2012

Botanical Gardens: Driving Plant Conservation Law

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kjeanrl/vol5/iss1/2
I. INTRODUCTION

The international botanical garden community is the largest plant conservation network in existence. Botanical gardens around the world collect endangered plants, save their genetic materials, and share germplasms, which are collections of organisms’ genetic resources. In order to preserve endangered, threatened, and rare plants, botanical gardens must be able to collect wild plant materials and transfer them across international borders. Federal and state laws in the United States and international regimes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), affect the actions that botanical gardens can take. Botanical gardens in the United States and around the world have enthusiastically adopted the CBD’s principles of Access and Benefits Sharing (ABS), with many American botanical gardens creating their own ABS policies in the absence of the United States’ ratification of the CBD. Botanical gardens have also played a role in crafting global conservation policy, drafting the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) in 2002. The GSPC was the first specific conservation strategy developed under the CBD. In addition, botanical gardens helped revise the GSPC in 2010. While the CBD has made it more difficult for botanical gardens to collect and share...
wild plant materials, the botanical garden community is actively involved in attempts to revise the CBD to facilitate scientific and conservation efforts that do not bring commercial gain.

II. PLANTS UNDER THREAT AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

Plants make their own food using solar energy – no animal can accomplish this feat. Consequently, plants are regarded as the foundation of all animal life. All animals depend on plants for energy. About 270,000 species of plants live on our planet. Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) estimates that one in eight plants are threatened with extinction. Threats to plants include habitat loss and degradation, competition with introduced invasive species, overexploitation, and climate change. Losses of individual species can dramatically alter the composition of ecosystems, affecting animals and other plants that live in the ecosystem. As of October 2012, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service listed 800 plants and lichens as endangered or threatened in the U.S. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN) Red List included 14,582 plants assessed at “vulnerable” or worse.

Protecting and monitoring those plants is a massive undertaking. Botanical gardens are doing what they can, growing plants in living collections and sharing information with one another to ensure that some rare and endangered plant taxa continue to exist as their wild habitats disappear. Botanical gardens are also actively involved in the formulation

12 Id.
15 Id.
16 Id.
17 Habitat Loss, supra note 13.
and application of national and international laws that regulate the collection and conservation of plants.  

A. What are Botanical Gardens?

Botanical gardens are museums of plant life, collections-based institutions similar to natural history museums, zoos, and aquariums. While most botanical gardens function as public parks and pleasure gardens, they are distinguished from those institutions by their scientific, research, and conservation missions. There are approximately 2,500 botanical gardens around the world, including over 350 in North America, over 500 in Europe, and over 200 in southeast Asia, mostly in China and India.

BGCI lists several criteria that most botanic gardens meet in whole or in part:

1. some degree of permanence;
2. a scientific basis for collections;
3. scientific documentation and labeling of collections, including information about origins, if wild;
4. monitoring plants in collections;
5. exchanging seeds, plant materials, and information with other institutions;
6. engaging in scientific or horticultural research on plants in collections and in herbaria; and
7. open to the public and providing information to visitors.

Botanical gardens contain “living collections”, groups of plants grown for particular purposes. Common organizing principles for collections include geography, taxonomy, ecology, and conservation status. Other botanical gardens are organized by themes such as medicinal plants, crops, butterfly gardens, or carnivorous plants. Collections can be

23 Dosmann, supra note 2, at 209.
24 Id.
25 Id.
26 Id.
28 Dosmann, supra note 2 at 209; see also Living Collections, supra note 27.
permanent or temporary and can be used both to showcase plant diversity and for specific research or educational purposes. 29

Botanical gardens have a history of combined roles as scientific institutions and tourist destinations. The first botanical garden, built in Padua in 1545, was originally used for scientific and medical research on plant-based medicines. 30 In the 17th and 18th centuries, people began visiting private gardens owned by the wealthy; visiting botanical gardens was a leisure activity that gradually spread through all social classes and to all who sought tranquility and pleasant environments. 31 During this same period, scientists began assembling collections of plants that were of scientific and economic interest to them. 32 Explorers collected plants from around the world to grow in European and American gardens and used these collections to study taxonomy and classifications and to develop new ornamental and medicinal plants. 33 Many botanical gardens today have added education and biodiversity conservation to their missions. 34 In recent years, botanical gardens have started to research ex situ conservation, 35 ecology, phenology, anatomy and physiology, assisted migration, and comparative genetics. 36 Botanical gardens also work to record and preserve traditional knowledge about plant use in indigenous communities. 37 

The world’s botanical gardens are collectively working to make their collections and missions relevant to a modern, high-tech world facing a biodiversity crisis by digitizing their records and saving more information about their plants. 38 Natural history collections, including botanical gardens, are useful for many kinds of research — ecology, environmental science, climate change, and genetics — as well as for commercial plant breeding and crop development. 39 Geo-referencing from provenance data can help researchers locate endangered species in the wild, track their movements

29 Dosmann, supra note 2 at 209; see also Living Collections, supra note 27.
33 Id.
34 History of Botanic Gardens, supra note 32.
35 Dosmann, supra note 2, at 210.
38 Dosmann, supra note 2, at 227.
39 Id. at 218.
over decades, and show which species occupy the same habitats. Accurate provenance data can help develop conservation collections that represent a full range of genotypes. Accurate long-term data sets are particularly useful for ecological and climate change research.

B. Botanical Gardens and Conservation

Botanical gardens serve dual functions: first, as museums displaying interesting or beautiful specimens; and second, as repositories of living genetic material which can be used for breeding. Every botanical garden has limited resources – space, money, manpower, and climate – and must decide how best to use those resources to further its conservation mission while also educating and entertaining the public.

Botanical gardens focus much of their attention on the conservation of plants, specializing in what is known as *ex situ* conservation. In *ex situ* conservation, plants are grown in sheltered environments away from their natural habitats. To conserve plants *in situ*, the plants are maintained in their natural habitat. *In situ* conservation is ideal, but *ex situ* conservation is becoming more prevalent and more important as plants’ natural habitats disappear. Many gardens grow *ex situ* collections with the goal of preserving endangered or extinct species or as a complement to *in situ* conservation. BGCI predicts that botanical gardens may become important sources of plant material in the near future, as ecosystems must be stocked with new species to combat climate change.

Many plant species would have become extinct if gardeners had not preserved them. *Franklinia alatamaha* survives thanks to John and William Bartram, who discovered the tree in Georgia in 1765 and began propagating it shortly before it disappeared completely from the wild around 1800. The spectacular Dove Tree, *Davidia involucrata*, exists in European and North American gardens through sheer luck. In 1899, plant collector E.H. Wilson went to China seeking the fabled tree only to discover that the one

40 Id. at 226.
41 David Rae, *Fit for Purpose: The Importance of Quality Standards in the Cultivation and Use of Live Plant Collections for Conservation*, 20 BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION 241, 250 (2010).
43 Id.
45 Id.
46 Id.
48 Role of Botanic Gardens, supra note 43.
49 Peter del Tredici, *Against All Odds: Growing Franklinia in Boston*, 63 ARNOLDIA 2, 3 (2005).
known specimen had been cut down for lumber. During his exhaustive search for Dove Trees growing in the wild, Wilson managed to collect enough seeds to introduce the tree to the nursery trade.

Many plant taxa are extinct in the wild and exist in captivity solely because of botanical gardens. For example, *Sophora toromiro*, a small tree from Easter Island, went extinct in its natural habitat but was preserved for reintroduction by the Bonn University Botanical Garden. The Kew Royal Botanic Gardens has collaborated with the Seychelles Botanic Garden to breed and re-establish *Rothmannia annae*, a plant native to the Seychelles that is nearly extinct in its natural habitat. *Kokia cookei*, a tree endemic to Molokai, Hawaii, went extinct in the wild in 1918 but has been cultivated in botanical gardens since then. As of 2008, the tree was growing at Waimea Audubon, Lyon Arboretum, Volcano Rare Plant Facility, and the National Tropical Botanical Garden. The last known wild *Cyanea pinnatifida*, endemic to Oahu, Hawaii, died in 2001, leaving its cultivated progeny in the Lyon Arboretum and the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

Some plant species formerly thought to be extinct have been rediscovered and now live in botanical gardens. The Hawaiian plant *Cyanea truncata* was thought to be extinct after the last known plant died in the 1980s. Subsequent surveys discovered a few more wild plants, three of which survived until 2006 and provided genetic material that botanists used to propagate more plants and outplant them into a protected habitat. Hawaii’s Genetic Safety New Program and the Lyon Arboretum maintain seeds and tissue samples that can be used to propagate more plants in the future.
C. Preserving Genetic Diversity

Like zoos with captive breeding programs, botanical gardens face several problems associated with ex situ collection, including small population sizes, genetic drift, spontaneous hybridization, and inbreeding depression. To alleviate the potentially harmful effects of these problems, botanical gardens attempting to re-establish wild populations through ex situ conservation must ensure that their ex situ collections contain as much genetic diversity as possible.

There are several ways to accomplish this. One is to store seeds, which are small and genetically unique. Some botanical gardens have invested in cold-storage technology and cryopreservation, which may make their seeds, embryos, and tissues viable for many years. The United States Department of Agriculture runs the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS), a cooperative effort by federal, state, and private organizations to preserve the genetic diversity of plants and facilitate the breeding of new crop varieties. In addition, some regional networks of seed banks share materials. The Kew Seed Bank has embarked on the Millennium Seed Bank Project to collect and conserve seeds from most plant species in the United Kingdom and from 10% of the world's flowering plants. However, not all seeds can be stored.

Another method to preserve genetic diversity is to collect plant material from as wide a variety of wild sources as possible and then to grow that plant material in the living collections of a number of different institutions that can then share germplasm for breeding and reintroduction programs. Plants in living collections can furnish genetic material as seeds, which contain unique genotypes, or as tissue, which produces clones.

D. Criticisms of Ex Situ Collection and Responses

Some critics believe that ex situ conservation is of limited value. Botanists worry that botanical gardens do not represent a wide array of genotypes; indeed, many ex situ collections of rare and endangered plants

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61 See S. Volis & M. Blecher, Quasi in Situ: a Bridge Between Ex Situ and In Situ Conservation of Plants, 19 BIODIVERSITY & CONSERVATION 2441 (2010).
66 Rae, supra note 41, at 254-257.
consist of very few individual plants taken from only one site.\textsuperscript{68} Collection is often biased by ease, with collectors procuring the most accessible plants instead of getting a wider sampling of individuals from the wild population.\textsuperscript{69} The most acutely threatened species are not the most represented in collections, only a small percentage of plant material is of known wild provenance, and most collections of particular taxa within individual botanic gardens are very small, between one and ten individuals.\textsuperscript{70} Researchers have found large genetic differences between ex situ collections and their wild counterparts after several decades of separation, with ex situ collections losing genetic diversity in cultivation.\textsuperscript{71}

Preserving plants that have become extinct in the wild is extremely complicated, especially if a botanical garden wants to reintroduce an extinct plant to its former habitat.\textsuperscript{72} Ideally, reintroduced plants would still contain the genetic makeup of their wild ancestral plants, but that is often not the case. Genetic diversity can decrease through genetic drift, which is a loss of genetic diversity in small populations over several generations,\textsuperscript{73} and hybridization, which is interbreeding of related species, resulting in offspring that are not members of either parent species.\textsuperscript{74} Both are natural processes that may become unavoidable when dealing with living organisms that reproduce freely. For example, tree species may not be best conserved in botanical gardens, which are too small to contain many individuals of the same species.\textsuperscript{75}

Gardens have responded to criticisms of their effectiveness by revising their collections policies to focus on high-priority taxa, maintaining better data and sharing it with other institutions and conservation networks, and integrating in situ with ex situ preservation.\textsuperscript{76} Techniques such as adequate sampling at the time of collection, collecting from large populations, and using near-natural cultivation to allow generation overlap and interspecific competition can improve genetic diversity within

\begin{footnotes}
\item[69] Id.
\item[71] Daniel Lauterbach et al., \textit{Rapid Genetic Differentiation Between Ex Situ and Their In Situ Source Populations: An Example of the Endangered Silene Ottites (Caryophyllaceae)}, 168 BOT. J. LINNEAN SOC. 64, 69-71 (2012).
\item[72] Mike Maunder et al., supra note 53, at 1348.
\item[73] Andreas Enlin et al., \textit{Consequences of Ex Situ Cultivation of Plants: Genetic Diversity, Fitness and Adaptation of the Monocarpic Cynoglossum Officinale L. in Botanic Gardens}, 114 BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION 272, 273 (2011).
\item[74] J. J. Zhang et al., \textit{Spontaneous Interspecific Hybridization and Patterns of Pollen Dispersal in Ex Situ Populations of a Tree Species (Sinojackia xylocarpa) That is Extinct in the Wild}, 24 CONSERVATION BIOLOGY 246, 246 (2010).
\item[75] See SARA OLDFIELD, \textit{BOTANIC GARDENS: MODERN-DAY ARKS} (2010).
\item[76] Mike Maunder et al., \textit{The Effectiveness of Botanic Garden Collections in Supporting Plant Conservation: A European Case Study}, 10 BIODIVERSITY & CONSERVATION 383, 397-98 (2001).
\end{footnotes}
collections. Gardens are beginning to coordinate conservation efforts among institutions and to perform large-scale genetic studies to verify provenance. BGCI has sponsored research to verify the genetic diversity of garden collections, which will lead to better conservation in the future.

To succeed in their ex situ and in situ conservation efforts, botanical gardens must be able to collect wild plant material, including seeds, cuttings, and whole plants. They must also be able to visit as wide a range of sites as possible and take samplings from as many populations as possible. This is precisely where collections law comes in.

E. Building Collections

Botanical gardens acquire material for their collections through several means, including gifts, purchases, breeding and propagation from existing accessions, and wild collection. Gardens with serious conservation missions consider wild collections the highest priority—these are the plants that preserve wild genotypes adapted through natural selection to live in specific habitats. Ideally, botanical gardens acquire and grow only those plants that have been acquired in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. To assist in this effort, most maintain meticulous and open records of provenance of all plant materials.

Wild plant material typically comes from field collection. Several centuries ago, European botanists such as Mark Catesby and John Fraser collected whatever plants they wished and shipped them back to Europe for the horticultural trade. Today, botanical garden curators must comply with a plethora of laws and regulations governing the types and quantities of plants that can and cannot be removed from wild habitats.

Some collectors are lucky enough to find their desired plants on private property and obtain permission from the landowners to collect plant material; that obviously simplifies the issue. In most cases, however, collecting a particular plant requires at least a certain amount of paperwork to apply for permits. First, there is the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Anyone wishing to collect a federally listed plant must first apply for the correct permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. If

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77 Lauterbach et al., supra note 71, at 71-72.
78 Kozlowski et al., supra note 70, at 673.
79 Samain & Cires, supra note 68.
80 TIMOTHY C. HOHN, CURATORIAL PRACTICES FOR BOTANICAL GARDENS 41-69 (2008).
81 Id.
82 Id. at 42.
83 Id. at 50-68.
84 W.C. Coker, Our Mountain Shrubs, 31 J. ELISHA MITCHELL SCI. SOC'Y 91, 92-93 (1915).
the taxon is also listed under a state endangered species act, another permit will be necessary.\textsuperscript{87} If a federal or state agency such as the United States Forest Service owns the land, that agency will also need to issue a permit.\textsuperscript{88} All permits must be current at the time of collection.\textsuperscript{89}

For example, Schweinitz's sunflower, \textit{Helianthus schweinitzii}, an endangered species under the ESA, grows in North and South Carolina.\textsuperscript{90} As of 2010, some populations grew in two Heritage Preserves owned by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.\textsuperscript{91} South Carolina law prohibits "gathering, damaging, or destroying plants, fallen vegetation, animals, and fungi except to the extent these activities are authorized by permit."\textsuperscript{92} North Carolina's Plant Protection and Conservation Act makes it unlawful "[t]o uproot, dig, take or otherwise disturb or remove for any purpose from the lands of another, any plant on a protected plant list without a written permit from the owner which is dated and valid for no more than 180 days and which indicates the species or higher taxon of plants for which permission is granted."\textsuperscript{93} Any botanical garden that wishes to add Schweinitz's sunflower from these populations to its collection must therefore apply for at least two permits.

It might of course be easier to collect plants growing in the highway right-of-way, which would only require permission from state departments of transportation. Getting a full range of genotypes, however, requires collection from as many habitats as possible. Simply collecting plants from the most accessible sites will not result in great genetic diversity and will not produce as good of a conservation collection as could be achieved by collecting more widely.

If the botanical garden wishes to export plant material to another country or import foreign material for its collection, it must comply with additional laws and regulations. The Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) enforces laws and regulations contained in the ESA and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to keep non-
native pests and diseases out of the United States. To import live plants that fall under CITES jurisdiction, a botanical garden needs a valid USDA Protected Plant Permit and a permit under the Department’s nursery stock regulation. CITES-listed plants must enter the United States through a “Designated Port”. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also requires import permits for wild-collected CITES Appendix I species.

APHIS inspects millions of plants every year at its inspection stations and seizes those that lack proper documentation. Many of the seized plants end up at botanical gardens. Ideally, these gardens hold the plants for up to 30 days while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s International Affairs Division of Management Authority attempts to arrange for the plants to be returned to their country of origin. If the plants are not returned, the participating botanical garden may then incorporate them into its collection.

III. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN NETWORKS

Botanical gardens’ efforts at conservation have been enhanced considerably by the creation of worldwide networks of gardens that share information and genetic material and can collaborate to efficiently distribute limited resources. The worldwide botanical garden network, with more than 2,500 gardens worldwide, is the largest plant conservation network in existence. Botanical gardens around the world cultivate more than 150,000 plant taxa in their living collections, including about 12,000 taxa that are either extinct or nearly extinct in the wild.

There is a long tradition of sharing botanical materials, dating from the days of explorers who carried plants from continent to continent in the 17th-19th centuries. As a result of this tradition, botanical gardens typically hold highly international collections of plants. Many ornamental

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95 Id.
96 Id.
97 Id.
99 Id.
101 The History of BGCI, supra note 100.
103 The History of BGCI, supra note 100.
plants popular in American and European gardens are native to Asia. For example, many types of azaleas,\textsuperscript{104} camellias,\textsuperscript{105} and magnolias\textsuperscript{106} came from China and Japan several hundred years ago. As a consequence of long-ago plant movements, gardens in the West house taxa that are endangered in the East. Small, unknown gardens can sometimes hold rare and endangered species without even realizing it.

Serendipitous conservation is all very well, but modern technology and communication has made it much easier to set up deliberate exchange and collaboration programs. Within the United States, several organizations coordinate plant conservation efforts. The American Public Gardens Association (APGA) is a group of botanical gardens dedicated to information sharing, networking, public awareness, and research.\textsuperscript{107} The North American Plants Collections Consortium (NAPCC) is a collaboration between APGA and the Department of Agriculture’s NPGS.\textsuperscript{108} NAPCC coordinates a continent-wide approach to managing plant collections and preserving plant germplasm.\textsuperscript{109} Members share information and germplasm to more efficiently conserve important plant groups and facilitate scientific research and breeding.\textsuperscript{110} The Center for Plant Conservation (CPC), housed at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri, is dedicated to preventing the extinction of plants native to the United States.\textsuperscript{111} It maintains informational profiles on numerous endangered and threatened plant species and contracts with participating botanical gardens to serve as custodians of particular taxa.\textsuperscript{112} Major botanical gardens such as Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, the Missouri Botanical Garden, and the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., also participate in collaborative and individual research and conservation initiatives.\textsuperscript{113}

On an international level, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), established in 1987 by the IUCN, is the leading


\textsuperscript{107} About Us, APGA, http://www.publicgardens.org/content/about-us (last visited on Sept. 11, 2012).


\textsuperscript{109} Id.

\textsuperscript{110} Id.


\textsuperscript{112} Id.

international organization working to save endangered plants. Its headquarters are in London and it has regional offices in the United States, Kenya, Singapore, and China. BGCI is registered as a charity in the United Kingdom and receives support from the Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew and Edinburgh. It is a member organization, but non-members can participate in its activities and benefit from its information.

BGCI’s stated goals are to reverse the loss of key plant species and their habitats, preserve threatened plants in ex situ collections, promote the conservation and sustainable use of plants important to human life, and study the effect of climate change on plants. This is a massive undertaking, requiring the participation of botanical gardens around the world. Every botanical garden in the world can participate in BGCI’s effort because every garden offers a unique location and set of assets. The International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation, published by BGCI in 2000, outlines a framework for the development of botanical gardens worldwide with an ultimate aim of halting the loss of plant biodiversity and environmental degradation. High on its list of priorities is the creation of partnerships and alliances among institutions to create a united approach to plant conservation. Hundreds of botanical gardens have signed the Agenda, which serves as a formal agreement confirming their commitment to plant conservation. BGCI was instrumental in developing the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002 and in revising the GSPC for 2011-2020.

BGCI’s work includes gathering data from gardens on which species are held in ex situ collections to help gardens and networks focus their collection efforts. The exact number of threatened plants held in ex situ collections is unknown, and many individual gardens are unaware that they hold rare or endangered species in their collections. This data will
allow the world’s botanical gardens to decide where to focus their conservation resources. Identifying the world’s plants is a first step toward determining which plants most need conservation efforts.

Next, discrepancies in scientific names must be reconciled. This process can present problems for those trying to list threatened species. Botanists across the world are working to reconcile taxonomy, a task that will require botanical gardens to improve their digital inventories and share data with one another.

A. Endangered Species Lists

Several different institutions maintain lists of endangered species. These listings give plants, animals, and other living organisms legal protection and are of particular interest to botanical gardens for two reasons. First, the lists identify species that could benefit from ex situ conservation, which can guide collection building. Second, endangered status can complicate efforts to collect the plant in order to conserve it.

1. Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The ESA, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, makes it unlawful to take, collect, import, export, or otherwise handle any endangered or threatened plant in areas under federal jurisdiction or in violation of state law. This includes seeds and plant parts; however, seeds from artificially propagated threatened plants are fair game. An “endangered” species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of their natural habitat ranges. A “threatened” species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. For endangered species, the Fish and Wildlife Service will issue permits for scientific research or enhancement of propagation or survival, which would cover ex...
situ conservation within botanical gardens.\textsuperscript{133} For threatened species, the Service will also issue collection permits for botanical or horticultural exhibitions or educational use.\textsuperscript{134}

2. IUCN Red List

Botanic Gardens Conservation International collaborates with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to compile the Red List of Threatened Species.\textsuperscript{135} The Red List uses specific criteria to determine the extinction risk of plant and animal species and is the main global resource on the conservation status of species.\textsuperscript{136} The list ranks species according to threat level and lists types of threats affecting individual species.\textsuperscript{137} It also contains information on how many threatened species live in individual nations and which listed species have gone extinct.\textsuperscript{138} There are nine categories on the list: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern, Data Deficient, and Not Evaluated.\textsuperscript{139} Several groups participate in the compilation of the list, which is updated every year. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, conservation organizations, and other groups use the Red List to assess threats to biodiversity.\textsuperscript{140}

Plants hold a relatively minor place on the Red List compared to vertebrates, as only about three percent of plant species appear on the list.\textsuperscript{141} Conifers and cycads are the only plants to have been thoroughly assessed.\textsuperscript{142} A number of assessments are several years old, dating from 2003 to 1998.\textsuperscript{143} As of 2009, 167 plant families had not yet been assessed and incorporated into the Red List, with basal angiosperms having been particularly neglected.\textsuperscript{144}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Permits, supra note 86.
\item[134] United States Fish & Wildlife Service Glossary, supra note 131.
\item[136] Red List Overview, IUCN RED LIST, http://www.iucnredlist.org/about/red-list-overview#redlist_criteria (last visited Sept. 29, 2012).
\item[138] Id.
\item[139] Id.
\item[141] Biodiversity Assessments and Indicators work, IUCN, http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/the_iucn_red_list/biodiversity_assessments_and_indicators_work_/ (last visited Sept. 29, 2012).
\item[143] Id.
\item[144] George E. Schatz, Plants on the IUCN Red List: setting priorities to inform conservation, 14 TRENDS PLANT SCI., no. 11, 2009, at 638, 640.
\end{footnotes}
3. CITES

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), in force since 1975, regulates the international trade of wild plants and animals. It classifies plants and wildlife into three categories according to the level of endangerment. Appendix I species are the most strictly protected because they are threatened with extinction, even if trade does not affect the species; Appendix II includes plants that are primarily threatened by trade, such as ginseng and some orchids.

4. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD is an international convention established in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, also known as the “Earth Summit.” Members agree to protect biodiversity in their own territories and to support the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity elsewhere. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) created the CBD in response to threats to biodiversity of species and ecosystems by human activities. It became effective on December 29, 1993.

The United States signed the CBD on June 4, 1993, but, along with Andorra and the Holy See, is not a party to it. American representatives attend meetings as observers but cannot engage in negotiations or participate in final decisions.

The CBD aims to promote sustainable development and use of resources. Its stated objectives include the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair sharing of the benefits of genetic
resources and relevant technologies. Members have the right to exploit their own natural resources but must ensure that their activities do not harm the environments of other members. All members must cooperate with each other to manage areas beyond their jurisdictions. Every member must develop its own national strategies for preservation of biological diversity, including identification of important components of biodiversity, monitoring those components, and determining what activities could damage that diversity. Biodiversity should first be preserved in situ, with ex situ conservation as a complementary measure. Every member is encouraged to educate the public about the need to protect the environment. National governments hold the right to determine access to local genetic information, but all members are obligated to share access to technology that makes use of genetic resources. Finally, all members must facilitate the exchange of biological information.

Of particular interest to botanical gardens, Articles 8 and 9 of the CBD cover in situ and ex situ conservation. Under Article 8, in situ conservation, each member must establish and regulate protected areas, promote the protection of ecosystems and populations of species in natural settings, use sustainable development next to protected areas, restore degraded ecosystems, prevent the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, and protect indigenous lifestyles. Ex situ conservation, covered under Article 9, is meant to complement the above in situ measures. Each member should create facilities for the ex situ conservation and research of plants, animals, and micro-organisms and plan for the reintroduction of preserved species into the wild when possible.

Major botanical gardens should be keenly interested in the CBD, both for its specific provisions on in situ and ex situ conservation and its controversial requirements for Access and Benefit Sharing. According to Peter Wyse Jackson, the current director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, the international plant conservation scene has been transformed over the

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157 Id.
158 Id.
159 Id.
160 Id.
161 Id. at art. 15.
162 Id. at arts. 8-9.
163 Id. at art. 8.
164 Id. at art. 9.
165 Id.
past decade with the adoption of the GSPC and the flurry of activity that followed it, especially among botanical gardens around the world.166

B. Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

One of the purposes of the CBD was to equalize the imbalance in profits derived from the exploitation of biological materials.167 For most of the modern era, genetic resources - tissues of plants, animals, and other living organisms that contain DNA - have been considered the common heritage of mankind, to be exchanged, accessed, and exported freely.168 Advances in genetic engineering in the 1970’s and 1980’s allowed advanced nations to develop genetic resources into commercially valuable products protectable as intellectual property.169 Developing nations in the “Global South” tended to be the sources of the genetic resources while more advanced nations in the “Global North” created the profitable products.170 The profits generally remained in the advanced nations, leaving the countries providing the genetic resources little or no benefit from their unique biota.171 Developing nations protested that the genetic resources, or “common heritage,” were turning into private property and demanded a share of the profits.172

Article 15 of the CBD, Access to Genetic Resources, is the source of the legal basis for the principles of Access and Benefit Sharing. Under this Article, signatories to the Convention recognize that members have sovereign rights over their natural resources and determine how natural genetic resources can be accessed.173 Every party to the CBD agrees to try to facilitate access to those genetic resources by other parties for environmentally sound uses and under mutually agreed terms.174 The party in whose territory the genetic resources are found must give informed consent to their use prior to any use of those resources unless the parties have come to another arrangement.175 Ideally, any scientific research on genetic resources should take place in the country of origin; the country

167 Convention on Biological Diversity, supra note 156.
170 Id.
171 Id.
172 Id.
173 Convention on Biological Diversity, supra note 156, at art. 15.
174 Id.
175 Id.
supplying the resources should at least be able to participate in the research. Every signatory agrees to enact laws or regulations to guarantee that the results of research and the benefits of commercial use of genetic resources are shared with the country or countries providing the resources.

Article 15 introduced several new principles to the rules governing research permits and licenses:

1. Prior Informed Consent — the relevant authority of the nation providing the genetic material must know about the collection and give its consent before any collection can take place;
2. Mutually Agreed Terms — users and providers of genetic material must agree on the conditions governing use of that material and the sharing of any benefits gained from it; and
3. Benefit Sharing — the country providing the genetic material must share in the benefits of the resulting research. Sharing need not be restricted to monetary benefits; it can occur through infrastructure building, technology transfer, and academic networks, all of which are necessary to building the knowledge bases of developing nations.

"Genetic material" refers to any plant, animal, or microbial material that contains functional units of heredity. "Genetic resources" means genetic material of actual or potential value. "Access" is not defined in the CBD, which leaves its meaning open to interpretation by members. As interpreted, it applies to genetic materials and the traditional knowledge involved in obtaining or using them. If research utilizes traditional knowledge or is done in conjunction with indigenous communities, the ABS system applies and the holders of the traditional knowledge must be included in the research process.

C. Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC)

The GSPC was adopted in 2002 as the first specific conservation strategy developed under the CBD to serve as a pilot project for the CBD as

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176 Id.
177 Id.
179 Convention on Biological Diversity, supra note156, at art. 2.
180 Id.
181 See generally id.
well as a first step toward implementing the CBD’s goals. Its original goals included:

1. documenting the plant diversity of the world;
2. monitoring the status of plants and identifying those in need of protection;
3. creating an integrated information system for the sharing of plant diversity information;
4. promoting research on systematics, taxonomy, ecology, and conservation biology of plant communities;
5. conserving plant diversity in situ and, where necessary, ex situ, preferably in countries of origin;
6. using plant diversity sustainably; and
7. promoting education about plant diversity.

Leading botanical gardens immediately began working on these tasks. The GSPC set ambitious goals for 2010: 60% of the world’s threatened plant species conserved in situ, 60% of threatened plant species in accessible ex situ collections (with 10% of those in recovery and restoration programs), and 70% of the genetic diversity of crops and other socioeconomically valuable plants conserved.

Additional goals included an accessible working list of all plant species, an assessment of the conservation status of all plant species, an end to threats to wild flora by international trade, preservation of plant resources and indigenous knowledge that support local food security and sustainability, the establishment or strengthening of networks of plant conservation at all levels, and more publicity and education about the importance of plant diversity.

These goals were easier propounded than met. According to BGCI’s 2010 survey of North American threatened plants, which considered 230 collections, only 39% of the 9,496 threatened taxa were being grown in living collections or maintained as germplasm. Many of those holdings were of questionable viability.

Although the world’s botanical gardens did not meet the GSPC’s 2010 goals, that year, the parties to the GSPC created a new "Global

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\[184\] Jackson & Kennedy, supra note 166, at 578-580.


\[186\] Id.
Strategy 2011-2020”, intended to guide progress over the next decade.\textsuperscript{187} The Strategy’s objectives include documenting and conserving plant diversity, using plants sustainably and equitably, and creating public awareness and engagement to protect plants.\textsuperscript{188} Targets include:

1. An online flora of all known plants;
2. assessment of conservation status of all known plant species;
3. at least 75% of known threatened plant species conserved \textit{in situ};
4. at least 75% of threatened plant species in \textit{ex situ} collections, preferably in their countries of origin, and at least 20% of threatened species in recovery and restoration programs;
5. no wild plants endangered by international trade;
6. local and indigenous knowledge and practices maintained or increased;
7. public education about the importance of plant diversity; and
8. cultivation of individuals, institutions, and networks to achieve these targets.\textsuperscript{189}

Implementing the Strategy will require the cooperation of many institutions at international, national, regional, and local levels, including international organizations, communities, governments, universities and research institutions, and the private sector.\textsuperscript{190} BGCI’s recommendations for reaching the 2020 goal included better data sharing and collections management, stronger collaborative networks, and improved genetic diversity of collections.\textsuperscript{191} Improving genetic diversity necessarily forces botanical gardens to collect more wild plants and exchange plants with one another.

\textbf{D. Bonn Guidelines}

In 2006, the Secretariat of the CBD adopted the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{188} Id.
\textsuperscript{191} KRAMER ET AL., supra note 185, at 4.
\end{footnotesize}
Benefits Arising Out of Their Utilization.\textsuperscript{192} The purpose of the Bonn Guidelines was to assist stakeholders in developing practical guidelines and strategies for ABS, with particular emphasis on users seeking prior informed consent from providers.\textsuperscript{193} The guidelines are not legally binding, but Executive Secretary Hamdallah Zedan remarked at the time that the fact that about 180 countries had already adopted them demonstrated that parties wanted a clear authority guiding ABS issues.\textsuperscript{194}

The Bonn Guidelines recommend that each party designate one national focal point to handle ABS matters and that competent national authorities be responsible for granting access and negotiating with users.\textsuperscript{195} While users are encouraged to seek prior informed consent and respect indigenous communities and customs, providers are instructed to avoid imposing arbitrary restrictions on access to genetic resources.\textsuperscript{196} Paragraph 32 addresses \textit{ex situ} collections, stating that “prior informed consent should be obtained from the competent national authority[ies] and/or the body governing the \textit{ex situ} collection concerned as appropriate.”\textsuperscript{197}

Appendix II lists possible monetary and non-monetary benefits that users can furnish providers. Such benefits can include payments, fees, royalties, license fees, salaries, research funding, or joint ownership of intellectual property rights.\textsuperscript{198} Non-monetary benefits might include the sharing of research results, participation in product development, technology transfer, use of databases, contributions to the local economy, and sufficient additional examples that users ought to be able to make a case that nearly anything is a “benefit.”\textsuperscript{199}

\textbf{E. What ABS Means to Botanical Gardens}

Botanical gardens must still gain access to wild plant material in order to develop their collections and fulfill their mission of documenting and conserving plant diversity. However, gardens in most of the world must follow the CBD’s guidelines on access and the sharing of benefits in order to develop their collections legally.\textsuperscript{200}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{192} \textit{Background of ABS, Convention on Biological Diversity}, https://www.cbd.int/abs/background/ (last visited Sept. 27, 2012).
\item \textsuperscript{194} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{195} Id. at 4.
\item \textsuperscript{196} Id. at 6.
\item \textsuperscript{197} Id. at 10.
\item \textsuperscript{198} Id. at 18-20.
\item \textsuperscript{199} Id. at 19-20.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
BGCI and its members have created principles of ABS for participating institutions.\textsuperscript{201} Members promise to honor the letter and spirit of the CBD, CITES, and other applicable laws and regulations related to ABS and traditional knowledge.\textsuperscript{202} Anyone wishing to collect genetic resources must describe how they intend to use those resources and acquire prior informed consent from the government of the country and other relevant stakeholders, including botanical garden management, when acquiring resources from \textit{ex situ} collections.\textsuperscript{203} Members must create transparent policies on the commercialization of genetic resources acquired both before and after passage of the CBD.\textsuperscript{204} Not surprisingly, written agreements are an important component of these transactions. Accurate curation and record keeping is essential.\textsuperscript{205}

Many botanical gardens in Europe belong to the International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN), an international network of approximately 70 botanical gardens designed to facilitate and regulate the exchange of genetic materials among its members.\textsuperscript{206} The IPEN requires its members to adhere to a code of conduct that governs acquisition and handling of living plant materials and benefit sharing.\textsuperscript{207} Gardens promise to accept only plant material acquired in accordance with the CBD.\textsuperscript{208} They agree to obtain prior informed consent from countries of origin when collecting wild material.\textsuperscript{209} The documentation rules are quite strict, and materials distributed through the IPEN can be used only for non-commercial activities; if commercial uses of some plant material are contemplated, the botanical garden must revisit the country of origin for new prior informed consent.\textsuperscript{210} Benefit sharing can include joint expeditions, projects, or publications, reintroduction of threatened plant species to countries of origin, and exchange of technology and staff.\textsuperscript{211} Such organization makes it easy for members to exchange plant materials because each uses the same practices of documentation and ABS.\textsuperscript{212}
In 2006, BGCI prepared materials on the CBD for those working with botanical collections to introduce them to the treaty and its requirements.\textsuperscript{213} These materials list some of the main ways in which botanical garden work is affected by the CBD: access to genetic resources, sustainable use, exchange of information and technology, and identification and monitoring.\textsuperscript{214} They explain that botanical garden personnel must follow the provisions regarding genetic material, particularly when gathering plants for botanical gardens' collections. The provisions must be followed even in nations without post-CBD ABS legislation, such as most European nations, many of which had ABS procedures in place before the CBD was passed.\textsuperscript{215}

The World Intellectual Property Organization maintains a database of biodiversity-related ABS agreements.\textsuperscript{216}

IV. THE CBD AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO COLLECTION

A number of scholars in Europe and other parts of the world are worried that the CBD's ABS provisions actually impede scientific research by unreasonably restricting access to genetic resources in source countries.\textsuperscript{217} Access procedures can be difficult and time-consuming. Not every country has an ABS system in place, and in many places there seems to be some confusion as to exactly what needs to be done to apply for access.\textsuperscript{218} The various national authorities tasked with vetting applications may not understand the goals of scientific research and tend to be restrictive in their interpretation of applications.\textsuperscript{219} There is also the fact that commercial research is usually preceded by strictly academic research; countries do not want to risk allowing scientists to come explore their biota for academic reasons only to have that research turn into a profitable commercial enterprise in the future.\textsuperscript{220} Many nations feel that they have little reason to trust scientists and fear biopiracy.\textsuperscript{221} Scientific publishing might be against the interests of the providing country if information in the...
public domain ceases to be the providing country’s intellectual property and strict access regulations result.\textsuperscript{222}

Brazil, for example, has a notoriously onerous application process.\textsuperscript{223} Scientists who work there and their Brazilian collaborators must spend a great deal of time working through the bureaucracy. Brazilian scientists might actually be losing opportunities to collaborate with foreign scientists.\textsuperscript{224} Costa Rica and Panama, on the other hand, have streamlined their permitting processes, leading to greater knowledge of local biodiversity, increased international collaboration, and improved conservation.\textsuperscript{225}

Rather than being restrictive, countries should realize that scientific research could offer many benefits to providing countries. Parties to the CBD are supposed to monitor their biodiversity, and basic research certainly contributes to that effort.\textsuperscript{226} However, many of the countries with the greatest needs lack the capacity to accomplish this on their own.\textsuperscript{227} Taxonomic research in particular is essential to the cataloguing of biodiversity, and every nation needs non-national experts if it is to get a complete survey of its organisms.\textsuperscript{228} Overly restrictive access procedures benefit no one, including the providing countries that miss out on the benefits of scientific research on their biota.\textsuperscript{229} Scientists argue that plant genetic material should be considered the common heritage of all humanity and that all nations depend on the interdependence of plant genetic material; therefore, no country should restrict access to plant germplasm.\textsuperscript{230} Scientists in developing countries such as India now worry that international access requirements are driving away foreign collaborators.\textsuperscript{231}

Some scholars believe that the fundamental assumptions behind the CBD were flawed. In 2012, Sylvia Martinez and Susette Biber-Klemm that ABS regulations were written with commercial uses of biological materials in mind; host nations are keen to maximize the monetary benefits that can accrue from the use of genetic resources in products such as pharmaceuticals.\textsuperscript{232} Noncommercial research faces the same prior informed consent requirements as commercial research, but academic researchers do

\textsuperscript{222} Id. at 30.
\textsuperscript{223} Alexandre Antonelli & Victor Rodriguez, Brazil Should Facilitate Research Permits, 23 CONSERVATION BIOLOGY 1068, 1068 (2009).
\textsuperscript{224} Id.
\textsuperscript{225} Id. at 1068-1069.
\textsuperscript{226} WILLIAMS, DAVIS & CHEYNE supra note 213.
\textsuperscript{227} Martinez & Biber-Klemm, supra note 217, at 2.
\textsuperscript{228} Id. at 4.
\textsuperscript{229} Id.
\textsuperscript{232} Martinez & Biber-Klemm, supra note 217, at 28.
not anticipate economic profits from their work.233 There is also the simple matter that plants are living organisms, and do not themselves obey the CBD. Plants will readily spread on their own, even in captivity.234

In 2010, Rachelle Adam looked at the reasons that biodiversity loss did not slow in the decade after the CBD was passed.235 She suggested that the CBD’s initial assumptions, such as the assumption that compliance with multilateral environmental agreements could halt biodiversity loss, are mistaken.236 Instead, she posits that biodiversity is being lost partly because many countries do not agree that biodiversity needs to be protected.237 Adams also points out that biodiversity is inevitably lost through ordinary human activities such as eating and home building, presenting what appear to be insurmountable obstacles to halting the loss of biodiversity.238 She suggests that the CBD addresses the symptoms of biodiversity loss without addressing its causes, such as population growth and the failure of the market to reflect true environmental costs in prices, and recommends alternative approaches to halting the biodiversity crisis.239

F.M. Birhanu, a law professor in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, concluded that creating a national ABS regime is quite challenging for developing countries such as Ethiopia.240 He notes that the CBD describes ABS in the most general of terms, leaving it up to individual countries to create regulatory schemes.241 Not surprisingly, since the CBD entered into force in 1993, few African nations have passed ABS laws.242 Ethiopia, for example, has very high genetic diversity in food and cash crops, but until recently did not keep track of which of its genetic resources were taken out of the country.243 In 2006, it created an ABS Law, the Access to Genetic Resources and Community Knowledge and Community Rights Proclamation, which is intended to ensure that Ethiopia gets fair and equitable shares of benefits from resources.244 It applies to genetic resources both in situ and ex situ, including ex situ conservation efforts outside Ethiopia.245 Anyone who wants to access a genetic resource must obtain a written access permit from the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and

233 Id.


236 Id.

237 Id. at 127.

238 Id. at 129.

239 Id. at 127-28.

240 Birhanu, *supra* note 169, at 249.

241 Id. at 252.

242 Id. at 250.

243 Id. at 255.

244 Id. at 249.

245 Id. at 256.
Research, a government institution. However, the law does not require the Ethiopian government to consult regional or local governments, resulting in ABS agreements that are often poorly drafted with minimal enforcement or follow-up efforts.

A. Improving the CBD

The parties to the CBD have been discussing refinements to the ABS system for the past decade. In 2008, the Barcode of Life initiative and other groups presented suggestions on methods of improving access for noncommercial research. The participants did not agree on a definition of noncommercial research, but did agree that certain criteria distinguish noncommercial from commercial research. For example, noncommercial research results are placed in the public domain instead of being privately held, and noncommercial researchers do not file patents on their products. Martinez and Biber-Klemm have made several recommendations for the future: active scientist participation in ABS permit-granting committees, adaptations to the ABS system to accommodate noncommercial research, and simplification of ABS application procedures. Academic researchers can build trust by presenting transparent research goals and results and by cooperating with research partners in countries providing genetic resources. Unexpected discoveries that show commercial potential should be presented to providing countries for renegotiation of ABS agreements.

Researchers want the ABS regime to include exemptions for genetic material procured exclusively for noncommercial academic research. One major question is whether the CBD should establish new ABS standards for scientific research or simply set minimum standards and allow researchers and countries to make ABS agreements on a case-by-case basis. Scientists could become more involved in the negotiation process by lobbying national governments, forming professional networks to participate, and attending CBD meetings as observers. Observer organizations are allowed to submit their opinions on specific issues to CBD conferences.

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246 Id.
247 Id. at 257.
248 Martinez & Biber-Klemm, supra note 217, at 5-6.
249 Id. at 5.
250 Id. at 6.
251 Id. at 5-6.
252 Id. at 5.
253 Id. at 5.
254 Jinnah & Jungcurt, supra note 231, at 464.
255 Id. at 465.
256 Id.
257 Id.
Some countries are considering various systems of certificates of origin, public documents that would certify the provenance of objects.\(^{258}\) Such a system could be voluntary or legally binding, and national offices entrusted with handling \textit{ex situ} collections or plant breeding could take charge of the cases in their fields.\(^{259}\) An international searchable database of certificates of origin could vastly speed up the process of moving genetic material between countries.\(^{260}\) The IPEN system already functions like this. European scholars have been pondering the logistical difficulties of the CBD and publishing guides for researchers.\(^{261}\)

**B. Nagoya Protocol**

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits was adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, on October 29, 2010.\(^{262}\) It was open for signature by parties until February 1, 2012,\(^{263}\) and by October 29, 2012, eight nations had ratified the Nagoya Protocol.

The Nagoya Protocol attempts to refine the ABS provisions of the CBD. It creates provisions that emphasize a user country’s compliance with the laws and regulations of countries providing genetic resources.\(^{264}\) The idea is to make sharing and access more predictable. The Protocol also strengthens provisions giving benefits to indigenous communities furnishing traditional knowledge and specifically invokes the role of women in those matters.\(^{265}\)

Of particular interest to scientists are the following provisions:

1. Article 8, which calls on each party to encourage research that could lead to the conservation and

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\(^{258}\) Markus Rüssli, \textit{Access and Benefit Sharing User Measures in Switzerland}, 14 \textit{J. WORLD INTELL. PROP.} 54, 64 (2011).

\(^{259}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{260}\) \textit{Id.} at 64-65.


\(^{262}\) \textit{About the Nagoya Protocol}, \textit{CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY}, http://www.cbd.int/abs/about/ (last visited Sept. 26, 2012).


\(^{264}\) \textit{About the Nagoya Protocol, supra note 262.}

sustainable use of biological diversity by simplifying access procedures for non-commercial research,\textsuperscript{266}  
2. Article 14, which creates an ABS Clearing-House to share information on ABS provisions in various nations;\textsuperscript{267}  
3. Article 17, which requires each party to monitor the use of genetic resources;\textsuperscript{268}  
4. Article 23, which encourages parties to transfer technology and encourage technological growth in developing countries; and\textsuperscript{269}  
5. Article 24, which advises parties to encourage nonparties to adhere to the protocol and contribute information to the ABS Clearing-House.\textsuperscript{270}  

Developing the infrastructure to administer the key provisions of the Nagoya Protocol will be expensive for many countries.\textsuperscript{271} The Global Environment Facility established a fund in June 2011 to assist developing countries in building their capacities to implement the Protocol and pay for technological development and sustainable use of genetic resources.\textsuperscript{272}

\textit{C. The United States and the CBD}

With so many other countries participating in the CBD's ABS regime, the United States will inevitably feel the effects of the treaty even though it is not a member of the CBD. As a practical matter, the U.S. government recognizes the CBD as an international framework that ensures equitable sharing of access and benefits.\textsuperscript{273} In addition, the State Department has advice on compliance for researchers who want to collect genetic resources in other countries.\textsuperscript{274} The National Plant Germplasm System's Plant Exploration Program has found it much more difficult to collect plant materials as other countries have implemented ABS laws.\textsuperscript{275} The NPGS has shared benefits in the form of non-monetary benefits such as

\textsuperscript{267} Id.  
\textsuperscript{268} Id.  
\textsuperscript{269} Id.  
\textsuperscript{270} Id.  
\textsuperscript{271} Id.  
\textsuperscript{272} Id.  
\textsuperscript{274} Id.  
\textsuperscript{275} Id.
paying the costs of travel, sharing collected germplasm, and strengthening professional ties through collaborative research. 276

Some U.S. botanical gardens are adopting ABS provisions on their own. For example, in 2007, the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Coral Gables, FL, wrote its own policy on access to plant genetic resources and benefit-sharing. 277 Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, also in Coral Gables, Florida, has created its own agreement to supply biological material that complies with the CBD. 278 The Missouri Botanical Garden created a Plant Genetic Resources Policy that guarantees all plant genetic resources will be collected in compliance with international laws and regulations and recognizes that states have sovereignty over their genetic materials. 279 Missouri is committed to supporting the GSPC’s 2011-2020 update and its 16 outcome-oriented global targets. 280

In October 2012, the APGA held a national summit to discuss a possible code of conduct for U.S. botanical gardens that would help them conform to international ABS norms without restricting the sharing of plants and germplasm. 281 Many participants expressed concern that European laws were too restrictive, and that material transfer agreements requiring a donating institution to track the uses of plant materials by third parties effectively locked plants into a sort of “gulag.” 282 Regulations arguably have forced researchers to spend a huge amount of energy and money to gain rights to objects with no commercial value. Forcing botanical gardens to vet all possible recipients of plant materials in order to ensure that they do not exploit genetic material without sharing benefits with a country of origin could be an unreasonable burden, especially to smaller gardens. Some garden representatives pointed out that growing plants is in itself a benefit to the world, and that a system such as that used by the NPGS, allowing unrestricted uses of all plant materials in its collection, are an excellent way of furthering scientific an conservation research. 283 The NPGS will not accept germplasm from sources that restrict

276 Id.
282 See Chad Husby, Montgomery Botanical Center, Address at the 2012 Face2Face Summit: Putting Policy into Practice: Access and Benefit Sharing: MBC/FNGLA Seedbank Online Auction (Oct 25, 2012) (explaining in the address the restrictions in the European laws, spurring further discussion among those in attendance at the conference).
283 Id.
distribution of those materials to third parties. Many garden representatives want to be able to use those terms as well, accepting and sharing plant materials as they wish, without having to worry about future commercial applications of that material.

Should the United States join the CBD? Widespread international membership illustrates that many countries think the treaty is a good idea, though one that needs refinement. William J. Snape, senior counsel at the Center for Biological Diversity, based in Tuscon, Arizona, believes that membership in the CBD would benefit American Scientists. With biodiversity disappearing at an alarming rate, real threats to human comfort and safety are presented. Snape argues that the U.S. already has in place many of the CBD’s requirements – it has a system of protected areas, laws such as the Endangered Species Act, processes to oversee adverse impacts on biodiversity, and acknowledgement of tribal rights. The ABS provisions rely on parties’ freedom to contract and to mutually agree on terms, so no party will be forced into an agreement. Snape argues that membership in the CBD would not result in changes of land use or allow the United Nations to sue the United States and that worries about the CBD’s effects are not legitimate reasons to delay ratification.

In any case, American botanical gardens that wish to play on the international conservation field effectively belong to the CBD community. There are good reasons for botanical gardens that do any international plant collecting to create their own ABS policies. Building trust with other countries is crucial, and our national attitude toward environmental resources probably does not inspire confidence from other countries. Individual gardens, however, can form agreements with partners that observe currently expected standards of access and benefit sharing while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on research, propagation, and other activities. U.S. botanical gardens might be in a pleasantly unique position to negotiate; because such gardens are not bound by the CBD, they could potentially have more access to genetic resources in other nations, especially in cases where the potential for commercial profit is low. The new openness and sharing of information might lead to new opportunities.
and collaborations, and ultimately to more effective conservation of biodiversity in American botanical gardens.

Ultimately, the CBD attempts to facilitate the sharing of materials and information to conserve biodiversity. The primary reason to share access and benefits is to ensure that genetic resources and the benefits they confer on humans are available to as wide a range of institutions and individuals as possible. Selfishness will ultimately prove counterproductive to botanical gardens’ conservation efforts.