

October 8, 2026

In the Spotlight:

Celebrating Women in Business: The Inspiring Journey of E’s Garden Teahouse and Things

VIEDA Client Spotlight | National Women’s Small Business Month October 2026.

October is National Women’s Small Business Month, a nationwide celebration recognizing the women whose entrepreneurship, determination, and innovation strengthen local economies. Throughout St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, women-owned businesses create jobs, energize historic downtowns, and preserve the cultural traditions that make the U.S. Virgin Islands unique. The Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority (VIEDA) proudly supports these entrepreneurs through financing from its Economic Development Bank (EDB), revitalization initiatives administered by its Enterprise Zone Commission (EZX), and partnerships with organizations such as the Virgin Islands Small Business Development Center (VI SBDC) and SCORE.

From Academia to Entrepreneurship

In recognition of this special month, VIEDA is proud to spotlight Judith Edwin, owner of E’s Garden Teahouse and Things, located in historic downtown Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas.

After dedicating many years to the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), Edwin retired with a desire to explore an entirely different path. Her inspiration came during a visit to China, where she observed the cultural significance of tea service. Recognizing that tea also holds a special place in Virgin Islands culture, particularly through the longstanding tradition of locally prepared “tea bush,” Edwin envisioned a business that would celebrate familiar island flavors while introducing customers to teas from around the world.

Around 2014–2015, that vision became E’s Garden Teahouse and Things, a welcoming establishment offering residents and visitors a unique cultural experience. Today, the teahouse is featured on two downtown food tours, introducing visitors to local traditions while contributing to the economic vibrancy of Charlotte Amalie.

Perseverance Through Challenges

Like many entrepreneurs, Edwin’s journey has been filled with both accomplishments and obstacles. From the challenges of establishing a business as a woman entrepreneur to navigating devastating hurricanes, the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal fluctuations, and downtown parking limitations, Edwin has demonstrated remarkable resilience.

An important partner throughout her journey has been VIEDA’s Economic Development Bank (EDB).



When Edwin initially pursued her business venture, she lacked all the financial resources necessary to bring her vision to life. With financing assistance from EDB, she was able to establish E’s Garden and take a significant step toward realizing her entrepreneurial dream. That support extended beyond the initial financing. Following the hurricanes and during the pandemic, EDB worked with Edwin by providing payment deferments, helping her navigate periods of economic uncertainty. Her experience highlights the importance of access to financing and continued partnerships that help small businesses overcome challenges and pursue long-term sustainability.

Through its Economic Development Bank, VIEDA continues to provide eligible entrepreneurs with financing opportunities to start or expand businesses, purchase existing businesses, acquire inventory and equipment, make leasehold improvements, and meet working capital needs.

Learn more: <https://www.usvieda.org/financing>

Watch Judith Edwin Share Her Story
<https://youtu.be/4ruQQ6rYLG1>



Explore VIEDA Business Financing Opportunities
Ready to start or grow your own business?
Explore financing opportunities through VIEDA’s Economic Development Bank (EDB).
Learn more: <https://www.usvieda.org/financing>

Additional Resource: Enterprise Zone Commission (EZC)

Through its Enterprise Zone Commission, VIEDA supports the revitalization of historic communities, including Savanne-Downstreet and Garden Street-Upstreet on St. Thomas, and Christiansted and Frederiksted on St. Croix. Qualifying businesses that build, renovate, invest in equipment, or hire Virgin Islands residents within designated enterprise zones may be eligible for tax credits and other incentives.
Learn more: <https://usvieda.org/community-development/>

Learn more at www.usvieda.org/financing or Email info@usvieda.org
St. Thomas/St. John: [\(340\)714-1700](tel:(340)714-1700) or [\(340\)773-6499](tel:(340)773-6499)



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Learn more about VIEDA programs, investment opportunities, and doing business in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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