



Manzanillo SUN

October 2016

coastal Mexico's lifestyle magazine



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by Ruth Hazlewood

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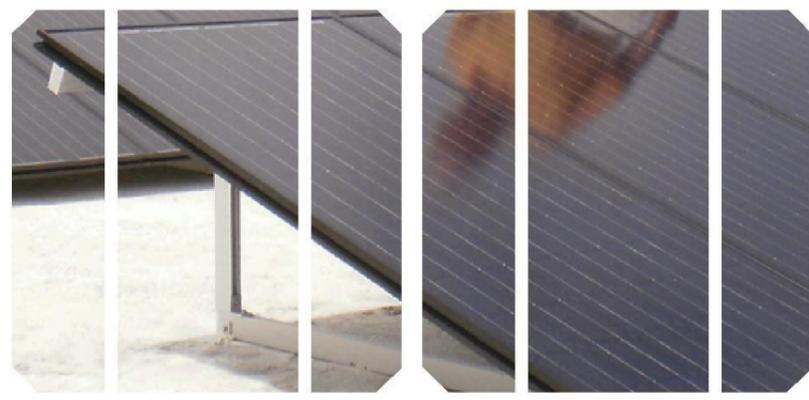
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To send submissions for possible inclusion in the magazine, please send to the editor by 15th of each month. We are always looking for writers or ideas on what you would like us to see as topics for the magazine.

Article submissions:

- Preferred subjects are Manzanillo and Mexico
- All articles should be 1000 words or less or may be serialized or 500-750 words if accompanied by photos
- Pictures are welcome
- Comments, letters to the editor, articles, photos and advertisements are always welcome

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Tonalá, for seriously great shopping!

by Suzanne A. Marshall

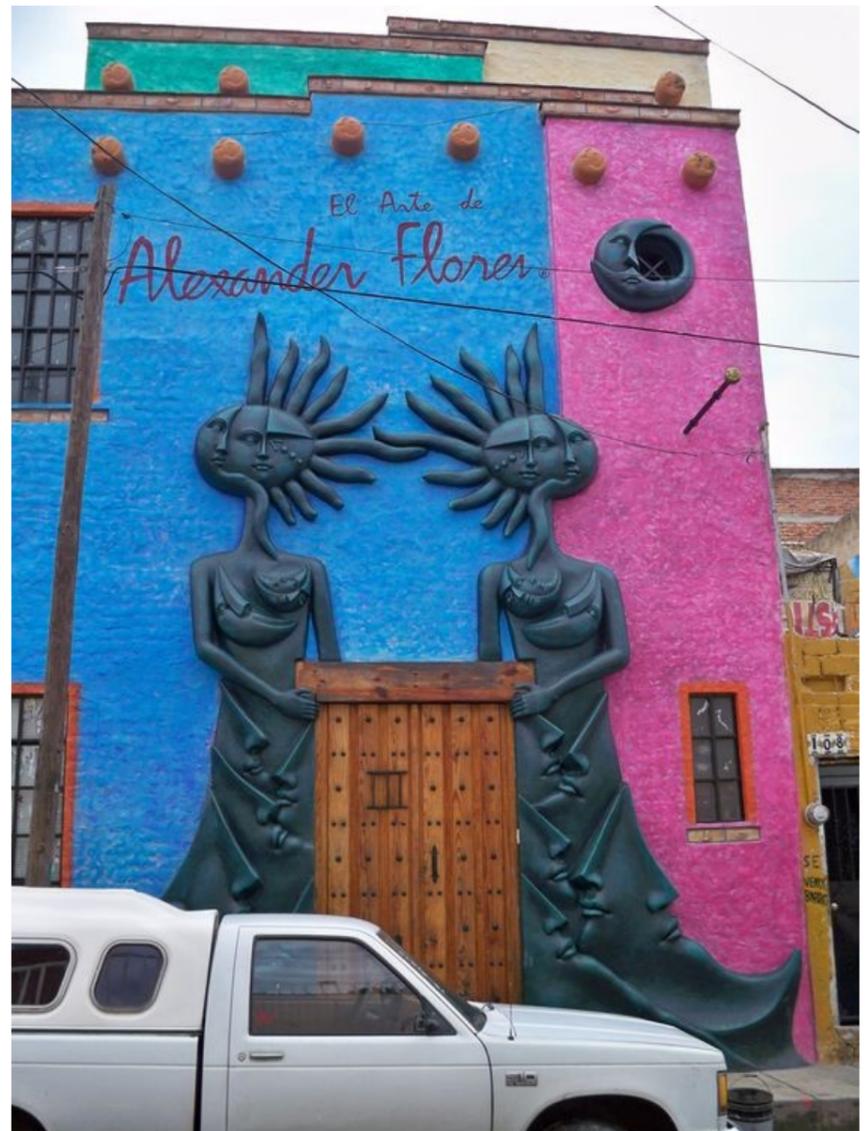
There exists a fascinating and exciting manufacturing district on the outskirts of Guadalajara, Jalisco. It's named Tonalá. I use the word fascinating because you've likely never seen anything like it elsewhere. And I say exciting because the pricing is such a bargain you think you've died and gone to heaven. Housewares, hand-blown glass, clothing, furniture, weavings, carpets, jewelry, floor tiles, ceramic sinks, trinkets and souvenirs abound throughout the streets that cover endless square kilometers. Let the photos speak for themselves!



Experiencing a shopping excursion there is the best way to understand the scope of products and endless array of artisanal pieces. If you are a serious shopper wanting to furnish a vacation condo or upgrade your kitchen ware, be sure to take a few days. This way you give yourself the time needed to really scan the choices at a leisurely pace and also enjoy some lovely little side restaurants and 'taquerías'. Perhaps you want to take some unique and special gifts back to friends and family. The only problem you will have is making your final choices.



This district is producing products for greater Mexico and well beyond its borders. I have seen vans and trucks there with license plates from Quebec, Canada. They were loading up inventories of products for resale in their Canadian stores. Some of the local hotels actually cater to larger inventory buyers by providing storage areas on their mezzanine levels that are secured until the shopping is done and vehicles are loaded.



Although we live in Manzanillo, our condo association holds its annual meeting in Guadalajara; so a number of years ago, we tied in a Tonalá excursion at the same time. We rented a car and drove the 4 hour trip and gazed upon the stunning mountains and valley vistas along the way. We navigated quite well with our GPS applications though that could be the subject of another adventure story in future.

The hotel we booked was right near the Tonalá district and all we had to do was walk out the front door and start shopping. On that particular day, we ambled straight into 'street market day' held Thursdays and Sundays each week. So, not only were there all the shops to explore, but also several blocks of street vendors under tents and awnings. It was very festive indeed.

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(Tonalá - Continued from page 1)

But, we had an objective: wall-mounted entry shelves for the front and patio door areas. We needed a place to throw our keys and sunglasses or put down a plate or a glass when going in and out to the terrace. We also needed to be able to fit them into the car. (We would later learn they ship almost anywhere.) It was quite difficult to stay on task as we meandered in and out of the shops and circled the open market tables of colorful and assorted items.



Following a nice lunch on the street, we crossed over to the other side and found ourselves in a shop with exactly what would work for us. It was a wall-mounted wrought iron half circle design with a glass top insert. I loved it. We spoke with the shop clerk and discussed pricing. It was a bargain by any standard. But, we said we needed two of them. Without hesitation we were told they could fabricate another one for us within 2-3 hours! This was quite shocking for us as we are part of the 'hurry up and wait' league who are used to the 'big box' stores and waiting for shipping from distant warehouses.



So we put down our deposit and off we went to explore more of the area. Indeed, when we returned, our shelves were ready to go. I still smile at the surprise of the experience. I should add here, that Tonalá has a lovely 'town' square complete with a beautiful cathedral, museum and various shops and restaurants as well. It is also a lovely diversion from the serious shopping and miles of walking.



Since then, we have returned many times with other friends and family and found more lovely pieces for our home in Manzanillo. Some of our most experienced travelling friends could not believe the expansiveness of the area. If you're looking for some fun and exercise, put on some good walking shoes and head for Tonalá. For those who don't care to drive, I have heard that there are shopping excursions and the first class bus systems in Mexico are the greatest for comfort and site seeing. There is a terminal very near Tonalá from which you can take a taxi. Have fun!

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by Tommy Clarkson

Java Turmeric, *Curcuma xanthorrhiza*

Family: *Zingiberaceae*

Also known as: Indian Saffron or Hidden Lilies

In that I had forgotten where and how I had gotten these absolutely gorgeous flowering plants, I was wholly stumped as to the name of these. Thus, I sought the sagacious counsel of Anders Lindstrom, the savviest botanical guy I know. In addition to being the world's foremost authority on cycads (to see his collection is a truly awesome experience) he is the curator of the spectacular - "I kid you not" - 600 hectares (1,483 acres or nearly three square miles) Nongnooch Tropical Gardens outside of Pattaya in Thailand.

He promptly identified these stunners as members of the *Curcuma* genus - quite probably *Curcuma xanthorrhiza* - members of the ginger family. Aware that Patty and I had taken a week-long cooking course when last in his corner of the world, he reminded me that its edible roots can be used in preparation of Thai cuisine.

They are sometimes referred to as Hidden Lilies in that their inflorescences are partially tucked away from view among the leaves. There are around forty different species of these deciduous rhizomatous coming from Southeastern Asia, India and Malaysia. (Point of interest: In Hawaiian, all of these are called Olena. This has led some gardeners to refer to the entire array of different plants as *Cucuma olena*. This, however, is not a recognized botanical name.)



Mulch atop the soil bed is good thing

Many of the *Costus* species are suitable for growing in pots or planters, thriving outdoors in moist and humid environs. As they die back to the soil surface level in the cooler times, mulching is probably a good idea. But remember to mark them well as - if you are like me - you may well forget what is where and inadvertently plant another specimen atop them during their seasonal slumber!

Java Turmeric like sandy loam with peat or fine coconut fiber (coir) added. But do not water them while they are dormant, commencing regular watering only once the sprouts arise. As Anders told me "Remember that these plants go dormant in the dry season and need a dry rest, but they will be up, flowering and growing well in the spring with the first rain." Usually with long petioles, their leaves are basal (arising from a rhizome, root, bulb or corm). The large rhizome (a prostrate stem running along or just below the ground surface) is that which contains the herbal qualities. Kirsten Albrecht

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(Java Turmeric — Continued from page 4)

Llamas, in her excellent book Tropical Flowering Plants states, "The flower spikes are on individual scapes (leafless stalks arising directly from a rhizome, bearing a flower or inflorescence) or on the leafy stem. The fertile flowers are in usually shorter, less colorful scoop-shaped bracts at the base of the inflorescence with an ornamental coma (a whorl of sterile bracts at the top)."



These really are stunners!

Its uses include incorporation as a mild spice used in drinks providing both flavor and a yellowish color as well as incorporation in seasoning food such as in the curry of India. By itself, it has an aromatic, pungent odor and a bitter taste.

Research bears out that the rhizome can be used medicinally. Among its positive benefits is that it has liver protection properties. Additionally I've read that, it is "anti-oxidant and anti-edemic (and can) encourage bile and prevent the formation of gallstones". Reading further, I noted that its "rhizomes have anti-viral and anti-inflammation properties".

But its array of positives, purportedly, doesn't stop there in that its ability to inhibit bacterial growth lead it to be employed

against acne; It can normalize digestion; Increase breast milk production; Decrease cholesterol levels; Be used in the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease; And, can be effective for long-term maintenance therapy of ulcerative colitis and urinary tract infection.

There are a plethora of scholarly articles, research project results and scientific articles to be found on *Curcuma xanthorrhiza*. In fact, while apparently gaining in recognition and popularity, little seems to be written in easily-found botanical books about the care, upkeep and maintenance of growing any of the *Curcumas*.



Ours growing beneath a Australian Foxtail Palm

Even Llamas – while writing about twelve of the *Curcuma* species - neglected to discuss the *C. xanthorrhiza*. But in perusal of her publication I noted that the *C. australasica* and *C. phaecaulis* looked quite similar to my plants.

However, those with whom I spoke and corresponded indicated that there is a growing awareness of the beauty of these plants. Accordingly, more information should be coming "on-line" soon!

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Puerto Ángel's Seaside Playground...Playa Zipolite

by Dan and Lisa Goy, exclusive to Manzanillo Sun

On February 25, 2016 we left Puerto Arista on the coast of Chiapas and headed northwest using Hwy 200. This was Day 50 of our 90-day tour. We did hit some wind in what some might describe Wind Tunnel Alley just before you arrive at La Ventosa, and drove thru a large wind farm a few hours before our arrival in Puerto Ángel. This was a long day and we were very pleased to arrive at our destination, Fernando's Campground, only steps away from Playa Zipolite, the only sanctioned nude beach in Mexico.



Playa Zipolite

The community known as Zipolite consists of an approximately one-mile stretch of beach with a street that parallels it. It has a central neighborhood, Colonia Roca Blanca, situated at the western end, where many of the hotels and restaurants are located. Colonia Roca Blanca is named for the island or large rock just off the shore, which is white due to bird guano.



Northern beach view

Until just recently, in 2014, the main drag was the only paved street within the community. The Colonia Roca Blanca has now been completely redone, and the town now has three streets



Southern beach view

paved with yellow brick and stonework. Further behind the beach and Adoquín is a larger road that connects Zipolite with other local communities such as San Agustinillo and Puerto Ángel.



San Agustinillo

We were keen to see just how far we ended up from the beach and were happy to find a short 3-minute walk was in our future. We celebrated our arrival with a group dinner at the



Northerly view



Dinner at Playa Aloha

(Continued on page 7)

(Puerto Angel and Playa Zipolite — Continued from page 6)

Aloha Restaurant, great food, cheap cold beer, strong WiFi and a wonderful sunset on the beach. What could be better?



Rafael, Fernando, Daniel

Playa Zipolite is a beach community on the southern coast of Oaxaca state in Mexico between the much more popular and well known Huatulco and Puerto Escondido. As was said earlier, Zipolite is best known as being one of Mexico's very few nude beaches and for retaining much of the hippie culture that made it notable in the 1960s and 1970s.



Zipolite restaurants

The name Zipolite, sometimes spelled Sipolite or Cipolite probably comes from the Nahuatl word sipolitlan or zipotli, meaning "bumpy place" or "place of continuous bumps or hills". Others claim the name means "beach of the dead" in either Nahuatl or Zapotec because of dangerous underwater currents just offshore.



Roland on the boogie board



Warm, beautiful sunset

We found the beach was very popular with gay men, Europeans and the younger set, especially backpackers, who stay in one of the many rustic cabins or camping spaces that line the beach.

This was our last serious beach time before heading inland for 3 weeks so we made the most of it. Lots of time in the water, on the beach and strolling thru town and the nearby community of San Agustinillo. Collectively we visited many different restaurants over our 4 night stay, where it was hot and humid for sure, as was the ocean. We did have electricity, unfortunately not enough to run the AC, almost enough to run the fans.



Very popular restaurant

Interesting that in the 1960s and 1970s, counterculture hippies began to congregate here in part due to the beach's isolated nature. At the time, there was little law enforcement, and drug use became common. In the 1970s and 1980s the beach gained a reputation in Mexico and among foreign travelers as a

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(Puerto Angel and Playa Zipolite — Continued from page 7)

free-love paradise. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Zipolite was hard hit by two hurricanes and a fire.



Zipolite beachfront palapas

The first hurricane was Hurricane Pauline on 7 October 1997, a category four storm which destroyed nearly everything in town with strong flooding, leaving it -along with Mazunte and Puerto Ángel- cut off from the mainland, but there were no deaths.



Zipolite campground

Next was Hurricane Rick on 9 November 1997. While not as strong as Pauline, the storm damaged roads and other infrastructure that was only partially rebuilt after Pauline. The last disaster to cause major damage was a fire that broke out on 21 February 2001, burning many of the wood and palm-thatched structures that were on the beach. You could see that the campground owner's house had been badly damaged by previous hurricanes as only the concrete bearing walls and roofline remained on the 2nd floor.



Zipolite hotel

It is obvious that there are no building codes enforced here, so constructions vary as to materials and quality. There are no banking services here either although an automated teller machine (ATM) has been recently installed in the Roca Blanca. There is also an ATM and a branch of Banco Azteca in Puerto Ángel. There is no currency exchange either, but many places take US dollars and a few places even accept credit cards.



San Agustinillo graffiti

Almost all the establishments that face the beach have palapa-sheltered restaurants and bars in front and lodging in the back. These lodgings can vary from wood huts, to simple concrete structures and often include hammocks and places to pitch tents. Another highlight for Zipolite is the variety of restaurants from the standard Mexican to international cuisine and vegetarian choices.

Many of the local restaurants are owned by expatriate Italians and serve pasta dishes as well as pizza. Another restaurant serves crepes because of its French expatriate owner. Nightlife in Zipolite is subdued, however, in the high season (November through May), some surprisingly good musicians pass through town. Some of our gang stayed out late enough to enjoy some of the entertainment. The local band, the Zipolite Beach Billies, hosts a weekly open mic that is very popular among tourists and locals alike. Many of the beachfront hotels have their own

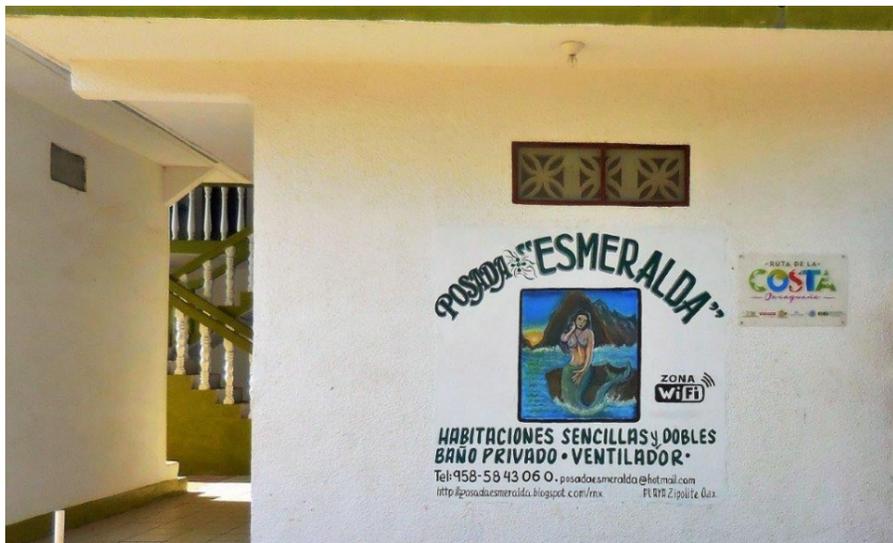
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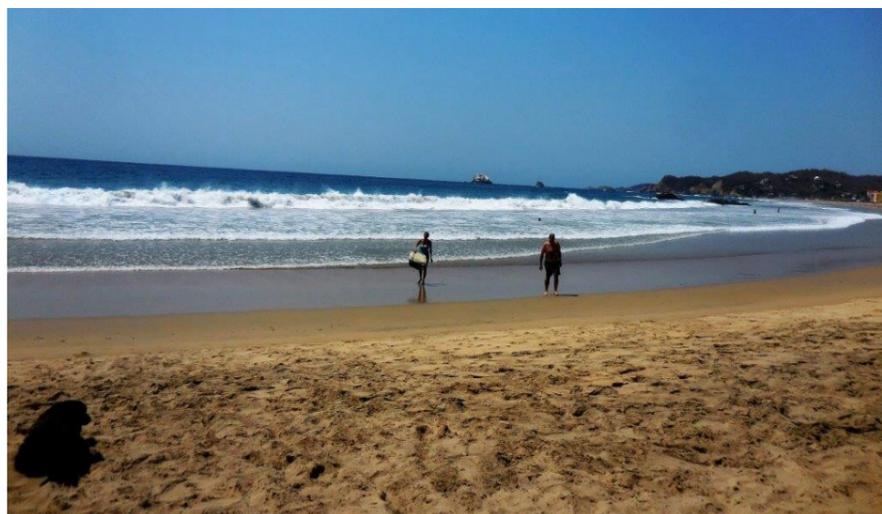
small bars and there are a number of small nightclubs such as Libelula Bar, Zipolipas and La Puesta. Posada Mexico also frequently hosts live music. There is a large yoga community in Zipolite with classes being offered at the Alquimista and Loma Linda. Our stop here was well worth it, lots of fun and great memories. Enjoy our photo tour!



Local library



Local waterfront hotel



Lulu, Marian and Roland



San Agustinillo graffiti



Narrow road in San Agustinillo



Art on RV park wall

Submitted by Dan and Lisa Goy
 Owners of Baja Amigos RV Caravan Tours
 Experiences from our 90-day Mexico RV Tour: January 7-April 5, 2016
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you can reach Dan and Lisa Goy at thegoys@manzanillosun.com



by Tommy Clarkson

Mexican Hat Plant, *Bryophyllum daigremontianum*

Family: *Crassulaceae*

Also known as: Mother-of-Millions, Mother-of-Thousands, Devil's Backbone, Alligator's Tongue or Alligator Plant



See all the "babies" eager to leap off and start lives of their own!

A member of the Kalanchoe genus, this widespread group of succulents can be found ranging from Africa to Asia and even

in the Americas. Preferring the slightly cooler (that's a relative term, of course) time of the year, they tend to grow best during our winters and flower with spring. *(But, just because I used that word winter, keep in mind that it is not frost-hardy and typically will die if subjected to temperatures below freezing.)*



The Mexican Hat plant is an upright succulent perennial with triangular-lance-shaped, grey-green leaves

This particular species, originating in Madagascar - what we call the Mexican Hat Plant - is an upright succulent perennial with triangular-lance-shaped, grey-green leaves (sometimes spotted with brown). Growing on the edges of the leaves are rows of baby plantlets which will drop off and grow in great proliferation. It flowers but rarely - let's say sporadic, at best! However, when it does, they are pendent, tubular greyish pink of approximately three quarters of an inch (2 cm).

While having a penchant for preferring a prostrate inclination, the *Bryophyllum daigremontianum* will generally grow to a height of approximately three and a quarter feet (1 meter).

According to *Plants Rescue*, "It is commonly found growing on gravelly and sandy soils. This succulent plant is a weed of bushland and disturbed sites such as roadsides, along fence lines, around rubbish tips and abandoned rural dwellings. It also occurs frequently along creeks and rivers where it is spread by floodwaters."

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(Mexican Hat Plant — Continued from page 10)

A particularly interesting aspect of it is that it reproduces via vegetative propagation. This is accomplished through clone plants being produced on the mother plant without necessity of seeds or spores and which Patty says beats the hell out of twenty-eight hours of labor!

Relative to these "babies", Sherry Boas wrote in her column *Simply Living*, as published in the Orlando Sentinel, "*When (these) plantlets fall off, sometimes with white, threadlike roots already in place, they settle on the ground and proceed to grow. Not fussy about soil, (these) seedlings have successfully rooted . . . in moist spots, as well as in areas where water supply is limited.*"



Ours makes a great walkway border!

She goes on to say, "*On the positive side, (these are) easy to uproot. One yank with a gloved hand (to protect against the serrated edges) can pull these shallow-rooted perennials from their roost. On the negative side, each yank has the potential to dislodge several of the plantlets, undermining the entire plan.*"

The Mexican Hat Plant likes well-draining sandy soil and full sun or partial shade. With lots of light, its leaves will develop a pinkish-red color. Under less bright conditions, they will stay more greenish.

Adapted to dry conditions, the Mexican Hat Plant can survive long periods of drought. But water it well upon initial planting.

After that, they almost seem to thrive on neglect! So, water no more than once or twice a week. However, if you forget and over water causing rot, discard the affected plant and simply start new ones from plantlets. Probably getting way more technical than necessary, its leaves are actually short, determinate, leaf-like branches that are often termed *phylloclades* or *cladodes*.

Like a surprising number of plants, all parts of the Mexican Hat Plant are poisonous, so kids and pets beware! (Truly, if ingested by small children or animals, it can be fatal.) Conversely, as regards consumption by something of something, during growing season I suggest you feed yours a balanced liquid fertilizer two or three times.

It is possibly subject to attack by mealy bugs, scale and aphids; as to diseases, watch out for powdery mildews and rust. For the novice gardener or those cursed with a brown thumb, the Mexican Hat Plant is great as it is extremely low maintenance in needs.

Bryophyllum daigremontianum grows in shallow rocky soils, so, obviously, it is an excellent plant for rock gardens and xeriscaping. As to other possible applications, it is great for use in a container or in a window sill planter. Or, with proper care (meaning, "curb it from running amuck") it is a great looking as a specimen plant as well as mass planting or group planting.

As Sherry Boas noted, that this plant requires "tough love"; you need to control it, not have it mastering you! Tell it what she tells hers, "*You can stay on the property, but I won't spoil you.*"

(Now that's counsel of the sort all parents with over twenty-one year olds still at home should heed!)

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you can reach Tommy Clarkson at tommy@manzanillosun.com

Vacations and Water

Part 1 of 2

by Terry Sovil

Water safety and drowning prevention

Fall is coming! That means a return to your beloved Manzanillo. Many of you will head to the beach, spend time at the condo pool or your own private pool. I wanted to talk to you a little about **drowning, safety** and offer some **tips** to help keep you, your family and friends safe. This will be a 2-parter.



Water competency

The American Red Cross (ARC) has developed a *Water Competency list*. This is a list of water skills that are considered critical for a swimmer to be safer. You should assure that swimmers visiting your pool, or swimming in the ocean, are capable of performing these skills with proficiency. Anyone not able to do these requires closer supervision.

Step, or jump, into water over their head

- Return to the surface and float or tread water for 1 minute
- Turn around in a full circle and spot an exit
- Swim at least 25 yards / meters to the exit (swim a few laps to get 25 yards in a smaller pool)
- Exit from the water – in a pool, exit the water without using the ladder

Drowning

Drowning is the act of dying by submersion and inhalation of water or another liquid. It is essentially death by suffocation. We often think of drowning in terms of distress, panic, scream-

ing and waving arms. If these occur at all, they occur before drowning. Drowning itself is very quick and often silent.

A person that is at, or close to drowning, is unable to keep their head elevated and above the water so they are not able to breathe properly. Because they cannot breathe they are unable to shout or cry out. When you lack air, your body cannot perform the physical actions involved in waving or trying to attract attention.

Dry drowning and secondary drowning

Anyone that has had a near-drowning experience should be seen by a doctor. Dry and secondary drowning occur due to the inhalation of water that may cause problems later, not right away.

Symptoms from dry drowning generally occur right after the incident. Secondary drowning usually does not display symptoms until 1-24 hours after the incident. Both of these are very rare but they do make up 1-2% of all drowning incidents.

Symptoms of dry drowning and secondary drowning

Dry drowning and secondary drowning have the same symptoms. They include:

- Coughing
- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling extremely tired

A child may also exhibit changes in behavior such as becoming irritable or a noticeable drop in energy levels which can all mean that the brain is not getting the oxygen it needs.

What to do

If there is a water incident and a child shows any of the symptoms, get medical help. In most cases the symptoms will go away on their own but it is important to get them checked. Any problems that do develop are usually treatable. The sooner you seek help, the better. Your job is to monitor the child for the next 24 hours after the incident. If symptoms don't go away, or get worse, transport them to an urgent care facility. They may need a chest x-ray, and IV and possibly be kept under observation. That can't be done in a traditional doctor's office.

There are no drugs for dry or secondary drowning so the child will get supportive care, monitoring them to assure that airways are clear and monitoring their oxygen level. If they have

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breathing problems they may be put on a breathing tube and possibly breathe pure oxygen.

Panic

When I used to teach many of the ARC courses we had to memorize a definition for panic: "Panic is a sudden, overwhelming sense of dread that inhibits a person's ability for self-help."

Panic is **SUDDEN**. It may happen quickly, even with something that is routine but goes slightly wrong. When it occurs, you can't think about anything! You can no longer help yourself.

Panic is **OVERWHELMING** and affects every portion of your body. Muscles will tighten, adrenaline is released and skin may flush.

A panicked person has lost the ability to **REASON**. They will not hear or comprehend instructions such as "grab the rope". If they are able to try to do something, it is usually the worst choice they could make.

Becoming **PANICKED**. A simple example: a new but competent swimmer thinks "I'm swimming!" But it is their first time in the ocean, they imagine "Wait! I've never been in this kind of water. I can't swim here!" A sudden lack of confidence, a shadow in the water, someone splashing water could push them over the edge and into panic.

Response / rescue

The ARC taught the concepts of **Reach, Throw, Row, Go**. You need to do something but it is usually NOT jumping in the water to save someone. That should be a last resort and based on your abilities!

First **REACH** for them. This isn't just extending an arm. A reach includes throwing a line, extending a pole, or throwing a life ring etc. I'll talk about this in more detail.



Lifeguard rescue can

If you have nothing available to reach with, **THROW** something to them. Even an almost full jug of water will float. If you can get it to them and they can grab it, they can hang on and float. A thermos. A cooler. All of these will float.

If it is in the ocean, **ROW** to them if you can. A boat, a kayak, a kickboard or paddleboard or even a floating air mattress.



GO. If you have nothing else available, don your fins if you have them. Push a float if you are able (a cooler, or floating mattress etc.). This gives you something to extend to them when you reach them.

A drowning or panicked person will grab onto you and try to climb up on you so they can get up out of the water. They will generally face safety which is where you are coming from. This is why GO is last. You need confidence and experience to engage a panicked person in the water! Look closely at where the victim is and run along the beach or the pool to shorten the distance.

Evaluate the pool you use for length and width and safety equipment they have. If there isn't much, get a mid-size plastic milk bottle and pick up a package of 50' line at Home Depot. If

(Continued on page 14)

(Vacations and Water — Continued from page 13)

you are a beach person, get 75-100' of line. Keep the milk container about 1/3 full of water. It will throw much easier with a little weight in it!

Tie a knot (remember how to do that? - see the article from the [September 2016 edition](#)) through the handle and you have something that you can reach with!

Before you throw, make sure you have one foot on the bitter end of the line! Do not throw directly at the person. Throw it over and past them. They should be able to grab the line. You can pull them to you.

If you miss and need to throw again, simply pull all the line back in and let it drop at your feet. DO NOT pick it up. DO NOT try to coil it as you go. Now, when you get the jug back, throw again.

The line will not tangle unless you've touched it. Practice this! It is a very simple, inexpensive tool to have within reach. A life ring will work the same way. There are also other tools such as a "shepherd's crook" for pools.

Until next time when we will talk about drowning and how to recognize it!



Shepherd's crook

you can reach Terry Sovil at terry@manzanillosun.com



<http://faculty.deanza.edu/donahuemary/Howtorescueadrowningvictimusingareachingassistorashepherd%27scrook>

Ben-Hur

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Starring: Jack Huston, Morgan Freeman, Toby Kebbell, Rodrigo Santoro

Director: Timur Bekmambetov

“Judah Ben-Hur loses everything after his adopted brother Messala, now an officer in the Roman army, returns to Jerusalem and accuses the young prince of treason. Stripped of his title and separated from his wife and family, Ben-Hur must endure years of slavery on a galley at sea. When fate brings the estranged brothers to an epic and deadly chariot race, Ben-Hur finally gets the chance to exact vengeance on the man who destroyed his life.”

The movie was just OK for me and I wonder why they decided to remake this film at all. Unless they were prepared to make it even more powerful than the 1959 version starring Charlton Heston which won an astonishing 11 Academy Awards, why bother? Perhaps someone felt a modern version for the new generations was in order.

There are some interesting special effects for the chariot race scenes. However, the rest of the story for the most part was a little lackluster and the plot is lacking some insights into the personalities and thus the rationale for the conflicts portrayed between the brothers.



IMDB has rated this movie as 5.7/10 based on 8,702 viewers.

you can reach Suzanne A. Marshall at suzanne@manzanillosun.com

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Pandora's Promise

(Netflix)

by Suzanne A. Marshall

Featuring: Mark Lynus, Michael Shellenberger, Stewart Brand, Richard Rhodes, Weyneth Cravens

Director: Robert Stone

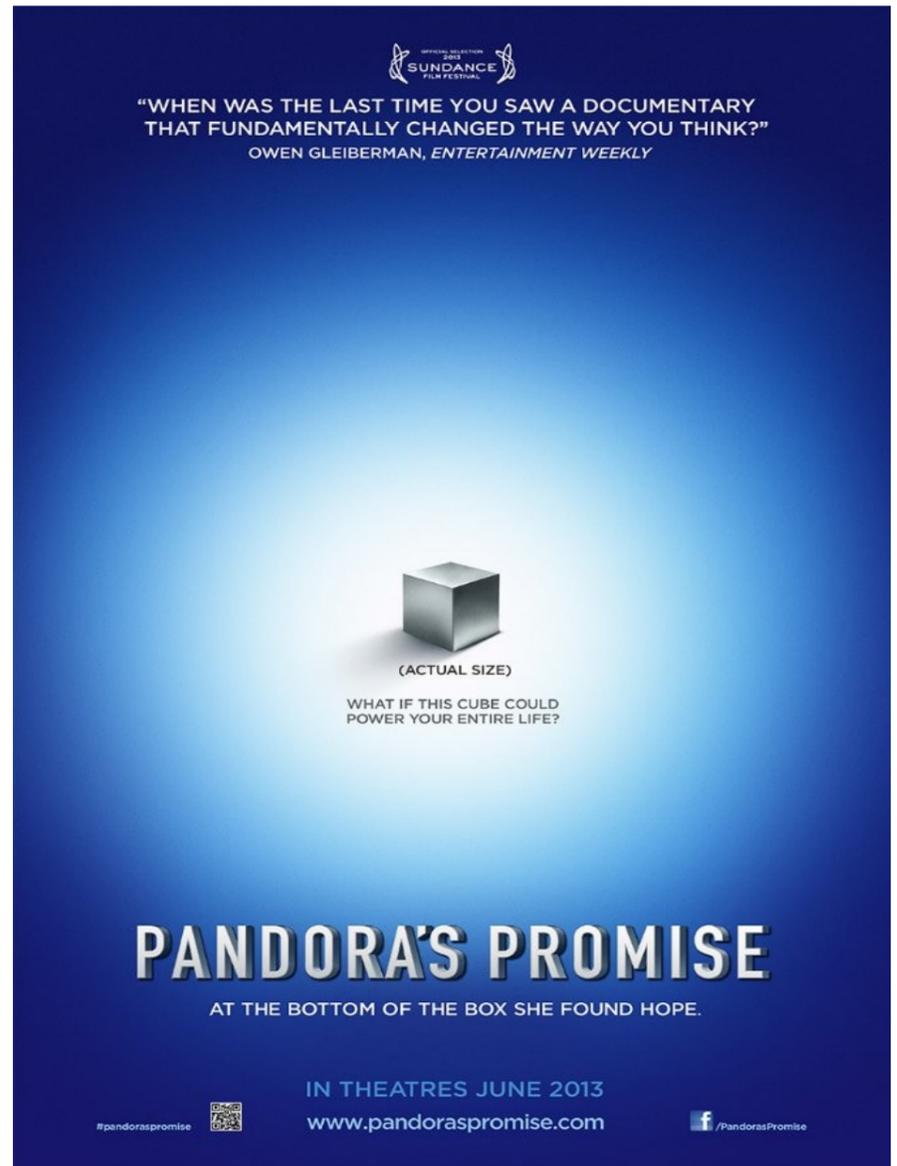
"A feature-length documentary about the history and future of nuclear power. The film explores how and why mankind's most feared and controversial technological discovery is now passionately embraced by many of those who once led the charge against it."

This is a very thought provoking documentary and gives us a newer perspective on the pros and cons of nuclear power. It also offers some information that might 'debunk' what many of us presume to know as fact. For example, the issues of nuclear waste and radiation fallout. It's interesting to note that some of the commentators were former activists previously opposed to the very idea of nuclear energy.

I found myself deeply engrossed in this film, especially given the current political and public debates surrounding the oil industries, pipelines, population growth, global warming and the needs of the human race for food, reduced pollution and energy. What are we going to do?

I believe that anyone who views this documentary will find themselves wondering and wanting more information about the future of energy production.

IMDB gives this film a rating of 7.4/10



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A little as the Aztecs saw it

by Kirby Vickery

The culture of the Nahuatl speaking peoples is, at best, poorly understood by most modern folks.

One of the prime reasons is the fact that the Mesoamerican god names are long and difficult to pronounce even by native Hispanic peoples. If you trace our mythological 'belief' system back into any of our root cultures, you find gods, either good or bad, but never both or sometimes one or the other. So the concept of what is called a 'duality' (both good and bad, male and female, etc.) within each of the Mesoamerican gods is a difficult idea to swallow.



Quetzalcoatl has been known to do cameos in various Final Fantasy games. He's cool like that!

Most historical archaeologists feel that use and practice of sacrificing people is probably the most difficult concept of their religious practices to understand. Not so much the one by one termination of one's enemy on alter stones, even though that was really excessive, but, the fact that these people would line up to be sacrificed, preferring that to a quiet death in their houses or the honor of having one or more of their children chosen for sacrifice. It has been shown that the majority of these sacrifices were done by and for the 'Priest Class' which held a social control over the populous tighter than the Druids had over the Celts.



A graphic depiction of ritual sacrifice

For the past three years or so I have been writing about "Aztec Mythology" and have acquired a great deal of information concerning them and other Mesoamerican societies. Occasionally, I would branch into straight history or sociology as the mood hit me (being married to the owner and publisher of the magazine had its privileges). After a time, I was able to separate some of the folklore from fact and some from fiction. It amazes me the number of stories that modern people take for straight mythology actually have some historical fact of basis for belief.

A few months ago, I published a story that I thought was a folklore piece but have since learned that it is much more than that. Not only is the story historically true, it even lends itself to the origins of the Aztec Empire if you want to call it thus. While teaching English Literature, and especially in my history classes, I always tried to give a broad banded look for my students into what was going on in the rest of the world. Or, at least, a broader picture to the story or immediate subject I was teaching. Toward this end, I am going to re-present that story.

The Aztec was a Johnny-come-lately tribe of the Nahuatl-speaking peoples of the Mesoamerican world. They filtered in during the 1200CE years in small groups, selling themselves as second class citizens and working accordingly. Their chief occu-

(Continued on page 18)

(A Little as the Aztecs Saw It - Continued from page 17)

pation was being mercenaries to whatever lord was in charge in the area they were in. Today Nahuatl translates to mean Clear Speech. There are evidences of it as far north as Arizona and Utah. During their time they were known as a warlike tribe calling themselves the Mexica and they referred to the area of their origin as Aztlán. They had a written language but the priests ordered all references to their origin destroyed during Hernán Cortés' invasion.

By the time the Aztec's started to amass in Mesoamerica, there were a number of city-states well established under the Mayan civilization which had been taken over by the Toltec's about three hundred years past (about 900CE).

Being warlike and independent, the Mexica would anger one lord then another and be told to move on. All the while, they were growing in population and adopting, absorbing and sharing the local culture and beliefs as they went, while always growing in strength.

In one notable legend, the Mexica asked the ruler of the city-state of Culhuacan, who they were vassals of at the time, for one of his daughters. The king granted it thinking it was a political marriage he was accepting, but when he got invited to a festivity, which he thought was said marriage, he was met with the high priest of the Mexica wearing the flayed skin of his daughter.

The Mexica had actually asked for the girl for a sacrifice and not a marriage as the king had thought. He immediately banished the entire population of Mexica to the swampy waters of Lake Texcoco thinking that he had rid himself of them as they would probably die of starvation.

The Mexica maintained their own myths and legends. One of them entailed finding an eagle eating a snake while perched on a prickly pear. And there he was in the middle of a small island in the middle of this swampy lake. So they built the city of Cuauhmixtlán, Place of the Eagle Between the Clouds, later renamed Tenochtitlán, the Place of the Prickly Pear Cactus (in honor to their first high priest Tenoch), and its twin city Tlatelolco, Place of the Mound of Sand, home of the largest market in the Americas.



Mexican flag — eagle on prickly-pear cactus

They later formed the Triple Alliance with neighboring city-states of Texcoco and Tlacopan, beginning what is now known as the Aztec Empire. Mexico City is there today.

you can reach Kirby Vickery at kirby@manzanillosun.com

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Before you call your travel agent...

by Señor Tech

I have not used a travel agent to book my travel for over 25 years. That is except for our first cruise earlier this spring and we paid an additional \$130.00 for that privilege. There are many resources online that offer travel savings and allow you, the reader, choices of flight times and connections as well as hotel room amenities.

This spring my wife, Señora NotSoTechie, and I flew back to Canada for six weeks. Last year we sold our home, so we needed a place to stay. Like the old adage that states "house guests and fish start to smell after three days"; we decided not to bother our numerous relatives and friends and instead rent a condo. We had heard about Airbnb.com from our daughter, so we went online. We found an absolute gem (see photos throughout the article), it had two full bathrooms, dining room (including table and six chairs), living room, office (complete with printer and all types of office supplies), two bedrooms, and in-suite laundry and a secure underground parking spot. There were two balconies, one with a Weber natural gas grill. The condo was located in downtown Edmonton for a price of \$92.00 per night. The cheapest hotel room I was able to find in a tourist style hotel, was over \$110.00 per night for a standard one-bedroom guest suite.



Airbnb certifies both the owners and those looking to rent. When a new account is setup, the applicant has to verify their e-mail, phone and provide government I.D. This provides protection for both parties. The site also has an excellent rating system. The owner rates the person who rented the suite, so that other owners can determine if a renter trying to rent their suite might be a risk. I was asked to rate the owner, so that other renters could determine how they would be treated. Owners are also rated on how fast they respond to queries and booking approvals. There are also numerous photos to help make the decision to rent that property. In our case, the photos did not adequately show how great the condo really was. It was not a "my compliments to the photographer moment" that we sometimes get at a restaurant displaying the items on a menu.



We also needed a rental vehicle. I am a Costco member, so I tried Costcotravel.ca (.com in the US). We saved over \$400.00 or 30% on a one-month rental of a full-sized car. I checked all the online rental sites, and on-line travel sites. This was for vehicle pickup and drop-off at the airport. Normally the discount is not as generous, so if you are a Costco member, you may want to check there as well as the normal online travel sites.

Airbnb is a great way to get imbedded in the local neighborhoods, but if hotels are more to your liking, then consider an online booking site. There are numerous sites including Hotels.com (owned by Expedia) and Booking.com (owned by Priceline) which are the most notable. But there are also sites that search and aggregate the other travel sites and claim to offer the best deals. Trivago.com is the latest .com site for hotels only. It appears to be an excellent choice for finding the lowest hotel prices.

(Continued on page 20)

(Before you call your travel agent...Continued from page 19)

Sometimes after finding a hotel online, it is also worthwhile calling the hotel directly (not their toll-free booking site), as some will offer free breakfasts or other enticements to save paying the booking commissions.



There are also sites online that specialize in airline bookings. Most notable are Orbitz.com, Expedia.com, Priceline.com, Kayak.com and Travelocity.com. The sites also offer comparison with the other booking sites. While this may seem redundant, there are instances where a lower fare was available on the comparison website. These sites will usually provide additional discounts if you book hotels and/or car rentals with the airfare. You are also able to search for hotels only, or car rentals only at these sites.

Frequent flyers should check with the airlines for seat sales offered to their most loyal customers. And don't forget to use the loyalty points. Airlines, hotels and car rental agencies are making it easier to book online and only charge the taxes, once the points are redeemed.

If you own property and would like to swap with another property owner in another part of the world, HomeExchange.com may be of interest. Similar to Airbnb in concept, you can enjoy travel to another locale and save considerable dollars in accommodations. Of course you will have to let them stay in your home while you visit theirs.

We have not tried this, but we have friends that were able to visit parts of Europe that they normally might not visit due to the cost. They especially enjoyed living like the locals and they were very happy with their experiences. The home page asks where you want to go and where you live. Based on these answers, a list of properties will display. If your location is listed,

then a swap should be easy. There are also swap listings that are open to any location. These may be harder to arrange. It will be easier to swap if your property is located close to nature, in the heart of a city, or has tourist appeal.



The other day we stopped at a travel agent and asked about flights to Guanajuato from Manzanillo. I was quoted a price and I noticed it was 20% higher than the fare displayed on-screen. I don't begrudge paying a travel agent for their work, but if I am able to do my own bookings, I can use the savings for extras on my trip. I suppose that is why hotels, airlines, and other travel-related businesses have cut commissions to travel agents. So when you use their services, expect to pay more for your travel. The internet has made it much easier, for anyone who is willing to search, to save on their travel expenses.

if you have questions or suggestions about future technology topics, email me at seniortech@manzanillosun.com



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Should you invest in stocks in retirement?

by Yann Kostic

Financial advisers often recommend that their clients maintain some of their savings in stocks, even after retirement. But is the risk worth it?

Retirees living comfortably on income from Social Security, pensions, and bonds may think it's crazy to take on the anxiety that comes with fluctuating stock prices for a little more growth. That's understandable: after the recent financial crisis, it's easy to believe the market may nosedive and destroy the value of your nest egg.

If you're certain you can live comfortably the rest of your life on your Social Security, pensions, and bonds without dipping too deeply into your retirement savings, you have a good case for avoiding stocks.

"If, for example, you have \$500,000 in savings, and plan to withdraw 3% (\$15,000) in the first year of retirement, increasing subsequent annual draws for inflation, there's a 90% probability that your nest egg will last at least thirty years, even if invested in 50% cash and 50% bonds", says global asset management firm T. Rowe Price.

But what about unforeseen circumstances? Your daily living expenses could go up by more than anticipated. You could decide to travel or indulge in expensive hobbies. Or you could experience a costly medical crisis or a lawsuit.

Say, with \$500,000 in savings, invested in 50% cash and 50% bonds, you now want to withdraw 4% (\$20,000) in the first year of retirement, and withdrawals will increase annually to compensate for inflation.

As T. Rowe Price's research indicates, this change from 3% to 4% means there's less than a 50% probability that your nest egg will last for more than thirty years.

If this possibility concerns you, you may want a cushion to absorb unexpected expenses, and the growth potential of stocks may appeal. However, they may not be right for you. Your adviser, who understands your individual circumstances, can help you decide.

Yann Kostic is an Investment Advisor (RIA) and Money Manager with Atlantis Wealth Management. Yann specializes in retirees (or soon to be), self-reliant women and expats in Mexico. Atlantis Wealth Management has relationships with international custodians allowing multiple foreign currencies in a single account. Yann splits his time between the Lake Chapala area, Manzanillo and Central Florida. Comments, questions or to request his newsletter, "News you can use" contact him at yannk@atlantisgrp.com, in the US at (321) 574-1521 or in Mexico, (376) 106-1613



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Codices

Treasures of Mexico: The Mixtec, Aztec and Maya Codices that Survived the Conquistadors



When Europeans arrived in the New World, they did not only kill people with war, slavery and disease, they also attempted to destroy the cultures of the native peoples. Among so many cultural tragedies, one stands out in Mexico: the burning of ancient manuscripts illustrated and written before and shortly after the Spanish invaded.

The Mexican codices, as they are called, are richly illustrated texts that provide a window into the life, history, religion, and culture of Mexico, before and after the Spanish invasion that began in 1521. Only about two dozen pre-Spanish codices survived the tragedy of the book-burning. Several others survive from after the invasion. The University of Arizona Library website says Mexican rulers also destroyed some manuscripts.



The wedding of 3-Flint and 12-Wind from the Mixtec Zouche-Nuttall Codex

The books were written and illustrated mostly by **Mixtec**, **Aztec** and **Maya** people and go back as far as 629 AD, through to

1642 AD. The **Mixtec codices** that survived are mostly pre-Spanish, while the Aztec manuscripts display influence of European culture. Only four Mayan codices survive, all pre-1521 AD. The Mexican codices are made of long strips of deer hide, cotton cloth or bark paper. Some of them have wooden covers. Pre-Spanish codices fold like accordions, showing images on both sides of the folio. If the manuscript was meant to be displayed against a wall, the artists painted just one side.



Mayan hieroglyphs (Drawing by Maria Egupova/123rf.com)

The largest group of early Mesoamerican codices are early Mixtec pictographic books from Oaxaca.



An image from the 12th century Codex Colombino of the Mixtec people shows the 11th-century military and political feats of Lord Eight-Deer, aka Tiger Claw, and another ruler, Four-Wind, and religious ceremonies marking these feats. (Image from the World Digital Library)

(Continued on page 23)

(Codices — Continued from page 22)



Detail of the Dresden Codex as redrawn by Lacambalam (Wikimedia Commons)



An image of the Dresden Codex from the World Digital Library

“Some pre-Conquest Mixtec codices contain genealogical tables of their rulers from the birth of 4 Alligator, the first Lord of Tiantoga in the eighth century, to the last cacique in 1580. Births, marriages and deaths of their lords and rulers, as well as wars, conquests, religious ceremonies and feasts are the most important events represented in these genealogical and historical manuscripts. One does not find scenes from Mixtec everyday life; the focus is on the life and deeds of rulers,” says the University of Arizona Library.

Mixtec codices include the Zouche-Nuttall, Vindobonensis, Bodley, Selden, Egerton, Columbinus, and Becker I. According to the University of Arizona Library, the Mixtec codices were not primarily intended as historical texts to pass on knowledge to subsequent generations, but rather were histories as mnemonic devices to help in oral recitation.

Other codices of the central highlands of Mexico and the Mixtec Oaxaca region, called the Borgia group, are neither Mixtec nor Aztec and are about ritual beliefs in the 260-day ritual calendar. They include the Borgia, Laud, Cospi, and Fejérváry-Mayer codices.

Maya codices



A page from the pre-Spanish Codex Borgia, depicting the Sun god (Wikimedia Commons)

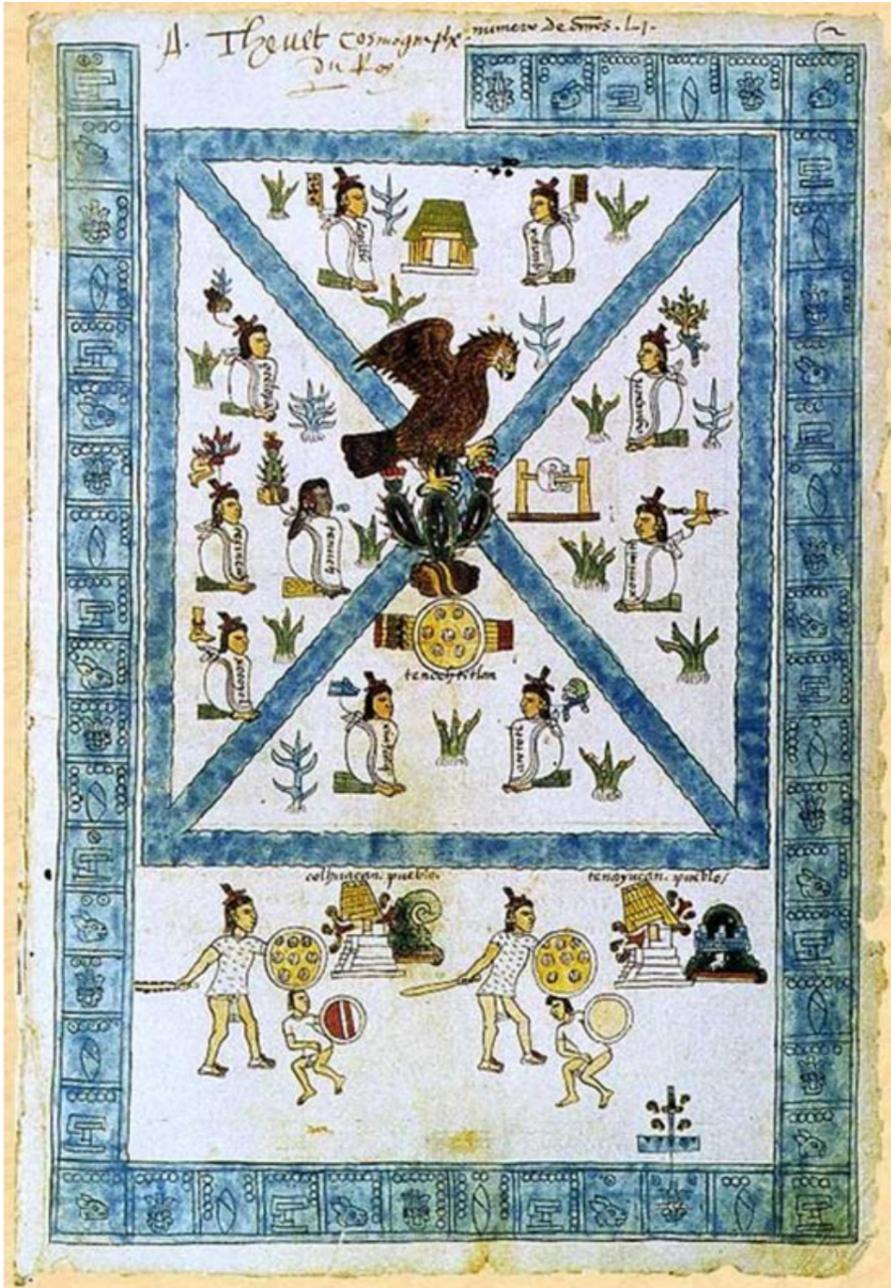
Just four Mayan books survived the book-burning by Franciscan missionaries. They are the Codex Dresdensis, the Codex Tro-Cortesianus (Madrid Codex), the Codex Peresianus (Paris Codex), and the Grolier Codex.

“None of these remaining Mayan codices record any type of

(Continued on page 24)

(Codices — Continued from page 23)

history or chronicles, they instead contain astronomy, divination, rituals and calendars,” says the University of Arizona website. All four of the Mayan codices possibly date to before the arrival of the Spanish, but the date of the Tro-Cortesianus has been questioned in recent years because European paper and writing are between two sheets of bark.



The Codex Mendoza opening page depicts the founding of Tenochtitlan in 1325 AD.

The Mexican seal includes the eagle on the cactus. (University of Arizona)

The World Digital Library says the Dresden Codex of the Maya people has figures, numerals and hieroglyphs of divination and ritual calendars, calculations of celestial bodies, instructions for new year ceremonies and descriptions of locations of the god of rain.

Mexican codices from the colonial era include the Mendoza, Matrícula de Tributos, Borbonicus, Azcatitlan, Vaticanus A, and Xicotepec codices.

Others that show even more Spanish influence include the Florentinus, Sierra, Tlatelolco, Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca, Ix-

tlilxochitl, Techialoyan García Granados, Tlaxcala, Magliabechianus, Azoyú 1, Tudela, and Totomixtlahuaca.

“Aztec codices were less pictorially complex than Mixtec manuscripts, even though the Aztecs had learned bookmaking from the Mixtecs. No original Aztec manuscript has survived that does not show European influence.”

“The Codex Borbonicus is thought to be the only one whose style matches the pre-Conquest Náhuatl style, nevertheless it is considered to be a colonial copy,” writes the University of Arizona Library. “Aztec codices were burned by the Spaniards for their pagan religious content, and by Aztec kings in an effort to rewrite their history. The codices dealt with divination, ceremonies, the ritual calendar, and speculations about the gods and the universe.”

by Mark Miller
ancient-origins.net

To see more about this article series, visit us at [Path to Citizenship \(P2C\) online](http://Path to Citizenship (P2C) online)

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Day of the Dead

Mexico's Cultural Heritage

by Ruth Hazlewood of Experience Mex-Eco Tours,
exclusively for Manzanillo Sun



Most of us, when we think of Day of the Dead, think of those elaborate skeleton figures (Catrinas) and perhaps the image of people sitting around gravestones by candlelight, but what is the significance of this tradition in Mexico?

Many different cultures celebrate their dead, and despite the festivities in Mexico now coinciding with All Saints Day and All Souls Day, pre-Hispanic celebrations took place at different times and for differing time periods, depending on the cultural beliefs. There is evidence of such celebrations in the Mayan, Nahua, Totonac and Purépecha cultures existing from pre-Columbian times, and of human skulls having been used in their rituals of death and rebirth.



For such cultures, death was not about being allowed into heaven or banished to hell based upon acts during one's life; the after-life was related to the form of death and its significance within that particular culture. For example, death by sacrifice in the Nahua culture meant that your soul would live on with Huitzilopochtli, the Sun God, as would the souls of women who died during childbirth.

The Spanish colonisation of Mexico in the 16th century not only involved the seeking of the country's riches, but the conversion of its inhabitants into Catholics and therefore the so-called salvation of their souls. The rituals held by the native people for their dead were condemned by the Spanish colonists and, over time, were modified and adapted to Catholic beliefs.



The result of this can be seen all over Mexico today, as many families celebrate All Saints Day and All Souls Day in compliance with the Catholic tradition on November 1st and 2nd. However, there are still many indigenous cultures in Mexico that, despite having complied with the dates of the Catholic tradition, continue to possess the same core beliefs as their ancestors. So significant is the resistance by these cultures to let go of their beliefs, that this event in Mexico has been recognized as part of Mexico's Intangible Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

One of the most interesting aspects of the traditional celebrations of the dead in Mexico is that they are just that, celebrations. This is generally not a time to be sad or mourn lost loved ones, but a time to be with them again for one night, and nourish them with those things they enjoyed during life on earth, particularly their favourite foods and drinks. Some of the

(Continued on page 26)

(Day of the Dead — Continued from page 25)

most traditional and extravagant of these celebrations can be seen today in the Lake Pátzcuaro region of Michoacán and in and around Oaxaca City.



For the indigenous people of the Lake Pátzcuaro region, the Purépecha or Tarascas, the time of year in which they celebrate their dead actually coincides with their ancestral traditions. The Purépecha, as do many other cultures, attribute great significance to their agricultural calendar, and with maize being one of the most important crops, its harvest between the months of October to December is an incredibly important time. It is thought, therefore, that their pre-Hispanic celebrations took place during these months, and it is no coincidence to today's Purépecha, that the monarch butterflies begin to return to Michoacán during this period. The arrival of these majestic creatures during this special time represents the souls of their lost loved ones returning to be with them once more.



The scene you will find in the Lake Pátzcuaro region today is one of vibrant colours and a lively atmosphere with music, food and drink. Graveyards are covered with yellow marigolds (cempasúchil or cempazúchitl), which have been part of the tradition since pre-Columbian times and are considered the flower of the dead.

You will also see baby's breath, coxcombs, white amaryllis and wild purple orchids, which are considered the flowers of the souls. Skulls are also used to decorate gravestones, but these days they are made of sugar! Come nightfall, families gather in the graveyards by candle light and enjoy the company of their lost loved ones once again. This is a truly amazing experience, which even the most cynical amongst us cannot help being touched by.

I am fortunate enough to travel to this area of Mexico year after year with groups of people who are interested in learning more about Mexico's culture, history and nature. Using local guides, we aim to enable respectful interactions between tourists and locals through our series of well-planned tours.

(Continued on page 27)

(Day of the Dead — Continued from page 26)

The dates for our Day of the Dead trip each year are October 31st to November 3rd.

Our other tours to Michoacán include Morelia and the Monarch Butterflies, and La Ruta de Don Vasco (the Highlights of Michoacán). These trips are operated between the months of January and March and you can get dates and itineraries on our website: www.mex-ecotours.com, or by emailing us: info@mex-ecotours.com.

Dan and Ruth established Experience Mex-ECO Tours in 2005 after meeting on a sea turtle conservation programme in Tomatlán, Jalisco. With University degrees in marine biology (Dan) and zoology (Ruth), both of them quickly fell in love with the conservation work and decided to stay in Mexico and start Experience Mex-ECO Tours. The company was established in 2005 with the aim of supporting community and conservation projects through a series of short trips in the Costalegre area. Eleven years on, whilst still running local community tours, they now take groups all over Mexico, giving people the chance to experience the country's cultural, historical and natural highlights with professional local guides.



Experience Mex-ECO Tours

A series of multi-day tours to Mexico's cultural, historical and natural highlights

The Mexico City earthquake, 30 years on

Though now 31 years have past, the following extract from an article in The Guardian reminds us of just how resilient Mexicans are. If you meet anyone from the Mexico City area, they can likely tell you first-hand stories of just how difficult this was to overcome. Having lived through several earthquakes myself in central Mexico, I can tell you that people from Mexico City jump a little faster than the rest of us when they feel the shaking.



The devastation of the 1985 Mexico City earthquake was swift. In just over a minute—in the early hours of 19 September, while the city was still asleep—100,000 houses crumbled, 5,000 people died and roughly five million residents were left without electricity or potable water. On the Televisa broadcast that morning, newscaster Lourdes Guerrero maintained her smile as the room around her began to move. “It is still shaking a little,” she said into the camera. “But we must remain calm. We will wait a second so that we can continue talking.” The feed cut to static.

Just a few blocks away, the historic city centre, or El Centro, was in pieces. Cathedrals, hospitals, museums and other monuments to Mexican history were destroyed. The Hotel Regis, once the neoclassical centrepiece of the downtown area, was all rubble and ash.

Situated between three large tectonic plates, Mexico is a seismological nightmare. Mexico City is its most vulnerable city, built as it is on a sinking lake bed. With a magnitude of 8.1, the 1985 earthquake pushed Mexico far past its breaking point.

Three decades later, however, El Centro bears almost no trace of this devastation. With millions of dollars poured into devel-

opment projects by Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim, the rubble of 1985 has been replaced by new sidewalks, public furniture, freshly painted tenements and outdoor Wi-Fi. City officials maintain that building codes are enforced, and the mayor’s office has developed a six-point plan in case of future emergencies. In the 30 years since the earthquake, the city government has managed to transform Mexico City’s wealthy centre into a major tourist destination.



Yet, in the peripheral zones, beyond the tourist’s reach, informal settlements continue to proliferate. There, codes and regulations are irrelevant. Residents build with whatever materials they can find and afford, and they continue to struggle to gain access to basic services such as water and electricity.

For all the improvements of the last 30 years, roughly 60% of the city is made up of these unregulated, informal and vulnerable zones.

The growth of these settlements over the last three decades attests to the persistence of poverty and inequality in Mexico City—and as a result, its vulnerability to its next big earthquake.

The earthquake

In 1985, Mexico City was the world’s largest urban area. With more than 16 million residents, the city had been growing at a ludicrous rate – over 4% annually through the 1970s, with a growth rate of close to 40% in the city’s periphery.

Its economic boom, known as the Mexican Miracle, encouraged heavy migration, and few politicians were eager to stem the flow of incoming labour with strict building codes or regulations. As a result, informal settlements exploded across the city, from expanding tenements in the city centre to makeshift structures along its outer rings.

(Continued on page 29)

(The Mexico City earthquake — Continued from page 28)

The decades since

In the three decades since, reconstruction efforts have expanded. The city centre—whose historic buildings were hit hard by the earthquake—has been completely remodelled. In 2002, the city government launched a public-private partnership with Carlos Slim’s nonprofit foundation, *Fundación del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de Mexico*, to funnel resources into the downtown area. Together with a wave of private investment, the project has installed a new telecommunications infrastructure, renovated old properties and constructed new pedestrian malls.



Meanwhile, the government has made major strides in earthquake preparedness. They have established monitoring systems to detect earthquakes before they arrive, new agencies to coordinate responses to a potential earthquake and they have raised crucial funds in case of future emergency. When a 7.4-magnitude quake hit in March 2012, the city was well-prepared, initiating its six-point emergency plan and evacuating public buildings. There were no casualties.



The spirit of the Damnificados

The Solidarity Plaza in Mexico City’s El Centro is a simple monument. Three large copper hands reach up from a cement block to grip a flagpole. A few feet forward, the date “Septiembre 19 de 1985” is inscribed in the cement, a commemoration of the earthquake that demolished the Regis Hotel that once stood there. It is intended to remind passersby of the courage of the *damnificados* (those affected by a disaster or crisis), and the progress that has been made as a result of their fight. Trees line the perimeter and, on most days, it is a blurry bustle of tourists and office workers.

Yet the spirit of the *damnificado* movement has all but vanished. Following the earthquake of 1985, hundreds of thousands of Mexico City residents mobilised to improve housing conditions for the poor.

While the government has focused on beautifying El Centro, Mexico City’s civil society has in many ways grown indifferent to the poverty, inequality and vulnerability that continue to beset it.



To learn from the Mexico City earthquake of 1985, then, will require more than reconstruction or regulation. If much of the damage of the earthquake was caused by dangerous, informal construction, then the government must address directly the reasons why residents resort to these construction methods—displacement, poverty and inequality. To address these, the city must first discard its zero-tolerance approach to work proactively with its low-income communities to develop infrastructure, services and homes that are safe for residents in the long term. And it must protect its residents from the rising property prices that displace them from the centre and give rise to vulnerable settlements in the first place.

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Pan de Muertos

Day of the Dead Bread



- 15 servings
- 166 calories per serving

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup warm water (110 degrees F/45 degrees C)
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons anise seed
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons orange zest
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 2 tablespoons white sugar

Directions

Heat the milk and the butter together in a medium saucepan, until the butter melts.

Remove from the heat and add them warm water. The mixture should be around 110 degrees F (43 degrees C).

In a large bowl combine 1 cup of the flour, yeast, salt, anise seed and 1/4 cup of the sugar.

Beat in the warm milk mixture then add the eggs and orange zest and beat until well combined.

Stir in 1/2 cup of flour and continue adding more flour until the dough is soft.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic.

Place the dough into a lightly greased bowl cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size. This will take about 1 to 2 hours.

Punch the dough down and shape it into a large round loaf with a round knob on top. Place dough onto a baking sheet, loosely cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for about 1 hour or until just about doubled in size.

Bake in a preheated 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) oven for about 35 to 45 minutes. Remove from oven let cool slightly then brush with glaze.

To make glaze: In a small saucepan combine the 1/4 cup sugar, orange juice and orange zest. Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil for 2 minutes.

Brush over top of bread while still warm. Sprinkle glazed bread with white sugar.

Recipe by Lola

source: AllRecipes.com



A bit of history...

Pan de muerto (Spanish for bread of the dead), also called *pan de los muertos* or *dead bread* in the United States, is a type of sweet roll traditionally baked in Mexico during the weeks leading up to the *Día de Muertos*, which is celebrated on November 1 and 2.

It is a sweetened soft bread shaped like a bun, often decorated with bone-shaped phalanges pieces. Pan de muerto is eaten on Día de Muertos, at the gravesite or altar of the deceased. In some regions, it is eaten for months before the official celebration of Dia de Muertos.

In Oaxaca, pan de muerto is the same bread that is usually baked, with the addition of decorations. As part of the celebration, loved ones eat pan de muerto as well as the relative's favorite foods.

The bones represent the departed one (difuntos or difuntas) and there is normally a baked tear drop on the bread to represent goddess Chimalma's tears for the living. The bones are represented in a circle to portray the circle of life. The bread is topped with sugar.

source: Wikimedia