

The new greenhouse: The new approach

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About 10000 people visit the greenhouse of the Main Botanical Garden Russian Academy of Sciences every year. It is old and needs reconstruction. It is not very large (5000 m²), but has a rich collection of tropical and subtropical plants. Since its opening the greenhouse has fruitful educational traditions.

Facilities available for education of visitors:

- a rich collection of tropical and subtropical plants (more than 5,500 sp., var., cv.)
- a small botanical museum, containing mainly fruits, timbers, seeds of tropical and subtropical plants
- very qualified staff of experienced specialists (it's members write books and articles about tropical and subtropical plants in popular horticultural magazines.)
- connections with greenhouses of other botanical gardens
- close cooperation with ecological centers
- bonsai club unites amateurs of bonsai plants
- help of the volunteers (they make free the most difficult kinds of horticultural works: cutting and repotting of the tall trees 10 m high, for example, lianas and so on.)
- not long ago the informational-service center was opened in the greenhouse with its main aims as making excursions with various groups of visitors, giving lectures and consultations. A staff of the guides exists since the opening of the greenhouse.

The 1st section of the new greenhouse is going to be opened in 2007. The new greenhouse will be mainly expository. It'll have new modern educational facilities:

- large and tall sections for the expositions of plants
- botanical museum
- exhibition halls
- classroom for students (and so on).

But the new approach should be expressed in:

1. The development of the educational program that could facilitate a sustainable development of nature, the greenhouse and Botanical Garden as a whole and every visitor attending excursions, classes or exhibitions (the plan of the excursions routes, including museum and themes of the excursions have already been composed.).
2. Larger staff of the educators.
3. Making the garden more accessible for people with special needs. For the first time in Russia, "The exposition for the blind" is being elaborated now. This work is supported by grant of the Russian Department of Science. A preliminary assortment of plants is proposed as well as themes for the excursions. Special labels in Braille will be done.

4. New methods of teaching. We hope that having all these facilities the new greenhouse can become a real center of education for sustainable development.

Biography

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Born in Moscow in 08.09.1955. Graduated from the Moscow pedagogical university in 1977. Since 1981 have been working in the Main Botanical Garden RAS. Ph. D., senior researcher.