

What can you grow in Panama?

Written by T. Rob Brown (aka Roberto Chocolate)

Monday, 14 June 2010 19:47 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 June 2010 12:32

This question came in from an Alberta resident planning their move to Panama. Roberto

I would love to learn more about the kind of gardening possible in Panama.... for example can a person grow regular vegetables like lettuce, tomatoes, beans, peas, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers, squash, watermelon, etc. and also flowers... perennials, annuals of what zone? Do people garden regularly? We found in Mexico on the Yucatan anyway most regular folk did not.. leaving it to the rural dwellers who brought their produce to local markets. We wondered why local people did not grow more of their own food. Would we be able to garden and grow our own food there in the coastal or mountain areas??? year round? My response: Yes, at the the higher elevations it is possible to grow vegetables - but not down on the coastal areas - it is too hot.

In El Valle (pronounced "el bi yea", as all V's are B's in Panama) you can grow anything - including coffee at the higher elevations.

Down on the Pacific coast (Santa Clara), I grow lemons, oranges, papaya, mangos, cashews, bananas, plantains, avocados, guavas, and yucca on my

property. (Go to the PHOTO GALLERY on the home page and see the photos of the flowers in my garden).

I have 115 different kinds of palm trees, and over 800 different tropical flowers - there are 1,500 different types of orchids alone in Panama - there is an orchid

museum in El Valle - it is too hot down here for orchids however, except in the shady areas. Go to the library and get some books on tropical plants and

flowers - and read up on some of the unusual "bugs" we have here (read my story about killer ants)

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In Canada I had what I called "a black thumb". I killed so many plants, I literally went out and bought a hundred bunches of silk flowers and planted them on my property for an upcoming wedding - I called them "Ever Blooms" whenever people asked, and never took them down. The gig was up when it snowed

unexpectedly and my garden was still blooming!

In Panama, you literally cut off a branch of something and stick it in the dirt - and it grows! It is amazing. I love gardening here. Roberto