Dear Friends of UCBG:

We invite you to come with us as we return to Cuba in 2017. On this very special 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 and the colonial cities of Trinidad and Cienfuegos. 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.
— Visit Vivero Alamar, a project for sustainable agriculture.

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 at Berkeley
Day 1 Miami to Havana, Cuba
Depart on the morning charter flight from Miami to Havana. Transfer to our hotel, stopping to visit the Plaza of the Revolution. This evening enjoy a welcome dinner in Havana. Hotel (4 nights). D

Day 2 Havana Botanic Garden
Our day begins with a tour of the National Botanic Garden and a meeting with staff members. After lunch, walk through Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to see its charming plazas and historic buildings and visit the Museum of Colonial Art. B,L,D

Day 3 Havana, Vivero Alamar, Finca La Vigia, Quinta de los Molinos
Today we learn about sustainable agricultural practices and Cuba cuisine on a visit to Vivero Alamar, a community farming project. Visit Finca La Vigia, Hemmingway’s home in Cuba. After lunch, walk through 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. 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. After lunch, we continue our scenic drive to the mountain lodge at Topes de Collantes in the Sierra de Escambray. Hotel (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
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
This morning we visit the Jardín Botánico 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 visit Cienfuegos and see the historic Plaza José Martí and Palacio del Valle. There will also be a short performance by the Cienfuegos Choir if they are not on tour. B,L,D

Day 9  Cienfuegos to Havana
Our drive back to Havana takes us through coastal wetlands, grasslands, and small villages. Tonight we celebrate our Cuban experience with a farewell dinner in Havana. Hotel (1 night). B,L,D

Day 10  Havana to Miami & Home
After breakfast, transfer to the Havana airport for our flight back to Miami. B

Hotels: The hotels will be the best available in each location and confirmed before the tour.
Discover Botanical Cuba!
A People-to-People Tour!
January 20-29, 2017

CUBA

Costs & Conditions

Expedition Fee: $4,995 per person twin share + air fare from Miami to Havana, Cuba, RT approximately $650 + $500 per person donation for members of UC Botanical Garden; $550 per person for non-members. This is based on a minimum of 17 and maximum of 20 paying participants. We ask that all passengers share due to limited hotel accommodations. If a single becomes available, the supplement is $895.

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 10; 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 20 and return together on January 29. All passengers should book independent flights to arrive in Miami on January 19, 2017 and to depart Miami after 7:30 pm on January 29 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 2017
Betchart Expeditions Inc.
17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435
The balance is due November 15, 2016.

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 15, 2016 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.