

Botanic Gardens and Zoos -- Synergies for the future

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), an international NGO was founded in 1987, to link botanic gardens as a co-operating global network for effective plant conservation. BGCI, provide technical guidance, data and support for botanic gardens around the world, and now includes over 500 member institutions in 112 countries, all working together to implement a worldwide Botanic Gardens Conservation Strategy for plant conservation.

BGCI publishes ROOTS, an attractive magazine with summaries in three languages. The current issue (Vol. 1, No. 2, 2004) is devoted to the relationship between botanic gardens and zoos.

This is a very timely issue of the magazine and the issue as such. The new World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy which was approved by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums just on 4 November 2004 includes several references to partnerships with botanical gardens.

There is an article in the current issue of ROOTS entitled Indian Zoological and Botanical Gardens : historical perspectives and the way forward by S. Walker, A. Pal, B. Rathinasabapathy and R. Manikam. (For a xerox copy of this article, please write a request to ZOO and send Rs. 10 in stamps. A short excerpt has been included in this issue of ZP in the next two pages). This article traces the development of zoos in India and links Indian zoos and botanic gardens in several instances where they have been combined, and also highlights the uniquely Indian contribution to zoo design of the forest departments' invention, the "biological park". This article also describes the new botanic garden coming up in Coimbatore which is actually the first stage of a biological park focusing only on species of plants and animal from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve NBR.

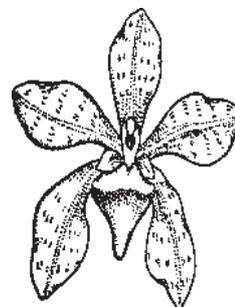
Other articles include : From Menageries to Master Plans: linking the botanical with the zoological; Taking a Holistic approach to environmental education; Plan education in zoos; From the lion's cage : a new education programme at Munda Wanga Environment Park, Gondwana connection: partnerships for learning, Conservation Education : the value of training, Should botanic gardens keep animals as exhibits ? We are trying to get some more copies of the important issue from BGCI and if we do, you can order the whole magazine. You can also write to BGCI at <info@bgci.org>.

A short note published in Cuttings (a newsletter of BGCI, Vol. 1(3) October 2004) about the recent International Zoo Educator Association reinforces the growing synergy between zoos and botanic gardens and it is followed by some more information about BGCI and its work in India and elsewhere.



Plants are important in zoos too

There seems to be a growing interest in the potential synergies between the work of botanical and zoological gardens – especially when it comes to achieving their mutual goals of biodiversity conservation and environmental education.



The International Zoo Educator Association's congress 'Inspiring stewardship through conservation education in a multi-cultural and intergenerational approach', held in Hong Kong last month, included a workshop from BGCI on the vital role zoo educators can play in supporting the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), Susan Gendron, the director of zoological Operations and Education Division from the hosting Ocean park Corporation, said about the conference "The "One approach fits all" is not the most effective way to ensure our educational and conservation messages are well received. Nowadays, we must take a multicultural approach in order to inspire the public's support for our zoos and aquariums and our important educational and conservational work". This may be considered to be true in botanic gardens as much as zoos.

In relation to plant conservation, the Global Strategy for plant Conservation (GSPC) is already proving to be a useful tool for zoos as well as botanic gardens. Bristol Zoo Gardens in the UK have used the GSPC to redefine their plant collections strategy and are now planning their first new plant exhibit, a biodiversity garden, in this line with this new GSPC-influenced strategy.

A number of useful case studies of zoo-garden synergies are provided in the latest issue of ROOTS, BGCI's education review.

Notes:

Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)
A strategy that has been developed to halt the current and continuing loss of plant diversity. The strategy consists of 16 outcome oriented targets to be achieved by 2010. The GSPC was adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002.
Further information: www.bgci.org/conservation/strategy.html

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