

Sponsors of the ZOO Plant Education Project



About Chester Zoo

Chester Zoo covers an area of over 100 acres within a total land holding of over 400 acres. The Zoo was founded in the early 1930s. The Zoo is internationally known for its innovative enclosure designs, for its many breeding successes, its involvement in co-operative breeding programmes and its international conservation programmes. In 2004 visitor attendance was approximately 1,087,000. The Zoo continues to play important roles in UK, Europe and the world in developing conservation outreach, research, education and marketing strategies. Founded in 1934 the North of England Zoological Society is the registered charity that operates Chester Zoo.

Chester Zoo is well on the way to being a leader in botanical conservation also. Plant conservation in the wild is of vital importance. If we do not conserve the forests, grasslands, wetlands and deserts then the number of species of plants and animals that face extinction will rapidly increase. The number of rare and endangered plant species, both native and foreign, grown in the Zoo will be gradually increased in an effort to conserve these plants in cultivation. The Zoo will continue to assist in overseas projects to save habitats and protect both flora and fauna. The Gardens section of the Zoo continue to plant colourful and attractive displays for the visitor to enjoy. As well as the outdoor exhibits there are wonderful indoor plants to admire.

Since the year 2000 the mission statement of Chester Zoo has been extended to include plants, understanding that conservation of animals is pointless if the environment in which they live is not protected too. The vast majority of the animal world depends on plants in one way or another for food and shelter for example, and, at a more fundamental level, for oxygen in the air.

Chester Zoo aims to conserve plants increase awareness of their variety and significance, increasing the number of endangered species grown in the zoo. The zoo is currently cataloguing all important conservation plants on a database and holds a substantial collection of Pleurothallid orchids, in collaboration other institutions. The cacti collection is increasing as well as rare British native species.

Chester Zoo has strong links with conservation bodies at national and international levels, including botanic gardens and plant conservation organisations, and is playing an increasingly significant part in plant conservation projects. Environmental issues are also important in the zoo nursery and gardens. Most plants are grown in peat free composts, and green waste is composted and used on site.

Chester Zoo / North of England Zoological Society is happy to support BGCI and Zoo Outreach Organisation education efforts to convey teaching materials supplemented and themed around BGCI's dramatic plant posters to botanic gardens, zoos, ngo's, schools and other educators in S.Asia.



BGCI

About Botanic Gardens Conservation

International (BGCI) BGCI brings together the world's botanic gardens forming a community working in partnership to achieve conservation and education goals. Over 200 million people visit botanic gardens every year and BGCI works with its member gardens to reach the public through school programmes and staff training.

BGCI was founded in 1987 to link botanic gardens as a co-operating global network for effective plant conservation. It includes over 500 member institutions in 112 countries, all working together to implement a worldwide Botanic Gardens Conservation Strategy for plant conservation.

BGCI provides technical guidance, data and support for botanic gardens around the world. With a wide range of activities including organising major meetings, workshops and training courses. BGCI has helped to create or strengthen national and regional networks of gardens to focus their efforts on plant conservation in new co-operative partnerships. Our computer database of rare plant species in over 300 institutions brings worldwide co-ordination to the individual efforts of each garden.

BGCI has helped create plans for new gardens or projects in many countries. BGCI publications, such as the regular Botanic Gardens Conservation News and education newsletter, *Roots* are important for those working in botanic gardens to share experience and information. BGCI prepares technical publications to guide conservationists on such subjects as conservation techniques; illegal rare plant trade; plant data recording on computers; reintroductions to the wild and other subjects.

BGCI education work has become an important means to enhance the role of gardens in many countries in environmental education and awareness and it has produced and distributed a wide range of new educational materials, such as videos, a slide pack, posters and newsletters, in several languages.

It is estimated that up to 100,000 plants, representing more than one third of all the world's plant species, are currently threatened or face extinction in the wild. Figures based upon known plant species currently about 270,000 which may increase by 10 – 20% by 2010, figures referenced from Global strategy for plant conservation). **Our message is clear - Action needs to be taken now!**

Botanic Gardens Conservation International BGCI is happy to support Chester Zoo / North of England Zoological Society and Zoo Outreach Organisation in the education efforts to convey supplementary material for the teaching materials provided to botanic gardens, zoos, ngo's, schools and other educators in South Asia.