POSTER 5

Atlanta Botanical Garden – Collections and Conservation Program

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Officially incorporated in 1976 on land belonging to the City of Atlanta in Piedmont Park (the city's largest communal park), the Garden's mission is to develop and maintain plant collections for the purposes of display, education, conservation, research and enjoyment. ABG is a private, non-profit botanical garden overseen by a Board of Trustees, with over 40 staff, upward of 300 volunteers, and a 10,000-strong membership base.

Collections

Like many urban botanic gardens, ABG makes the most of the 30 acres it occupies within a busy metropolis. The outdoor collections offer botanists, horticulturists, and the general public a series of different landscapes to explore. These range from the traditional, such as the Japanese and Rose Gardens, to the more informal, such as the Woodland Garden and Storza Woods. The latter is an example of the few remaining acres of mature hardwood forest found within the metropolitan area.

The centerpiece of the Garden is the Dorothy Fuqua Chapman Conservatory that was opened to the public in 1989. The Conservatory covers 1500 m^2 (16,000 square feet) and is serviced by backup greenhouses covering 930 m^2 (10,000 square feet). The collections focus on under-represented and endangered plant groups. They include Old World desert collections, Old World island palms that follow an island biogeographical theme, and other conservation collections including tropical conifers, orchids, cycads and carnivorous plants, ABG also houses a collection of poison dart frogs that are on public display with interpretive signage, in the Conservatory lobby.

Conservation Program

ABG's Conservation Program encompasses a number of regional and international projects and is based on a hands-on and project-driven approach. The key to this Program has been to work directly with local landowners, to bring as many of the relevant agencies, botanical institutes and organizations into collaboration, and to disseminate the staff's horticultural and botanical expertise to as wide a field as possible. One of its major goals is to use low-cost restoration and recovery techniques.

Projects include:

- Monitoring, restoration and conservation of unique and species-rich bog communities – these are found throughout the Coastal Plain and Southern Appalachian Mountains of the southeastern USA, ABG has developed restoration, management and propagation techniques to restore these communities and re-establish certain processes crucial to the maintenance of species diversity.
- Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance (GPCA) - ABG is a charter member of this network of government, private and public gardens and organizations that are working to conserve the endangered flora and ecosystems of the state of Georgia, including many rare carnivorous plant species.
- Micropropagation Laboratory – ABG not only propagates plants for recovery projects, but raises money for its Conservation Program through the development and marketing of unusual plant forms and cultivars, including an all red form of the Venus flytrap ('Akai Ryu' - Red Dragon developed by ABG staff member, Ron Gagliardo).
- Maquipucuna Foundation, Ecuador – ABG has a mutual collaboration with the Maquipucuna Foundation in order to exchange expertise, plant collections, and carry out field research. Staff from Ecuador can come to ABG through ABG's International Intern Program to develop their horticultural and botanical training.
- International Intern Program – To date, ABG has funded interns from Sabah, UK, China, Brazil and Ecuador to carry out conservation and horticultural projects.