

Plants for the Planet


Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Our strategic plan



BGCI

Plants for the Planet



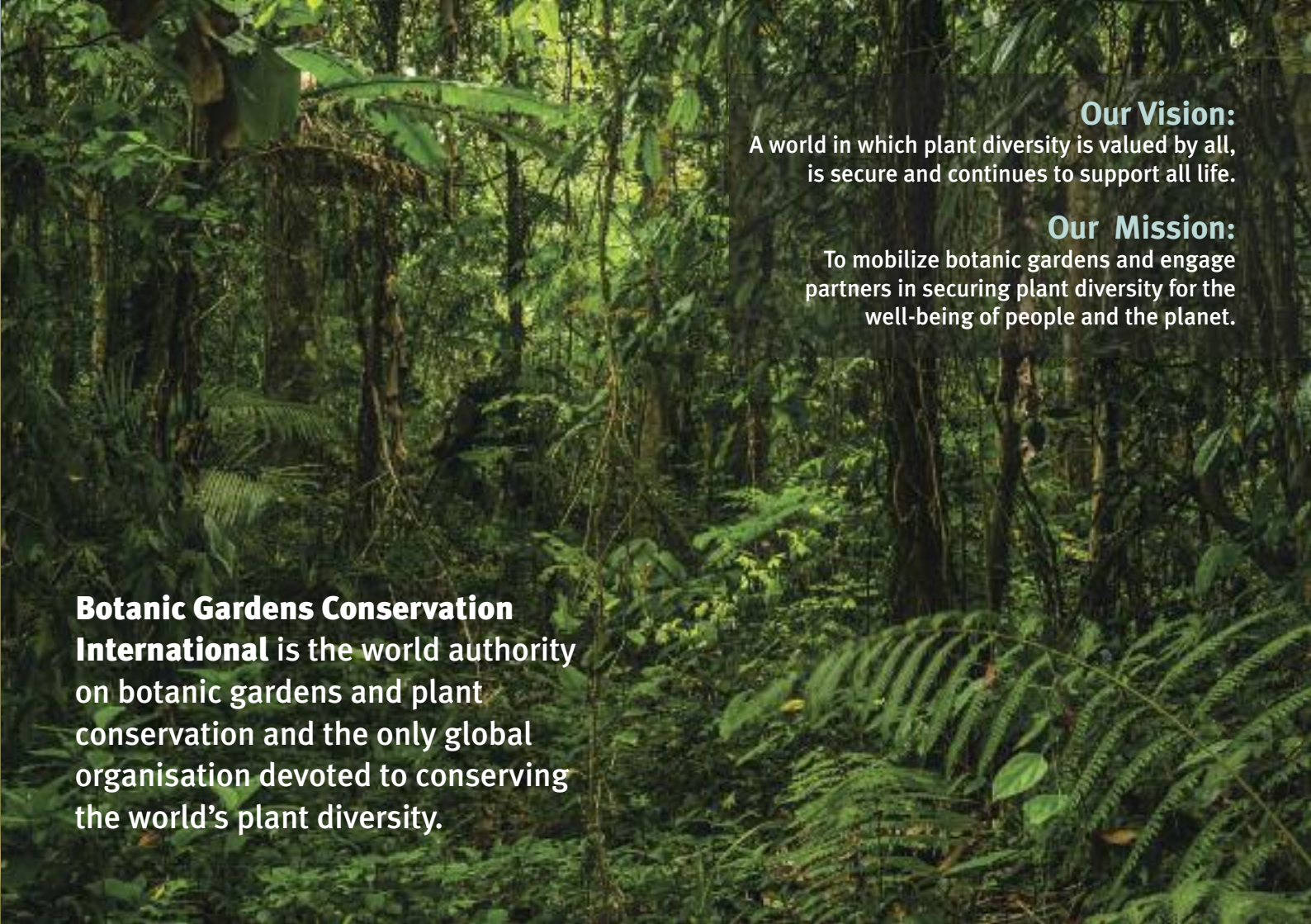


“ Humanity is in uncharted territory, with nature on the retreat and too many people distanced from its benefits. The efforts of botanic gardens to tackle these issues directly and to empower their visitors to shape a better future are greatly amplified through the powerful international network that is BGCI. ”

Professor Stephen Blackmore
Chairman, BGCI

“ BGCI’s greatest strength lies in our worldwide network of botanic gardens – the true ‘champions’ of plant diversity. ”

Sara Oldfield
Secretary General, BGCI



Our Vision:
A world in which plant diversity is valued by all,
is secure and continues to support all life.

Our Mission:
To mobilize botanic gardens and engage
partners in securing plant diversity for the
well-being of people and the planet.

**Botanic Gardens Conservation
International** is the world authority
on botanic gardens and plant
conservation and the only global
organisation devoted to conserving
the world's plant diversity.

The importance of plants

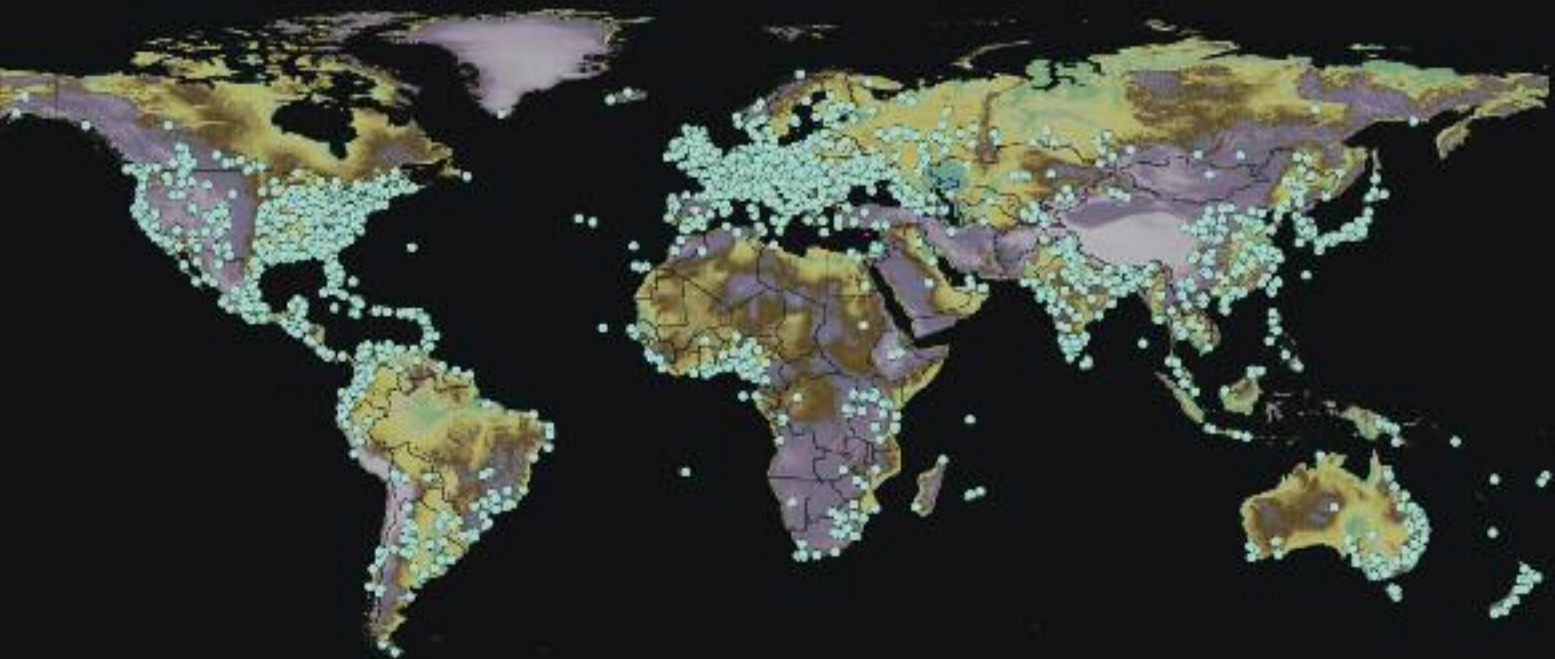
Wild plant communities underpin the web of life and the ecosystem services we all depend upon. Plants supply our food, medicines and raw materials whilst renewing oxygen in the air we breathe and maintaining the quality and quantity of our water supplies.

Worldwide, over half a billion people who live in poverty depend directly on wild plant resources to meet their daily subsistence needs. Yet, plant diversity is being lost on a global scale with wild places shrinking and plant species facing extinction at an ever-increasing rate. This affects us all, impacting livelihoods, the economy and the global environment.



Plants under threat

At least a quarter of the world's plant species are threatened with extinction – a figure that will increase significantly as the global climate changes. Fortunately, botanic gardens already grow one third of all known plants making them key players in plant conservation, environmental sustainability and habitat restoration. Botanic gardens carry out vital research and conserve plants in their living collections, seed banks and in the wild. Collectively they engage, inform and educate more than 250 million visitors annually, with the potential to reach even more people and wider audiences. They are remarkable organisations, cherished by the communities they serve.



BGCI provides a global voice for all botanic gardens:
championing and celebrating their inspiring work.

We are the world's largest plant conservation network, active in over 100 countries,
and we want to share our strategy with you.

The story so far

BGCI has been the voice of global plant conservation for over 25 years. We played a leading role in developing and implementing the UN's Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), signed up to by over 180 governments. We have helped establish many new botanic gardens and provided training in every aspect of the work of botanic gardens from management to conservation and education. We have documented and channelled information on the great diversity of plants, including endangered species, medicinal plants and crop wild relatives, held in the world's botanic gardens and seed banks. Our innovative conservation and education projects have been carried out locally in partnership with botanic gardens and other agencies in more than 30 countries.



Recent Achievements

- Our world-leading databases record details of over **3,000 botanic gardens** and the names of over **350,000 plants** held by more than **1,000 botanic gardens** and **seed banks** including many plants facing extinction in the wild.
- We have carried out conservation assessments for over **3,000 tree species** in the wild and **enabled priority conservation actions**, as members of the IUCN Red List Partnership.
- Over the past five years, we have supported the conservation of over **30 of the world's most threatened tree species**, initiated **3 habitat conservation projects** and **7 community-based restoration projects**, working in Latin America, Central and SE Asia, China and Africa.
- Recently, we have delivered teacher training in **11 European countries** through a consortium of **17 partners**. One project promoting inquiry based science education trained over **800 teachers** and **educators** reaching more than **16,000 students** across Europe.
- Through our Communities in Nature initiative we have worked with botanic gardens in the UK to **increase their social relevance**. We are now taking the lessons we learned out to the wider botanic garden community.
- The **world series of congresses** for botanic garden professionals organized by BGCI, held most recently in China, Ireland and New Zealand, is highly acclaimed, as are our **education congresses**.

Looking to the Future

The biodiversity of the planet is declining, too many wild plant species are threatened with extinction and current efforts to protect them are inadequate. More than half of humanity now lives in urban areas, leading to a growing disconnection from nature and decreasing health and well-being. BGCI is committed to tackling these issues and to scaling up its efforts. Responding to international biodiversity policy, BGCI will continue to focus on securing a future for threatened plant species and their habitats whilst engaging with wider audiences and strengthening the contribution of botanic gardens to ecological restoration.

BGCI has three main objectives:

- Sustaining plants and wild places;
- Connecting people with nature;
- Finding natural solutions for sustainable livelihoods and human well-being.

Our strategy for the next 5 years sets out the key actions we will take towards these objectives and we will monitor our progress against clearly defined targets.



Objective 1

Sustaining wild plants and places

We aim to increase the number of threatened plant species actively protected through botanic garden conservation programmes, including at least 250 globally threatened tree species. By offering membership to every botanic garden we will increase the reach of our network and the impact of our training and information resources to support plant conservation and ecological restoration. The restoration of at least 25 degraded sites will be underway as a step towards the overall goal of 100 restored ecosystems over 20 years.



Actions

- Develop BGC's global inventory of botanic gardens and their plant collections (GardenSearch and PlantSearch databases) leveraging their value as an *ex situ* conservation and restoration planning tool and broadening their appeal to new audiences.
- Assess the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation status of priority plant groups including at least 6,000 trees, crop wild relatives and medicinal plants and ensure prioritised conservation efforts.
- Gather and share information on the impacts of climate change on plant diversity, including monitoring and assessing the impacts and spread of harmful invasive plants, pests and diseases.
- Undertake ecological restoration at priority sites in different ecosystems around the world, demonstrating best practice, with community participation and livelihood issues addressed.
- Strengthen the Global Trees Campaign ensuring the *ex situ* conservation of at least 250 globally threatened tree species and conservation action for their habitats.
- Strengthen commitment to seed banking at local and regional scales.
- Develop a new programme for the conservation of arid land species.
- Organise staff exchanges and in-service training for young botanic garden scientists especially those in developing countries.
- Facilitate regional network meetings and organise a Global Botanic Gardens Congress to enhance the sharing of ideas, technical resources and good practices.

Tree conservation and forest restoration in Africa

Forest cover across Africa is decreasing rapidly and native tree species that provide medicines, food and timber are threatened with extinction. There is a great need to step up conservation of native tree species and ensure they are included in forest restoration efforts. Botanic gardens in Africa hold valuable species knowledge and propagation expertise and can play a vital role in addressing this issue. BGCI is supporting practical work led by botanic gardens in Kenya and Uganda to test native species' performance in forest restoration plots and prioritise native species that are fast growing and provide maximum benefit to local people. We are developing new projects to expand this initiative and work with additional botanic gardens elsewhere in Africa. We are forging new partnerships between African botanic gardens, government agencies and the private sector in securing a future for Africa's native trees and forests.

Support from the Ashden Trust is gratefully acknowledged.



“Deforestation and forest degradation alone will likely cost the global economy more than losses in the 2008 financial crisis.”

UNEP, 2012

Objective 2

Connecting people with nature

As a result of our work, all botanic gardens will be able to access our resources in support of public engagement programmes that help to reconnect people with nature. In this way we aim to further increase the relevance of botanic gardens to the communities they serve.



Actions

- Develop the capacity and commitment of botanic gardens to become more socially relevant through research, training, networking, disseminating best practice, and developing partnership projects.
- Develop new projects to encourage gardens to engage effectively with the public by applying new methods of science communication and citizen science and increasing public participation in addressing environmental issues.
- Develop powerful education and communication materials to explain the connection between plant diversity and critical issues such as food security, nutrition, water and energy security and climate change.
- Disseminate best practice in public engagement with plants and plant conservation through publications and on-line resources.
- Run training courses on outdoor and informal science education.
- Inform public engagement practice in botanic gardens through conducting and publishing research and evaluation.
- Organise two international education congresses that bring together experts to share skills and build capacity.



Communities in Nature

Botanic gardens are already running some truly inspiring community projects in biodiversity conservation and climate change action. They are simultaneously reaching out to new audiences and helping to tackle problems of social exclusion. To support this work BGCi has undertaken research and funded and trained botanic gardens to run innovative projects. These include teaching young people how to be more self-sufficient and grow their own vegetables, developing community groups' skills in sustainable woodland management and establishing a national community plant collection of marigolds. The projects have been successful in engaging communities with environmental issues and increasing community cohesion. At an individual level participants have gained practical skills, increased their self-confidence, aspirations and well-being. Increasingly they value the relevance of botanic gardens to their lives.

Support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is gratefully acknowledged.



“ I knew that there are things that are going extinct, but I didn't think much about it; you just assume that someone else is going to do something..... For me it is great that Bristol Zoo Gardens are saying well they are going to see if people in sheltered accommodation would like to do it. ”

**Participant of the Bristol Community
Plant Collection Project**

Objective 3

Finding natural solutions for sustainable livelihoods and human well-being

As a result of our work, the role of wild plants in supporting livelihoods and providing ecosystem services will be more widely understood.

Actions

- Carry out research on the economic and subsistence value and conservation status of wild plants for provision of timber, medicines, food, spices and flavourings, cosmetics, and other raw materials in support of the GSPC.
- Raise awareness of issues related to access to wild plant resources and the sharing of benefits from their use. Develop training resources on the implementation of related international provisions, in particular the Nagoya Protocol of the CBD.
- Identify wild plant species that have critical livelihood importance and, drawing on the skills of botanic gardens, work with partners including the private sector to enhance sustainable supply chains for these species.
- Develop an on-line resource that documents successful models of botanic gardens working with local people to improve their livelihoods through plant resource-based value chains.
- Develop projects that support communities to improve their livelihoods by sustainably utilising their native plant resources.



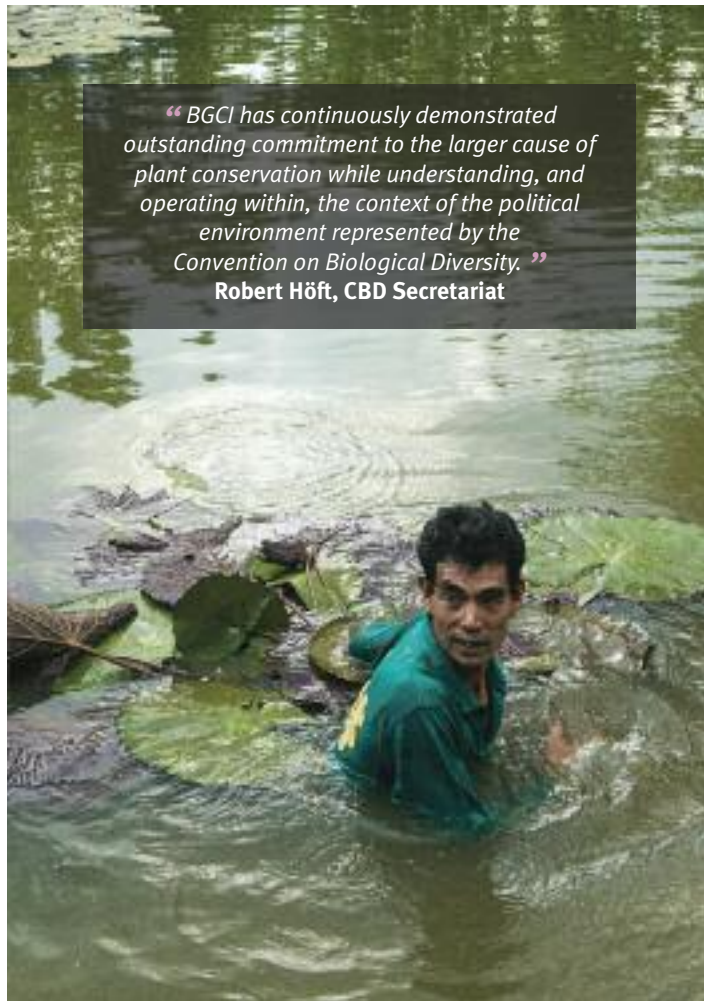
Stephen Blackmore



The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)

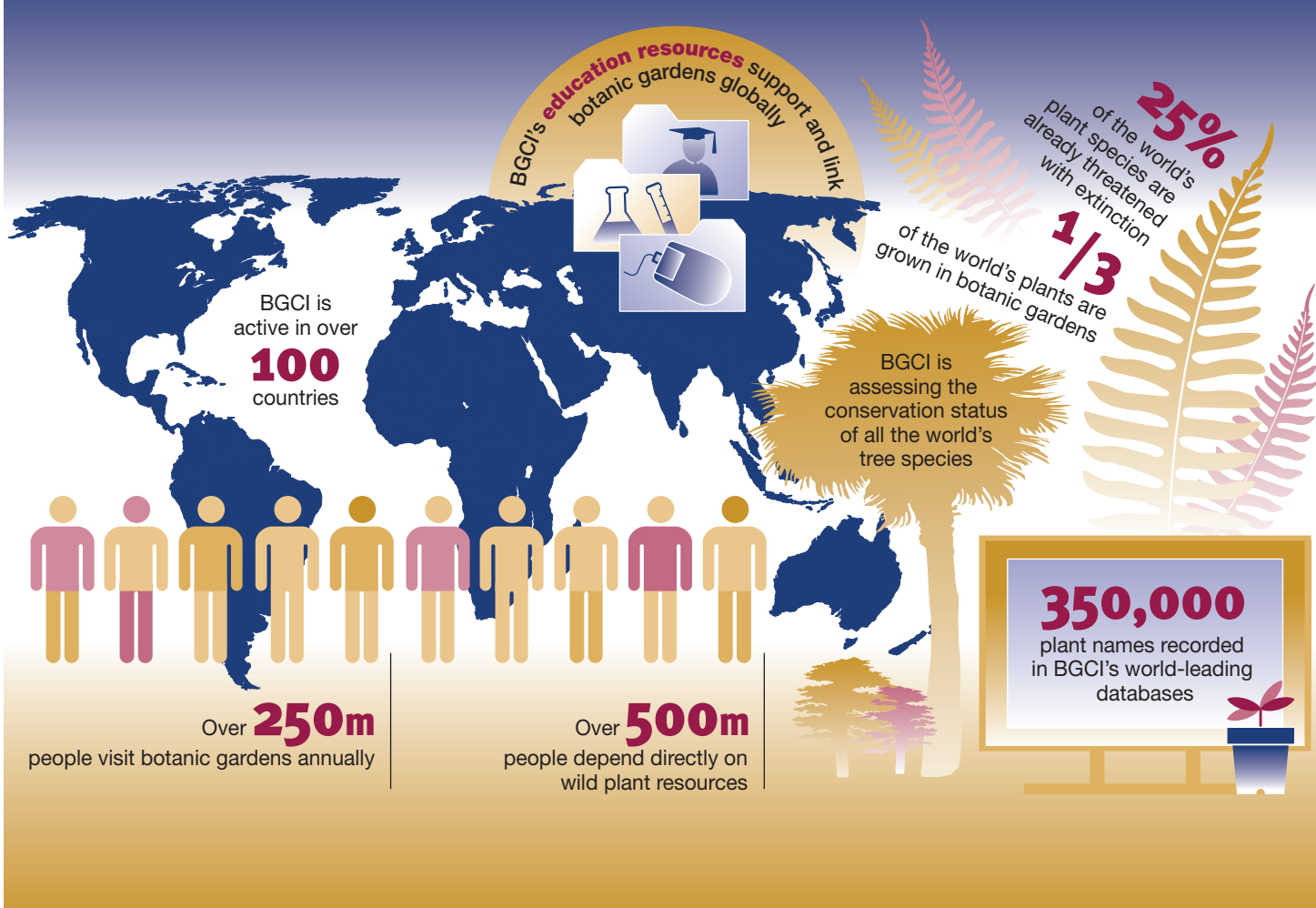
The GSPC, which is a programme of the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), consists of 16 plant conservation targets to be achieved by 2020. The GSPC provides a framework for working together at local, national and international levels to understand, conserve and sustainably use the world's plant diversity while ensuring that relevant benefits are shared. BGCI is recognised by the CBD Secretariat as the lead implementing agency for the GSPC. We have developed tools and resources and delivered training around the world. The implementation of the GSPC supports the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund and the Rufford Foundation is gratefully acknowledged.



“BGCI has continuously demonstrated outstanding commitment to the larger cause of plant conservation while understanding, and operating within, the context of the political environment represented by the Convention on Biological Diversity.”

Robert Höft, CBD Secretariat



BGCI's **education resources** support and link botanic gardens globally

BGCI is active in over **100** countries



Over **250m** people visit botanic gardens annually

Over **500m** people depend directly on wild plant resources

25% of the world's plant species are already threatened with extinction
1/3 of the world's plants are grown in botanic gardens

BGCI is assessing the conservation status of all the world's tree species

350,000 plant names recorded in BGCI's world-leading databases

Sustaining and growing our programmes

BGCI is at an exciting stage. We plan to scale up our efforts and broaden our scope in response to the major environmental challenges posed by the continuing loss of the plant diversity which is so fundamental to the future of humanity. We have a strong track record and a depth of experience in plant conservation and environmental education on which to build. Our approach is to work in partnership and our greatest strength is our global network of botanic gardens. We will use this to maximise our outreach potential, building visibility and influencing change.

Identifying new sources of funding will be critical to ensure that we can deliver the ambitious programme set out in our strategy. This will enable us to strengthen our small catalytic team so that we can work with our global network to maximise impact.



Please support our work to secure plant diversity for people and the planet.

Visit www.bgci.org in order to:

- Become a member of BGCI;
- Make a donation to our projects;
- Support training for young conservationists.

You can follow our activities on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/bgci>) and by subscribing online to our e-bulletin.

“BGCI is recognized as the leading plant conservation organization in the world, supporting and coordinating the international network of botanic gardens and arboreta in concerted efforts to save plants from extinction.”

**Dr. Gerard T. Donnelly, President and CEO
The Morton Arboretum**



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