

The Bristol Community Plant Collection, A WAZA Conservation Project (#12014)

Edwin Mole – Bristol Zoo Gardens, UK

Reprinted from WAZA website

Most gardeners have heard of Plant Heritage's National Plant Collections, but what is not obvious is that certain groups of plants are under-represented in the National Plant Collections scheme. One such group is hardy annuals; they create a number of challenges due to cross-pollination if they are grown together and the perception that they are "easy" by those considering creating collections. The result is that despite containing some of the most exciting plants that grow in a UK garden, they are neglected when compared to perennials in terms of their presence in conservation collections. By making this project a dispersed collection, these challenges are easier to manage. A dispersed collection is a botanical collection of plants that are managed centrally but that are grown on a number of different sites.



Calendula, commonly known as a pot marigold, was chosen for this trial as it is well known as both a popular garden flower and also for its medicinal value. Bristol Zoo Gardens wanted to grow a mixture of species (to support the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation) and varieties. Although there are a huge number of varieties available commercially, only two species of the plant are available. Since the start of the project, Calendula species seed from the Botanic Garden attached to Bayreuth University in Germany and six species from the US Department of Agriculture research department have been received and grown for the project, bringing the total to eight.

Very quickly a number of groups either were approached or found out about the project and asked if they could be



involved. These groups have grown 30 plants for a display in the zoo in summer 2012 and keep plants on site to harvest the seed later in the year. All the groups have been provided with training from Bristol Zoo Gardens staff, growing equipment, information packs and site visits to give advice and support throughout the spring and summer.

The project appears to be the first of its kind because it is a dispersed collection and also engaging community groups to be part of the growing process. It is hoped that by involving community groups a greater understanding of Calendula and plants in general will be gained. And, most importantly, that individuals and groups can take a very active part in plant conservation right here in Bristol.

Editor's Note: Background to the branding project

In 2000/2001, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop in Koln, Germany to discuss a strategic resolution of the question of how to make WAZA more effective for conservation. It was decided that there would be three workshops in different parts of the world themed on WAZA becoming more a part of *in situ* conservation, taking part in genuine and meaningful conservation. Later I could attend one of these three workshops which were facilitated by Dr. U.S. Seal and organised by WAZA. Many ideas were discussed but there was one idea that overwhelmed all others ... that was that WAZA would begin branding worthy conservation projects in order to promote them and also that the projects would showcase what captive institutions (zoos and aquariums) can do for wildlife conservation.

This idea took off like a rocket. The way it worked is that the Projects are branded when their authors apply. There are 3 types of criteria for endorsement, using biological, operational, institutional and partnership issues and the applications have to come up to the standard devised by the Executive Office of WAZA. The applications can be given by the project getting supported by WAZA members or a WAZA member that is supporting. Since this began several hundred projects have been approved and set up.

Obtaining WAZA brand suggests:

- Branded projects remain fully independent and WAZA in no way interferes with the implementation of the project.
- Branded projects may use the "Partner of WAZA" label in their publications, on their website, etc.

- A short article about the branded project is published in the WAZA News, with the possibility for a longer article in the WAZA Magazine.
- Branded projects receive the WAZA News and the WAZA Magazine.
- Branded projects may give a presentation at the WAZA Annual Conferences.
- A project description is published on the WAZA website. WAZA provides a link to the branded project's website and expects the project to do the same reciprocally.
- WAZA looks into the possibility of financially supporting branded projects through online donations and fundraising initiatives.
- Branded projects are expected to annually submit a short progress report (incl. evaluation) to WAZA.

Now, after several years of successful [WAZA Conservation Projects of the month](#), the first WAZA project for plant conservation came along! Bristol Zoo Gardens, with the support of Botanic Gardens Conservation International, have set up a new exciting project that tackles plant conservation with the help of nine community groups from around the city. National Plant Collections, but what is not obvious is that certain groups of plants underrepresented in the National Plan. The story of this project by Edwin Mole of the Bristol Zoo is on the WAZA website and we have poached it for publication.

Directory of Indian Taxonomists (DIT)

Dear Taxonomists of India...!

Dr. Hiren B. Soni, Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Environmental Science & Technology, Indian Institute of Science & Technology for Advanced Studies & Research (ISTAR) is planning to prepare an On-line "Directory of Indian Taxonomists (DIT)" and request all the Taxonomists of India send their details at drhirenbsoni@gmail.com

The Format of DIT is as follows:

Name: Hiren B. Soni

Major Groups: Microbes / Plants / Invertebrates / Vertebrates

Phyto-Groups: Viruses / Bacteria / Algae / Fungi / Grass / Herbs / Shrubs / Trees

Invertebrates: Protozoa / Porifera / Coelenterata / Platyhelminthes /

Nemethelminthes / Annelida / Arthropoda / Mollusca / Echinodermata / Minor Phyla

Vertebrates: Protochordates / Pisces / Amphibians / Reptiles / Birds / Mammals

E-Mail: drhirenbsoni@gmail.com

Mobile: 9426023901

The Draft Version of DIT will be E-mailed personally to each Taxonomist on 7-6-13, and Final Version will be On-line on 6-7-13.