

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY 2016 BARBADOS



ACTIVITIES



Figure 1: Environmental Officer Kim Downes Agard explaining biodiversity and its benefits to students of the St. Bartholomew Primary School

International Day for Biological Diversity was observed on May 22, 2016 with the theme “Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Sustaining People and their Livelihoods” being the focus. The theme “Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Sustaining People and their Livelihoods” was chosen to coincide with the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 13) to be held in Cancun, Mexico from 4 to 17 December 2016 which will focus on the mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors.

In the spirit of the theme for the year, activities were chosen to highlight how biodiversity can sustain people and their livelihoods and conservation of the ecosystem. The activities chose included tours of Medford Craft World and the National Conservation Commission. As has become the custom, public awareness and education activities were planned for four primary schools: Wesley Hall Infants School, Ellerton Primary School, St. Bartholomew Primary School and St. Christopher Primary School.

The International Day for Biological Diversity fell on the Sunday and the activities followed on at the start of week and the tours ran over the course of four days. Tours were conducted at Medford Craft World and continued onto the National Conservation Commission starting from Tuesday 24, May to Friday 27 May, 2016.

On each day of tours, students were separated into groups and taken on guided tours of Medford Craft World and the National Conservation Commission; St. Bartholomew Primary attended the tours on May 24, Wesley Hall Infants attending tours of May 25, Ellerton Primary on May 26 and finally St. Christopher's Primary attending on May 27.

Visit to Medford Craft World Centre



Figure 2: Students of St. Bartholomew Primary being educated on the how the Mahogany tree goes from a raw piece of wood to an artwork piece.

Tours of the Medford Craft World centre on each day began with an introduction of the facility, where it was explained to students that the facility was the only wood carving business in Barbados that do not use a chisel for carving but instead only used a sander machine in all their carvings. The students were guided to the area where the Mahogany tree (*Swietenia mahogany*) trunks and roots used to make carvings are placed. The tour guide Mr. Grantley explained the different colorations of the Mahogany wood becoming darker overtime. After carving the pieces are then dipped in varnish and allowed to dry for four to five hours. The students were then given a demonstration of how carving is done using the sander machine. After the demonstration the students then moved to the workshop where they observed the varnishing and drying process. The students were then finally taken to the display shop where they were given the opportunity to see the various designs that can be made from the wood of the mahogany tree. The tour concluded with the students interacting with pet ponies at Medford Craft World.



Figure 3: Pieces of Mahogany Tree in before carving



Figure 4: Students of the St. Bartholomew School being taken to the workshop and shown the process of cleaning, varnishing and drying of the mahogany pieces.



Figure 5: Students of the Wesley Hall Infants School in the Display Shop at Medford Craft World observing the finished products



Figure 6: Students of the Wesley Hall Infants interacting with the ponies at Medford Craft World

Visit to the National Conservation Commission

After their visit to Medford Craft World, the students then visited the National Conservation Commission (NCC). This first stop was to observe the various local plant species that are cultivated and sold and this part of the tour was conducted by Mr. Wayne Cummins. The students were taken to the three areas of the green house. These areas were; The Propagation Area where the plants were mostly in sandbeds, The Potting Area where students were each given a pot in which they placed soil in along with a plant such as the hibiscus plants (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) and finally the Hardening Area which is where potted plants are then taken for the soil to harden and for the plant roots to become firmly fixed within the soil. Mr. Cummins then quizzed the students on the areas where they were taken as well as on the types of the plants present in the greenhouse. Each student was then given a plant to take back with them.



Figure 7: St. Bartholomew Primary students visiting the NCC and being educated on plant propagation



Figure 8: St. Bartholomew Primary students being given a demonstration on potting plants at the NCC



Fig 9: Students of the St. Bartholomew Primary in the Hardening Area at the NCC

The final part of the tour of the NCC was a visit to the Apiary. An apiary is area where bees are kept and the students were able to observe the beehives at a safe distance. The Apiary at the NCC is supervised by Mr. David Small where several honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) are kept for the production of local honey and to assist with increasing numbers of the local bee population as it has been in decline in last thirteen years. Mr. Small educated the students about the benefits of bees such as their role in pollinating crops and them being a keystone species in the ecosystem as well creating a sustainable market for local honey.

Upon completion of the tours, the students for lunch on the grounds at the National Conservation Commission and were allowed to enjoy the facility under the supervision of their teachers.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Activity received coverage on the Nation Newspaper and the Barbados Advocate.