

RHS provides support to young students



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Bursaries awarded to two young orchid growers for attendance at conference.



Two young students, Zoe Barnes and Zoe Parfitt from Writhlington School near Radstock, Avon, were each awarded funding from the **RHS Coke Trust Awards** to participate in the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) conference in Durban, South Africa in November 2009.

Accompanied by their teacher Mr Simon Pugh-Jones and Dr Lauren Gardiner from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the girls had been invited to be speakers and lead a workshop at the BGCI conference, as well as give a presentation about the ongoing orchid project at their school. Both girls are considered outstanding members of the Writhlington School Orchid Project and have shown exceptional promise, especially in terms of their horticultural knowledge and skills.



Presenting Writhlington School's work to the conference delegates

Taking time out to study the local flora



Lectures were given to congress delegates and to the combined orchid societies of the Durban area and the girls worked closely with staff from the Durban Botanic Garden to deliver their workshops and talks. In the micro-propagation laboratory, thirty eight botanic garden professionals from around the world learnt how to sow orchid seed and replace seedlings *in vitro*. These events raised the profile of the Writhlington School project as a model for conservation, education and development. Throughout their trip the girls produced a blog for the RHS website which told the story of their trip and gained a good following across the UK.

The *RHS Bursaries Advisory Committee* was keen to show that not only was support given for the girls' trip, but that encouragement was seen to be given to young people who wished to pursue their horticultural interests and who had personally developed technical skills that were not overly difficult to achieve.

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ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Bursaries newsletter

Searching for *Scadoxus nutans* in its native habitat



Partly funded by an **RHS Blaxall Valentine bursary award**, Jonathan Hutchinson (currently Senior Supervisor at RHS Rosemoor) undertook a study trip to Ethiopia in February 2009 to search for *Scadoxus nutans*. The main aim of this trip was to improve his personal knowledge about its growing conditions to enhance his own National Collection.

The genus *Scadoxus* in the family Amaryllidaceae consists of nine species that are almost totally confined to the African continent. Three of these species are native to Ethiopia – one of which is endemic. The other two are more widely distributed throughout Africa. *Scadoxus nutans* is restricted to the regions of Illubabor and Kefa, where it grows in moist evergreen montane forest either on the forest floor or as an epiphyte. It is further restricted in its distribution by being only found between the elevations of 1000-2300m and is regarded as being under threat.



Scadoxus nutans – At Eja Beecha, Bonga area. In damp forest with bamboo element. Growing as a large spreading clump on side of trunk of *Aralia* sp.

In contrast, *Scadoxus multiflorus* subsp. *multiflorus* is probably the most widespread member of the genus and is the only species to reach beyond the continent, with a distribution extending into the Arabian peninsula. Within Ethiopia it is found in most regions. *Scadoxus puniceus* is also a widespread species on the African continent, but is totally absent from Kenya and only occurs in isolated populations in Tanzania. Unfortunately its flowering period is from March to June and therefore Jonathan was unable to see it during the study trip.

Scadoxus multiflorus subsp. *multiflorus* – found at Menagesha Suba State Forest, growing in open aspect on small area of scrubby grassland at side of forest track



Although Jonathan's main objective was to see *Scadoxus*, he also hoped to see *Canarina* and the giant lobelia *Lobelia rhynchopetalum* that grows on the Alpine plateaux. It was decided to do two excursions, each about one week long: the first going south of Addis Ababa to the high ground of Bale Goba National Park, while in the second he travelled to the south west – the home of *Scadoxus nutans*. The final five days were spent around Addis Ababa, looking at specimens in the Herbarium and spending days out looking at the flora around Addis Ababa.

In summary, Jonathan considered the opportunity to see the natural habitat and diversity within this species was a wonderful opportunity, particularly with regard to *Scadoxus nutans* and the range of plants with which it shared its epiphytic habitats. In his own words:

"Travelling to foreign countries and being able to see native plants in their habitat has always given me a lot of enjoyment" said Jonathan. "What made this trip particularly special was that I was taken round and shown some of Ethiopia's wonderful flora by people who are very passionate and knowledgeable about their own natural environment and the threats to which it is vulnerable. To have their enthusiasm and commitment from the very beginning made this a very worthwhile trip".

Palaces of Glass -

An opportunity to view spectacular conservatory displays in America

Thanks to the support of an **RHS Coke Trust bursary award**, Ian Tocher was able to travel to the United States for a one-week study tour of seasonal conservatory displays. The aim of the tour was to learn how these spectacular displays are designed, implemented and maintained, including learning about the associated plant production methods. This knowledge would be useful to Ian in his role as a Horticulturist in the Queen Elizabeth Temperate House at the Savill Garden, Surrey, where the displays have changed from permanent planting to seasonal plant displays, complemented by a backbone of tender woody plants.



Ian Tocher

Longwood Gardens

Ian began his tour by visiting Longwood Gardens, near Philadelphia, which is renowned for its seasonal conservatory displays. Two days were spent learning about the design process, the hands-on work of installing the displays and the highly efficient plant production process, which uses a computerised production schedule. Next, three gardens were visited in New York. Firstly, Wave Hill Gardens alongside the Hudson River in the Bronx, where Ian learnt about their artful and intimate plant displays in containers. A day was then spent at the New York Botanical Garden, viewing the Brazilian-themed orchid display in the conservatory and touring the extensive production glass-houses. Lastly, Brooklyn Botanic Garden was visited to look at the collections in the Steinhardt Conservatory and the historic Bonsai collection.



Ian Tocher

Longwood Gardens



Ian Tocher

New York Botanic Garden

The study tour was a great success, giving Ian an insight into the design of world-class seasonal conservatory displays and related plant production processes, along with the opportunity to meet many helpful and knowledgeable American horticulturists.

With thanks to **Ian Tocher**

Bursaries Advisory Committee Prizes

The award of a Bursaries Advisory Committee Prize is a long established practice, given to a submitted bursary report that is considered to be of the highest overall standard. Following assessment from judges drawn from members of staff associated with Botany, the Lindley Library, RHS Publications and the School of Horticulture, a shortlist of reports is prepared for final assessment by members of the Bursaries Advisory Committee.

With effect from 2009, it was decided to award two prizes; these to be presented at the Society's Qualifications Award Ceremony in order to increase the profile of the award. One prize would go to the candidate whose report was considered to reflect the highest standard of report writing and one to the candidate deemed to have personally gained the most from undertaking his/her project. The 2009 winners were:

Matthew Elliot—awarded the major 2009 *RHS Bursaries Committee Prize* of £500. His report reflected his 3-week study trip visiting the Canary Islands in December 2008, for which he had been awarded an RHS Coke Trust Award. He undertook assessment research work on *Juniperus cedrus* – recognised as an excellent project in terms of both horticultural and conservation value, as well as personal development for Matthew. His report was considered as exemplary, clearly detailing the aims of the project, the work undertaken and the results achieved.



Matthew Elliot receiving his award – seen here with RHS President Giles Coode-Adams and Bursaries Advisory Committee Chairman Bill Simpson.

Katherine Barnard—awarded the second *RHS Bursaries Committee Prize* of £250 for her report that gave a concise account of her one-year voluntary placement at Dunedin Botanic Garden, New Zealand. Katherine had applied to and been accepted by Dunedin Botanic Garden to participate in their Horticultural Trainee Programme for one year from July 2007 to July 2008. This programme offered a structured apprenticeship training programme, in conjunction with a local technical college that exposed trainees to as wide a range of ornamental horticulture as possible. She applied to the RHS Bursaries Scheme in May 2007 for financial support and was successful in being awarded the *John Mackenzie Morrison* award to assist with her expenses.

All bursary reports are held in the Garden Library at Wisley Garden for reference by staff, students and members of the public, thus providing complementary reading for anyone undertaking a similar project in the future.

RECENT BURSARY AWARDS

16 applications were received for the November 2009 Bursaries Meeting, for which **11** awards were made totalling **£22,725**.

16 applications were received for the February 2010 Bursaries Meeting, for which **12** awards were made totalling **£15,750**, with 3 applications having been withdrawn.

Bursary application closing dates 2010/2011

A bursary application should be submitted before one of the following closing dates, to ensure it is eligible for consideration by the RHS Bursaries Advisory Committee:

30 June 2010
30 September 2010
15 December 2010
31 March 2011

The completed form should be submitted by e-mail to: bursaries@rhs.org.uk or by post to
Secretary of the RHS Bursaries
Advisory Committee
RHS Garden Wisley
Woking, Surrey, GU23 6QB

"How fair is a garden amid the trials and passions of existence"

Benjamin Disraeli

