



**Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International  
(U.S.)**

c/o Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
1000 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11225-1099

## **Statement from BGCI's U.S. Symposium on Plant Conservation Education**

1. The U.S. Symposium on Plant Conservation Education brought together delegates from botanical institutions, conservation NGOs, environmental education organizations, and the business sector to assess the status of plant conservation education in the United States.
2. The Symposium was held on Plant Conservation Day, May 18, 2006, at the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. The Symposium was sponsored by Botanic Gardens Conservation International, with support from HSBC's Investing in Nature program.
3. At the Symposium, the participants highlighted examples of best practice in plant conservation education and charted new directions for advancing the field.

### *The Symposium*

4. Acknowledged the important role U.S. educators at plant conservation education institutions can play in helping achieve Target 14 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
5. Reaffirmed the critical role of education in conserving plant diversity around the world.
6. Recognized the strength and history of current plant conservation education programs in the United States, as well as the skill and commitment of plant conservation educators.
7. Highlighted the variety of high-quality plant conservation education programs at plant conservation education institutions and other education sites nationwide. These programs included eco-mentoring for teens; environmental problem-solving and arts competitions; local stewardship networks; place-based education programs; print and electronic publications; elementary and secondary school programs; public awareness events and celebrations; citizen science projects; special exhibits and interpretation; and professional development courses and training.
8. Affirmed the importance of direct, personal experiences with plants in effecting plant conservation awareness and action.
9. Acknowledged that the plant conservation message is not being widely heard by the general public, largely due to the strength of competing messages from mass media and consumer culture.



**Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International  
(U.S.)**

c/o Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
1000 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11225-1099

10. Recognized the importance of governmental support for plant conservation education activities and institutions.
11. Noted the decline in the number of botany and taxonomy courses in higher education.
12. Acknowledged the risk of overwhelming audiences with the enormity and urgency of the plant extinction crisis, especially during a time of other social and environmental challenges.
13. Noted the common public misperception that plants are a “completely renewable resource” and replaceable, and therefore not in need of conservation.
14. Stressed the benefits of conserving plant diversity, including benefits to human well-being and ecosystem services.

*New actions and urgent priorities*

15. Called on public gardens to emphasize the importance of their role in plant conservation and to be models for ecological sustainability.
16. Identified the need for a coordinated national campaign with a highly visible spokesperson to raise public awareness of plant conservation. This campaign would include:
  - a logo or symbol
  - a memorable slogan or message
  - a simple, direct statement of goals
  - guidelines for action
  - American Public Gardens Association guidelines for standardized plant collection labeling
  - major promotion of Plant Conservation Day
  - a lobbying mechanism in Washington, D.C.
  - engagement with regional plant societies
  - support for citizen science monitoring and data reporting programs
  - stories about plants that communicate relationships, continuity into the future, nurturing of the young, hope, and reverence for larger meaning
  - training and education of urban planners and architects.
17. Identified the need for a common, consistent message from plant conservation education institutions.
18. Recognized the importance of media outreach and increased media coverage of plant conservation efforts.



**Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International  
(U.S.)**

c/o Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
1000 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11225-1099

19. Urged plant conservation education institutions to create plant-based programs at non-plant-based partner sites (e.g. art museums, historical sites, natural history museums, etc.) for Plant Conservation Day 2007 and beyond.
20. Reiterated the need for increased funding for plant conservation education programs and staff.
21. Noted the need for increased local and national government lobbying by botanical institutions and networks in order to promote leadership for plant conservation at the highest levels.
22. Stressed the importance of creating outlets to showcase successful plant conservation efforts.
23. Called for the creation of a standardized, approved classroom curriculum focusing on plant conservation.
24. Stressed the need for engaging individuals in plant conservation by identifying relevant and practical examples of action.
25. Urged the coordination of future gatherings of plant conservation educators.

May 18, 2006 – Washington D.C.

*Symposium participants*

Anders Back, *American Public Gardens Association*  
Sue Bennett, *Anacostia Park/Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens*  
Patsy Benveniste, *Chicago Botanic Garden*  
Stefan Bloodworth, *Sarah P. Duke Gardens*  
Diana Bramble-Delajara, *Smithsonian Institution Enid A. Haupt Garden*  
Kathleen Bucco, *National Park Service*  
Jeri Deneen, *Deneen Powell Atelier, Inc.*  
Jeremy Edwards, *City of Falls Church (Va.)*  
Christine Flanagan, *United States Botanic Garden*  
Rosemary Ford, *Washington College / Botanical Society of America*  
Deborah Chollet Frank, *Missouri Botanical Garden*  
Barbara Franklin, *Pine Island Designs*  
Shelley Gaskins, *Smithsonian Institution*  
Patricia Harrison, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas*  
Rebecca Horner, *U.S. National Arboretum, ARS, USDA*  
Brian Johnson, *Botanic Gardens Conservation International*



**Botanic Gardens  
Conservation International  
(U.S.)**

c/o Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
1000 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11225-1099

Rory Klick, *American Community Gardening Association*  
Nancy Knauss, *Phipps Conservatory*  
Gary Krupnick, *Smithsonian Institution*  
Barbara Kurland, *Brooklyn Botanic Garden*  
Olivia Kwong, *Plant Conservation Alliance*  
Linda Lucchesi Cody, *U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum*  
Barbara Major, *U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum*  
Ray Mims, *United States Botanic Garden*  
Viveka Neveln, *American Horticultural Society*  
Mary O'Neill, *Middle Patuxent Nature Center Foundation*  
Katie Palm, *United States Botanic Garden*  
Diane Pavek, *National Park Service*  
Douglas Rowley, *National Park Service*  
Dan Shepherd, *Botanic Gardens Conservation International*  
Paul Spector, *The Holden Arboretum*  
Lacey Stokes, *Stephen F. Austin State University Horticulture Department*  
Sandy Tanck, *Minnesota Landscape Arboretum*  
Kimberly Winter, *North American Pollinator Protection Campaign*