

Cuttings

Botanic Gardens Conservation International Quarterly



Plant Search

9,000 plants safe from extinction **Botanic gardens provide safe haven for over a quarter of known threatened plants**

A recent study by BGCI indicates that approximately 9,000 plants which are threatened in the wild, are in fact in cultivation in botanic gardens around the world. This number makes up about one quarter of the plants presently known to be at risk, but is only a small percentage of the possible total. Although the 1997 IUCN list of endangered plant species listed 34,000 plant species as endangered worldwide, scientists estimate that anything up to 100,000 plants may be under serious threat of extinction due to mass habitat destruction and global climate change. BGCI's survey involved the development of a new tool, the Plant Search Database. It allows botanic gardens to check for the first time what they hold in their collections against an international list of plants, recorded alongside their status in the Red Book of Threatened Species maintained by IUCN-The World Conservation Union.

With over 200 million visitors a year and approximately 6.1 million living plant collections, botanic gardens are uniquely placed to act as sanctuaries for plants, as well as educating people about the devastating impact humankind has on many species. The work of botanic gardens in plant conservation is of vital importance at this time when, for tens of thousands of plants, it is 'one minute to midnight'.



Notes:

BGCI's plant search database is accessible to all through BGCI's website (www.bgci.org). The database includes plant records provided by over 500 botanic gardens worldwide. BGCI is keen to receive further plant records from any garden which has not yet contributed data.

For further information, please contact info@bgci.org.



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