

# National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Glasnevin LINKS WITH CHINA THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

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The recently restored Great Palm House at Glasnevin



Curvilinear Glasshouse Range at Glasnevin

In recent years **exchange visits** between Glasnevin and botanical institutions in China have been organised. In 2002 an expedition from Glasnevin revisited some of the locations associated with Augustine Henry, helping to re-establish our links with China. The aim of the expedition was to collect seeds, cuttings and herbarium specimens.

In 2003, Professor Ding Zhaohua and four colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Wuhan Botanical Gardens visited Glasnevin. Their work in Ireland included a study visit to the Burren in south west Ireland, a unique karst limestone landscape of horticultural and botanical interest.

A subsequent expedition from Glasnevin in 2004 helped to forge our strong and valuable links, which we enjoy today and hopefully will continue for many years to come.



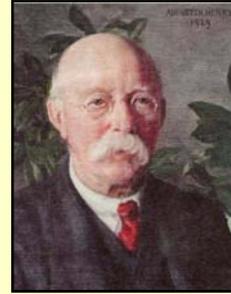
2002 Central China Expedition standing in the trunk of a 1000 year old Ginkgo



2003 visit to the Burren, Co Clare by the Wuhan Botanical Gardens team and 2002 expedition members.

The National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, Dublin which was established in 1795, has a distinguished record in the history of **horticulture** worldwide. The original purpose of the Gardens was the scientific study of agriculture, but by the 1830s this was greatly overshadowed by the pursuit of botanical knowledge. The **collections** include over 17,000 taxa from throughout the world. An active **science** programme at Glasnevin work to document plant diversity in Ireland and overseas. The **National Herbarium** at Glasnevin includes 750,000 preserved specimens. **Conservation** is a key role of the Gardens, working in Ireland and with partners worldwide to conserve many threatened species. The National Botanic Gardens is an active member of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, contributing to the implementation of the U.N.'s Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Glasnevin's long history of botanical links with China really began with the great Irish plant hunter, Dr **Augustine Henry** (1857-1930). Henry worked in the Imperial Chinese Custom Service and between 1885 and 1900 he discovered over 30 genera and 1,500 new species and varieties. He distributed over 15,800 herbarium collections to important Gardens such as Glasnevin and Kew. Henry was always on good terms with the local people, and the plant hunters who followed in his footsteps were always made welcome.



Augustine Henry.  
A portrait painted in 1929



Henry in Ichang in the 1890s



*Davidia involucrata*. Seen by Henry in 1886, this plant was instrumental in beginning Wilson's and other plant collectors' careers.



*Emmenopterys henryi* Rubiaceae



*Ginkgo biloba* at Glasnevin



*Rhododendron calophytum*



*Lilium henryi*

The **National Botanic Gardens of Ireland** welcomes the development of new links and collaboration with institutions throughout China. Opportunities are available at Glasnevin for:

- Horticultural placements and training
- University post-graduate opportunities
- Collaboration in science, conservation and horticulture

Please contact us if you would like further information.

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