GGI-Gardens Newsletter

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News, highlights, & opportunities from the botanic garden community

Global Genome Initiative for Gardens is an international partnership dedicated to collecting and preserving genome quality tissues for all species of plants on Earth

We're excited to announce the 2023 GGI-Gardens Partner Awardees!

Last December, we announced the opportunity for six gardens to become GGI-Gardens Award Partners in 2023, made possible by the support of the U.S. Botanic Garden and BGCI. In response, we received proposals from 16 countries around the world! We were inspired to read about projects working to safeguard endemic species, build collections of medicinal plants, and survey highly diverse but understudied remote landscapes. The proposals were so competitive, we were able to secure funding to support an additional four awards, bringing the total to 10 Awards from 10 different countries.

Institution (Alphabetical)	**Country**
Botanical Garden of Medellín	Colombia
Centre for Plant Medicine Research	Ghana
Centro de Investigación Científica de Yucatán A.C .	Mexico
Inala Jurassic Garden	Australia
Integrated Resource Management Association	Benin
Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute	India
Jardim Botânico do Recife	Brazil
Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability, Bethlehem University	Palestine
The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens	United States
University of British Columbia Botanical Garden	Canada

We look forward to working with our seven new GGI-Gardens Partners, as well as three previously awarded Partners with the capacity to collect even more novel taxa in addition to their impressive contributions from past projects.

Contact GGI-Gardens:

Email: mgostel@brit.org, ggi@brit.org /
Online: GGI-Gardens Website /
Twitter: #GGIGardens

GGI-Gardens Award Partner Profile

Botanical Research Center's Award Project Collection Totals:

Samples: 812
Families: 110
Genera: 236*
Species: 462*

*ID ongoing, expected to increase

A photo taken by Dr. Joeri Strijk of the splendid flowers of *Disepalum cornatum* (Annonaceae), a specimen collected by his team on Bukit Teraja

Botanical Research Center of Universiti Brunei Darussalam

A relatively new garden established in 2018, the Botanical Research Center of Brunei at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam is the first botanical garden of Brunei Darussalam, a nation located on the northern coast of the island of Borneo in southeast Asia. In 2021, they initiated their GGI-Gardens Partner Award project to extend their garden's ex-situ capacity and collections of endangered trees and ferns native to Borneo.

Due to the nature of their targeted taxa, it was clear from the start that successful identification and sampling in the forest would offer biological (difficulties in identification when sterile) and physical challenges (many primary forest trees are beyond the reach of even the longest collecting poles). In addition to sites where target species were inventoried previously, project P.I. Dr. Joeri Strijk selected less accessible sites that had not been the focus of previous collecting efforts. Although these remote sites allowed for the documentation and sampling of lesser known species, they also offered logistical challenges, especially for hauling and refreshing the dry ice for tissue samples.

Specimens recovered contained many botanical surprises, such as rare Bruneian species of Annonaceae and Lauraceae, several of which they were fortunate to encounter with flowers and fruits. They also encountered new populations of rare ferns that offered novel additions to the garden.

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Dr. Cicuzza looks on as they entered 'the long night': after a full day of climbing and sampling on Bukit Teraja, 71 samples awaited pressing after dinner at their longhouse.

Upcoming Events

On The Horizon: Looking to the Future of Plant Conservation
Center for Plant Conservation
National Meeting
04-06 May 2023
Desert Botanical Garden
Phoenix, AZ USA

IX World Magnolia Symposium
World Magnolia Association for Conservation, A. C., & the Global Conservation Consortium for Magnolia
Symposium & Conservation Workshop
29 May-03 June 2023
Siguatepeque, Comayagua, Honduras

New Horizons: Rising from Roots
American Public Gardens Assoc.
Annual Conference
05-08 June 2023
Omni Fort Worth Hotel
Fort Worth, TX USA

GGBN Annual Conference
Global Genome Biodiversity Network
International Conference
17-20 October 2023
Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes
Aguascalientes, Mexico

GCC
Global Conservation Consortia

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Major tree families such as Annonaceae, Lauraceae, Fagaceae and Dipterocarpaceae are exceptionally rich in tropical Asia (both at generic and at species levels) and pose significant challenges to field botanists, lacking an extensive set of diagnostic characters to support rapid field identification of sterile specimens. Trying to collect two kinds of tissue samples and herbarium specimens with limited resources and time put pressure on Dr. Strijk's team, with the success of a day's work depending on their site and unpredictable encounters while searching for target species. In his words: "Not surprisingly, having a skilled and efficient field team that is dedicated to being out in the field, collecting valuable data, and that strives to make the endeavor an enjoyable and successful one is vital. I'd like to commend my team members and field assistants for all their efforts and dedication to the project, and would like to thank the funders for supporting our project over the past year."

To botanize is to smell everything: Dr. Strijk and local forest specialist Mr. Arifin evaluate the scent of a Lauraceae wood fragment.

Resources

Global Conservation Consortia (GCC)
Coordinated by BGCI, the GCC is a network of groups of institutions and experts working collaboratively to develop and implement conservation strategies for priority threatened plant groups. So far, there are Consortia for the following taxa: Acer Cycads Dipterocarps Magnolia Erica Nothofagus Oak Rhododendron