

## Plants for Life : a Message from BGCI



Botanic Gardens Conservation International is delighted to supply a series of five posters for use in the Zoo Outreach Organisation plan education programme. The posters form a key part of BGCI's new campaign 'Plants for Life' which aims to increase public awareness about the importance of plant conservation.

Each of the posters illustrates a close-up of one of the following plant species:

- *Cocos nucifera* – a coconut palm
- *Betula albosinensis* – a silver birch
- *Taiwania cryptomerioides* – the 'coffin tree'
- *Calamus hookerianus* – a rattan
- *Pilosocereus royerii* – a cactus

The posters have been designed to be rolled or wrapped around cylindrical objects to make them look like real plants. BGCI's new website [www.plantsforlife.net](http://www.plantsforlife.net) is clearly displayed on the posters. By accessing this website people can find out information about why plants are important, why they need conserving, the type of conservation work carried out by botanic gardens and how they can get involved in conservation. Educators can also use this information to create leaflets and educational materials for those people unable to access the internet.

As well as making stunning displays, the posters lend themselves to a variety of educational activities. Below we have put together a selection of ideas you may like to try. We hope your zoo, botanic garden, school or office will want to display the posters and join us in the Plants for Life campaign.

### Using the posters in botanic gardens

Wrap the posters around

- Pillars or posts where people queue, for example at the entrance or in the café
- Bins – especially in high use areas such as at entrances and exits
- Lamp posts – the rattan poster works particularly well on thin poles
- Table legs in the café or meeting rooms
- Bench legs throughout the garden

The posters are coated with a biodegradable film to make them more durable, however they will be damaged in the rain.

### Activities in the botanic garden or zoo or forest division

- Run a family fun day – offer prizes to those families that can find the best object to wrap in the garden.
- Organise a workshop on making your own 'plant wrap'. Encourage people to observe plants close-up, particularly the stems and trunks.
- Hold a photography workshop teaching people how to take close-up shots of plants.

### Activities with School Groups

- Decorate the education department or school's room with the posters - turn the classroom into a forest!
- Give posters to school groups to decorate their own classrooms

- Using the posters as inspiration, encourage children to look closely at plant stems in any garden or compound. They could take their own 'plant wrap' pictures or make their own drawings or bark rubbings.
- When the posters are removed from display, children could use them to decorate their folders and work books.
- Encourage pupils to unleash their creative talent and write a play or poem about looking after plants or the environment. The posters could be used as a backdrop when the play is performed.

### Outside the Gardens

- If you are able to get permission from the local authorities, wrap posts in public places
- Make a trail for people to follow from the nearest bus stop or train station to a plant display area.
- Put the posters up in town centres, at tourist information offices and schools to raise awareness about plant conservation



### Involving the local media

- Contact your local newspapers, radio stations and T.V. news programmes with a press release, explaining what you are doing with the posters. Make sure you provide your contact details so they can follow up the story if they are interested. They may even advertise the event for you!
- If you have a web site, include a link from your page to BGCI's website [www.plantsforlife.net](http://www.plantsforlife.net). Please contact us if you would like BGCI to reciprocate.

### Involving the local community

- Provide posters for local groups to turn their premises into mini-forests
- The posters can be used to support community events to raise awareness about the need to achieve sustainable practices
- Offer posters to the local library

### Involving other organizations

- We want as many organizations as possible to get involved in the Plants for Life Campaign. Please encourage other organizations (plant conservation groups, nature clubs, universities, zoological parks etc) to contact us using the form on our website. We can send them posters to help raise awareness about plant conservation.
- Why not organize a 'Plants for Life' event in collaboration with other organizations? The posters could be used to make a trail between sites.
- If you don't already have connections with other organisations, the 'Plants for Life' campaign could provide a good opportunity to make these connections.

*Note from ZOO : Although we have not laid our hands on the posters yet, we think we will do so soon. Any organisation or institution which would like a sample of the posters, please write to us with your request. We regret that we cannot supply requests from individuals.*