

Notes from the 2nd Caribbean Botanic Gardens for Conservation Conference, 2005

We would like to give one more thanks to everyone who participated in the conference and helped to make it such a success! Here is a quick summary of some key points made during the conference. Additions or changes to these notes are welcomed. Stay in touch! BBG

2010 Challenges for Caribbean Botanic Gardens

- Drivers for change in the role of botanic gardens: Environmental, social, economic, political, the increased global profile for botanic gardens, addressing the need for governments to reduce poverty and encourage sustainable development through policy initiatives, and a growing role of public support
- Botanic gardens must illustrate alignment with the UN Millennium Development Goals on an individual and regional basis
- 1998 Regional Action Plan Goals must be re-focused for future action
- Mid-term evaluation: needed to register the achievements, problems, priorities, opportunities, activities, and future goals of Caribbean gardens
 - Peter Wyse-Jackson

International Policy and the Role of Botanic Gardens

- ***The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)***: The convention aims “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth”.
 - Sections applicable to the role of botanic gardens include: 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 18
- ***The International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation (BGCI)***: The Agenda brings together the world’s botanic gardens to work for plant conservation through science, education and horticulture by providing a structure which encourages individual botanic gardens to implement national agenda with respect to the global framework action plan
 - Headquartered in KEW, BGCI has 500 members in 118 countries and was established 1987. Its role is to provide guidelines promoting plant conservation, organize conferences, strengthen advocacy efforts, broaden the general conservation audience, conduct training and capacity building, and support field projects
 - Publications: Roots (biannual, environmental education), Cuttings (quarterly newsletter), manuals and guidelines, Plants for the Planet (CD Rom and good education resource)

- Databases: garden and plant searches (covering 130,000 taxa in botanic gardens) covering gardens even NOT part of BGCI.

You can provide more information to enhance this research...apply to become a garden editor for your garden-you will get an email, password, and access to manage your own information within the data base—share what you know!

– Suzanne Sharrock, BGCI

- ***The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)***: The CBD Conference of the Parties adopted the strategy in 2002. The strategy integrates national and international initiatives in plant conservation by listing a series of outcome oriented targets for 2010. These targets are the first to be internationally agreed upon with regard to biodiversity conservation.
 - Targets applicable to botanic gardens include: 1,2,7,8, 10, 11, and 14.

Key Points of the Conference

- Establishment of new gardens should play a complimentary role to those already existing within the country; one garden, perhaps with a prominent role in education should give the other the responsibility for government outreach. Our collective goal is to strengthen, not compete with, existing facilities.
 - Anthony Channona
- The University Initiative: By giving responsibility to nearby college students to assist with development of a national botanic garden we develop future environmental leaders and plant conservationists.
 - Sharon Palacio
- Community involvement and collaboration must occur in the establishment and further development of botanic gardens. Further ideas are welcomed that involve local communities. ie. If we pull out, will the site collapse? Ideas: Education of younger generations instilling aesthetic, economic, and scientific value
- Medicinal Plants and Botanic Gardens
 - Botanic gardens play a vital role in maintaining a genetic resource of traditional plants often used to meet primary health care needs. As species are lost in the wild, botanic gardens should make great efforts to incorporate medicinal collections into their sites. As the value of a plant often depends upon its medicinal value, additional research potentially offers health and economic benefits to people throughout the world.
 - The scientific names of plants play an essential role in the medicinal field due to the World Health Organization decision to incorporate traditional medicine in order to make access to medicine available for all.

- Movement of medicinal plant cultivation towards industrial production should; (1) provide economic benefits to indigenous people via intellectual property rights (also see CBD), (2) balance over and under exploitation, (3) utilize medicinal plant gardens whereby botanic gardens work with traditional healers, staff members are knowledgeable and conduct tours, and gardens keep a local focus on traditional medicine
 - Endemic plants and legal protection: Rights over an economically valuable species may be protected under CITES, and the CBD recognizes that countries have sovereign rights over their own flora so that Material Transfer Agreements dictate stipulations when plant material is moved from country to country. *However*, the CBD applies only to transactions taking place after its ratification and between (not within) countries.
 - Recognition: Medicinal plants publications should respectfully site the traditional healers assisting with the study as co-authors in order to comply with intellectual property rights and to provide an incentive for future generations to pursue traditional hearing
 - Dr. Laurent Jean Pierre
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- Botanic gardens should act as sanctuaries by addressing the needs of wildlife and plants when developing although some activities may not be as aesthetically pleasing as possible—ex. Composting plant remnants offer nutrients that should not be removed from grounds
 - Martin Meadows
 - Environmental educational needs may be met by gathering the natural history of a country via interviews that depict how much people throughout history have valued regional vegetation.
 - Sam Bridgewater
 - Institutions working together to address new threats to plant biodiversity through programs like the Darwin Initiative help communities to develop capacity for economic growth and sustainable management of their resources. Botanic gardens should focus on gathering information on species of economic interest with regard to their conservation status, ex situ conservation, genetic diversity, phylogeny, taxonomy, hybridization problems, disaster management, sustainable cultivation through demo plots and generation trials, and develop manuals on sustainable harvest that highlight *unknowns*
 - Nancy Garwood
 - Botanic gardens should encourage the use of native species in urban and growing areas to aid biodiversity and minimize costs and impacts associated with development. Ideas: Gardens hold landscaping events, mitigate noise, create privacy, bring in butterflies and birds, hold shows/sales, open to health clubs/walking/natural food/yoga groups, and improve the quality of life for surrounding communities either direct or indirectly. Ways to provide direct economic benefits to your area:

- Hire local residents
- encourage use of garden for training of local guides
- schedule cultural events during the tourist season with local groups
- organize local arts and crafts show and sale
- promote organic production of fruits and vegetables
- work with local healers on traditional medicine projects
- use local supplies for building, etc.
- promote local gardening and the establishment of community gardens
- facilitate composting in schools and hold training on how to do it properly
 - Mike Panton

Take care and we hope to see you during the next conference in Cuba, if not before. The interim questionnaire will be coming to some of you soon (remember, we know where you live!). Good luck with your projects...please share your many successes! And other experiences of course, even if they are not so great-we want to hear about them all!

From all of us at BBG