

From garden to nature – German Botanic Gardens are building a network for plant conservation

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Botanic gardens in German-speaking countries are increasingly involved in species conservation and combine ex-situ measures with in-situ reintroductions and reinforcements of rare and endangered plant species. The Conservation Cultures Working Group of the Association of Botanic Gardens in German-speaking countries, in which gardeners and scientists are involved, is growing steadily. We operate a website on which over 3000 conservation cultures of more than 600 species are listed in our gardens, and we provide information on the biology and cultivation requirements of a good 110 species. The website is supplemented by a list of 220 reintroductions and reinforcements projects, mainly carried out by botanical gardens, but also by NGOs. In addition to collecting seeds for our seed banks and planting and maintaining conservation and propagation cultures in the garden, the project WIPs De (Wildpflanzen-Schutz in Deutschland) also focuses on in-situ measures. This project, which is funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Germany from 2013 to 2025 and includes five botanical gardens, is concerned with Germany's so-called responsible species. These approximately 300 taxa have their main distribution focus in Central Europe, which is why Germany has a particularly high responsibility for their conservation. Reintroductions and reinforcements are often not publicized, especially if they have failed. However, it is very important to share experiences and learn from each other. Towards the end of the project, not only the seed accessions which are stored in the project seed banks and the conservation cultures will be published on relevant portals, but a database will also be available that provides information on the reintroduction and reinforcement measures. These databases will also include available monitoring as well as molecular data, and is intended to serve as a platform for exchange between scientists, NGOs and authorities.