

Crossing Continents



Target 11: No species of wild flora endangered by international trade



RBG Kew

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

John Muir

Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) under its Plants Committee. CITES allows trade in plant species that can withstand current rates of harvest from the wild, but prevents trade in those that face extinction. CITES has been in force for over 30 years and has been ratified by over 170 countries – the provisions of the Convention are translated into law in the countries which sign up to it.

The Convention operates through the issue and control of export and import permits for a number of clearly defined species listed in three Appendices.

- Appendix I is for the most threatened species: trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances;
- Appendix II is for species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival;
- Appendix III is slightly different to the others. It contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling trade.



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The collection of certain rare or commercially desirable plant species for trade poses a major threat to their survival in the wild. Examples include trees which produce high quality timber, herbs for medicinal use, and unusual, exotic ornamental species, such as some orchids, cacti and cycads.

The implementation, monitoring and review of this target is through links with the Convention on International



Bian Tan



Find out more: www.cites.org

Moray McLeish / The Nature Conservancy

Case study: Brazilian Rosewood (*Dalbergia nigra*)

The threatened tree species *Dalbergia nigra* produces one of the most highly prized woods in Brazil. Its attractive red/brown timber is very heavy and strong, highly resistant to insect attack and decay. Of more importance, however, is its high resonance – ideal for the production of musical instruments. The tree has long been harvested for the construction of high quality furniture as well as instruments, and also for its oils and resins. Brazilian Rosewood was listed on CITES in 1992, making trade in its timber illegal. Nevertheless, deforestation in its native habitat and illegal logging have continued and trees with thick trunks are now very rare.



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Where are we now?

- Approximately 300 plant species are included in CITES Appendix 1.
- Over 28,000 species are included in CITES Appendix 2, including the entire orchid and cactus families.
- Only a handful of plants are listed on Appendix 3, but over the past 15 years, some countries have used this Appendix to help control international trade in certain tree species.

CITES recognizes the need to promote sustainable trade in a wide range of timber and medicinal plant species and is broadening links with other organizations, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).