





## Capetillo Community, Río Piedras

The Community Garden, Nursery, and Urban Forest is a joint project of the Capetillo community and CAUCE (for its acronym in Spanish). The Capetillo residential sectors have a lot of neighborhood life but few recreational public spaces that provide contact with nature. The Garden of Capetillo responds to this priority. Capetillo has a population of more than 2,000 people. From the barrios in Río Piedras, Capetillo holds the largest population of Dominican immigrants.

### Organic Gardening and Supervised Study

The Garden of Capetillo was established in 2008 with funding from the Toyota Foundation, the Department of Natural Resources, and the UPR. In the Garden, we plant garden produces, spices, and medicine. It is organic because we only use products derived from plants (botanicals) and animal wastes, including turkey manure fertilizer, bat guano, and fish emulsion. For pest control, we use botanical repellents as neem extract that serves as an insecticide, nematocide, and fungicide.

These plants are sowed in compost and not in ground to prevent affecting the Earth's crust. We use the compost produced by the vegetable wastes of the green areas of the Río Piedras Campus. The Garden's products are sold to neighbors and restaurants of Río Piedras.

The children and young people of Capetillo collaborate in the garden and learn about farming and nutrition. During class time, they participate in supervised studies led by a group of volunteers, students, and professors from high schools around the area and the UPR.

### Nursery of Garden Produce and Native Trees

Which plants are disseminated in the nursery for the Garden? Depending on the season: spinach, peppers, arugula, chives, eggplant, cucumber, tomato, romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce, local lettuce, collard or collard greens, cabbage, and okra. We also disseminate seedlings of spices, such as rosemary, basil, cilantro, oregano, pepper, and *recao*; and, for the forest, native trees such as allspice (*malagueta*), *guácima*, guano, and mocha.



Image: Community Garden, Nursery, and Urban Forest of Capetillo

### Isla del Diablo (Devil's Island) Urban Forest

The Isla del Diablo Urban Forest is a small forest that could be classified as a secondary or tertiary sequence. Its vegetation is associated with abandoned or cleared places. It consists mostly of small cherry-laurel (*Murtigia calabura*) trees (10 to 15 feet) interspersed with young guano trees (*Ochroma pyramidale*) that exceed the canopy of cherry-laurels but are not dominant in this plant community (Vives, 2010).

### Flora

In the forest, 83 species of plants, including 24 trees, 11 shrubs (*higuillo*, *achiote*, and *acerola*), 16 vines (pumpkin and *parcha*), 3 ferns (silver and *Psilotum*), and 29 forbs (*anamú*, *ají*

*caballero*, *malanga*, *yautía*, and *playera*) were inventoried. The inventory highlights the presence of several native trees: mocha, soursop, star apple, *guazima*, guano, allspice, guava, royal palm (Vives, 2010).

