

## **Building relevance in living collections and botanic gardens horticulture to overcome current and future challenges**

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Over the past fourteen years, Missouri Botanical Garden has conducted a fundamental shift in its living collections and horticulture to better align with the Gardens mission, increase relevance and support critical needs in the world today. During the 2013 Botanic Gardens Conservation International Congress in New Zealand, the author presented a strategy to make key changes to increase capacity and capability. This included a greater focus on conservation horticulture delivered through an enhanced curation process, development of new facilities including; a new seed bank, micropropagation lab and increased nursery capacity. Along with the design and implementation of new living collections databases, innovative processes and management practices. In achieving the goals of enhancing the living collections, twenty-two field expeditions are now conducted annually and long-term collaborations developed utilising conservation horticulture in eight countries on five continents. The representation of species in our living collections has greatly increased, particularly the number of species of conservation concern. This presentation will review what was learned from making this shift, how many of our assumptions in 2013 were correct and how methods and processes were adapted and changed to implement this vision. Advice will be offered to other gardens embarking on this process through a discussion of the challenges and what areas of work remain to realise full potential in our horticulture and living collections. Future goals will be discussed identifying critical areas of work and strategies for moving forward.