

BGCI Care for the Rare Interpretation Development

Tips for creating species signs:

You may want to highlight species that tell unique and valuable stories! Here are some possible themes, which BGCI can help with (see details below):

- Threatened native species
- Threatened species known only from your garden's collection
- Threatened (native) species found in lots of collections
- Species extinct in the wild (how public gardens can be an insurance policy against extinction)
- Species that demonstrate geographic relationships – local, national, regional, global
- Recalcitrant species (value of seed banks and living collections)
- CITES species (threats and trade restrictions of economically important species)
- Threatened species that is a Crop Wild Relative
- Species not currently threatened (predicted threatened, non-threatened native, etc.)
- Additional themes: medicinal value, orchids, alpine species, etc.

Unsure which species to choose? We can help.

BGCI can help you prioritize a list of threatened plants in your collection! You can access valuable conservation information about your garden’s collection via the GardenSearch database (http://www.bgci.org/garden_search.php). GardenSearch cross-references each garden’s plant list with major threatened species lists, and tells you which plants in your collection are threatened in the wild, native to your region, and how many other gardens grow the same species.

To access your garden’s collections information in GardenSearch, follow Steps 1 and 2 of the PlantSearch Upload Instructions: <http://www.bgci.org/usa/plantsearchinstructions> (If your garden has not uploaded a plant list via GardenSearch, please discuss this with your collections manager or curator – we would also be happy to help with the process!)

Once you login as a Garden Editor, click on the ‘Plant upload’ tab in the left column to ‘download your current plant list’ as a spreadsheet. Your institution’s GardenSearch plant list should look like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	ID	Genus Hybrid	Genus	Species Hybrid	Species	Infraspecific Rank	Infraspecific Epithet	Cultivar	No. Locations	Crop Wild Relative	Red List	Red List 1997	CITES Appendix	CITES Last Assessed	NatureServe G-rank
2	6556	Abelia		chinensis					65	No					
3	63341	Abelia		mosanensis					45	No					
4	36369	Abelia		zanderi					5	No					
5	18224	Abeliophyllum		distichum					105	No		Endangered			
6	264504	Abeliophyllum		distichum				Roseum	10	No					
7	19041	Abies		concolor					141	No	Lower Risk: Least Concern				G5
8	15589	Abies		koreana					135	No	Lower Risk: Near Threatened	Rare			
9	36394	Abies		pinsapo					114	No	Lower Risk: Near Threatened				
10	36408	Abies		nordmanniana					113	No	Lower Risk: Least Concern				
11	21284	Abies		alba					108	No	Lower Risk: Least Concern				
12	1522	Cycas		revoluta					222	No	Near Threatened		II	8/1/1985	
13	16772	Abies		grandis					105	No	Lower Risk: Least Concern				G5
14	20440	Abies		balsamea					94	No	Lower Risk: Least Concern				G5

You can now sort this list to easily identify the following species in your collection which could be highlighted in the species signs:

- Threatened species (columns: Red List, Red List 1997, CITES Appendix, NatureServe G-rank)
- North American native species (select any species with a NatureServe G-rank: GH, GX, or G1-G5)
- Number of gardens growing the same species as your garden (column: No. Locations)
- Species related to major agricultural crops (column: Crop Wild Relative)

Other Considerations:

- *Species Selection:* Which species may be in bloom during the proposed exhibition/tour – although not necessary, it may increase the display value of the exhibit.
- *Determine a realistic number of species to highlight;* perhaps start small (approx.. 5 species) and increase this number through time.
- *Exhibit/tour development:* Integrate exhibit/tour with broader interpretation efforts/objectives for your institution. Location of target specimens in collection – if in one area or if distributed throughout. Choose a realistic timeframe for your interpretation project – are there other interpretation projects planned before or after this one?
- *Sign logistics:* Preferences for how to edit, print, post, maintain, or monitor the signs and any corresponding exhibit/tour? Consider creating a handout, brochure, cell phone, or similar guide for visitor use, to provide continuity for the exhibit; and integrate with online media if possible.

Additional Resources:

- Plant Conservation Day Resources: <http://www.bgci.org/plantconservationday/resources/>
- Designing Interpretative Signs (book): www.bgci.org/education/2229/
- Designing and Installing Interpretive Signs (article): www.bgci.org/resources/article/0395/
- Making Your Garden Come Alive: www.bgci.org/education/making_your_garden_come_a/
- Communication, Education and Public Awareness ([CEPA](#)) **Section 4: How to plan communication strategically?** ([pdf](#))
- International Zoo Educators Association, Training Materials: <http://www.izea.net/education/interpretation.htm>

Record your experiences and give us feedback!

Let us know if you use these materials for an interpretation project so we can track use, and please keep these questions in mind as you develop your interpretation project. Your feedback is crucial to the future development of these resources. Please [email us](#) with your Name, Job title, Institution, City and State and let us know how these resources worked for you, using the below questions to guide your response.

How did you use these resources? When and where did you display them? Have images of the display? Would you be able to provide files for the signs you developed, for a broader audience to use?

- Opinion on the file types offered, accessibility, versatility, usability, etc.?
- LAYOUT of Species Signs, Why Care for the Rare panel, and Public Gardens Care for the Rare panel (page size, font size, image size/position, amount of text vs. images, other?)
- CONTENT of Species Signs, Why Care for the Rare panel, and Public Gardens Care for the Rare panel (“Care for the Rare” icon, voice of text, images/maps used, overall conservation message, other?)
- How would you rate your overall experience?
- How would you rate staff and visitor reactions to this interpretation project?

- Other general or specific comments?