

# Global Tree Specialist Group Newsletter

June 2025

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The Global Tree Specialist Group (GTSG) is entering a new phase in its mission to protect and restore the world's tree diversity. With the launch of our Strategy for 2026–2029, we have a clear, ambitious yet achievable roadmap to guide our efforts.

Now that the strategy is in place, it is time for all of us to reflect on how we can contribute to its implementation. I invite each of you, as active GTSG members, to explore these targets and consider how you can participate. Later this year, I will be reaching out to gather your commitments on which activities you would like to contribute to and how we can ensure these targets are met.

A special thanks to all of you who played a part in developing this new strategic plan. Your input — whether through the initial survey, the strategy meeting in Chicago, or feedback on draft documents — has been invaluable.

Together, we will continue to tackle the urgent challenges ahead, ensuring that trees remain a critical part of the global conservation agenda 🌍🌳

Best wishes,

Malin Rivers

Chair of the Global Tree Specialist Group



## GTSG Strategy 2026–29

The GTSG Strategy for the next quadrennium (2026-2029) has now been finalised. It is an ambitious yet realistic strategy, to enhance conservation of trees globally. This strategy includes 14 key targets and 37 actions across the five components of the IUCN SSC Species Conservation Cycle, all designed to drive meaningful impact in global tree conservation.

- Network – 3 targets (9 actions)
- Assess – 3 targets (8 actions)
- Plan – 2 targets (8 actions)
- Act – 3 targets (11 actions)
- Communicate – 3 targets (10 actions)

The link to the new strategy can be found here: <https://portals.iucn.org/union/node/33486>

## New GTSG Logo

The very talented Eugenia Cordero Schmidt has designed a new updated GTSG logo, as seen here and at the top of this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone that helped feeding into the the design process.

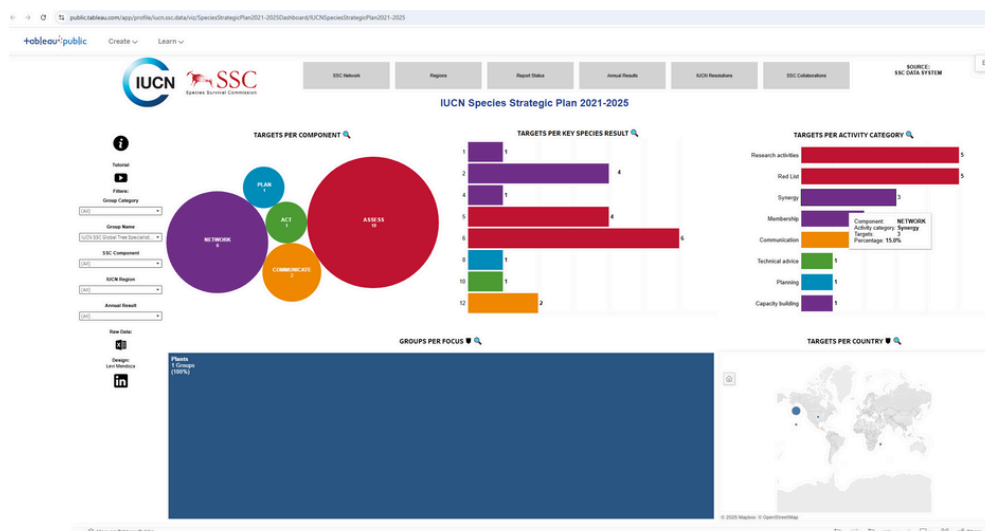
The logo and Powerpoint template are available to download from the [SSC members area](#).



## GTSG Report and visualisation

I am pleased to share with you the [2024-2025 Global Tree Specialist Group Report](#).

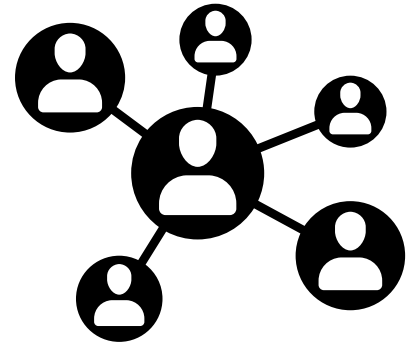
If you prefer to see this information as part of the larger SSC Network, then you can access this data in the [Interactive Dashboard](#) of SSC DATA, the latest product created by the SSC DATA Unit. With this tool, our network and the general public will be able to interact with the data stored in the SSC DATA database. The key features of the dashboard include open access, filters for main categories, interactive charts, and the ability to download information in a spreadsheet.



## Welcome to the new GTSG Members

A warm welcome to the following new GTSG members. We are pleased to have you join the network.

- Jackeline Salazar, Dominican Republic
- Kurt Dreisilker, USA
- Alexander Linan, USA
- Mpho Mathalauga, South Africa
- Vania Pereira, Brazil/USA



## ASSESS: Update from the latest IUCN Red List update 2025.1

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species was updated 27th March to include an additional 892 tree species, bringing the total number of tree assessments published to 47,817. Highlights from the update include many assessments for Cuba, Ecuador and New Zealand.

This latest update also includes assessments for species of *Boswellia* (frankincense trees) on Socotra Island, Yemen. One of the most valuable commodities of the ancient world, indigenous people continue to use the resin and bark of *Boswellia* species in traditional medicine and religious practices. The species are threatened by increased foraging pressure from grazing goats, and more frequent and intense droughts, cyclones, flash floods and landslides. These assessments once again emphasise that tropical islands host the highest proportion of threatened tree species worldwide.

Assessment work continues for species that remain unassessed, as well as updating assessments as needed. If you spot any errors in published tree assessments, please get in touch with Emily Beech, Red List Authority Coordinator ([emily.beech@bgci.org](mailto:emily.beech@bgci.org)).



**GTA**  
Global Tree  
Assessment

## Ambientico – issue on Threatened trees in Costa Rica

A new edition of *Ambientico*, a Costa Rican biodiversity journal, [Árboles amenazados en Costa Rica: hallazgos y estrategias para su conservación](#) (Threatened trees in Costa Rica: findings and strategies for their conservation) features works from several members of the Global Tree Specialist Group. The issue includes articles such as the [Red List of Endemic Trees of Costa Rica](#), with data collated during the Global Tree Assessment, an [overview of current conservation actions](#), as well as specific case studies of conservation action including work on [Quercus insignis](#), [Pleodendron costaricense](#) and [Ocotea monteverdensis](#).





## Spotlight on a GTSG Member Project: View from a student

Rik Lardinois, third-year MSP student at Maastricht University

During my Honours Research Program, I have (had) the privilege of working on the Global Tree Assessment, focusing on the final tree assessments for the tropical plant family Annonaceae. It has been an amazing experience so far!

Under the supervision of Dr Roy Erkens, I have been able to expand my research skills in the world of conservation biology. I've worked on analyzing data from big databases, learning how to interpret it and deal with the challenges that come with it, like recognizing biases in the spatial data. This experience has given me a better understanding of how conservation science is done and the important role that data plays in this field.

One of the coolest aspects of this opportunity is that I can collaborate with experts from all over the world, in various fields related to conservation problems. Throughout the project, I worked with botanists, conservationists, and ecologists, from data analyst experts to experts in fieldwork. This multidisciplinary approach is exactly what I am taught at the Maastricht Science Programme, and now working in the same setting on a real-life conservation problem is really worth it!



It's exciting to see how my contributions, even as a bachelor's student, are part of something bigger. Being involved in a real-world conservation project like the Global Tree Assessment expands my skillset for sure, but even more, it reaffirms that I want to help preserve biodiversity through conservation science!





## Spotlight on a GTSG Member: Cristian Echeverria

My first connection with nature began during elementary school when I participated in a science group and went on excursions to the outskirts of the city. During high school, I joined the ecology group, where, for four years, I learned to interpret ecosystems and developed skills to give talks about ecology to students from various schools in southern Chile. My passion for trees solidified when I studied Forestry Engineering at the Universidad Austral de Chile. Later, I completed a Master's degree focusing on growth patterns of *Nothofagus* in Chile, followed by M.Phil. and Ph.D. studies at the University of Cambridge, UK, centered on understanding the processes of deforestation and fragmentation of temperate forests in Chile.

Before starting my Ph.D., I had the opportunity to work with Adrian Newton and Sara Oldfield in the Global Tree Campaign of UNEP-WCMC and Fauna and Flora. One of the most significant activities we carried out was the restoration of *Araucaria araucana* forests in Chile in 2005, which was featured in a BBC London report.



My connection with BGCI began in 2014 when I invited its Secretary General, Sara Oldfield, to participate in a plant congress in Chile. Since then, we have exchanged experiences related to conservation policy and the evaluation of tree conservation status. In the following years, and to this day, I have established a closer collaboration with BGCI, being invited to participate in the assessment of Chilean trees as part of the Global Tree Assessment. Along with members of my team from the Landscape Ecology Laboratory, we contributed assessments of various Chilean trees for the IUCN Red List. Through this effort, the conservation status of several Chilean species has been recorded globally, highlighting their importance and risk of extinction.



Additionally, it has been a great opportunity to be a founding member of the *Nothofagus* Consortium, which has helped to raise the visibility of this emblematic Southern Hemisphere genus and coordinate efforts with other institutions. This consortium has been pivotal in uniting efforts to ensure the conservation and recognition of *Nothofagus* species across different regions.

My work in species assessment has been a professionally rewarding experience, with a positive impact on the development of conservation policies for Chilean flora. These efforts have been strengthened by the collaboration with BGCI, allowing for more informed, scientifically-based decisions for the preservation of Chile's native threatened species. As a researcher, my work has not only focused on publishing scientific articles but also on contributing to real and effective actions in the conservation and restoration of forests. Having the opportunity to closely study Chilean flora is, without a doubt, a privilege. As Chilean poet Pablo Neruda once said: "He who does not know the Chilean forest does not know this planet."

## Remembering George Schatz

by Sara Oldfield

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of George Schatz a brilliant botanist and conservationist. I first met George in the mid 1990s whilst working on The World List of Threatened Trees. Charlotte Lusty and I hoped to persuade him to work on IUCN Red List Assessments for Madagascan tree species. Initially wary because of lack of detailed information for many of the species, George soon took up the challenge and rapidly became a leading global expert in application of the IUCN Red List categories and criteria for plants. He joined the GTSG when it was formed in 2003 and participated actively over the years.



George was excellent company and it was always a pleasure to meet up with him around the world to talk about plants, family, good times and friendship. His legacy to plant conservation is hugely valued.

<https://annals.mobot.org/index.php/annals/article/view/987>



*Stenanona panamensis* (George Schatz)

## North American Fruit and Nut Tree Crop Wild Relative Conservation Partnership Awards

BGCI-US and the United States Botanic Garden have announced the North American Fruit and Nut Tree Crop Wild Relative (NAFANT CWR) Conservation Partnership Awards. They invite proposals from US-based institutions undertaking conservation work—such as plant exploration, ex situ collections, in situ management, and research—focused on priority fruit and nut tree CWR taxa. Award amounts range from US\$4,000-\$5,000.

Proposals will be accepted until July 15, 2025.

<https://app.sheepcrm.com/bgci/form/68305145e6553823ed0c3612/>

## Spotlight on a Tool: Global Useful Native Trees (GlobUNT)

The Global Useful Native Trees (GlobUNT) is a tree species selection tool that provides scientific data on native tree species for restoration, agroforestry, and conservation. The tool combines native distribution data across 242 countries and territories from GlobalTreeSearch with information on ten categories of human usage documented in the World Checklist of Useful Plant Species. It helps decision makers, conservation practitioners, farmers, and researchers identify the most suitable species to maximize the benefits to local livelihoods and the diversity of native trees.

<https://patspo.shinyapps.io/GlobalUsefulTrees/>



## EDGE Fellowship application open

Are you — or do you know — an early-career conservationist passionate about protecting one of the world's most unique and threatened species? Applications are now open for the EDGE Fellowship 2026, a 28-month programme designed to build conservation leadership where it's needed most.

EDGE Fellows receive funding, training, and mentorship to deliver a two-year project focused on a species from the EDGE species list — species that are both Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered.

You may be eligible to apply if:

- You are working on a species included on the EDGE List,
- You have less than ten years of paid conservation experience, and
- You are a national of the country where your chosen EDGE species occurs.

For more information: <https://www.edgeofexistence.org/edge-fellowship-2026/> and [edge@zsl.org](mailto:edge@zsl.org).

## Tree photo for the cover of the SSC report?

The SSC DATA Unit is inviting us to submit candidate photographs for the cover of the IUCN SSC 2024-2025 Species Report, which will be dedicated to plants.

Below is a list of the technical specifications of the candidate photographs, based on the guidance from our graphic designer:

- 1) Preferably in horizontal format.
- 2) If it has a horizontal format, the minimum height must be 2800 pixels and the minimum width must be 3800 pixels.
- 3) If it has a square format, the minimum size should be 2800 × 2800 pixels.
- 4) Minimum 300 DPI resolution.
- 5) Colour mode must be RGB.

If you would like to submit a photograph please send me ([malin.rivers@bgci.org](mailto:malin.rivers@bgci.org)) your contribution (including credit information) by 30 June 2025.



## Keep in Touch

Please let us know what you have been up to and share news with the Group

Drop us an email ([redlist@bgci.org](mailto:redlist@bgci.org))

Follow the Global Tree Specialist Group on Bluesky [@globaltreesg.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/globaltreesg.bsky.social)

Follow Global Tree Specialist Group on X [@GTA\\_GTSG](https://twitter.com/GTA_GTSG)

Check out the [GTA website](https://www.globaltreeassessment.org/) for updates

