



## Garlands for glory inspired by London 2012

Children around the world will be giving an ancient athletic tradition a contemporary environmental twist when they design a wreath for the champions of today. Launching at the House of Lords on Tuesday 5th October, *Plant Champions* is an innovative biodiversity competition challenging thousands of children worldwide to create a wreath fit for an athlete. Inspired by London 2012, Botanic Gardens Conservation International and the Fairchild Challenge are offering children aged 11-19 a unique opportunity to learn about the importance of plant diversity while having fun and being connected to the largest sporting event on earth.

Students are asked to research plants that represent their country's biodiversity and select those that could be woven together to produce a stunning wreath. They can use different parts of plants including flowers, leaves, fruits or twigs. Botanic gardens worldwide are running the competition with their local schools and are encouraging children to provide them with:

- a) a list of plants, including Latin names, used in their wreath
- b) a rationale (500 words) for their selection of plants with at least one plant having a conservation message
- c) a one-sentence conservation message related to one of the selected plants and;
- d) a colour photograph of their wreath, worn on the head of, or held by, the student.

The best pictures will be displayed in London during London 2012.

Baroness Grey-Thompson, a Paralympian with 16 medals to her name and winner of the London Marathon six times, will launch *Plant Champions* at the House of Lords on 5<sup>th</sup> October. *Plant Champions* has been awarded the Inspire mark and is officially recognised by LOCOG as a project that is contributing to a legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Seb Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games said: '*Plant Champions* is encouraging children worldwide to fulfil their potential. I am proud that with the help of partners such as BGCI, we are delivering our vision to use the power of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to boost participation in fantastic education projects like Plant Champions'.

The relationship between sports and plant life began with the Olympic Games over 2,700 years ago in ancient Greece by the crowning of the winning athletes using olive branches. The olive

tree (*Olea europaea*) was considered sacred and symbolized peace and victory. Native to the Mediterranean Basin, the olive was important for nutrition and health, and was valued economically. We want students to update the idea of a traditional wreath and create one that is fit for an athlete competing in London 2012. Find out how you can join in the global competition by visiting [www.bgci.org/education/fair2/](http://www.bgci.org/education/fair2/)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

The Fairchild Challenge/BGCI Global Competition 2011/12

<http://www.bgci.org/education/fairchild-challengebgciglobalcompetition2011/>

To receive a press invitation to the launch of Plant Champions at the House of Lords on 5<sup>th</sup> October from 6-8pm email Charlotte Case at [charlotte.case@bgci.org](mailto:charlotte.case@bgci.org)



For jpgs of logos and to use this photograph (1.71MB) contact [Julia.willison@bgci.org](mailto:Julia.willison@bgci.org)

### About BGCI

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)  
Descanso House  
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Tel 020 8332 5953

BGCI is the largest international network of botanic gardens and related institutions working collectively for plant conservation and environmental education. Its mission is “to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet.” Established in 1987 and with over 700 members drawn from almost 120 countries, BGCI provides technical and policy guidance as well as regular up to date information through its newsletters, magazines, conferences and courses. From influencing government policies and priorities to encouraging grassroots action, BGCI’s global reach and professional expertise enables it to achieve real conservation milestones. For further information, go to [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)

For all **media enquiries**, contact **Julia Willison, Director of Education** on 020 8332 5942 (wk) or 07827 927501 (mobile). E-mail: [Julia.Willison@bgci.org](mailto:Julia.Willison@bgci.org). From Monday 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> contact only on mobile.

### **About The Fairchild Challenge**

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden  
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Coral Gables, FL 33156 USA  
Tel 01 3056671651

The Fairchild Challenge is an annual, standards-based, environmental education outreach program of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. It offers a menu of separate but parallel multidisciplinary challenges for elementary, middle, and high schools, attracting students of diverse interests, abilities, talents and backgrounds.

General Questions: [fairchildchallenge@fairchildgarden.org](mailto:fairchildchallenge@fairchildgarden.org)

### **About the Inspire programme**

The Inspire programme is run by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. It is an opportunity for everyone to be a part of the London 2012 Games – a broad participation programme spanning sport participation, education, sustainability, volunteering, and business opportunities & culture. New opportunities are being created to inspire young people and encourage the whole of the UK to join in. The Inspire programme has awarded over 1,400 different projects the Inspire mark.

### **About London 2012**

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are delivered by two key organisations – the London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA).

LOCOG is responsible for staging a memorable Games in 2012. They will deliver the best possible Olympic and Paralympic Games experience for everyone involved, enabling a lasting legacy and inspiring people to join in.

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is the public body responsible for developing and building the new venues and infrastructure for the Games and converting the Olympic Park for long-term use after the Games.

In the summer of 2012, the UK will come alive with the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Find out the latest from the London 2012 blog – [london2012.com/blog](http://london2012.com/blog)