

BOTANIC GARDEN
CREATION AND MANAGEMENT:
THE FEASIBILITY AND DESIGN OF
NEW BRITISH COLLECTIONS
[On-line Edition]

PhD Thesis
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Abstract

Introduction

Chapter 1 - Overview of Botanic Gardens

Chapter 2 - Survey of British Botanical Collections

Chapter 3 - Case Studies of Selected Botanic Collections

Chapter 4 - Discussion of Botanic Collections Elements

Chapter 5 - Design & Interpretation

Chapter 6 - Eden Project Case Study

Chapter 7 - Market Research

Chapter 8 - Carymoor Case Study

Chapter 9 - Alternative Solutions

Chapter 10 - Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix

Abstract

Originating from collaboration between the University of Reading and Carymoor Environmental Trust, the objective of this study was to assess the feasibility of a new native-species botanical collection in Britain and suggest a possible design.

To achieve this, information was gathered from interviews with employees of botanical collections, a postal survey of 115 botanical collections in Britain, market research conducted into four possible stakeholder groups (schools, universities, the public and professionals whose work involves the identification of British plants) and a review of Website use by botanical collections. The study also includes case studies of the Carymoor Environmental Trust, The Eden Project, Chelsea Physic Garden, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and Edinburgh, the university botanic gardens at Reading, Cambridge, Oxford and Bristol, as well as the National Wildflower Centre and the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens.

The results of the survey and case studies of the botanical collections allowed them to be classified into nine groups for which models were created to aid feasibility assessment.

The results of the market research showed that there was interest from all four stakeholder groups in using a new botanical collection in Somerset but that their requirements differed.

The thesis concludes by stating that the unique nature of botanical collections means that their feasibility must be assessed individually and that designs cannot be made in abstract. However, it can be said that funding is crucial and that if no parent organisation exists, which is willing to support the collection, then revenue generated from visitors must be relied on.

The study also highlighted a lack of assessment of the effectiveness of interpretation in botanic gardens as well as a discrepancy between the level of plant identification skills of university graduates and those required by employers in the environmental management field.

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