

Latin American Ethnobotanical Garden

The University of Georgia

Athens, Georgia, USA



The purpose of the Latin American Ethnobotanical Garden located at the University of Georgia is to highlight the plants of cultural significance in Latin America and focus attention on the critical need for conservation of this biodiversity. In 1995 faculty and graduate students realized the need for a location on campus to conduct research on the horticultural requirements of medicinal plants. This idea quickly grew to encompass a public

space that would introduce ethnobotany to the university and the local community and serve as a teaching laboratory for graduate and undergraduate students. The concept was met with enthusiasm by the university administration and approval was granted to begin converting a site located behind the Department of Anthropology into a garden. The Catherine John Murphy foundation provided financial support in the form of an endowment that ensures continued development and maintenance of the garden.

The project emphasizes the study of ethnobotany through a variety of related disciplines such as anthropology, botany, horticulture, ecology, pharmacology, biochemistry and conservation biology.

The major foci of the garden are the medicinal plants of the Tzeltal and Tzotzil Maya of Highland Chiapas. An educational outreach program with local school children is currently underway at the garden, providing an opportunity for children to share and experience the many cultural uses of plants in Latin America and learn more about the field of ethnobotany.

