



## **Plants for the Planet**

*The work of Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International in 2008*



**BGCI**

*Plants for the Planet*

# Message from the Chair



The world has finally woken up to the reality of climate change. Warnings suggest we have limited time to act. All actions to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate the impacts or adapt to a changing climate can make a difference and there is something that every individual and organisation can do. BGCI and botanic gardens around the world are revising their strategies and actions to align with mechanisms to tackle climate change.

As Professor Stephen Blackmore, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and Chair of BGCI's International Advisory Council points out in his new book, *Gardening the earth – Gateways to a sustainable future*, there are two types of solutions to the global environmental predicament: "first, biological remedies concerned directly with gardening the green living world; second, technological solutions based upon human inventiveness and ingenuity". The global network of botanic gardens facilitated by BGCI is ideally placed to help deliver the biological remedies. In fact that's what we already do – but the potential to expand our work is enormous.

BGCI operates efficiently and effectively from a small secretariat based at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Our global reach is through our growing membership, primarily of

botanic gardens and related institutions, but also an increasing number of committed individuals who love plants and understand the importance of botanic gardens. Our recently established offices in Chicago and Guangzhou are rapidly enhancing the work of BGCI and its member gardens in the US and China and, in Singapore, coordination of activities in the plant rich region of Southeast Asia, continues effectively through networking, capacity building and practical botanical restoration projects. Our offices and representatives in other countries also greatly help to enhance the global effectiveness of BGCI.

Quietly and too often un-noticed, botanic gardens are saving plant species from extinction around the world. Working together we can document the world's flora and the species that need conservation action, restore degraded habitats and store plant material for future adaptation to climate change. We can also inspire garden visitors to play a role in "gardening the green living world". Please join us in these ambitious but essential endeavours!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan M. Walmsley".

**Baroness Joan Walmsley,  
Chair, BGCI Board of Directors**





In 2008, BGCI looked back on a decade of supporting the development and implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

(GSPC) of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and looked forward to revising this Strategy to reflect the reality of climate change. Stella Simiyu, seconded by BGCI to the CBD Secretariat, played a key role in organising botanical events and debate at the CBD's Conference of the Parties held in Germany in May. At this global meeting our *Plants and climate change: which future?* report was launched (see page 2). The report has been a huge success with copies being widely distributed, including to botanists working throughout the US in various Federal agencies. It has also been translated into Korean as part of South Korea's commitment to tackling climate change.

Addressing climate change was the theme of the World Botanic Gardens Science Congress held in the Netherlands in June 2008. Hosted by the Botanic Garden of the Technical University of Delft, the amazing ingenuity of botanic gardens in



tackling global issues was on display! Speakers at the congress called for a massive scale-up of conservation actions in the face of climate change and participants agreed on the need to position botanic gardens at the centre of future plant conservation research and action.

Despite the difficult fundraising environment of 2008, BGCI was successful in attracting support for the continued development and implementation of practical conservation projects, working in partnership with member gardens. With a focus on conserving plants of importance for human well-being, we are helping a number of communities in East Africa and Southeast Asia save the wild plants they use for food and medicine.

Raising the profile of BGCI is key to attracting new support for our activities, and during 2008 we participated in a number of high profile events. These included a display at the summer exhibition of the United States Botanic Garden, situated at the foot of Capitol Hill in Washington DC, co-organising a botanic garden exhibition at the Olympic Games in China and



co-hosting two side events at the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress in Spain.

Finally, a true highlight of the year for BGCI was a sparkling fundraising event held at Singapore Botanic Gardens in December. This was a magnificent celebratory evening where the generosity of the BGCI Board, truly supportive guests and above all the Singapore Botanic Gardens will be valued and appreciated by us all for many years to come!

**Sara Oldfield,**  
**BGCI Secretary General**



# Plant conservation in a changing world



The world's climate is presently changing more rapidly than at any time in human history. Such climatic changes are intimately connected with plants, which harness the energy of the sun through photosynthesis and maintain ecosystems for all life on earth.

Despite the importance of plants, we currently have an extremely limited understanding of how they will be affected by climate change. Models of future plant distributions however, indicate that many thousands of species will be affected and widespread extinctions are predicted.

Botanic gardens are pivotal in efforts to conserve plant diversity. Their living and seed bank collections provide an important insurance policy against extinction in the wild, they are

centres of botanical expertise and knowledge and they provide unparalleled public awareness and education opportunities. Perhaps most important of all however, is the global network which spans all geographic regions.

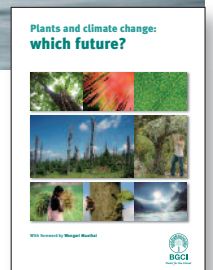
## Which future?

In 2008, BGCI called on this global network to provide input to a major review of the currently available information on the impacts of climate change on plants. The results of this review were published in a unique reference work: *Plants and climate change: which future?* The report provides referenced information and case studies that:

- Examine the effects of climate change on plants (from individual cellular responses to entire ecosystem changes);
- Describe how the impact of climate change on plants will affect the animals and humans who depend upon them;
- Explain which species are most at risk of extinction;
- Recommend actions needed to ensure a future for the world's plants.

The report was launched at an event at the House of Lords in the UK and subsequently presented to the international biodiversity community at a side event at the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn, Germany.

*"This report attempts to demonstrate the linkages between plant diversity and climate change and why it is crucially important to care for the world's natural plant diversity..... Understanding, explaining and valuing our plant diversity are other vital tasks – so often undertaken by botanic gardens and promoted by BGCI". Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Laureate.*



*“The fate of humanity in the light of climate change, and of all known species, is inseparable from the fate of plants”* **Gran Canaria Group, 2006**



### Box 1: Elements of BGCI's climate change information service

#### **Species at risk**

PlantSearch, our database of plants in cultivation in botanic gardens, is being used to identify and highlight species most at risk from climate change. These include species with 'nowhere to go' such as island and mountain species as well as those already under threat. The database will be enhanced to provide additional relevant information to support species conservation and recovery programmes.

#### **Relevant climate change research**

The information service highlights climate change research relevant to plants and the work of botanic gardens.

#### **Botanic gardens and climate change**

The information service will provide an interactive space for BGCI's members and partners to exchange information about on-going conservation actions relevant to climate change. This section will also focus on the sustainability of gardens themselves and how they can minimise their own carbon footprints.

#### **Education for climate change**

Linking to BGCI's education pages on the website, this section provides a wide range of innovative tools and resources for use in botanic garden climate change education and public awareness programmes.

The report has been extremely well-received by the botanic garden and wider botanical community, with copies being widely distributed. Whilst the recommendations of the report are comprehensive, requiring action by a wide range of plant conservation stakeholders, many are particularly relevant for BGCI and its members. In a follow-up to the report, BGCI is developing a plants and climate change information service to help our members take action and respond to the effects of climate change (see Box 1).

# Working together



This information will be increasingly vital to help reduce the impacts of climate change and to enable adaptation to future ecological scenarios.

## The importance of networks

Sharing resources and expertise in plant conservation is particularly important in areas rich in plant diversity. The Caribbean islands form a global biodiversity hotspot but are significantly under-resourced in terms of botanical infrastructure. BGCI took part in the Third Caribbean Botanic Gardens for Conservation Conference held in Cuba in March, at which the need for more training in plant conservation techniques was again emphasised. A commitment to help fundraise for training workshops was given by BGCI. Across the world the West African Botanic Gardens Network met in November. At this meeting Dr George Owusu-Afriyie, a member of BGCI's International Advisory Council, explained how BGCI can support the work of botanic gardens in Africa.

Botanic gardens have an important role to play in explaining the ecological and cultural importance of plants in a local context. BGCI works closely with botanic gardens in the

In 2008 we were involved in a wide range of regional and national botanic garden initiatives and projects with our individual garden members. Working together as a global network enhances and amplifies the activities of botanic gardens in saving global plant diversity.

In June, BGCI participated in an important international meeting, held at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew to

discuss the role of botanic gardens in ecological restoration. One of the outcomes of this was an agreement that BGCI will work closely with Kew to catalogue the skills and resources available for restoration projects within the global botanic garden community.



*BGCI's greatest strength is its worldwide network of botanic gardens and working with this network is key to our success*



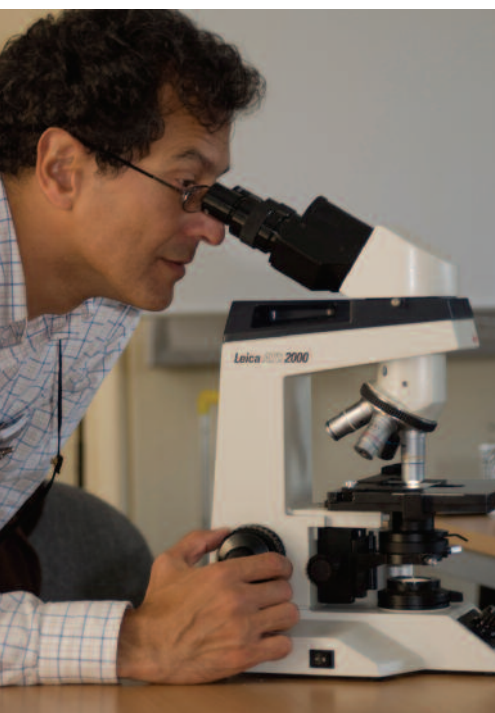
botanic garden members. With the new look website going live at the end of the year, the PlantSearch and GardenSearch databases remain in a prominent position and are priorities for development to enhance the conservation role of botanic gardens. Over 600 botanic gardens share information through these unique online databases. In the months leading up to the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, BGCI will be working hard with its members and associated networks to upgrade the functionality and information content of these databases. We need to use the assembled information to plan effective conservation responses to the increasing loss of plant diversity in the wild.

Arabian region and in 2008 was involved in the evaluation of a UNESCO initiative to establish a Quaranic Botanic Garden Network. The first two sites have been identified in Sharjah and Qatar and various other countries are keen to join the initiative.

### **Building education capacity**

The education role of botanic gardens remains paramount. In 2008, BGCI supported the development of education programmes at the University of Riga Botanic Garden in

Latvia. We also jointly organised a five week International Diploma in Botanic Garden Education in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK. This brought together nine participants from seven countries to learn about setting up education programmes for sustainability, share experiences and find out about education programmes run by botanic gardens in the UK including the Eden Project and the University of Oxford Botanic Garden. Over the years the Education Diploma courses have been attended by over 50 participants from more than 35 countries. This course has strengthened their capacity to effectively deliver education programmes to well over two million children and adults. Target 14 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation emphasises the need for all to understand the importance of plant diversity. BGCI continues to support implementation of this Target through our meetings, courses, publications and internet resources.



### **Getting the word out**

Development of the BGCI website was an important goal for 2008. The main aim was to make our work more accessible to a wider audience and in doing so promote the work of our

# Supporting global policy

BGCI continued to play a key role in global plant conservation policy in 2008 through its support for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). As a programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the GSPC guides plant conservation work both nationally and globally. Similarly BGCI's policy work is conducted at both levels.

Having passed its half-way point, 2008 marked a crucial year for the GSPC. An in-depth review initiated in 2007 was completed, and the results presented as a *Plant Conservation Report* at the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD in May. Six years into the strategy, the review revealed that real progress had been made towards meeting many of the targets. The COP requested that the GSPC be further developed post-2010 and that current targets be updated. BGCI, through our GSPC Programme Officer, took a lead in the review process and in preparing the final report.



BGCI's efforts to further engage the corporate sector with the GSPC bore fruit in 2008, with The Boeing Company agreeing to support a series of regional workshops in 2009 on the development of post-2010 plant conservation targets. This is a great step forwards in mobilising corporate support for plant conservation, and will greatly enhance BGCI's role in global policy development.

At the national level, BGCI's support to CONABIO in Mexico resulted in the development and publication in 2008 of Mexico's response to the GSPC. The Mexican Plant Conservation Strategy adopts the targets of the GSPC, adapting them to Mexican conditions, in a plan to halt the deterioration and loss of Mexican plant diversity by 2030.

## Reviewing GSPC progress

The in-depth review of the GSPC noted the key role of botanic gardens in the implementation of many of the targets. However BGCI's specific contributions were particularly recognised in relation to Target 2 (conservation assessments and Red Listing), Target 3 (development of models and protocols), Target 8 (ex situ conservation), Target 14 (education and public awareness), Target 15 (capacity building) and Target 16 (networks for plant conservation).

## BGCI and GSPC implementation

### Target 2 – A preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species

In 2008, BGCI continued working on the global assessment of tree species focusing on the Red Lists of Maples and initiating a Red Listing process for Rhododendrons, with an international workshop held in Singapore. We also worked on the development of a list of European threatened plants based on national Red Lists and supported Red





The Conference of the Parties to the CBD “extends its appreciation to BGCI for its support for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation”  
**COP Decision IX/3, 2008**



Listing in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar as part of projects funded by SwedBio and the JRS Biodiversity Foundation.

**Target 3 – Development of models with protocols for plant conservation and sustainable use**

BGCI acts a ‘clearing house’ of information on plant conservation – publishing a wide range of journals, manuals and guidelines. In 2008, the two issues of our botanic garden

journal focused on conserving forest and urban biodiversity and we published a manual on the reintroduction of rare and threatened plants in Russian and English. The SwedBio-funded project also looked at methodologies for linking scientific information with community based conservation.

**Target 8 – 60% of threatened plants in ex situ collections and 10% of these in recovery programmes**

BGCI provides global monitoring of this target through PlantSearch, a database of plants in the living collections of botanic gardens worldwide. Figure 1 shows the increasing number of records held in PlantSearch since its launch in 2002.

**Target 14: Education and public awareness about plant conservation promoted**

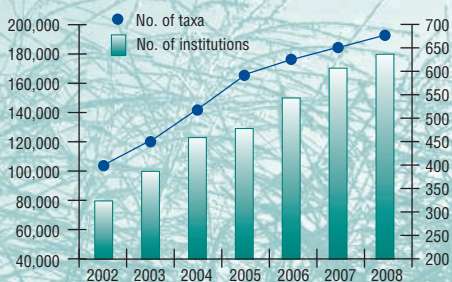
BGCI focuses on building the capacity of its global network to

deliver effective education and public awareness programmes. In 2008, for example, we ran our International Diploma Course for botanic garden educators (see page 5). We also co-organised a World Botanic Gardens Exhibition at the Olympic Games in Beijing, highlighting the plant conservation work of botanic gardens.

**Targets 15 and 16 – Building capacity and establishing networks for plant conservation**

Much of BGCI’s work revolves around these two targets – as reported on pages 4-5. A particularly important networking event in 2008 was the 2nd World Botanic Gardens Science Congress, which BGCI co-organised with the Botanic Garden of the Technical University of Delft, Netherlands. Themed on ‘Challenges in botanical research and climate change’, the congress attracted a large international audience.

Fig. 1. Data provided to BGCI PlantSearch database



# Summary of accounts

Extracts from Financial Statements Year ended 31 December 2008	Extracted from BGCI Limited accounts		For illustrative purposes converted at rate of 2008 \$1.46:£1 2007 \$1.99:£1	
	2008 £000	2007 £000	2008 \$000	2007 \$000
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
Grants	441	900	645	1,791
Membership subscriptions	98	73	143	145
Other income	60	135	88	269
	<b>599</b>	<b>1,108</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>2,205</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Staff costs	636	634	928	1,262
Direct project and other project implementation costs	587	1,199	857	2,386
Management and administration costs	47	16	69	32
	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>3,680</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>(671)</b>	<b>(741)</b>	<b>(980)</b>	<b>(1,475)</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>				
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Current assets/(liabilities)</b>				
Debtors	101	89	147	177
Cash at bank and in hand	717	1,440	1,047	2,866
Creditors due within one year	(65)	(110)	(95)	(219)
	<b>753</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>2,824</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>2,866</b>
<b>Funds</b>				
Restricted funds	338	1,043	493	2,076
Unrestricted funds	430	397	628	790
	<b>768</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>2,866</b>

The full Financial Statements are available on written request from BGCI Headquarters.

## Acknowledgements: BGCI gratefully acknowledges the support of all its members and of the following individuals and organisations for its programme in 2008.

### Major sponsors and donors

- Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
- The Boeing Company
- British Airways
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- Ciarins (Singapore)
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- GC Gibson Charitable Settlement
- Herbal Science
- JRS Biodiversity Foundation
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- The Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust
- The Swedish International Biodiversity Programme
- UNESCO

### BGCI Conservation Donors

- Sharon Christoph
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- International Dendrology Society
- Olubunmi Omoseyindemi
- Dr Lisbet Rausing
- Mr and Mrs S. M. Trafford
- Baroness Walmsley

### BGCI Gala Dinner - Singapore

- Dr Chin See Chung
- Dr Wong Wei Har
- The organising committee
- All those individuals and organisations who generously supported the event in a variety of ways including Beth Rothschild and family

### In-Country support:

#### China

- Dr Hongwen Huang, South China Botanical Garden
- Dr Hanping Xia, South China Botanical Garden
- Dr Jingping Liao, South China Botanical Garden
- Mr Pei Ouyang, South China Botanical Garden
- Dr Keping Ma, Beijing Institute of Botany
- Dr Jin Chen, Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden
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- Dr Yonghong Hu, Shanghai Botanical Garden

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- Dr Yong Li, Fairy Lake Botanical Garden

#### Germany

- Botanic Garden of the University of Bonn
- Association of German Botanic Gardens
- Prof. Bartholott, University of Bonn Botanic Garden

#### Indonesia

- Dr. Irawati, Bogor Botanic Garden
- the late Dr. Holif Imauddin, Cibodas Botanic Garden

#### Japan

- Biodiversity Network Japan
- Japan Association of Botanical Gardens
- Ministry of Environment
- Prof. Kunio Iwatsuki
- Prof. Jin Murata, Botanic Gardens, University of Tokyo
- Dr. Tomohisa Yukawa, Tsukuba Botanical Garden, National Science Museum

#### Latvia

- Signe Tomson, University of Riga Botanic Garden
- Anta Sparinska, University of Riga Botanic Garden
- Lauma Strazdina, University of Riga Botanic Garden

#### Netherlands

- Dr Bob Ursem
- Dr Bert van den Wollenberg

#### Singapore

- Dr. Chin See Chung, Singapore Botanic Gardens
- Dr. Wong Wei Har, Singapore Botanic Gardens

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- Prof. Yong Shik Kim
- Korean Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta

#### UK

- Gail Bromley, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- Patt Griggs, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
- Jon Lovett, University of York

#### USA

- American Public Garden Association
- Association of Zoological Horticulture
- Bureau of Land Management
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- Center for Plant Conservation
- Chicago Botanic Garden
- Plant Conservation Alliance
- United States Botanic Garden
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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**Sarah Kneebone** - Education Officer (until January 2008)  
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**George Hackford** - Intern (October – December 2008)  
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IRST Botanical Gardens	Rwanda
North-West University Botanical Garden	South Africa
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City of Tampa Parks and Recreation	United States
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Hoyt Arboretum	United States
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Shambhala Mountain Center	United States
The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University	United States
The Key West Tropical Forest and Botanical	United States
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*Plants for the Planet*

**Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International**

Descanso House, 199 Kew Road,  
Richmond, Surrey, TW9 3BW, U.K.

Tel: +44 (0)20 8332 5953

Fax: +44 (0)20 8332 5956

E-mail: [info@bgci.org](mailto:info@bgci.org)

Internet: [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)



**Our vision: A world in which plant diversity is valued, secure and supporting all life.**

**Our mission: To mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet.**

**BGCI's patron is HRH the Prince of Wales**

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Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Descanso House, 199 Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3BW UK.  
Tel: +44 (0)20 8332 5953 Fax: +44 (0)20 8332 5956  
E-mail: [info@bgci.org](mailto:info@bgci.org) [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)

BGCI-Canarias, c/o Jardín Botánico Canario Viera y Clavijo, Apartado de Correos 14, Tafira Alta 35017, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, Spain.  
Tel: +34 928 21 95 80/82/83 Fax: +34 928 21 95 81  
E-mail: [jmlopez@grancanaria.es](mailto:jmlopez@grancanaria.es)

BGCI- China, 723 Xingke Rd., Guangzhou 510650 China.  
Tel: (86)20-37252692 E-mail: [Xiangying.Wen@bgci.org](mailto:Xiangying.Wen@bgci.org)  
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BGCI-Deutschland, c/o Botanische Gärten der Universität Bonn, Meckenheimer Allee 171, 53115 Bonn, Germany.  
Tel: +49 2 2873 9055 Fax: +49 2 28731690  
E-mail: [biogart@uni-bonn.de](mailto:biogart@uni-bonn.de)

BGCI-Netherlands, c/o Delft University of Technology Julianalaan 67, NL-2628 BC Delft, Netherlands  
Tel: +31 15 278 4714 Fax: +31 15 278 2355  
E-mail: [I.j.w.vandenwollenberg@tudelft.nl](mailto:I.j.w.vandenwollenberg@tudelft.nl)  
[www.botanischetuin.tudelft.nl](http://www.botanischetuin.tudelft.nl)

BGCI-Russia, c/o Main Botanical Gardens, Botanicheskaya st., 4, Moscow 127276, Russia. Tel: +7 (095) 219 6160 / 5377 Fax: +7 (095) 218 0525 E-mail: [seed@aha.ru](mailto:seed@aha.ru), [www.bgci.ru](http://www.bgci.ru)

BGCI – Southeast Asia, c/o Registry, Singapore Botanic Gardens, 1 Cluny Road, Singapore 259569.  
E-mail: [Blain.Tan@bgci.org](mailto:Blain.Tan@bgci.org)

BGCI (US) Inc. c/o Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, Illinois 60022, USA.  
E-mail: [usa@bgci.org](mailto:usa@bgci.org) [www.bgci.org/usa](http://www.bgci.org/usa)