



WHAT IS PLANT SEARCH?

Plant Search is a database compiled from lists of living plant collections submitted to BGCI by over 700 of the world's botanic gardens. It is freely available and searchable online at http://www.bgci.org/plant_search.php/. All records are linked to the 1997 and 2006 IUCN Red Lists of threatened plant species, CITES appendixes, the International Plant Names Index (IPNI), a list of Crop Wild Relatives, and the Tree Conservation Database.

WHEN WAS PLANT SEARCH CREATED?

Plant Search was developed by BGCI as a tool to quantify how many threatened plant species are being cultivated by botanic gardens worldwide. It was made freely available and searchable through BGCI's website in 2005, and is actively expanded and updated by BGCI and botanic gardens.

WHY IS PLANT SEARCH AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR CONSERVATION?

Botanic gardens collectively maintain more than 6 million living plant collections, including over 10,000 of the world's most threatened plant species. This makes them uniquely suited to act as sanctuaries for threatened plants, and as research centers to understand their growth and survival needs. Plant Search is a tool designed to help botanic gardens and others collectively conserve and research threatened plant species.

WHO WILL FIND PLANT SEARCH USEFUL?

Plant Search is a valuable resource for a wide range of potential users:

- 1) **Botanic garden staff**, to not only identify the species in their collections with conservation value, but also to measure their garden's collections relative to those of botanic gardens around the world. See http://www.bgci.org/botanic_gardens/news/0435/ for one of many reasons why the value of the Plant Search database...“is immense and we should all be encouraged to upload our data to it and use it to evaluate our collections”.
- 2) **Researchers** interested in studying threatened plants in an accessible setting, and utilizing the expertise of botanic garden staff who know how to propagate and maintain them
- 3) **Conservationists** interested in conserving or restoring threatened plants, needing source material to use in a restoration or needing the expertise of botanic garden staff who know how to propagate and grow them.
- 4) **Policy makers and planners**, as a tool to justify continued and increased support for botanic gardens as centers for plant conservation and research
- 5) **Anyone** interested in ensuring that a strong safety net exists for threatened plants to guard against extinction. Plant Search allows for gap analysis: if a search on any threatened species returns no results, it means that we have no record of it being grown in a living collection. *A rare plant that is not in a living collection is more vulnerable to extinction than one that is being protected, grown, and understood in a botanic garden setting.*

WHY CAN'T WE IDENTIFY THE LOCATION OF SPECIES?

Plant Search is a valuable tool to identify how many botanic gardens hold collections of any given species, as well as its threatened status and relationship to valuable crop species or threatened tree

species. However, to protect the individual collections of rare species, Plant Search *does not* identify which botanic gardens hold which species (but you can find out by contacting BGCI, who will place a request for the gardens holding collections of interest to contact you).

HOW CAN I ADD MY GARDEN'S COLLECTION INFORMATION?

BGCI encourages botanic garden staff to submit their collections information to Plant Search, and to use it as a tool in assessing the conservation value of their collections and planning efforts.

Uploading information to the database is fast and easy if you have an electronic list of the taxa currently in your living collections. Here's how:

- 1) You will need a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing 7 fields of information for each taxon in your plant collections. The table below shows these required fields and provides 2 examples of how your plant record information should look:

Genus Hybrid	Genus Name	Species Hybrid	Species Name	Infraspecific rank	Infraspecific epithet	Cultivar name
	Abies		lasiocarpa	var.	arizonica	
	Abutilon	x	hybridum			Voodoo

- 2) Once all of your data is added to the Excel spreadsheet, select 'File - Save As', enter a file name, and select 'CSV (comma delimited)' as the file type option under 'Save as Type'. Remember where you saved the file, as you will need to locate it shortly.
- 3) Find your garden's BGCI page by searching for it at www.bgci.org/garden_search.
- 4) Once on the correct page, click the 'Edit Garden' button at the top right corner. You will need a login to access your garden's profile, so if you don't yet have one you will need to register at www.bgci.org/garden_apply.php to receive a username and password.
- 5) Once you have successfully logged on to edit your garden, check to make sure that information for your garden is up-to-date, especially the Contact and Staff Details section. Thousands of visitors use BGCI's website to locate and learn more about botanic gardens in their region every week, so it pays to keep your information as detailed and current as possible.
- 6) Using the navigation bar at the left of the screen, select 'Plant Upload'. You will be taken to a screen that allows you to upload your plant records by browsing for the Excel file you have saved as a .CSV document on your computer.
- 7) After selecting the proper file, check the box to replace your current plant list (unless you are just adding taxa to your existing collections), and then hit the 'Upload Plants' box.
- 8) Once submitted, your list will be cross-referenced with the International Plant Names Index (IPNI; see www.ipni.org/). Within 24 hours, an email will be sent from BGCI's server to the contact email addresses listed in your Garden Search profile. The email will list any submitted taxa that did not match with IPNI, at which point you can edit your list and resubmit or contact BGCI at <http://www.bgci.org/worldwide/feedback/> if you feel a name should have been accepted and was not.
- 9) Once accepted, your list of plants will be added to all online Plant Search queries, and will also be available for download from the 'Upload Plants' page in your Garden Search login area. This list is cross referenced with the 1997 and 2006 IUCN Red Lists of threatened plant species, CITES appendixes, the International Plant Names Index (IPNI), a list of Crop Wild Relatives and the Tree Conservation Database.

Please contact BGCI at www.bgci.org/worldwide/feedback/ with any questions or comments.