



Media Contact: Sarah Brady, Executive Director

Sarah.brady@thegardenstcroix.org

340-692-6153

PRESS RELEASE:

ST. GEORGE VILLAGE BOTANICAL GARDEN AWARDED LEVEL 1 ACCREDITATION BY ARBNET ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

St. Croix, USVI (November 22, 2023) – The St. George Village Botanical Garden in Frederiksted has been awarded a Level 1 Accreditation by The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum, for achieving particular standards of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens. The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program is the only global initiative to officially recognize arboreta at various levels of development, capacity, and professionalism. The St. George Village Botanical Garden is also now recognized as an accredited arboretum in the Morton Register of Arboreta, a database of the world's arboreta and gardens dedicated to woody plants. This accreditation makes the Garden the only registered arboretum in the Greater and Lesser Antilles.

The St. George Village Botanical Garden was established in 1972. The Garden encompasses 16 acres with over 1,000 Caribbean and pan-tropical plants and trees growing against a backdrop of ruins and repurposed buildings of an old 18th and 19th century Danish colonial sugar plantation.

Our palms collection includes over 25 species that grow in the Caribbean and adjacent regions of Central and South America.

Our Native Arboretum, containing over 20 species, is dedicated to trees that are considered "native" according to the oldest botanical records. These include *Ceiba pentandra*, *Tecoma stans*, and *Hura crepitans*. This collection contains many examples of trees that have had commercial or economic value and have been harvested to near extinction on the island.

Our Naturalized Forest provides our visitors with an opportunity to walk through an area of shrubs, trees, and vines similar to the "bush" on St. Croix. Nothing has been planted in this forest which cannot be found growing throughout the island. The pathway parallels Mint Gut, a dry riverbed, and passes through areas containing native species as well as introduced, naturalized varieties.

We are home to some particularly charismatic specimens including several cannonball trees (*Couroupita guianensis*), sausage tree (*Kigelia pinnata*), an enormous baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), and a towering kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*).

"The St. George Village Botanical Garden is an extraordinary place that is built around the ruins of a former 18th and 19th century sugar cane plantation. To add the Arbnet accreditation to our credentials increases our visibility throughout the region and facilitates collaboration with a broader range of experts so we can continue to fulfill our Garden mission."

-- Sarah Brady, Executive Director

About ArbNet

ArbNet is an interactive, collaborative, international community of arboreta. ArbNet facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experience, and other resources to help arboreta meet their institutional goals and works to raise professional standards through the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program. The accreditation program, sponsored and coordinated by The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois in cooperation with American Public Gardens Association and Botanic Gardens Conservation International, is the only global initiative to officially recognize arboreta based on a set of professional standards. The program offers four levels of accreditation, recognizing arboreta of various degrees of development, capacity and professionalism. Standards include planning, governance, public access, programming and tree science, planting and conservation. More information is available at www.arbnet.org.