



growing heritage

Action Plan for
Conservation
of Plants in Cultivation
www.growingheritage.org.uk

Welcome to the first edition, designed to update key users about the progress towards the objectives of the Action Plan for Conservation of Plants in Cultivation.

The Growing Heritage Conference took place in 2006 to address the conservation of garden plants, to review past achievements and plan for the next ones.

The Action Plan was published as a result of the conference organised by Royal Horticultural Society and Plant Heritage (National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens) (obtainable as a pdf from www.growingheritage.org.uk). It sets out the factors that affect cultivated ornamental plant conservation, which are in many respects the same as those that affect plant conservation as a whole.

The future of cultivated plant conservation depends upon all of us, through partnerships and collaboration, and cannot be carried out by one organisation alone. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep all the interested parties up to date on what has been attained and who is doing it.

Objective 1 – Knowledge

The RHS and Plant Heritage are making progress in their aim to *make information about cultivated plants more accessible* through a database of nursery catalogues. Currently volunteers at RHS Wisley and the Lindley Library in London are recording the information on all nursery catalogues which are sent into the society. Plant Heritage are compiling information on holdings amongst notable horticultural and botanical institutions around the country.



A project is also underway to get local Plant Heritage groups involved in checking libraries and record offices for any nursery catalogue holdings. It is hoped that with their local knowledge of notable plants people and nurseries they may be able to uncover information which would not be found by others.

Excitingly for the project overall, the next edition of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (ICNCP) will include an appendix on libraries holding significant or active collections of nursery and seed catalogues. This could help the project in the ultimate aim of having a searchable database to be used by professionals and interested individuals.

Objective 2 – Education

“Make people more aware of the importance of cultivated plants” - An education steering group has been created. Areas being investigated include enhancing the coverage of conservation, organising more conservation centred events and increasing the relevance of cultivated plant conservation to horticulture.

(Education cont)

The first regional Plant Heritage Day organised by the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire groups, hosted by Cambridge University Botanic Garden (CUBG) took place on Sunday 8th June 2008. (Sponsored by Brother UK Ltd and Awards for All).

The day enabled the public to view the region's National Plant Collections in one location, and to demonstrate the importance of cultivation plant conservation. The marquee housed 29 National Plant Collections® - 10 photographic and 19 exhibiting plant material, in addition to the nine collections held by CUBG.

Education was the prime focus of the day. Nine National Collection Holders gave short presentations, and there were twelve guided tours focused on a variety of subjects with Roy Lancaster taking two inspirational tours.

1500 visitors attended the event, many keen gardeners but also people unfamiliar with the work of Plant Heritage. The event successfully achieved its objectives, visitors meeting and talking with National Collection Holders, purchasing plants from the collections to take their piece of "Plant Heritage" home to grow and providing an opportunity for the dedicated conservation work of National Collection Holders to be appreciated by a wider audience.



Objective 3 Strategy Raise the profile of horticulture where it matters ...

The NCCPG are working on ways to enhance the coverage of succession plans in the application process for National Plant Collections, by amending the application process to place a greater emphasis on the possible options open to collection holders to safeguard their plants and knowledge for the future.

Objective 4 Enhancing diversity

Workshops for National Collection Holders held at RHS Wisley have focussed on CITES, CBD and issues surrounding plant breeders rights, with the help of RBG Kew, DEFRA, NIAB and many others.

Objective 5 Best Practice...and look after those we have already have ...

Plant Heritage are working towards a Red List for cultivated plants. This will involve a considerable amount of volunteer work and extensive levels of cooperation between all those participating. It is anticipated that it has the potential to act as a unifying project for the many diverse plant organisations in the UK. A presentation on the theory and processes involved was made at the NCCPG AGM in May.

A role to coordinate the project has been created and advertised. The Threatened Plant Project Co-ordinator role will start in September 09, funded for by Finnis Scott Foundation. There is also the prospect of cooperation with the National Trust through their plant recording project, which intends to: 'map out the thousands of rare species of plant in the care of the National Trust which have been bred by passionate plant collectors or gathered by plant hunters on expeditions during the last 400 years or so. We might even 'discover' plants that we didn't know we had.' (Mike Calnan NT Website)

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Contributions and comments to growingheritage@rhs.org.uk