



## **EuroGard 6**

The aim of EUROGARD VI was to bring together best practices and theory in order to:

- Promote effective action by botanic gardens for plant conservation.
- Strengthen the links between botanic gardens, research institutes, conservation networks and other stakeholders.
- Enhance botanic gardens as centres for sustainability, human well-being, environmental awareness and protection.

The United Nations has declared the decade, 2011-2020, the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. This Congress was an opportunity for botanic gardens to demonstrate their contributions to this important international initiative. A key feature of the congress was incorporating theory into practice and presentations show cased approaches, tools and research that help us to confront the challenges of biodiversity loss in a changing world. Mitigation methods concerning in situ and ex situ conservation actions were presented, as well as, effective networking practices that allow us to respond efficiently to the challenging targets of the European and Global Strategies for Plant Conservation.

The Congress also aimed to highlight the important relationships that exist between people and plants, and through this, link the work of botanic gardens to the achievement of the all important Millennium Development Goals.

### **SESSIONS and KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

#### **1. Global and European Strategies for Plant Conservation for 2011-2020: The Role of Botanic Gardens**

Sara Oldfield, Secretary General, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, UK  
Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson, President, Missouri Botanical Garden, USA

How to monitor the progress and assess the deliverables of the Global and European Strategies for Plant Conservation (GSPC/ESPC)? Which actions should botanic gardens develop in order to implement the targets of GSPC and ESPC? Are there new steps and challenges for plant conservation? What should be the role of botanic gardens with respect to the new Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020? Should the role of botanic gardens be redefined in the age of biodiversity crisis? How could effective links between ex situ and in situ plant conservation be strengthened? What are the priorities and key-areas for plant conservation?

What are the challenges for botanic gardens concerning biodiversity hotspots? How should the threats and levels of risk for species and populations be assessed? What should be the policy of botanic gardens with respect to the introduction of invasive, alien species? How can botanic gardens participate in allaying the effects of climate change?

## **2. Strengthening Networks for People, Plants and Botanic Gardens**

Professor Jose-Antonio Fernandez-Perez, Department of Biotechnology, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

How can joint actions and co-operations between botanic gardens be developed in order to combat biodiversity loss? How could new technologies be used in the generation of collaborative knowledge? Can new web-based platforms for capacity building and best practices standardization and sharing be developed? How can examples of cluster development-joint actions of interconnected partners (Botanic Gardens, Research Institutes, businesses, suppliers) be used to gain a competitive advantage nationally and globally, with the aim of developing co-operative programmes with different partners-stakeholders at a national and international level? How can local communities be linked with volunteers and funding in order to support conservation initiatives? How can the links between conservation, research and education be strengthened?

## **3. Plants and People: From Myth, History and Art to Science and Culture**

Professor Stella Kokkini, School of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece  
Assistant Professor Sultana-Maria Valamoti, Department of Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece  
Professor Dimitris Tzanoudakis, Department of Biology, University of Patras, Greece

How have the relationships between people, cultures and the uses of plants (foods, medicines, cosmetics) through the centuries shaped the history of primitive and advanced cultures? How have the medicinal applications and the traditional uses of plants in ancient and contemporary times been monitored and recorded and how is this knowledge significant in the modern world? How should the role of plants in food and nutrition be evaluated in a changing world? How has Archaeology played a role in discovering the origins of agriculture? How can the identification of landraces and the ancestors of contemporary crops help in a world of climate change? Can Archaeology and historical texts be used to explore the impacts of anthropogenic activity in the past on the environment? Can plant mythology and art be used to raise public awareness regarding plant biodiversity and conservation? How are plant secondary metabolites (e.g. hallucinatory drugs, essential oils, poisons) linked with human cultures, their traditions, rituals, the supernatural and ways of life? Can Formal Gardens be considered as designs, art or as a rearrangement of biodiversity? How are plants linked to cultural heritage, folklore, symbolism and art?

## **4. Consider Globally, Act Locally: Experiences in Addressing a Changing Environment**

Professor Stephen Blackmore, Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh, UK  
Professor Costas Thanos, Department of Botany, Faculty of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

How can new approaches and methods for the management of plant diversity research be implemented? How can horticulture tools for the management of plant species under conservation be improved? How can innovative technologies help in plant management? Can new approaches for ex situ plant conservation be developed? Should the practices for the reintroduction of plant species into the wild be reassessed? How can Access and Benefit Sharing and Fair-Trade be applied to plant resources? How can botanic gardens promote and implement “Green” practices? How can the impact of biodiversity loss on human wellbeing be determined and evaluated? How can conservation methods and the status of economically and socially important plants be promoted? Can case studies of the evaluation and commercial exploitation of local plants and their products be implemented globally? Does plant diversity play a role in human nutrition? How to give emphasis to the evaluation of local and regional plants (e.g. aromatic, medicinal) for the promotion and the demonstration of excellence of specialised local products? Can the ornamental horticulture industry be used to highlight plant diversity? Which plants should be utilized in landscaping and green roofs with respect to climate change? Can plant diversity be part of alternative forms of tourism?

## **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

### **Theme 1 - Global and European strategies for plant conservation for 2011-2020: the role of Botanic Gardens.**

*Recognising* that Botanic Gardens have been actively involved in shaping national and international agenda for plant conservation;

Noting that the new Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020 provides an excellent framework for Botanic Gardens’ activities in strategic and practical contributions to plant conservation;

Emphasising that the roles of Botanic Gardens in supporting the GSPC are manifold, from contributions of smaller gardens to single targets to potential contributions to all 16 targets by larger gardens,

the Congress *encourages* all Botanic Gardens to:

- ***Consider appropriate activities to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy to 2020, taking into account new challenges;***
- ***Contact national CBD focal points to ensure that a national GSPC focal point has been appointed and that the activities of Botanic Gardens in support of the GSPC and CBD are recognised by National authorities; and***
- ***Ensure that the data of their living collections are submitted to BGCI’s Plant Search so that indicators of GSPC targets can be measured.***

## **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

### **Theme 2: Strengthening networks for people, plants and botanic gardens.**

*Recalling* that the significance of plant diversity and the importance of its conservation is a message that must be brought to the attention of civil society and policy makers;  
Emphasising that up to date information is a precondition to represent the botanic gardens community, and to respond rapidly and accurately to national, regional and international policymakers;

Recognising the desirability of the international community of Botanic Gardens to have a single representative voice on the world stage; and

Acknowledging that Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the European Consortium of Botanic Gardens provide a focus for unified action as well as a mandate to speak on Botanic Gardens' behalf,  
the *Congress* asks all Botanic Gardens to:

- ***Support early discussion between relevant organisations (BGCI/IABG) to find a way of going forward together;***
- ***Get engaged in collaborative activities of their national networks and through these, the European Consortium of Botanic Gardens ([www.botanicgardens.eu](http://www.botanicgardens.eu));***
- ***Work together in seeking funds for collaborative projects to advance plant conservation and environmental education;***
- ***Optimise capacity building, especially in support of smaller gardens;***
- ***Share, on regional and international levels, best-practice protocols and knowledge of management of ex-situ collections of threatened plants; and***
- ***Ensure that their details are accurate and up to date on BGCI's databases, so that it can be used as a measure of progress by European Botanic Gardens.***

## **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

### **Theme 3 - Plants and people: from myth, history and art to science and culture.**

*Noting* that plants have been important to humankind for thousands of years;  
Welcoming the information obtained during the congress on the historic uses and distribution of plants in Greece providing a clear insight into the spread, distribution and uses of plants in Greece over millennia;

Emphasising that connecting with nature is more important than ever before;

Noting that Botanic Gardens are uniquely positioned to address the growing disconnection between children and nature and to restore the link between people and plants; and  
Recognising the opportunities provided by new technologies to engage with broader audiences

the *Congress recommends* that Botanic Gardens should:

- ***Promote positive stories about activities to restore hope in the conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of plants in Europe;***

- *Share experiences with new technologies between Botanic Gardens;*
- *Seek to engage new audiences that remain unaware of many of the conservation issues faced by plants and ecosystems;*
- *Continue their engagement in educational research and practice;*
- *Collaborate with artists and educators to develop innovative approaches to increase public engagement; and*
- *Utilise stories about traditional, historical and mythical usage of plants to engage audiences.*

## **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

### **Theme 4 - Consider globally, act locally: addressing changing environment.**

*Appreciating* the opportunities to promote the revival of small scale businesses, and the strengthening of local economies throughout Greece and the Mediterranean through agro-tourism initiatives, sustainable harvesting or cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants, as well as through conservation and restoration of native habitats;

Recognising the ongoing and vital role of Botanic Gardens in safeguarding species through ex-situ conservation;

Further recognising the current and increasing threat of and impacts on biodiversity as a result of climate change;

Being aware of the threats posed to biodiversity by invasive alien species; and

Welcoming the Council of Europe's Code of Conduct for Botanic Gardens on Invasive Alien Species as an excellent basis for relevant Botanic Garden initiatives, on environmental issues,

the Congress *encourages* Botanic Gardens to

- *Demonstrate best practice in relation to environmental sustainability both in their day to day work and when constructing new buildings and infrastructure;*
- *Offer expertise to assess environmental impacts of new technical developments;*
- *Create favourable environments for wildlife;*
- *Assist with advice and research to support sustainable livelihoods and economies based upon plant products; and*
- *Be creative in developing new, environment-friendly, plant-based technologies;*

On conservation activities, the Congress *urges* Botanic Gardens to

- *Manage their collections in accordance with an agreed institutional policy, taking into account relevant national and international legislation, guidelines and Codes of Conducts;*
- *Establish or maintain activities in relation to ex-situ activities in support of Target 8 of the GSPC in view of the growing emphasis on restoration projects; and*
- *Stay involved with conservation actions like Plant Microreserves and other in-situ or inter-situs projects;*

In regard to Alien Invasives, the Congress *recommends* that Botanic Gardens

- ***Train their staff to raise awareness and comprehension about the issue of Alien Invasive Species;***
- ***Assess the risk of plants in their collections becoming invasive – develop and implement guidelines, Codes of Conduct, and appropriate practice to prevent the spread of alien species;***
- ***Seek innovative electronic solutions to sharing information on Invasive Alien Species and alerting others to emerging problem taxa; and***
- ***Undertake research on the spread, control, management and risks posed by invasive alien species.***

#### **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

##### **Resolutions on Congress Theme – ABS and the Nagoya Protocol**

*Respecting* that the accessioning, management and exchange of plant material must be carried out in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity; and

Recognising that it presents an important challenge for Botanic Gardens to develop Access and Benefit-sharing agreements for ex-situ collections under the CBD, the Congress *urges* all Botanic Gardens to:

- ***Become familiar with and fully engaged in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Nagoya Protocol and other multi-lateral environmental agreements;***
- ***Seek, in coordination with national networks, to be involved in developments of national regulations on ABS;***
- ***Submit case-studies to their national networks that exemplify both the tangible and intangible benefits shared by BGs with provider countries for incorporation into the updated European Action Plan for Botanic Gardens;***
- ***Make use of systems compliant with the principles of Access and Benefit Sharing;***  
and
- ***Join the International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN) for the exchange of materials between institutions.***

#### **EuroGard VI Congress Conclusions**

##### **Resolutions on the European Botanic Gardens Consortium**

The Congress

- ***welcomes the ongoing valuable support and guidance that is provided by the European Botanic Gardens Consortium;***

- *recognises the important role it provides in supporting and guiding networking, linkages, and practical action amongst European botanic gardens, particularly in the field of plant conservation; and*
- *thanks Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) for its continued support in providing a secretariat for the Consortium.*

Thanks to the host, organisers, and sponsors

- *The Congress congratulates the Island of Chios, and the Greek Botanic Gardens Association on the occasion the inauguration of the Aegean Botanic Garden – a remarkable and noteworthy action to secure the survival and appreciation of the wealth of the flora native to the Aegean region.*
- *The Congress congratulates and thanks the Balkan Botanic Garden of Kroussia, the General Directive of Agricultural Research of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation, DEMETER, the Greek Network of Botanic Gardens, the Advisory Committee, the Scientific Committee, the Organising Committee, the Education, Art and Social Programme Committee and Local Host Committee for all their work in making the congress a great success.*
- *The Congress acknowledges the important role played by the staff of the Balkan Botanic Garden of Kroussia and the members of the European Botanic Gardens Consortium for their work in supporting the programme of the Congress and for contributing to so many aspects of its organisation.*
- *The Congress also expresses its grateful thanks to the Congress Secretariat Artion Ltd for their efficient organisation of the meeting, and to Apivita S.A.; Ari Foods; BGCI/CBD; Chian Cellar (Chiotiko Kelari); Gklavakis Plants; Green Fund; Hellenic Botanical Society; Iris BG; MastihaShop; Nireus S.A.; Scient Act; Stoupakis Chios Distillery S.A.; Tani G.P.; Theofrastos; Vitro Hellas who have all provided such generous financial or other forms of support; and Maria Gerardi-Passali, artist (for the creation of the logo).*