

(The Jamaican traditional dish consists of Akee and eggs). Perhaps Dorothy did not know the danger but she ate the fruit before it was ripe. In spite of all the doctors' efforts, she could not be saved and she died in the hospital belonging to the banana company.

STOP "H": IN THE FOREST

It almost seems as if you are in another world – it feels cooler, there is a greater variety of plants. You can see creepers, vines known as "monkey ladders", pacyayas, "donkey eggs" (the name is due to the shape of their fruits) and many other species. You may think you are lost in the middle of a forest and that a tiger is about to jump out at you, but don't be afraid – you are still on the right path! This is the



site of a plantation of "Sangre" (*Pterocarpus indicus*), which is one of the largest trees and the most common at this stop.

Due to lack of upkeep, this plantation has now been invaded by other plants and has become a kind of secondary forest. We hope that you will take a moment to relax and enjoy this peaceful spot, far away from busy urban life.

STOP "I": WALKING TOWARDS THE EDGE OF LANCETILLA

On your right hand side you can see various houses with families going about their everyday lives. These houses are the Lancetilla Community and, strange as it may seem, although they are so close to the Gardens, they are actually outside the boundary, which is formed by stream opposite. These houses are in the buffer zone and activities are taking place to conserve and improve biodiversity. The community and the Gardens live together in harmony and if you have time, take a look around the village and talk to our neighbours.

To arrive at the next stop, cross the small stream on your right and walk about 30 metres.

STOP "J": FOOD OF THE GODS

The fruit in this plantation is known as the "food of the gods" because it is the largest and oldest in existence in our continent. Planted in 1927, it covers an area of 8.5 acres (approximately 3.5 hectares). The name of this fruit and its tree is the "mangosteen" (*Garcinia mangostana*). This plant originates from south-east Asia and is highly regarded for its delicate flavour, unlike any other on earth. During harvest time (August – September) we encourage you to try it - and are sure that you'll love it. These days, the plantation is getting quite old and some trees have died as the result of attacks by a fungus belonging to the Phitophora genus. Following the path that leads through the plantation, you will arrive at the next stop.



STOP "K": A PARADE OF PALMS IN YOUR HONOUR!

This imposing and majestic avenue of palms (*Roystonea regia*) covers 300 metres and almost looks like a military parade. These palms were planted in the 20s. On the far right of the avenue you can see African Palms (*Elaeis guineensis*), which are the mothers of the thousands of hectares of palms that now cover Honduras, Costa Rica and Cuba. Most of the butters and oils that we consume are made from these. To get to the last stop, please follow the arrows and the palms along the avenue to your left will watch over you.



Pictures: Jens Bittner, Ph.D. Lancetilla Botanical Center

STOP "L": DISCOVERING MORE TROPICAL BEAUTY

After crossing the little bridge, walk on about 30 metres and you will meet the road. Turn right to get back to the start of this route once more. But before you go back, take a look at the collection of palms on your left hand side and the heliconias opposite. They are grown for propagation and research purposes as well as because they are ornamental. There are 30 species and / or varieties of palms and heliconias and the latter are native to South and Central America. These plants are special in that they can only be pollinated by hummingbirds and by bats. They also grow the famous "bird of paradise" flowers.



Lancetilla Botanical Gardens would like to thank you for your visit. We have a whole range of services to offer so please feel free to call in, write or phone if you have any enquiries or suggestions as to how we can improve our service.

Lancetilla Botanical Garden and Investigation Center

Phone: (504) 448-1740
 e-mail: lancetilla@hondusoft.com
 Web Site: www.lancetilla.org
 P.O. Box: No. 49
 Tela, Atlántida
 Honduras, C.A.

Design: FHIA Center of Communications, Phone: (504) 668-2470 Redaction: Ing. Carlos Valle, J.B.L.

WELCOME
 To the Lancetilla Botanical Garden and Investigation Center



The Green Treasure of Honduras

THE SELF-GUIDED
 Tour
 Of the

Interpretative Trail
"Histórico"



Tela, Atlántida, Honduras, C.A.

Welcome to the Lancetilla Botanical Gardens and Research Center, considered by many to be **The green treasure** of Honduras because of the infinite number of plants and animals (both birds and mammals) it contains and because of the peacefulness to be found here. This autoguide will help you to tour the paths within the garden. This route is called the "historical" path because you can see plants, buildings and other works which take you back to the 1920s, when a group of visionaries, working for a banana company, first came to this beautiful narrow valley. The tour is 1200m long and will take you about 60 minutes. There are 12 stops en-route, which are marked with letters. During the walk you can see a lot of variety of plants and numerous birds and other wild animals. From the moment you begin your walk, please be careful. Do not leave the path and do not pick plants or fruits without permission.

STOP "A": A RECENT HISTORY



You are opposite the garden's administrative offices, about 300 metres from the Visitors' Centre, having admired the "Bamboo Tunnel", a majestic natural formation. What you can see is the regeneration of plants originally from 1927. 16 of the 1000 varieties of bamboo in the world can be seen in these gardens. At this stop you can see the offices which were built in 1979, when Lancetilla was run by **CO-HDEFOR**. The gardens are

currently run by the "Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Forestales" (**ESNACIFOR**), which is based in Siguatepeque, Comayagua. On this stop you can see the area where plants are propagated, the Training Centre and the Orchid House, which is to your right. You can take a look around this area if you wish on your return. Following the arrow, you will arrive at stop **B**. Take care when crossing the small bridges, since they were built by the banana company more than 60 years ago. Beneath the bridges pass drainage canals that were built to avoid flooding.

STOP "B": THE STONE PATHS

You will reach a stone path. This path passes beautiful exotic and native trees such as the one that you see about 10 metres ahead on your left, which is commonly referred to as the "Cannon Ball", (*Couropita guianensis*), from Brazil which can



Mangos, Tamarindo, Longans, Longandarias, Rambutanés and others. Most of them were planted between 1927 and 1948 for research purposes.

STOP "C": DELICIOUS, BUT WHAT A SMELL!

From here the path takes a turn to the left and you can see a Durian (*Durio zibetinus*). This tree produces a very nutritious fruit (28 – 32% carbohydrate, 2 – 3% protein and 3 – 4% fat) which has a delicious taste, like that of ice-cream. The fruit is large, (similar to the fruit of the mazapan), and is green and covered in spines. The strange thing about this fruit is that, in spite of its delicious flavour, the smell of the ripe fruit is very unpleasant, like that of rotten onions. If you are curious about the trees around you, they all have plaques to identify them and you can find the "Langsat" (*Lansium domesticum*), a tree which originates from India and which produces very sweet, fleshy fruits. On the left is a shrub, known as the "Cola Nut" (*Cola acuminata*), which comes from Africa. Inside, the fruit has yellow seeds from which an oil can be extracted. In the past this was used to prepare cola drinks.



be identified by its fragrant flowers and its large brown fruits which resemble cannon balls. Because of the strange form of its flowers, many people think that the plant is carnivorous, but this is not true and the tree is ornamental. Following the path (look for the arrow) you will see species such as

STOP "D": THE POPENOE HOUSE

This is the story building which you see opposite, which was built in 1942. Apart from a few small changes, the original structure has been maintained. It was used by lodge for company workers. Nowadays, the second floor houses the Technical Department for the Gardens as well as the **PROECEN** project office and the first floor houses a library and a herbarium.



STOP "E": WHY CRISTOBAL COLON CAME TO THE AMERICAS

Cristobal Colon discovered this continent whilst looking for a shorter route to the East Indies (Asia) in order to bring to Europe the valuable and exotic spices that were so sought after in the Royal Courts of Europe. Colon didn't succeed in discovering spices, but Doctor Popenoe did. On this stop, you can touch and see the Fat Pepper (*Pimenta officinalis*) and the Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*) which are spicy and are used to flavour food and drink. The first species is a leafy tree however the second needs the support of another to develop, (in this case along a *Gliricidia sepium*). You can also see a short plant with heavy cover which is the Moscada Nut (*Myristica fragrans*), whose fragrant seed is used as a medicine and as a flavouring for pastries. Finally you can see perhaps the best known spice of all, cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) which has been fenced off to protect it from over-use. The whole tree is aromatic, but the part that is most often used is its bark. You have now finished your journey through the spice area. Follow the arrow up the little hill that leads to the next station.



STOP "F": THEY EVEN GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR US

You will find yourself in what was once the "**Norteamerican Cemetery**", the area put aside by the Tela Railroad Company to bury all employees from the USA who died in Tela. At that time, journeys to the States were made by boat and it was expensive and difficult to take a body back to be buried at home. There are 17 graves here, and most are for adults, although there are also some children's graves. Many of them died as the result of tropical diseases such as Malaria. On your left you can see the **wood cemetery** and our collection of Palms and Heliconias. At the bottom, there is a great view of the Biological Reserve, a separate area of the Garden and the source of water for Tela and its surrounding area. We encourage you to visit the reserve, since, although it can be physically challenging, the chance to see diverse plants and animals and to enjoy the clear waters of the Lancetilla River make it well worthwhile. Following the path, we arrive at a very special place – **the place where Doctor Popenoe's first wife is buried**.

STOP "G": DOROTHY POPENOE AND HER LOVE FOR HONDURAS

In this grave lie the remains of Dorothy K. Hughes. She was born in England in 1899 and married in the United States in 1923. She moved to Honduras with her husband two years later. It was whilst she was here that she developed a deep interest in the culture and archaeology of Honduras and of Central America. She grew especially fond of this area and wandered around unpopulated and dangerous parts looking for archaeological sites to reveal more about this country's culture. She died at the young age of 33 in what are still mysterious circumstances when in December 1932, she ate an unripe "Akee" (*Blighia sapida*). The Akee contains a poisonous substance when green but when the fruit is ripe, it opens, releasing this substance and it is then perfectly edible.

