

Rosemary Delaney Smith
Project Coordinator
Jost van Dykes (BVI) Preservation Society
Great Harbour
Jost van Dyke BVI VG 1160
(284) 540-7428

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lignum vitae and Teyer Palm identified on Jost van Dyke

Jost van Dykes, British Virgin Islands

Several stands of Lignum vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) and Teyer or Broom Palm (*Coccothrinax alta*) have been identified on Jost van Dyke.

Lignum vitae, a native tree with a distinctive trunk, had an economic value for its hard and heavy wood, as well as for oily resin that permeates the wood. Historically, the trunk of this tree was used to make bearings and blocks for propeller shafts and bearings for roller mills. Lignum vitae is almost extinct in the wild in the neighbouring United States Virgin Islands and is protected under Territorial Law. Trade of the wood of this tree is controlled under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES).

The Teyer or Broom Palm is also a historically and culturally significant tree in the BVI, where it is used to make brooms, thatch roofs, and string fish. Teyer Palm is endemic (geographically restricted to) Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Over a dozen stands of this tree were identified on Jost van Dyke during an October 2008 field assessment.

The above findings are the result of ongoing field research in Jost van Dyke as part of the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP) funded project entitled "Jost van Dykes Community-based Programme Advancing Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development". Research on this project is being conducted by the staff of the Island Resources Foundation in partnership with local professionals. The project is coordinated by the Jost van Dyke Preservation Society, whose office is located in Great Harbour Jost van Dyke.

For more information about the project or the Jost van Dykes Preservation Society, visit www.jvdgreen.org or www.jvdps.org e-mail projco@jvdps.org or call 284-540-0861 or 284-540-7428.

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