

Report on 3rd Global Botanic Gardens Congress Wuhan, China



Right: Opening Ceremony of the 3GBGC
(Photo: BGCI)

The 3rd Global Botanic Garden Congress (3GBGC) held in Wuhan, China from April 16-20, 2007 was extremely successful. The Congress provided a forum for 954 delegates from botanic gardens in 67 countries to consider matters of mutual importance and concern for global plant conservation. The scientific programme included 4 plenary sessions, 42 symposia with a total of 202 oral and 145 poster presentations. The Congress also included many spectacular social events such as the Welcome Reception and the BGCI and WBG Anniversary Celebration in the Wuhan Botanical Garden, the Congress banquet and acrobatic display by the Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe and a one-day tour of Wuhan.

BGCI and all those who attended the Congress are extremely grateful to the hosts of the Congress: the Wuhan Botanical Garden and the co-organizers: the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Hubei Provincial

Government, the Wuhan Municipal Government and the State Forestry Administration for making the Congress such a success. The Congress organization was faultless and everyone was made to feel very welcome. Wuhan was an excellent venue and the overseas delegates were very pleased to have the opportunity to visit China, which for many was their first visit.

The main aim of the Congress was to review the contributions of botanic gardens to the *Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* (GSPC) (CBD, 2003) through the implementation of the 2010 Botanic Garden Targets (Wyse Jackson, 2004). There were 12 plenary addresses which addressed the themes of the GSPC and the parallel sessions were developed to highlight the contribution of botanic gardens to the most relevant targets of the GSPC. The moderator of each session documented the key points: 1) the present status; 2) the gaps and/or barriers; and 3) suggestions for future

work. The conclusions were then given at the closing plenary session and can be found on the BGCI website. This review will help provide a framework and guidance for the work of botanic gardens for the period 2007-2010 and beyond. It has also been included in the in-depth review of the implementation of the GSPC (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/3) and presented to the twelfth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 12) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Paris at the beginning of July. BGCI is very grateful to the volunteers who presented the conclusions for each theme: Tim Entwisle (Botanic Gardens Trust, Australia) Understanding and documenting plant diversity; Kayri Havens (Chicago Botanic Garden, USA) Conserving plant diversity; Suzanne Sharrock (BGCI) Using plant diversity sustainably; Li Mei, (Nanjing Botanic Garden Mem. Sun Yat-Sen, China) Promoting education and awareness about plant diversity and Stella Simiyu (BGCI/CBD Secretariat, Kenya) GSPC overview.

One of the most valuable aspects of an international congress is the opportunity for delegates to meet and share experiences and develop future collaboration. This was done informally and also formally through regional network meetings: East Asia Botanic Gardens Network (EABGN) chaired by Yong Shik Kim (Korean Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta



(KABGA); Asia Pacific Botanic Garden Network Meeting chaired by Philip Moors (Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, Australia); African Botanic Gardens Network (ABGN) chaired by Christopher Dalzell (Coordinator, ABGN); North American Partnership for Plant Conservation (NAPPC) chaired by David Galbraith (Chair, NAPPC); Latin American & Caribbean Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta (ALCJB) chaired by Alberto Gómez Mejía (President, ALCJB) and the inaugural meeting of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) convened by Chandrakant Salunkhe (Krishna Mahavidyalaya, India).

A congress also provides an opportunity to attend training workshops and these were very popular. Six training workshops were held on the Sunday before the Congress attended by a total of 173 people on the following topics: Efficient seed preservation, Translocation of threatened plants, Education for sustainable development a step-by-step process for botanic garden educators, Plant records for the management of *ex situ* living collections, New internet communication tools and Red listing: why is it important? BGCI is very grateful to the facilitators for these useful workshops.

BGCI would like to thank the staff of our partner organizations particularly Professor Hongwen Huang, Director of Wuhan Botanic Garden whose vision was translated into such an outstanding Congress. BGCI would also like to thank the Deputy Directors of Wuhan Botanic Garden Tianquan Xu and Junjie Gong and their staff who worked so tirelessly with the co-organizers and National Organizing Committee to make Congress run so smoothly. BGCI is also extremely grateful to Xuejun Zhang who headed the Congress Secretariat and her staff Yinzhu Tan and Lina Chen for



their work in coordinating the venues, hotels, congress materials, social event, caterers, transport, tours and all the many tasks associated with a congress and for registering the delegates with such efficiency and patience. On behalf of the delegates, BGCI would also like to thank the smiling and helpful volunteers who made the Congress such a memorable event.

BGCI staff are very grateful to the Chair of the BGCI Board, Baroness Walmsley for attending the Congress and speaking on the behalf of BGCI and to other Board members Peter Raven, Steve Hopper, David Bramwell, Stephen Blackmore, Peter Wyse Jackson and Julian Stanning for their support. BGCI would like to take this opportunity to thank Anle Tieu (former BGCI China Programme Coordinator) who contributed a great deal to the organisation of the Congress.

A BGCI International Advisory Council was held attended by Chin See Chung, Maite Delmas, Timothy Entwisle, David Galbraith, Alberto Gómez-Mejía, Esteban Hernández Bermejo, Hongwen Huang, Angela Leiva, Jan Rammeloo, Philippe Richard, Annie Lane and Heiki Tamm.

The Congress was well covered by the local and national press and media. Internationally, it was covered by China Dialogue (<http://www.chinadialogue.net>) and news of the Congress was posted on the websites of BGCI and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (<http://english.cas.ac.cn/eng2003/news/detailnewsb.asp?info=26509>).

A personal flavour was given by bloggers, Pam Allenstein (<http://publicgardens.wordpress.com/>) and Elizabeth Haegele (<http://lizstripto.china.blogspot.com/2007/04/3rd-global-botanic-gardens-congress.html>).

Delegates from 12 countries and BGCI staff were supported to attend the Congress by the HSBC *Investing in Nature* Programme, Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa for which

BGCI is very grateful. The Congress Secretariat supported 31 scholars from 16 countries which was a very important contribution. The East Asia Botanic Gardens Network (EABGN) meeting was generously supported by the Mitsubishi Corporation and through this support two scholars from Mongolia and two from North Korea were able to attend the EABGN meeting and the Congress.

BGCI intends to distribute a CD of the Proceedings and post them on the BGCI website.

Finally, BGCI are very grateful to all the delegates who participated in the meeting to ensure that the Congress achieved its aims and provided a lasting legacy for the botanic garden community through the network links fostered around the world.

References

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- ➔ Wyse Jackson, P., 2004. Developing international targets for botanic gardens in conservation: a consultation document. *BGJournal* **1(1)**: 4-6. <http://www.bgci.org> accessed 4th July, 2007.

Etelka Leadlay
Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Descanso House, 199 Kew Road
Richmond, Surrey TW9 3BW U.K.
E-mail: Etelka.Leadlay@bgci.org
Internet: <http://www.bgci.org>

Far left:
 Sara Oldfield,
 Secretary
 General, BGCI
 (Photo: BGCI)

Left: Professor
 Hongwen
 Huang, Director,
 Wuhan Botanic
 Garden
 (Photo: BGCI)

Below:
 The 3GBGC
 Welcome
 Reception in the
 Wuhan Botanic
 Garden
 (Photo: BGCI)

