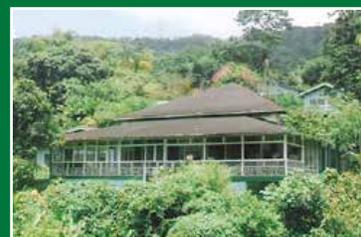




# The Bellbird Newsletter

THE ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTRE



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June 2013

## Weighing in with Asa

When Asa Wright Nature Centre decided that we needed our own commercial scale for weighing coffee harvest and monitoring our other crop activities, we wrote to suppliers seeking their quotations for a suitable scale.

To our very pleasant surprise, the people at Unique Scale Services Limited called us and said that they would like to assist Asa Wright in our work and offered to donate a suitable scale for our needs! Unique Scale Services' Sales Manager Mr. Patrick Augustus visited Spring Hill to assess our needs and to see our coffee drying

and roasting processes, and he recommended a Titan H Stainless steel digital commercial scale for us.

Asa Wright visited the Unique Scale Services exhibition booth at the Trade and Investment Convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on 15th June, where Unique's Managing Director, Mrs. Francisca Nandoo-Hamid presented the scale to Asa Wright's Peter O'Connor. On behalf of the Centre, and as a token of appreciation for their generosity, Peter O'Connor presented bags of Asa Wright's Mountain Ebony Coffee to Mrs. Hamid



*Managing Director Mrs. Francisca Nandoo-Hamid presents the scale to Asa Wright's Peter O'Connor. Looking on is Unique Scale Services' Sales Manager, Patrick Augustus*

and management of Unique and invited them to visit Asa Wright to enjoy the ambience and see how much their donation means to our work. Unique Scale Services Limited is the latest Corporate Partner

to join with Asa Wright in helping us to fulfill our mission of conservation, preservation and community outreach, and we welcome and appreciate their generosity.



## YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST OF THE MONTH

If you think your child has done something helpful to preserve the environment, please feel free to share it with us. Either write a short story, or send a few pictures to [dinetienne44@gmail.com](mailto:dinetienne44@gmail.com)

He/she may be selected as our Young Environmentalist for the month! Once your child is featured in our monthly newsletter, he/she and two adults will be given a complimentary day visit to Asa Wright Nature Center, which includes viewing birds/animals on the verandah, a nature tour and use of the clear-water pool. Ages 5-16.



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## World Environment Day

By Kimberly Chu Foon

World Environment Day is held on June 5th of every year. It began in 1972 and was spearheaded by the United Nations Environment Programme. This event aims to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment as well as encourage political attention and action.

I'm sure you're wondering what the Asa Wright Nature Centre did to celebrate the World Environment Day. Well we did quite a few things! We participated in the SGP Knowledge Fair at the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA). The theme was "Share to Protect" and the primary aim was to raise public awareness



*Students from the Atwell's Educational Institute plant trees.  
Photo by Michele Soodeen*

on the success stories that NGOs have had in their environmental projects.

*What a success it was!*

School children of all ages as well as adults flocked the auditorium and the entire place was buzzing. There was a variety of exhibitors, each of them proud to showcase their unique achievements. Then there was the monkey which caused a huge ruckus. Whether or not the monkey was real is subject to debate! Let's hope there are many more Knowledge Fairs to come in the future as this may be the key to our success in our drive to bring environmental issues to the forefront.

Of course our World Environment Day celebrations

didn't end at the Knowledge Fair. Asa Wright also attended the World Environment Day Exposition in Chaguanas. This was yet another opportunity for our organisation to showcase what we do and the importance of environmental conservation. Again, many visitors came bright-eyed and ready to learn.

Finally, for our last event we had yet another exciting venture. What's World Environment Day without planting some trees! Students and teachers from the Atwells Educational Institute visited us on this special day hoping to contribute whatever they could to the environment and contribute they did.

They brought with them nine fruiting plants including citrus and avocado and under the directive of our knowledgeable gardener Mr. Bharat, these trees were planted around the estate. The activity aided in exposing the students to the importance of reforestation in conjunction with the theme Think, Eat, Save. We were very happy to have them with us on World Environment Day and we hope that we see many more schools with such initiatives here in the future.



*Johanne and Kimberly talk to a group of students at the Knowledge Fair.  
Photo by Peter O'Connor*



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## Crafting Bamboo at Asa Wright

By Denise Etienne

Have you ever thought of building bamboo furniture? Then you would have truly enjoyed being a part of Asa Wright Nature Centre's Bamboo Workshop. We partnered with Wilhelm Trujillo and Rodolfo Sandoval "Fyto" of Venezuela, to host this four day workshop from 14th-17th June, 2013. It was well attended by many communities and a few staff members participated.



*A group shot of the bamboo builders Photo by Edwin Chu For*

The first day Erle Rahaman-Noronha gave a very educational and insightful talk on Permaculture, which is the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient. The next three days Wilhelm and Fyto taught us about the different species of bamboo and how to use them. There is one called Guadua which is

known to be the worlds the strongest bamboo, it's even believed to be stronger than steel! They also explained the different ways to harvest dry and treat bamboo. The techniques were very hands-on. We learnt how to use the power-saw, blow-torch and numerous other tools while preparing the bamboo.

We separated into three smaller groups and each came up with an idea of a piece of bamboo furniture to be constructed. A chaise lounge, table and chair were created. During the developmental stages of each piece of furniture, we learnt how to achieve the different types of cuts and how to go about joining the pieces

together using either glue, dowels or nuts and bolts.

Our entire group worked very well together and shared excellent camaraderie. Overall, everyone had a great time and some folks were interested to know when next we'll be hosting another Community Workshop. So workshop ideas are invited!



*Germaine and furniture Photo by Denise Etienne*



*Bamboo creations Photo by Edwin Chu For*



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## Brown Violetear (*Colibri delphinae*)

By Johanne L. Ryan

While its colour is not as prominent as many of Trinidad and Tobago's hummingbirds, the Brown Violetear remains a stunner in its own right. As its name hints, the pride of its appearance is the broad violet patch at the ear coverts. These beautiful ear patches are best seen in close view with the help of binoculars or a spotting scope. Apart from another burst of colour at the throat – iridescent green, with hints of blue – this bird is mostly brown and gray.

The Violetear roams Trinidad's Northern Range moving



*Brown Violetear*  
Photo: Caleb Walker

from elevations over 2,500 ft, to lower parts (above 500 ft.) during the period from November to February. It is not found at the Asa Wright Nature Centre throughout the year, but in recent weeks has taken up temporary

residence here. In the thick forest it frequents flowers of the canopy, especially the Mountain Immortelle.

This hummer also spends its time in areas of tall secondary growth and coffee plantations, again preferably at the canopy. In addition to sipping nectar, the Violetear will also hawk for insects. The Brown Violetear makes a call of approximately five, successive sharp notes.

This sound can be used to locate the bird, which has a tendency to blend in with foliage. This hummingbird can be quite aggressive and territorial. The males are known to establish leks which they forcefully defend in the event of any disturbance. Its

nests, made of plant down, are placed as high as one to two metres above ground. The Violetear is 12 cm long and so can be placed in the category of the larger hummingbirds of T&T.

The hummer also resides in central America and South America, from Guatemala to Guyana and Brazil. So you have been introduced to our scene – stealer, the Brown Violetear, a unique hummingbird of Trinidad and Tobago.

### References:

French, Richard. *A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Cornell University Press. 2012.

Hilty, Steven L. *Birds of Venezuela*. 2003.

## A Generous Donation

By Johanne L. Ryan

A *National Geographic* magazine can bring the world to your doorstep. With the turn of a page one can be transported to the summit of Mount Everest, the pyramids of Egypt or the deep sea at the Mariana Trench. It is no wonder that this magazine has been treasured by so many.

In June, we acquired a treasured collection of *National Geographic* magazines and maps from Mrs. Noreen George. These magazines had been

collected for approximately 30 years from 1975 to 2005. We happily added them to our library and under the ambit of education, we donated some of the magazines and maps to schools in the Arima Valley.

Thank you Mrs. George for this fitting donation to mark National Geographic's 125th Year Anniversary!



## WHAT'S THAT BIRD?



Peter from Cascade caught this bird feeding in his backyard. Did you guess that it was the Cocoa Thrush?