



AFRICAN BOTANIC GARDEN NETWORK
BULLETIN NO. 5
July, 2002

2nd Congress Steering Committee Meeting, Aburi, Ghana

by Christopher Willis and Fiona Dennis

A year after their first meeting in June 2001, members of the African Botanic Garden Network Steering Committee met again at the Aburi Botanic Gardens, Ghana, to evaluate their progress. Regional Co-ordinators were present from central, west, eastern and southern Africa, with Fiona Dennis of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) representing the international botanic garden community and north Africa. The Co-ordinators presented reports on their specific regions over the past year.

The venue for the Congress was confirmed as Durban Botanic Gardens, South Africa and the date, 24-29 November 2002. A draft of the Congress programme was developed (see below). There will be an additional day of workshops immediately prior to the Congress. The Committee is calling on African botanic gardens to complete their gardens Needs Assessment and send them to their Regional Co-ordinators who will then analyse them and report to the Congress. Gardens are also being asked to seek sponsorship (USD1,500 per person) to enable their staff to attend the Congress. Gardens are also asked to liaise with their Regional Co-ordinators to ensure that an up-to-date contacts database can be developed as a tool for Africa's botanic garden community. It is hoped that all of the botanic gardens in Africa and the surrounding oceanic islands will be represented at the Congress.

The regional representation at the Congress was revised as follows: North Africa: 8, West Africa: 20, East Africa: 15, Southern Africa: 37, Central Africa: 12. International participation at the Congress is encouraged from delegates who work with or in African botanic gardens.

Sincere thanks to George Owusu-Afriyie, Director of Aburi Botanic Gardens and Chair of the Congress Steering Committee, for the generous hospitality shown to the Committee members in Ghana.

African Botanic Gardens Congress

Draft Programme

Sunday 24th November 2002

Workshops: Interpretation– Abel Atiti (National Museums of Kenya (NMK)), John Roff (Petersmariburg Botanic Garden (PBG)), Plant collections techniques (Nhou Ndam (Limbe Botanic Garden (LBG)), Ian Oliver (Karoo Botanic Garden), Red Data List Mike Maunder (Hawaii Botanic Garden (HBG)), Janice Golding (Pretoria Botanic Garden), Alien vegetation & eradication Richard Boom (Durban Botanic Garden (DBG)), Environmental Education Alexis Symonds (DBG).

Registration followed by cocktails to welcome delegates.

Monday 25th

Opening ceremony, President Thabo Mbeki.

Keynote Address: 'Role of African botanic garden's in plant conservation' Peter Raven (Missouri Botanic Garden).

Plenary: 'International Agenda: A key role for African botanic gardens' Peter Wyse-Jackson Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI).

'The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation' Stella Simiyu (NMK)

An introduction to the regional presentations Chris Fominyam (LBG).

'The SABONET success story' (Chris Willis & Stefan Siebert).

Open forum with Regional Co-ordinators. Facilitator: David Lapido (CENRAD, Nigeria).

Evening: City Hall banquet.

Tuesday 26th

Plenary: Results of regional Needs Assessment reports. Facilitator: Stella Simiyu (NMK)

Plenary: 'Action Plans' Mike Maunder (HBG). Open forum. Chair: William Wambugu (NMK).

Workshops: 'The Way Forward' Regional contributions to the African Network.

Plenary: Network Action Plan: A report-back with group ideas. Facilitate: Fiona Dennis (BGCI) and Sharon Turner.

Evening: Guest lecture by Donal Cracken.

Wednesday 27th

Field Trip: Silverglen Medicinal Plant Nursery, Muthi Market, tour of Durban parks and gardens.

Evening entertainment at Zimbali on the beach.

Thursday 28th

Plenary: 'Lessons learned from world-wide networks' 10 minute presentations: Peter Wyse Jackson (BGCI), International Association Botanic Gardens (IABGC), American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA), Red Nacional de Jardines Botanicos de Colombia, Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens (CHARBG), Jardins Botaniques de France et des pays Francophones, Asociacion Mexicana de Jardines Botanicos, Planta Europa. Facilitator: Christopher Willis (NBI).

Plenary: Developing the African Botanic Garden Network. Chair: George Owusu-Afriyie Aburi Botanic Gardens (ABG).

'Linkages and partnerships'. Examples: Missouri Botanic Garden and Madagascar.

Breakaway groups to report-back. Facilitator: Nhou Ndam (LBG) and Peter Wyse Jackson (BGCI).

Regional Network Meetings. Evening presentation by Steering Committee on draft constitution.

Evening: Dinner at Durban Botanic Gardens. Display of Zulu dance and contemporary African jazz.

Friday 29th

Plenary: Finalise Action Plan: Presented by George Owusu Afriyie (ABG). Introduction by Dr. Murtala Mohammed (Mohammed Murtala Memorial Gardens, Nigeria).

Open forum: 'The Way Forward' Birth of the network! A report-back and conclusions. Facilitator: Christopher Willis (NBI) and Stella Simiyu (NMK).

Thanks and closing ceremony Brian Huntley (NBI). Departure.

CENTENARY OF THE EAST AFRICAN HERBARIUM

Agnes M. Lusweti and Grace W. Ngugi (Exhibition sub-committee)

On the 9th of August 2002, the East African Herbarium (International acronym EA) turns 100 years! The EA is mandated "*to collect, preserve, research and disseminate information on Kenya and East African flora for conservation and utilisation.*" The functions of the EA have grown to allow far more than taxonomy of vascular plants. Complementary activities and projects include the Plant Conservation Program (PCP), a complimentary library, mycological research, seed banking and research and a botanical garden with a growing collection. The EA also participates in many national and international projects in taxonomy, biodiversity and conservation (Kabuye, 1994).

That 'Plants' remain mysterious even when the EA has existed in the last 100 years is somewhat unsettling. 'Plant-blindness'- the inability to recognise and appreciate plants for what they are partly to blame for ecological destruction. The EA needed a medium of communication to simplify the subject and make it more interesting. Therefore, the EA proposed activities to blend science and art so as to educate and entertain. A botanical art competition was built in for schools so as to nurture upcoming talent. A selling exhibition, based on pre-set guidelines was planned as one of the activities. Botanical art was chosen, as it has a wider intellectual appeal and application (Barthel-Bouchier, 2001). Besides, being a form of self-expression, it creates lasting affection, unlike scientific facts.

The exhibition opened on 28th June to an audience of over 300 guests and will run till 27th August 2002. The theme of the exhibition, is "*Botanical Expressions... plants thro' Art.*" It mainly showcases botanical art. It also presents some documented indigenous and current novel uses of plant resources in Kenya. A section of the exhibition is dedicated to the history of the EA, some current activities and research projects. A total of 43 freelance artists took up the challenge. They illustrated some 135-plant species using various media and techniques. Finally, to keep them painting, 42 winning students from around the country were rewarded with a set of watercolours, a paintbrush and an article on how to draw and paint plants. Detailed information is contained in Masinde and Ngugi, (2002).

FUNDING APPEAL: The inaugural exhibition set off successfully, adding a new chapter to contemporary Kenyan art. Special thanks, to the host institution NMK and department EA, Kenya Museum Society (KMS), Regional Land Management Unit RELMA-SIDA, and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). The EA is eager

to make it a regional, biennial event. EA will nurture botanical art for the joy of it, promote it as a medium of communication and as a scientific and economic resource for botanists, artists and public. To plan for the subsequent one, *Botanical expressions II*, set for July/August 2004 a special appeal is made here for funding.

Contact: EA, P.O Box 45166, Nairobi Kenya. Tel: +254 2 3743513, Fax: 254 2 741424
Email: Plants@africaonline.co.uk Website: WWW.Museums.or.ke and WWW.artmatters.info

NBI commits to implementing the International Agenda

Christopher Willis

The National Botanical Institute (NBI, South Africa) and its network of 8 national botanical gardens has expressed its commitment to the *International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation* by developing a unique poster that will be displayed at the entrance of each of its gardens in due course. It is important that the more than 1,000,000 visitors coming to the NBI's gardens on an annual basis are exposed to the International Agenda and are informed that botanical gardens are involved in plant conservation activities. It is hoped that the poster will also serve to encourage visitors to support, and become involved in some of the gardens' conservation initiatives.

African botanical gardens that would like to adopt the International Agenda should:

- (i) Agree to adopt the International Agenda by making a written undertaking to work for the implementation of its provisions.
- (ii) Publicise their adoption of the International Agenda to those who work with, or visit, their botanical garden, so as to raise awareness of the importance and significance of a global policy for botanical gardens in conservation and to help raise new resources to support their conservation programmes .

Progress made by the botanical garden community (both individually and collectively) in the implementation of the International Agenda will be reviewed during the 2nd World Botanic Gardens Congress scheduled to be held in Barcelona (Spain) in mid-April 2004. The International Agenda is available free, by e-mail attachment from BGCI: bgci@rbgkew.org.uk. Electronic versions of the poster can be sourced from Christopher Willis at ckw@nbipre.nbi.ac.za.

Acknowledgements: The poster was designed by Sandra Turck of the NBI's Graphic Design Services, Pretoria. Thanks to John Roff (Interpretation Co-ordinator, NBI) for his comments on the draft poster.

Reference: Wyse Jackson, P.S. & Sutherland, L.A. 2000. *International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation*. Botanic Gardens Conservation International, U.K.

NOAH's Arc in the making.

Didier Dogley, Director National Botanic Gardens, Seychelles

The government of Seychelles has launched a unique project to create a National Biodiversity Centre at Barbarons on the West Coast of Mahe, the principal island of Seychelles. This Centre will allow Seychelles to continue to be a primary player in term of Biodiversity conservation. It will equally strengthen the development of eco-tourism, the sustainable utilisation of plant resources and serve as a major contributor to environmental education.

The Centre will comprise of a botanical garden designed to showcase the indigenous flora, a modern nursery with appropriate facilities, a seed bank, a herbarium, a Research Centre, a Museum and a Visitors Centre. The Museum will have interactive exhibits to engage the visitors and encourage them to discover and enjoy the natural splendours of the islands. Linked to the Museum will be a natural reserve, which has opportunities for research and conservation of mist forest vegetation and fauna.

The Biodiversity Centre will undertake the following roles:

- Serve as a focal point for public awareness and thereby promote the conservation of Biodiversity.
- Develop education programmes with schools wildlife clubs and other institutions.
- Serve as an ecological, horticultural and ethnobotanical research Centre
- House the national seed bank and herbarium
- Serve as an eco-tourism resources Centre and attraction offering walks and trails, with interpretation as well as displaying specimens of Seychelles Biodiversity and associated information.
- Provide a location for ex-situ conservation of rare indigenous plant species.
- The project is estimated to cost about 3.3 million US \$, equivalent to 19 million Seychelles Rupees.

The Wonderful Wilderness of the Entebbe Botanic Gardens

John Mulumba Wasswa and Kato Patrick Sengo

The beautiful Entebbe Botanic Gardens is currently the focus of the following planning initiatives:

- 1) **Conservation and management of resources:** To maintain, enhance and display a diverse and well-documented collection of living plants and a comprehensive documented collection of preserved plants and seed stock.
- 2) **Research:** To pursue botanical and other appropriate research programmes in collaboration with other national regional and international institutions.
- 3) **Education and Awareness (Outreach):** To promote public and community awareness, knowledge and consciousness of the plants' role in their welfare and survival and therefore, the importance of their conservation and sustainable utilisation.
- 4) **Recreation.** To ensure sustainable management of Entebbe Botanic Gardens exposing a wider public to the Botanic Gardens through provision of a variety of recreation amenities.
- 5) **Income generation:** To develop a mechanism for raising income as a means towards self-sustenance (sustainable funding initiative)

Success in the implementation of identified key actions to achieve these objectives depends heavily on the sustainable funding of the institution. Development partners and other stake holders will play an important role in this.

Regional Course for Southern African Horticulturists

Christopher Willis, Stefan Siebert & Christopher Dalzell

A two-week training course was presented to 25 horticulturists from 9 southern African countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) (8-20 April 2002). The 25 horticulturists represented 19 southern African botanical gardens. The course was held at the Durban Botanic Gardens, South Africa, and hosted by the Southern African Botanical Diversity Network (SABONET) and the Durban Parks Department. Forming part of the on-going capacity building activities associated with the GEF/UNDP-funded SABONET project, the tailor-made course was developed as a result of the need expressed by southern African botanical garden representatives during a regional workshop held in March 2001 (see *African Botanic Garden Network Bulletin* No.s 2, 3 and 4).

The course included modules on propagation, soil mixes and growing media, pest control, nursery management, layout, irrigation and structures, fertilisation, interpretation, machinery, turf management, bedding design and landscaping, staff management, plant collections, record keeping, field collecting techniques and herbarium collections as well as communications, letter and report writing. The course included several practical sessions as well as field excursions to local nurseries, the Durban muthi market, Zimbali Nature Reserve and the Natal National Botanical Garden in Pietermaritzburg.

Acknowledgements: The NBI and the Regional SABONET Secretariat acknowledge with sincere thanks the staff of Durban Botanic Gardens and Durban Parks Department who assisted in the smooth running of the course. Their dedication, enthusiasm and effort are greatly appreciated.

African Botanic Gardens Bulletin

The African Botanic Garden Bulletin has a revolving editorship. This means that your garden can have the opportunity to produce the Bulletin should you be interested. Please contact BGCI at Descanso House, 199 Kew Road, Richmond Surrey TW9 3BW, UK Fax: 0044 020 8332 5956 Email: bgci@rbgkew.org.uk, or express your interest to the current Editor Mark Richardson: Durban Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 3740, Durban 4000, South Africa Tel: +27 (031) 201 1303 Fax: +27 (031) 201 7382 Email: markm@prcsu.durban.gov.za

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