

Flora of St. John

The preparation of a comprehensive flora for the island of St. John is progressing well after many consecutive years of field work. The island has been thoroughly explored, in a search for all species of vascular plants. Many plant specimens have been collected and deposited at the herbarium of the Virgin Islands National Park for reference and further study.

Pioneering work was done by Dr. Roy O. Woodbury (retired Professor from the University of Puerto Rico) who collected the first specimens and published a checklist for the plants on St. John. He discovered four species which proved to be new. His work constitutes the starting point for this floristic project.

Additional field work has been done in an effort to collect every species of vascular plant on the island. As a result, a few more species have been added to the checklist, and the information on phenology and distribution of the species have been expanded. The status of the rare and endangered species of plants is better understood as new populations have been found.

The "Flora of St. John" will contain complete descriptions of the vascular plants, and information about distributions and local uses. Two hundred line drawings will illustrate about 400 of the 800 species occurring in St. John. The descriptions are primarily the work of Dr. Pedro Acevedo with some contributions by a few colleagues from the Smithsonian Institution. This work will be published in two volumes, each one describing about 400 species. The manuscript for the first volume should be ready in October 1992.

Dr. Pedro Acevedo
Smithsonian Institution