

The Oman Botanic Garden: An inspiration for plant diversity and conservation in Arabia

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The Oman Botanic Garden (OBG) is a pioneering project designed to conserve Oman's unique botanical heritage and address the challenges of plant diversity loss. This world-class garden aspires to comprehensively document, cultivate, and showcase Oman's entire native flora within precisely designed habitats. This approach sets the OBG apart as a leader in ex-situ plant conservation efforts in the region. Since its inception, a dedicated team of young botanists and horticulturists has embarked on a journey of exploration, collection, and propagation of Omani plant life. Their tireless efforts have resulted in the OBG accumulating the largest documented collection of Arabian plants. The garden's herbarium houses approximately 80% of Oman's known flora, while the short-term seed bank (with more than 50% of the flora) focuses on building the living collection. Beyond accumulating an impressive collection, the OBG team has generated a wealth of data and knowledge that serves as a valuable resource for both local and international institutions. The OBG actively collaborates with government agencies, for example, to develop spatial planning strategies, contributing its botanical expertise to various projects. Additionally, the garden plays a pivotal role in providing data and practical experience for students pursuing botany and horticulture, both locally and internationally. To further enhance public knowledge and understanding, the OBG is currently developing an online encyclopaedia dedicated to Omani plants. This comprehensive resource will provide detailed information on Oman's unique flora, serving as a valuable foundation for comprehending arid-zone plant life. The Oman Botanic Garden stands out not just for its impressive collection but also for its commitment to knowledge sharing and collaborative conservation efforts. It is poised to become a leading centre for understanding, preserving, and celebrating Oman's unique botanical heritage.