



# Vanuatu



The Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu is a 'Y' shaped archipelago located between the Solomon Islands to the north and New Caledonia to the south. The capital, Port Vila, is only a short flight from Queensland, yet a world away.

Lush and leafy vegetation surrounds idyllic palm fringed lagoons and the locals are friendly and helpful. If you can pull yourself away from the beach, there is much more to see and do...

The Ni-Vanuatu people are great horticulturists and raise many interesting crops in their gardens. Over many centuries the Ni Vanuatu people have selected plants for superior flavour and ornamental qualities.

Crotons (*Codiaeum variegatum* cultivars), acalyphas (*Acalypha wilkesiana* cultivars), cordylines (*Cordyline fruticosa* cultivars) and pseuderantheums (*Pseuderantheum caruthersii* cultivars) have been grown since pre-European times in the island gardens.

There is tremendous diversity of leaf forms and colour – more than you are likely to see anywhere else.

Many other popular garden plants also originate from these islands – the Yellow Crinum (*Crinum xanthifolium*), Red Ginger (*Alpinia purpurata*), Native gardenias to the islands (*Gardenia tahitensis* and *G. tannensis*), Fan Palm (*Licuala grandis*), Veitchia Palm (*Veitchia arecina*), Carpoxyton Palm (*Carpoxyton macrospermum*) and the Snakeskin Fishtail Palm (*Caryota ophiopellis*).

The warm temperatures and regular rainfall encourage vigorous tropical growth. Lush gardens can be seen around the various hotels and resorts, however the best gardens are the private gardens – as there are many keen gardeners on the island of Efate.

While tourists would seldom get to see the gardens, once every two years some of the finest are open as part of the annual Garden Week.

The next one will be in spring 2010 – for more details email: [vanuatumgardens@gmail.com](mailto:vanuatumgardens@gmail.com) ●