

Care for the Rare Species Sign Instructions

This document provides instructions on how to make an interpretive sign for your selected species using our Care for the Rare templates. We hope you will find this resource useful for developing interpretive signs about species in need of conservation.

Before you begin: A checklist of information needed to make a species sign

1. *A high resolution photo of the species*

Use the following guidelines for the best results:

- a. Resolution - select a photo that is at least 20KB large
- b. Shape – a centered, square photo will give the best results. The final image will be circular, so center and crop the photo to be square wherever possible to avoid distortion at the edges.
- c. Focus - the photo can show the whole plant, just the inflorescence, fruit or leaf – choose a picture that best suits the species

2. *Map of current and/or historical distribution*

Select one of the provided maps available here and customize it to show the distribution for the selected species. Maps of the [World](#), the [United States](#) and the [US with HI & AK](#) are available for editing. Select the appropriate map for your species based on either the current or historical distribution of the species.

3. *Compelling information about the species*

Each sign includes the below headings. Gather appropriate information that will fit these sections, and write in the first person. Each section should **NOT exceed 30 words** or 175 characters (including spaces) for the best layout. The section headings are below.

- a. About me – general descriptive information about the plant
- b. Why I'm rare – threats to the species leading to its conservation status
- c. My story – include something compelling or especially cool about this species
- d. How you can help – link to conservation actions and/or garden initiatives for visitors

4. *Your garden's logo (optional)*

Ideally, this logo should be transparent and high resolution.

5. *You're ready to make a species sign!*

Examples of the two sign options are below to give you an idea of the overall layout and format.



Instructions for Making a Species Sign

Open the desired template file in Microsoft Word (using Office 2007 or 2010: [contact us](#) for other formats)

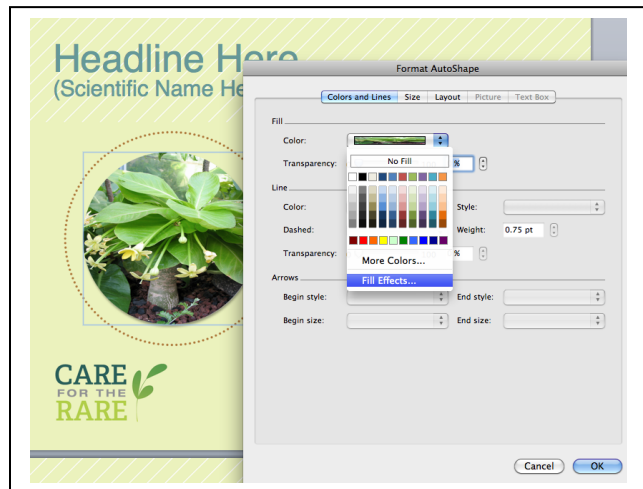
1. Insert species common and scientific name

2. Insert picture.

Right click on the template picture, select “Format AutoShape”



On the “Colors and Lines” section, click the dropdown menu for Fill, Color, and select “Fill Effects”.



A “Fill Effects” window will pop up and should be at the furthest right “Picture” section.

Click “Select Picture” below the picture and navigate to the location where your species photo is stored. The picture preview window should change to your selected photo. Click “Ok”.



3. Insert species text using the appropriate headings.

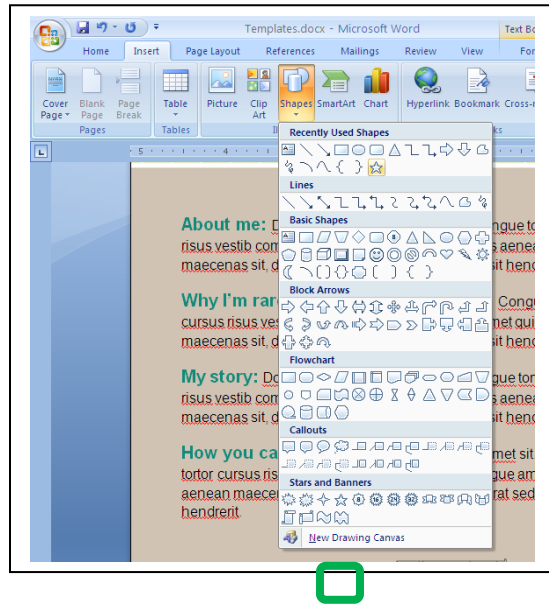
Text should not exceed 30 words or 175 characters for each section in order to leave room for logos and maps. **Do NOT change the font type, size or formatting**, this was carefully chosen for maximum readability.

4. Insert distribution map (optional)

The template already has a map of the contiguous [US](#). Blank, transparent, customizable maps of the [world](#) or [US with HI & AK](#) are available to be cropped and customized as necessary.

Customize the map by inserting a star over the relevant area of the map. Click Insert -> Shapes -> Stars and Banners -> 5 pointed star. See image to the right.

(note: do not customize your map using Paint, it will no longer be transparent if you do.)

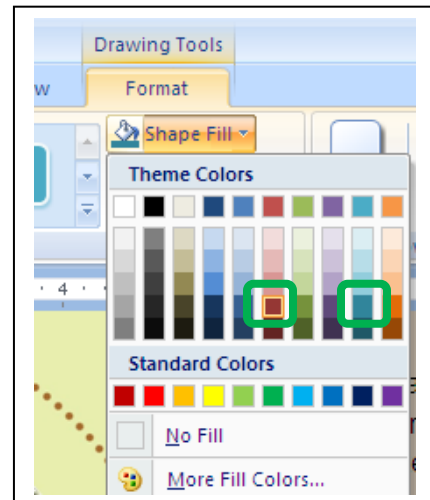


Format the star using the Format tab to have

1. No shadow
2. No outline
3. Colors that match the sign theme as outlined with a green box to the right

Red Accent 2, Darker 25%

Aqua Accent 5, Darker 25%



5. Insert your logo (optional)

Ideally, your logo will be transparent and high resolution. If you do not have or do not wish to use a logo, delete the “Logo here” text on the Template.

6. Provide photo credit

This should be placed in bottom outside corner of the text section Use all caps and the following format: PHOTO UNITED STATES BOTANIC GARDEN or PHOTO JANE DOE, CITY GARDENS

7. Save your sign

Be sure to save each sign as a unique file name – we suggest one that identifies the scientific name of the species it interprets (for example, B._insignis.docx for Brighamia insignis).

For best printing, save your sign in an unchangeable (PDF) format, click File -> Save As, then enter the document name, and change the Save As Type: field from Word Document (*.docx) to PDF (*.pdf).

8. Print your sign

Species signs are designed to be printed on 8.5 x 11 paper, so you can easily print and display them for free on any color printer. Save the file as a PDF for printing. You may want to laminate or place printouts in clear plastic sleeves prior to putting them on display or using them for programming to extend their lifespan. You can also make the sign file available on your website or have your sign printed on sturdier material for longer-term display. [Contact us](#) with any questions.

9. Share your sign

Please consider sharing the signs you develop with us so we can make them freely available to the public garden community. Send the completed MS Word files for all of your completed signs to us at usa@bgci.org.

10. Using your signs

Unsure of what species might be in need of interpretation or what to do with a completed sign? Check out our [interpretation development](#) page for help on how to select species for signs and develop interpretive tours.