



Plantsforthe**Planet**
The work of Botanic Gardens
Conservation International in 2009



Message from the Chair

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. So this is a good year to think about the diversity of flora and fauna on the planet that we largely take for granted. Botanic gardens are great places to celebrate the diversity of plants – collectively the botanic gardens of the world grow around one-third of all flowering plant species. The conservation and restoration work of botanic gardens is helping to ensure that our increasingly threatened biodiversity is maintained in safe hands. Looking back over BGCI's achievements in 2009 I am again struck by how much we achieve for such a small budget! We are able to do this



Acer pentaphyllum

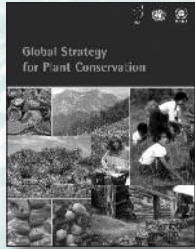
because of the fantastic global network of botanic gardens and the friendships and collaborations between them. If BGCI can effectively help to facilitate this network, linking gardens in Africa with those of Australasia and gardens in Russia with those of Latin America, then we are doing a great job. The Fourth Global Botanic Gardens Congress held in the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland at Glasnevin in Dublin this year gave me an opportunity to see the friendships between botanic gardens worldwide at work. A big thank you to the Irish Government and staff at Glasnevin for their hard work and support for this truly magnificent event.



During 2009, BGCI helped to update an important international agreement, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, using our convening power worldwide. The successes of this Strategy, in good measure due to the ongoing work of botanic gardens, are something to celebrate! But our work is far from over. We need to ensure that botanic gardens with strong conservation and education programmes continue to flourish and that everyone truly understands that all life depends on plants.

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

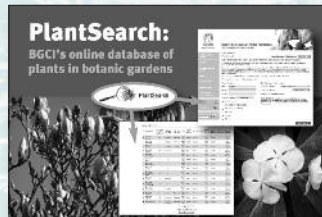
BGCI in 2009



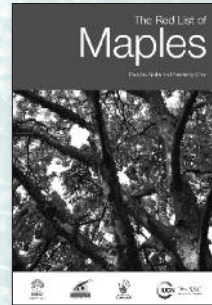
Conserving the world's wild plant diversity is a momentous task! In 2009, BGCI continued to work at all levels to maximize its support for plant conservation and the crucial work being undertaken by botanic gardens. The global policy framework provided by the *Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* (GSPC) continues to guide our work and in 2009 we helped to update this important strategy of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Publicising

the Strategy to a wider audience remains a challenge, but the Janet Meakin Poor Research Symposium entitled Global Plant Conservation and Outreach held at Chicago Botanic Garden in association with BGCI provided an excellent opportunity to do this.

Sound information remains essential for prioritizing and planning plant conservation action. BGCI was delighted to join the 4D4Life project in 2009, a three year project funded by the European Commission, to develop the comprehensive Catalogue of Life. The value of BGCI's own databases (GardenSearch and PlantSearch) was highlighted at an international workshop on the role of botanic gardens in the



restoration of ecosystems organised by RBG Kew. We remain committed to the continued development of these databases as a unique source of information on the skills and resources available throughout the global network.



BGCI retains its specific focus on assessing the conservation status and *ex situ* collections of tree species. In July, we organized the first meeting of the IUCN/SSC Global Tree Specialist Group, generously hosted by the Morton Arboretum. At this meeting we reported on our progress in Red Listing the world's rhododendrons and collectively prioritized the genera and regions of trees for conservation assessment over the next ten years. Later in the year we published the

Red List of Maples detailing the threatened status of all the species in this horticulturally popular and economically important tree genus. Earlier in 2009 we helped to organize an international symposium on the magnolia family held at South China Botanic Garden – which holds the world's largest *ex situ* collection of endangered magnolia species.

Ex situ collections of threatened plant species will become increasingly important in biodiversity conservation as the impacts of global climate change are felt. They will also be valuable in adaption to climate change whether through ecological restoration or trialling the growth of crop species under different climatic conditions.



Sharing experiences through networking and building capacity are key elements in global plant conservation. In June, BGCI participated actively in the EuroGard meeting in Helsinki which brought together over 200 botanic garden delegates. We also co-organized

a workshop hosted by the magnificent Tbilisi Botanic Garden in Georgia. The purpose of the workshop was to identify challenges and opportunities for Georgia's botanic gardens. These are of major historical and cultural importance and immensely important in conserving plants of the Caucasus Global Biodiversity Hotspot.

In the long term involving many more people in the conservation of local plants will be the key to success. BGCI worked with partners in Madagascar and Uganda to consider ways of increasing engagement with local communities in plant conservation and livelihood development. This topic is complex and likely to be a recurring theme for BGCI's work in the years to come.

Engaging with broader audiences is a challenge for many botanic gardens. In the UK, BGCI launched two new projects addressing botanic



Crocus cartwrightianus

gardens and social inclusion and also the role of Islamic gardens in the UK. It is hoped that the findings of these studies will ultimately have practical implications for botanic gardens in many parts of the world.

Overall 2009 was an exciting year for BGCI.

We strengthened our conservation work in China, consolidated partnerships in the US and developed an increasing focus of work in Africa. BGCI's 7th International Education Congress brought over 200 delegates from around the world to Durban, Africa's oldest botanic garden. Our work linking over 600 member botanic gardens and a wide range of partners is truly global. The challenges for botanic gardens are major but collectively we form the greatest force for plant conservation!

Sara Oldfield
BGCI Secretary General



Securing plant diversity

With up to one-third of all known plant species facing an uncertain future, which would you chose to save first? Recognising that people in rural communities in developing countries are largely reliant on wild plant resources and are likely to suffer most if these are no longer available, BGCI has been working with such communities to help protect their plant resources. Pilot projects in Uganda and Madagascar have allowed us to explore the issues and develop models for community-based conservation for the most valued species. Working in partnership with local botanic gardens and other partners, similar approaches have also been developed in Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam, with a focus on medicinal plants. Fostering dialogue among local communities as the ultimate natural resource custodians is essential to define locally appropriate conservation and management approaches.



In China, our work to save critically endangered trees continues. With a close link to BGCI's Red Listing work, the focus is on conserving threatened species of magnolia, oak, maple and rhododendron. An integrated approach to conservation secures these species for the future, while at the same time ensuring the continued provision of services from the ecosystems they are part of. Field surveys undertaken in 2009 have provided detailed information

on the distribution of target species and allowed seeds and vegetative material to be collected for the establishment of *ex situ* collections. Particular success has been achieved in producing a stock of seedlings of the highly threatened maple – *Acer yangbiense*. Very few individuals of this species remain in the wild, but it is hoped that the seedlings produced by our partners, Beijing and Kunming Botanical Gardens will provide a source of plants to reinforce wild populations.



Acer pycnanthum



Acer cappadocicum

Enabling people and botanic gardens

With over 200 million visitors every year, botanic gardens are ideally placed to educate and inform the public. However, the skills, expertise and resources required to deliver effective education and public awareness programmes are often limited. BGCI's education programme is helping to address this gap.



In 2009, BGCI's 7th International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens was held in Durban, South Africa, the first time an education congress had been held in Africa. Attracting 110 delegates from 23 countries, the congress highlighted the breadth and depth

of botanic garden education work around the world. The benefits of organising events such as this are encapsulated by these quotes from Congress delegates:

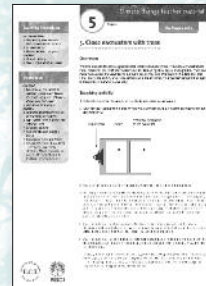
"The education congresses are useful on so many levels – introducing concepts to newcomers, creating partnerships and facilitating group discussions to identify solutions to the professional challenges we face."

"Often we work alone or in small numbers at our gardens, thus this is a chance to get ideas from a wider pool. It also gives a chance to assess whether the issues we are prioritising in our programmes are those that are seen by others to be important."



In February 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted *"The amount of global warming will depend on the choices human beings make"*. Since then, our education department has been busy developing a set of innovative resources that will help botanic gardens educate their visitors about climate change. With a focus on educating the young, we have developed

a comprehensive set of interactive teaching materials on plants and climate change. These are easily-downloadable from a special education portal on our website.



"Children are tomorrow's decision-makers and we need to encourage a re-evaluation of our values and behaviours, so that we can reverse biodiversity loss and deal with climate change"

Julia Willison, BGCI's Director of Education Programmes

Influencing decision-making and policy

The GSPC is the key instrument guiding plant conservation work nationally and globally. Following an in-depth review of the GSPC in 2008, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested that the strategy, with its 16 targets, should be updated for the period 2011-2020. The focus in 2009 was therefore on developing revised targets and building consensus around these. BGCI, with the support of the Boeing Company organised a series of regional workshops to gather input from stakeholders in Africa and the Americas. The workshops provided excellent opportunities to share experiences on implementation of the Strategy and to exchange views on how the



targets should be taken forward. The reports from the workshops were provided to the CBD Secretariat and were considered a key part of the GSPC consultation process.

BGCI worked with partners in Japan on the development of the Japanese response to the GSPC. A draft status report

was developed during the year and presented at a national workshop in December. The key role of Japanese botanic gardens in conserving plant diversity was recognised during this process, with the Japanese Association of Botanic Gardens playing a lead role in the review process.

In the US, BGCI worked with Chicago Botanic Garden and partners in government, academic and private sectors across the country to assess botanical capacity to implement policy and deliver practical conservation outcomes.



One of the key GSPC targets for BGCI and the botanic garden community is Target 8: “60% of threatened plant species in accessible *ex situ* collections...”. Monitoring progress towards this target has however been constrained by the lack of comprehensive global and regional lists of threatened plants. BGCI took steps in 2009 to address this constraint in Europe by developing a consolidated list of

regionally threatened plants. Based on national Red Lists and species distribution data, 1,917 threatened species were identified. Comparing this list with BGCI’s PlantSearch database (a database of the living plant collections of botanic gardens worldwide) and a database of European seed bank holdings developed by the European Native Seed Conservation Network (ENSCONET) allowed 808 threatened taxa (42% of the total) to be identified in *ex situ* collections.



Summary of accounts

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

Extracts from Financial Statements Year ended 31 December 2009	Extracted from BGCI Limited accounts		For illustrative purposes converted at a rate of 2009 \$1.56:£1 2008 \$1.46:£1	
	2009 £000	2008 £000	2009 \$000	2008 \$000
Income and Expenditure				
Income				
Grants	837	441	1,306	645
Subscriptions	105	98	164	143
Other incomes	30	60	47	88
	972	599	1,517	876
Expenditure				
Staff costs	579	636	903	928
Direct project and other project implementation costs	587	587	916	857
Management and administration costs	28	47	44	69
	1,194	1,270	1,863	1,854
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(222)	(671)	(346)	(978)
Balance Sheet				
Fixed assets	11	15	17	22
Current assets/(liabilities)				
Debtors	43	101	67	147
Cash at bank and in hand	586	717	914	1,047
Creditors due within one year	(94)	(65)	(147)	(95)
	535	753	834	1,099
Total assets less current liabilities	546	768	851	1,121
Funds				
Restricted funds	324	338	505	493
Unrestricted funds	222	430	346	628
	546	768	851	1,121

The BGCI community

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New Institutional Members in 2009

Malabrigo - Area Natural Protegida	Argentina
The Gardens of Fanshawe College	Canada
Hunan Forest Botanical Garden	China
Kunming Botanic Garden	China
Botanical Garden Faculty of Science	Croatia
Shehab Mazhar Barageel Garden	Egypt
Gambia National Botanic Garden	Gambia
Ioannis Patis	Greece
Alcsúti Arboretum	Hungary
Hortus Botanicus Universitatis	Hungary
Myanmar Floriculturist Association	Myanmar
Jardin Botánico Ambiental	Nicaragua
Oman Botanic Garden	Oman
Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua S.A.	Portugal
Gardens by the Bay	Singapore
Htoo Foundation	Singapore
Hantam National Botanical Garden	South Africa
Islamic Culture Foundation	Spain
Eastern Botanic Garden (Khao Hin Son)	Thailand
Jurij Fedkovich National University Botanical Garden	Ukraine
Auchgourish Botanic Gardens	United Kingdom
Durham University Botanic Garden	United Kingdom
Palomar College Arboretum	United States
Aarru	United States
New Orleans Botanical Garden	United States
University of Maryland College Park	United States

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 Page 1, (*Acer pentaphyllum*) Quarryhill Botanic Garden; page 3, (*Crocus cartwrightianus*) Nikos Krigas; page 4, (*Acer cappadocicum*) Westonbirt Arboretum, (*Acer pycnanthum*) Westonbirt Arboretum; page 6, (*Luronium natans*) Jo Packet.
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Chicago Botanic Garden
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
Missouri Botanic Garden
Plant Conservation Alliance
The Morton Arboretum
United States Botanic Garden
US Forest Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service

United Kingdom

Richmond upon Thames College
Society of Botanical Artists

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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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