Dear Friends of UCBG:

We invite you to come with us to Cuba in 2016. On this unique and inspiring program, we will travel on a General License from the U.S. Treasury Department to take friends and members of the UC Botanical Garden on a People-to-People Exploration of Cuba.

Our tour of Cuba begins in Old Havana and continues to the Escambray Mountains, the colonial cities of Trinidad and Cienfuegos, and Zapata National Park. We will explore the island’s diverse landscapes and habitats, from the plains or llanos to mountain forests and coastal wetlands.

The Cuban natural world is reflected in the national symbols: Roystonea regia, the royal palm; the white mariposa, Cuba’s national flower; and the colorful national bird, the tocororo. More than 8,000 species of plants are native to Cuba, including many orchids, palms, and ferns. Cuba is also home to the world’s smallest bird, the bee hummingbird.

As we travel around this amazing island, the largest in the Caribbean, we will meet with Cuban naturalists, botanists, horticulturalists, and local experts. Throughout our journey, we will engage Cubans directly in discussions about their lives and work, culture, and traditions.

Tour Highlights:

— Explore the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Old Havana and Trinidad.
— Visit several botanic gardens and see their amazing plant collections.
— Discover the mountain station at Topes de Collantes.
— See the extraordinary plant life in the Sierra de Escambray.
— Learn about Las Terrazas reforestation project.
— See the orchid collections at Orquideario Soroa.
— Visit Vivero Alamar, a project for sustainable agriculture.
— Observe the plants and wildlife of Zapata National Park, Cuba’s largest wetland.

We hope you will join us for this fascinating tour of Cuba.

Katherine Greenberg, Tour Escort and Advisory Board member of the UC Botanical Garden
**ITINERARY**

**Day 1  Miami to Havana, Cuba**
Depart on the morning charter flight from Miami to Havana, and transfer to our hotel (4 nights). Enjoy an afternoon walk through Old Havana—La Habana Vieja—to see its charming plazas and historic buildings before gathering for a welcome dinner. D

**Day 2  Havana Botanic Garden**
Our day begins with an orientation to Havana at the Scale Model of Havana, a project of the Group for the Comprehensive Development of the Capital. Then visit the impressive National Botanic Garden and meet with staff members. After lunch, meet with members of the Botanical Society of Cuba to learn about their work in botany and horticulture and discuss topics of interest. B,L,D

**Day 3  Havana, Vivero Alamar & Quinta de los Molinos**
Today we learn about sustainable agricultural practices and Cuban cuisine on a visit to Vivero Alamar, a community farming project. After lunch we meet the Director of Quinta de los Molinos, Cuba’s oldest botanic garden, which was founded in the 18th century. We learn about the Garden’s restoration project and community environmental development program. Later, we visit the Museum of Colonial Art. B,L,D

**Day 4  Las Terrazas & Sierra del Rosario Reserve**
This morning we drive to Las Terrazas Eco-Tourism complex and reforestation project, where we meet with staff and visit the local comunidad. We also visit the orchid collection at Orquideario Soroa, formerly a private garden, located in the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve. B,L,D

**Day 5  Havana to Topes de Collantes**
This morning we depart Havana and drive through the Cuban countryside, passing through small towns and sugar cane fields, to the village of Australia, once a sugar mill town and Fidel Castro’s headquarters during the Bay of Pigs invasion. After lunch we continue to the mountain lodge at Topes de Collantes in the Sierra de Escambray (2 nights). B,L,D

**Day 6  Parque de Codina**
Today we explore Parque de Codina, just three miles from Topes de Collantes. Our mountain adventure begins with a drive higher into the mountains in Soviet-era trucks to Encantos de Codina, an interpretive trail. Walking along the trail with a local ethno-botanist, we see a variety of orchids, ferns, and other plants native to this region. After lunch we return to Topes de Collantes and visit the Museum of Contemporary Art to see its outstanding collection of 20th century Cuban paintings. B,L,D

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**TOUR GUIDES**

A licensed Cuban guide will accompany the group throughout the tour, in addition to Dr. Lee Harper and Dr. Carlos Sanchez.

**Dr. Lee Harper** is a tropical ecologist who has conducted research in the Caribbean and in Brazil. He has been leading trips to Cuba for Betchart Expeditions for the last three years to great acclaim. He currently works with government agencies doing research along the St. Lawrence Seaway and is a licensed boat captain and sailor.

**Dr. Carlos Sanchez** is a professor of biology at the University of Havana and a botanist for the National Botanic Garden. His current research is focused on the ferns and lycophytes of Cuba and their conservation. Carlos speaks fluent English and enjoys sharing his interest and knowledge of the gardens and natural areas of Cuba.

**Tour Escort: Katherine Greenberg**, garden designer and author, is on the Advisory Board of the UC Botanical Garden. She is a past president of the Mediterranean Garden Society, Pacific Horticultural Society, and the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden. Katherine is fascinated with Cuban history, culture, and natural history. She escorted a Pacific Horticulture tour to Cuba in 2013 and looks forward to returning.
Day 7 Trinidad & Cienfuegos
This morning we head to the colorful colonial city of Trinidad, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for a stroll through its charming cobblestone streets and a visit to art studios and the cathedral. After lunch, we continue to the colonial port city of Cienfuegos. Hotel (2 nights), B,L,D

Day 8 Soledad Botanic Garden & Cienfuegos
Today we visit the Jardin Botanico Soledad, once managed by Harvard University and now by the Cuban Academy of Science Institute of Botany. The garden occupies 220 acres and contains over 2,000 trees. We meet with staff and learn about the Garden’s impressive history and projects to maintain the rich biodiversity of Cuba’s extraordinary plant life. In the afternoon we explore Cienfuegos and see the historic Plaza Jose Marti and Palacio del Valle. There also be a short performance by the Cienfuegos Choir if they are not on tour. B,L,D

Day 9 Bay of Pigs and Zapata National Park
This morning we drive along Cuba’s beautiful southern coast to Playa Giron on the Bay of Pigs, stopping to visit a small museum commemorating the ill-fated battle in 1961. After lunch in a charming restaurant beside a natural pool, we continue to Zapata National Park, the largest wetland in Cuba. Hotel (1 night), B,L,D

Day 10 Zapata National Park to Havana
This morning we explore Zapata National park along the La Salina road with a park staff member to observe the mangrove vegetation at the bay’s edge and the open waters of the inland estuary. This area is home to an abundance of wildlife and migrating birds, including flamingos. Our drive back to Havana take us through small villages, agricultural areas, and grasslands. Tonight we celebrate our Cuban experience with a farewell dinner in Havana. Hotel (1 night), B,L,D

Day 11 Havana to Miami & Home
After breakfast, transfer to the Havana airport for our flight back to Miami. B

Hotels: The hotels be the best available in each location and confirmed before the tour.
Discover Botanical Cuba!
A People-to-People Tour!
January 8-18, 2016

**Costs & Conditions**

**Expedition Fee:** $4,295 per person twin share + air fare from Miami to Havana, Cuba, RT approximately $650 + $450 per person donation for members of UC Botanical Garden; $500 per person for non-members. This is based on a minimum of 16 and maximum of 20 paying participants. Single supplement is $795. If you do not have a roommate or we cannot provide one, the single supplement must be paid. Limited singles are available.

**Expedition Fee Includes:** Group transfers in Havana, transportation by air conditioned motorcoach or vans, accommodations twin share with private bath in 3-star or 4-star hotels which reflect the culture of the country; all meals from dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 11; entrance fees; gratuities to bellboys and waiters; leadership by excellent naturalists and a representative from UCBG; special meetings with Cuban guests; leadership, administration.

**Expedition Fee Does Not Include:** Air fare and Cuba visa (quoted separately); pre-night in Miami, gratuities to your expedition leaders, guide and driver; excess luggage charges; items of strictly a personal nature (passport, phone calls, alcoholic beverages, laundry, internet, phone, fax, snacks or sodas); personal insurance; foreign airport departure tax.

**Air Fare & Airline Ticketing:** All passengers fly together from Miami to Havana on charter flights January 8 and return together on January 18. All passengers should book independent flights to arrive in Miami on January 7, 2016 and to depart Miami after 7:30 pm on January 18 or overnight in Miami. Ticketing fee is $50 additional. AIR FARES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE UNTIL TICKETED.

**Reservations, Deposits, & Payments:** Please complete the reservation form and mail along with a deposit of $1,000 per person to:

UC Botanical Garden Cuba 2016
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435
The balance is due November 8, 2015.

**Questions:** Please call Taunya at Betchart Expeditions Inc.

Telephone: (800) 252 4910
or (408) 252 4910
Fax: (408) 252 1444
Email: Taunya@betchartexpeditions.com

**Cancellations & Refunds:** The initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a $100 handling fee per person. There is no refund after November 8, 2015 unless your place is resold, then a $100 per person handling fee is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals, or other expedition features.