-binding $500.00 deposit* per person. If paying by check, MARK YOUR CHECK MEMO- Nov FNPS 2015 trip” The check is to be made to: Florida Keys TREE Institute (A 501 c-3 non-profit organization) If paying by credit card, go on our site and make payment, then mail the application n below and fill in credit card charge date.

Mail your deposit check and the application form to:
FK TREE Institute- PO Box 450493, Miami, FL 33145.
Questions? Contact: info@fktreeinstitute.org  866- 355-8733  866-FLK- TREE

Name _____________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________

Cell Phone ________________________   email ______________________________________

Fill in date if deposit was made by credit card:________(date)

Single_____      ($500.00 deposit)

Double _____ rooming with _________________________________  ($1,000.00 deposit)

Roommate Name ______________________________________

Roommate cell phone ______________   email _______________________________________

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Other notes:

We take care of getting your documentation, visas and all reservations starting in Miami. You are responsible for getting to Miami. The trip deposit is refundable* up until July 15, 2015. We will confirm receipt of your deposit. On or about mid July, we will email you a registration packet and instructions which will be due with final payment by July 15, 2015. It will also include information for optional trip cancellation/ interruption insurance. The package includes medical coverage while in Cuba. About one month prior to the trip, we will have a required toll free conference call to go over all the information for traveling to Cuba. No inoculations are required. Itinerary times may vary with flight schedule.

*There is a $50.00 service charge for refunds.

November 2015 FNPS trip
Itinerary

Day 1- Nov 15
Depart Miami direct into Cienfuegos, Cuba. Upon arrival, our bus will be waiting for our departure to the UNESCO Heritage City of Cienfuegos, a thriving port since Columbus landing in 1494, before checking into Hotel and have Dinner at a private paladar (on your own)

Day 2- Nov 16
After breakfast, visit the enchanting Botanical Gardens of Soledad, which served as Harvard University’s Tropical Research Station having more than 2,000 species of tropical plants. Some of the oldest Palms in Cuba exist here. Harvard’s name is still visibly carved into a palm tree entrance of what was once called the Harvard House. Meet with the staff and specialists here for an extensive private walking trip. Break for lunch and then an afternoon trip to Topes de Collantes , a nature reserve park in the Escambray Mountains range in Cuba. It also refers to the third highest peak in the reserve, where a small settlement and tourist center is located, all sharing the same name. Depart for Zapata Swamp. Overnight at Playa Larga Hotel (B,L,D)

Day 3- Nov 17
After breakfast depart to the area known as Zapata Swamp and visit the plant communities in and around this UNESCO Biosphere The great wealth of species and the diversity of ecosystems in this territory distinguish it from the rest of the country. There are about 900 plants with 150 endemic species. Notable are Tabebuia angustata (roble de yugo), Fraxinus cubensis (búfano), Annona glabra, Gueltarda combiri, Sabal parviflora, Bucida palustris, Hibiscus elatus, H. tiliaeae (majagua), Jatropha integerrima, Copernicia spp. Ilex cassine, Salix longipes and Chrysobalanus icaco. Lunch at nature preserve and in the afternoon. Dinner at a private paladar on your own, Overnight at Playa Larga Hotel. (B.L)

Day 4-Nov 18
Early morning guided walk of Zapata Swamp with a key specialist will take up most of the morning. Here will not only learn about the endemic plants of Zapata but get to see some of the rarest endemic birds of Cuba. (Half day). Zapata area has some of the best birding in all of Cuba, and, the Cuban Black Hawk, Cuban Parrot, Cuban Pygmy Owl, Green Woodpecker, Fernandina’s Flicker, Great Lizard Cuckoo, Bee Hummingbird, Cuban Crow, Crescent-eyed Pewee, Zapata Wren, Red-shouldered and Tawny-shouldered blackbirds, and many other species. We will have lunch and then head to Pinar del Rio. We will make stops
along the way to see some endemic palms in the wild. Check into our Soroa hotel and we will be treated to a presentation of the orchids of Cuba over dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Nov 19
After breakfast we will head to the canyon rim of a UNESCO biosphere known as Vinales Valley. This province- renowned for its scenic beauty, fertile tobacco plantations, and unusual mogotes (enormous flat top limestone outcroppings) and mountains that contain huge caves and underground river networks. Each Mogote boasts its own mini ecosystems. See rare plants and palms from this area. Our drive through Vinales National Park boasts some of the most breathtaking scenery in the entire country. Lunch will be held at El Palenque de los Cimarones with musical entertainment (nice location to be introduced to the Santeria, the Afro-Cuban religion and its origins). We will explore La Cueva del Indio, part of it by boat and will have a quick photo stop at the country’s biggest painted mural. Dinner at hotel Overnight in Soroa. (B,L,D)

Day 6 - Nov 20

After breakfast, depart for the vast Soroa Orchid Gardens, developed and nurtured by the University of Pinar del Rio. There will be a private hike to a nearby hillside to see endemic orchids in the wild. Soroa Garden has a research station for the studies of endemic orchids. The last newly discovered orchid in 2009 was named after the most renown Cuban orchid illustrators and Director of the Gardens, Lazaro Bocourt. Lazaro will be on hand to greet the group and discuss their research. This UNESCO biosphere is home to many endemic plants. Then head to Havana where will stop at the historic hotel National for lunch. After lunch we will visit the have an extensive walking tour through UNESCO Heritage City of Old Havana. (B,L) Dinner on your own then surprise entertainment.

Day 7- Nov 21

After breakfast at the hotel, we will have a very personalized visit of remodeled and critically acclaimed National Museum of Fine Art and Museum of Revolution. Break for lunch on your own at an organic farm before a Visit the Hemingway Finca and Gardens. Then visit the San Jose arts/crafts market, and bookstalls of Plaza des Armas with free time to explore on your own before farewell dinner. OPTIONAL EVENING: Buena Vista Social Club or Tropicana, plus other entertainment that might be available that night. The guide will arrange for tickets and transportation. (B,D)

Day 8- Nov 22

After breakfast, check-out of hotel and we will visit the majestic Havana National Botanical Gardens on our way to the airport. (B,)