

SUMMARY OF WORKING GROUPS

A. Professional Development

Participants: René Belland, Jocelyne Gagnon, Brian Johnson, Sarah Kneebone
Facilitator: Catherine Dumouchel

We had a brief discussion about who should participate in training such as this colloquium. Our conclusions were that it would be of value to:

- provide cross-pollination training amongst the various functions in our organisations
- involve senior management teams so they can be aware of issues and excitement
- provide a mixture of break out sessions around special interests and coming together in mixed groups

1. **Topics:** A few topics for training mentioned through the discussions include:

- how to deal with audiences with special needs
- fundraising
- biodiversity issues and topics

2. **Training available:**

- take advantage of what training opportunities are already being offered
- Provide suggestions/additions to the "training opportunities" sections of the bgci/canada web site posted on: www.bgci.org/canada/plant_training.html and www.bgci.org/canada/edu_training.html
- Provide updates to calendar of events, conferences, and workshops posted on: www.rbg.ca/cbcn/en/news/coming/index.html and www.bgci.org/canada/edu_events.html

3. **Potential training strategies:**

- inviting individuals from other organisations to evaluate your programme
- shadowing (within organisation and with other organisations)
- exchange programme
- study trips
- job swap
- internships
- internal discussion groups
- lunchtime seminars

4. **Sharing success stories:**

- find and post specific examples of successful training initiatives with brief descriptions and contact information
- provide information on existing programmes (internships, study trips, etc)

5. **Priority action:** We felt that an annual event such as this colloquium should be built into someone's job descriptions so as not to require complicated approval processes.

Here are some of the parameters for such an event:

- Involve participants from a diversity of functions: directors, educators, fundraisers, marketing and communications, scientists, etc.
- Needs to balance the professional development content, the networking opportunities and the action planning.
- A mix of presentations and workshops is suggested. Topics for the workshops could be determined by polling the potential participants and/or asking for submissions.

- Should be opportunities to meet across functions and for special interest groups to get together and address common issues.
- A fair/showcase activity would provide an opportunity to see what is happening in the various institutions. Everyone would bring his or her contributions and we could take one evening for a bit of show and tell.
- Try a format for sharing information such as "catch ups" where you have 1, 2 or 5 minutes to present something you're working on currently, a new initiative, an idea for a future programme...
- To deal with issues that may arise as the conference is being planned, also plan unstructured time, i.e. an open café format could work to focus people on emerging issues of common interest (similar to what we did at this conference)
- Social events are a must!
- Reference and resource tables are valuable.
- Continue to pay attention to the language issue and find ways to make this easier for everyone.

B. Strategies for Sharing

Participants: Jane Bowles, Robert Ritchie, Maggie Kilian, David Zehnder, Olivia Johns, Ingrid Hoff
Facilitator: Barbara McKean

1. **Types of information to share:**
 - Small-scale exhibits
 - Species at Risk: reports, educational information, photos
 - Plant information
 - SAPS programme (?)
 - Changing educational programme elements or new programmes
 - Educational & botanical expertise
2. **Means/methods of sharing:**
 - Regular contributions to e-newsletter
 - Working with partners/ kindred organisations to maximise efficiency (i.e. Columbia Valley Botanical Garden and the Land Conservancy)
 - Online educational programme data-base and/or programme wish-list
3. **Sharing educational programmes:**
 - Develop a spreadsheet/database inventory of educational programmes and resources (including strengths and wish lists) for each garden
4. **Suggestions for sharing skills and expertise:**
 - Create a Canadian bg-ed discussion group
 - Develop an educational programme data base for the website (members only access?)
 - Use the current e-newsletter more often for discussion

C. Institutional Decision-Making

Participants: Peter Romkey, George Patterson, Bill Rapley, Maurice Larson, Alan Watson
Facilitator: Laurel McIvor

1. **Discussion of issues/ items of interest:** Our initial round-table discussion of items of common interest regarding management/ decision-making in botanical gardens included:
 - Partnering with and engaging local community
 - Identifying needs to be adequately and appropriately staffed
 - Ensuring conservation is part of the common vision of board of directors
 - Developing specific funds for conservation work
 - How to link and create a stronger Canadian botanical garden network
2. **Canadian standards/ guidelines for botanical gardens & arboreta:** While there are many pros and cons of creating an accreditation programme, we felt that it would be very helpful for our public image and management to have some guidelines and/or standards.
 - Investigate existing accreditation programmes and efforts (i.e. AABGA, BGCI, CAZA)
 - Develop a proposal for Canadian botanical gardens
3. **Strengthening the Canadian BG network:** We recognised that there is a need and interest in an association that specifically serves the Canadian botanical gardens, arboreta and related institutions.
 - Where are current opportunities: through CBCN, AABGA, CMA?
 - Need to update our collective statistics to have a clearer picture of who, what, where, why
 - Could collectively apply for special project funding, but need a management “body”
 - Need seed funding to work on this (no one can incorporate this into their current workload)
 - Need to investigate options, potential partnerships and seed funding sources
4. **“Green” management:** Our institutions need to do more than just teach about conservation and sustainability, we need to “walk the talk”.
 - Communicate “best green practices” and specifically highlight accomplishments
 - Bgs should track their current operations and commit to improvements by undertaking, for example, “green audits”, invasive risk management planning, CSA or ISO standards...
5. **Contributions to global conservation efforts:** contributing and registering our contributions to these efforts help to improve our collective and individual credibility.
 - need to find time effective means of communicating efforts and registering contributions
 - the North American botanical gardens strategy to respond to the Global Plant Conservation Strategy will be circulated for review and comment
6. **Brainstorming ways to increase profile of Canadian botanical gardens:**
 - Investigate botanical garden links to the Pan Canadian Science Curriculum
 - Consider a public awareness campaign (perhaps partner with zoos and museums?)

D. Educational Programming

Participants:	Violene Simard, Anaïs Rinfret-Pilon, Allison Candy, Anne Madden, Charlene Forrest, Nancy Lee-Colibaba, Judy Browne, Heather House, Ian Hendry, Monique Lepage, Bill Swan, Tom Laviolette, Jean Pierre Parent, Marie-France Pelletier
Facilitator:	Andrée Hallé

This working group was particularly large and while necessary, the translation slowed down the exchange.

1. Items of interest :

The principal items of interest includes the clientele or audiences served by our educational programmes, programme content and evaluation. Due to time constraints, we weren't able to discuss all items.

2. Main discussion :

- Royal Botanical Gardens: gardening education programmes to 3-5 yr. olds present an interesting opportunity: information is addressed to the parents who, in turn, teach the children. Whereas with school-aged children, the programme is directed to the children who take this information to their parents. In both cases, it's important to involve the entire family
- There are also family/inter-generational programmes in spring and fall. Everything planted is recorded and then on view to the public. The visible and tangible nature of these gardens is an important factor for building longer-term awareness
- Common need was expressed to encourage repeat visitors, for example, to observe changes over the four seasons. We would prefer longer term participation in our programmes rather than one-time visits without follow-up
- Initiating Sunday family programmes has been successful
- Common experience showed that it's important to keep programme participation fees low. Having parents accompany the children on their visits encourages them to return. Friends organisations and/or membership programmes can offer strong benefits and discounts to encourage repeat visitation.
- Toronto Zoo's many "fun" family educational activities efficiently convey their educational messages children and their parents.
- Horticulture therapy programmes are of particular interest to long-term care facilities
- Specialised programming experiences were shared, i.e. "Garden of Senses" (for blind visitors) at Montreal Botanical Garden and the PAVE programmes for hearing impaired visitors at the Biodome.
- The « weird, wonderful, and wild factor » is a good way to attract families

3. Conclusion:

We recommend developing an educational programming Internet accessible data-base to share and stay current with programmes offered in other gardens. Potential uniform categories could include:

- Target audience
- Programme details
- Material required
- Programme objectives & outcomes
- Related travelling exhibitions
- Etc.

APPENDIX 1: Original Topics Identified throughout Colloquium

A. Professional Development

- a) check out training workshops available through NAI - the National Association of Interpreters
 - Interpretive training
 - Interpretive Programme Management
 - Exhibits, etc
- b) Lifelong learning opportunities
- c) Set up a mentor program for your volunteer program (added comments - "Same for staff"). Take your most talented interpretive volunteers and give them training in interpretation
- d) learning styles / teaching to different learning styles
- e) storytelling
- f) conservation interpretation and messages
- g) Then have these mentor volunteers teach and mentor the other volunteers and new volunteers pass on the knowledge
- h) professional training in biodiversity topics
- i) training for staff / training for corporation
- j) Invite fund development people to next gathering
- k) development of all garden staff to have same educational role in contact with public
- l) This has been a great conference: Does future hold more of these kinds of opportunities under similar funding?
- m) Identify existing conferences / meetings etc... in which we are already participating and where we could find an opportunity to meet

B. Strategies for Sharing

- a) Strategies for integrating biodiversity conservation messages into horticulture programmes...
- b) Funding/grants opportunities
- c) Pooling resources
- d) Sponsorship for educational programmes (different approaches)
- e) 1-minute light bites – quick catch ups with garden developments
- f) List serve to keep contact and send important information, questions, etc...
- g) Newsletter that describes/outlines garden projects with tips, foils, successes, failures...
- h) Examples of successful education programming partnerships
- i) Sharing program plans for camps, school programs, family days...
- j) Make a list of everyone's dream projects & current projects in order to exchange experiences & share resources
- k) Create a book/collection of Canadian case studies of educational values of programmes at gardens/arboreta/other institutions
- l) Develop a single database management system to facilitate sharing
- m) strategies for sharing the "recipe" for successful biodiversity education
- n) Publish Canadian conservation protocols
- o) Video night to share visual accounts of the most exciting work at each bg

C. Institutional Decision-Making

- a) Making educational programmes sustainable, both ecologically and financially
- b) Institutional expectations towards educational programmes in terms of cost recovery/revenue generation
- c) Adopt triple-e bottom line accounting at our institutions/organisations
- d) Influencing green policy of institution: "practice what you preach"
- e) How to influence institutional decision-making that impact biodiversity – making your institution "walk the talk"

- f) Collaboration for sharing/understanding species at risk (sar) issues and supporting recovery team actions/sar education programmes
- g) Getting individual institutions more involved with international plans/efforts (Global Strategy for Plant Conservation & International Agenda for Conservation in botanic Gardens)
- h) Brainstorm what the ultimate and end goal is to promote conservation of habitats, resources and atmosphere. Then brainstorm actions and priorities to achieve these end goals.
- i) Partnerships with businesses to produce “Green Products & services” and launch “Social Marketing” programme to change the public’s behaviour that will lead to conservation of habitat.
- j) Invasive Plants: do we ban these from public gardens when local & regional nurseries sell these plants to properties adjacent to public gardens?

D. Educational Programming

- a) Audience
 - How do we facilitate/encourage the participation of people who can’t afford our educational programmes?
 - How much of what we do is working with individual visitors as opposed to communities?
 - Who are we reaching with our educational programmes?
 - Who should we be reaching with our educational programmes?
 - Who are our visitors?
 - Stewardship programmes = awareness → pride → action
 - Providing visitors with opportunities to follow up on their visit (access to further info, community resources, community organisations...)
 - Celebratory nature of botanical gardens experiences
- b) Content
 - Programmes that go beyond awareness and knowledge (value development process, action)
 - Incorporate ways/messages to engender hope (avoid eco-phobia)
 - Place à l’imaginaire, à la créativité, à l’absurde!
 - Educators putting themselves in the shoes of the learners
 - How do we make programmes have an emotional connection when curriculum is information driven?
 - How do we facilitate collaborative learning processes?
 - How do we facilitate life-long learning?
- c) Evaluation
 - How do we know we are achieving our educational objectives?
 - Challenge of evaluating impact of educational initiatives related to plant conservation
 - Checking ideologies spread through education programmes
 - What makes a learning experience memorable?

E. Educational resource ideas for cross-Canada distribution

- a) Development of a few uniform elements (regarding environmental education) that could be used at all Canadian bgs – recognising individual identity and style of the different gardens but affirming mutual agreement and commitment
- b) Invasive Plant guide for gardeners (national template, but regionally specific)
- c) Travelling exhibit – about plant conservation & Canadian botanical gardens
- d) Guidelines available from bgci
- e) Poisonous plants index/ resource
- f) Develop a manual for bg based environmental education for primary/elementary level (kindergarten to grade 6)