

Press Communiqué

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Klorane Institute and Pierre Fabre Argentina

of the French pharmaceutical and dermo-cosmetics giant Pierre Fabre
join forces with the world's largest network dedicated to plant conservation –

**Botanic Gardens Conservation International, United Kingdom, and
Carlos Thays Botanic Garden, Buenos Aires**

to boost conservation and public awareness of Argentina's remarkable
native medicinal flora



Yungas vegetation, northern Argentina

Yungas San Francisco, Jujuy. Proyungas Image Bank. Photo: Jose Luis Rodriguez



Corporate foundation for the protection
and development of the plant heritage

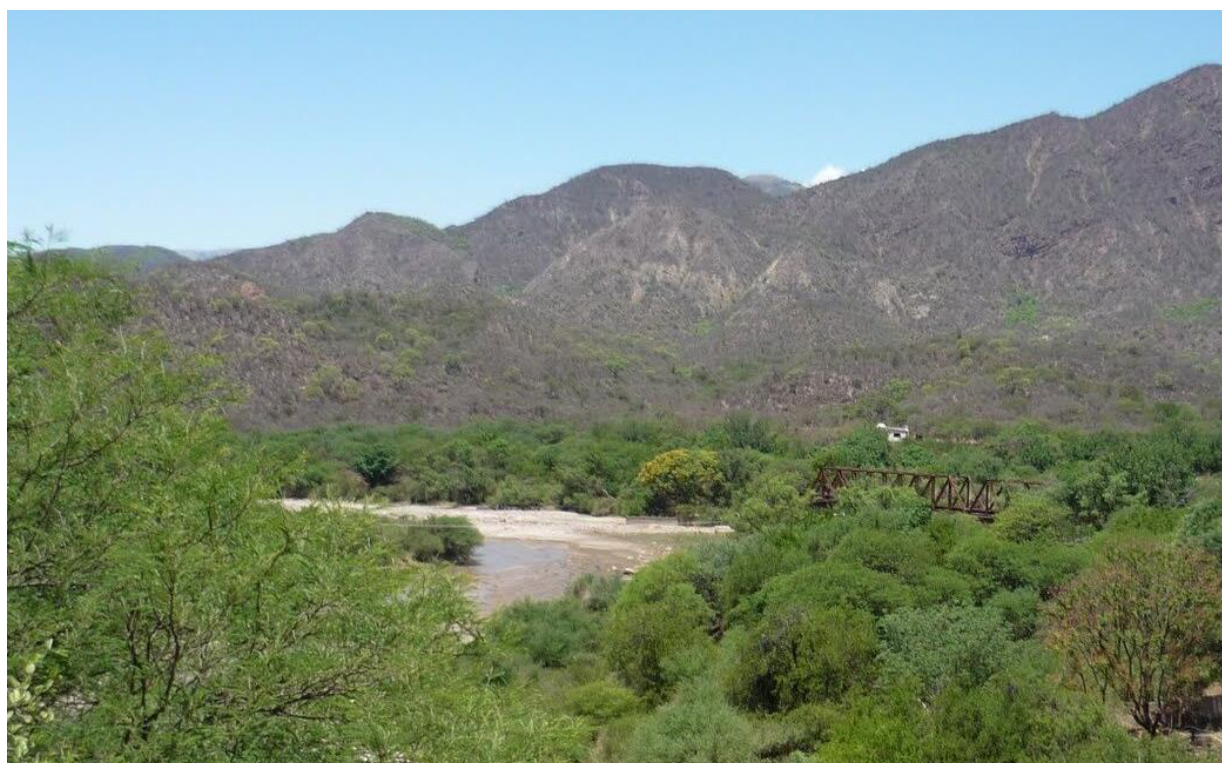


Concerted action to conserve Argentina's medicinal plant heritage

A new international partnership has formed, bringing together Klorane Institute, France, Pierre Fabre Dermo-Cosmétique, Argentina, Carlos Thays Botanic Garden, Buenos Aires, Argentina (JBCT) and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) in order to enhance and promote greater knowledge of Argentina's medicinal flora and implement *ex* and *in situ* conservation measures.

A threatened diversity

As one of the world's mega-biodiverse nations, Argentina is home to a wealth of medicinal plants. *There are at least as many as 1,500 native species – yet, beyond the country's borders, little is known of this national botanical treasure and its utilisation*, says Graciela Barreiro, Director of Carlos Thays Botanic Garden in Buenos Aires. Likewise, concerted national and international efforts remain limited to promote integrated conservation action for some of Argentina's most endangered and rare medicinal plant species and the habitats in which they occur.



Dry Chaco – a characteristic habitat in Argentina with an abounding medicinal plant diversity; habitat of *Maytenus viscifolia*. Departamento La Viña, Provincia de Salta. Photo: Daniel Taranto

Loss of natural habitat resulting from expansion of agriculture, urbanisation, mining as well as overexploitation of wild resources and environmental pollution are major factors driving the steady decline of Argentina's medicinal plants. *Traditional herbal medicines relying on native plants are a significant element of the health care in the country*, explains Serge Bouteleau, Director of Pierre Fabre Argentina.

For instance, in the mountains of the Sierra de Comechingones (Cordoba, northern Argentina) alone, some 150 plant genera are known to be collected for the preparation of herbal medicines. However, medicinal plants are not only used by and for people –

traditional veterinary practices apply concoctions of various species for skin complaints and in the treatment of parasites, etc.



***Pilocarpus pennatifolius* (Rutaceae),**
a native medicinal plant from humid north eastern Argentina, used by indigenous cultures to cure gastric problems, and has more recently been applied in eye care.



***Maytenus ilicifolia* (Celastraceae),**
a native medicinal plant from northeastern Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and southern Brazil, used in the preparation of herbal medicinal for various ailments as well as a contraceptive.

Scaling up action for conservation

Despite the importance of medicinal plants as a source of income and rural livelihood, comparatively few are cultivated while plant material is predominantly sourced from the wild, comments Joachim Gratzfeld, Director of Regional Programmes, BGCI. He further adds that this trend is likely to continue in the future, as most medicinal plants are traded locally or regionally, and the costs of cultivation are high while the agricultural land is generally used for the production of food crops.

Scaling up of cultivation for heavily exploited species such as *Minthostachys verticillata*, *Hedeoma multiflorum*, *Achyrocline satureoides*, *Passiflora caerulea*, *Acantholippia seriphioides*, *Lippia turbinata*, *Baccharis crispa*, *Zuccagnia punctata*, *Caesalpinia paraguariensis* could help to reduce pressure on the remaining natural habitats where these species occur, and secure genetic diversity in wild populations. However, commercial cultivation, management of natural habitats and sustainable harvesting approaches to wild populations need to be complemented by further measures. *Ex situ conservation, through live-plant and seed bank collections that are representative of the genetic diversity found in wild populations need to be established or further enhanced as an insurance policy in a future world,* comments Graciela Barreiro. She adds: *Botanic gardens and affiliated*

agricultural research institutions in Argentina have been very active in this field for many years, but still, action needs to be scaled up.



Jardín Botánico Carlos Thays, Buenos Aires

This new joint venture will address the urgent conservation needs pertaining to Argentina's medicinal plants through various strands of action, including the strengthening of *ex situ* conservation collections at botanic gardens, enhancing public outreach and awareness, and supporting the consolidation of the national network of botanic gardens.

We are delighted about this new international partnership with the botanic garden community in Argentina, says Florence Guillaume, Director of the Klorane Institute. Our corporate foundation reflects the mission of the Pierre Fabre Laboratories to care for the human being as a whole by drawing on continued inspiration from nature and plants. We are committed to the conservation and promotion of the Earth's botanical heritage, and work closely with a large number of partners. The objectives of this initiative are fully in line with the values of our foundation.

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Notes for Editors

About Klorane Institute

For over 20 years, the Klorane Institute has been committed to sharing its botanical passion by focusing on three missions:

- PROTECT plant species under threat through numerous, international scientific partnerships. The Klorane Institute is particularly involved in the Great Green Wall programme, which fights desertification in the Sahel by planting 60,000 desert date trees in Senegal over a period of 6 years. This project has been recognized by UNESCO within the « UNESCO GREEN CITIZENS » programme as a major sustainable development initiative.
- EXPLORE the world's plant treasures to increase botanical knowledge and enhance best practice to conserve plant diversity.
- EDUCATE the wider public in botanical knowledge, with a particular focus on children.

The Klorane Institute further enhances its influence as an agent of change by becoming founding partner of « UNESCO GREEN CITIZENS ».

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About Pierre Fabre Dermo-Cosmétique, Argentina

Founded in the early 1960's Pierre Fabre is the 3rd largest French pharmaceutical group and the 2nd largest dermo-cosmetics laboratory in the world. Its headquarters still located in Toulouse in the South-west of France, Pierre Fabre currently has branches in 44 countries and distribution agreements in over 130 countries. Pierre Fabre Laboratories employ over 10,000 people worldwide.

With brands such as Avène, Klorane, Ducray, René Furterer, A-Derma, Galénic, Naturactive, Elgydium, Eludril or Drill, Pierre Fabre Laboratories are market leaders in skin, hair and oral care products. Avène Thermal Spring Water is marketed worldwide, and is the leading dermo-cosmetics brand sold in Europe, Japan and China.

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About Carlos Thays Botanic Garden

Carlos Thays Botanic Garden of the city of Buenos Aires has 120 years of history, owing its name to its founder, the French landscape architect and city planner Charles Thays. Located in centre of the Argentina's capital, it is a major visitor attraction of Buenos Aires.

The collections of the botanic garden are steadily evolving. The living plant collection currently includes 3,700 specimens belonging to 200 plant families, while the herbarium includes some 4,630 specimens. A major area of the garden is dedicated to the cultivation of native tree species of Argentina.

Carlos Thays Botanic Garden is a prime institution in Argentina, not only for its location and history, but also because it serves as a leading institution in the development of educational projects.

Carlos Thays Botanic Garden

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About BGCI

Established in 1987, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) is the world's largest plant conservation network. Its mission is *to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet*. With over 700 members and partners from almost 120 countries worldwide, BGCI supports conservation programmes for threatened plants, as well as provides technical and policy guidance and regular up-to-date information through its newsletters, magazines, conferences and training courses. From influencing government policies and priorities to encouraging and supporting grassroots action, BGCI's global reach and professional expertise enables it to achieve real conservation milestones.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)

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