

research and recently, conservation. In the past, *ex-situ* collections of plants have provided little to conservation, with the aim of some gardens to obtain as many taxa as possible (stamp collections). However, a growing number of initiatives are focusing on the roles botanic gardens can contribute towards legitimate conservation, thus supporting our continent's commitment towards the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). Undertakings such as seed collection, gene banking, population monitoring, genetic research and the reinforcement of local populations highlight the recent development of botanic gardens as centres for conservation and present the case that they can now be considered as legitimate partners of the *in situ* community to help halt the loss of plant species in Europe.

A REVIEW OF PLANT REINTRODUCTION PRACTICE

Graziano Rossi¹, Costantino Bonomi²

¹ Coordinator of the plant conservation working group of the Italian Botanical Society, University of Pavia, Department of Ecology, Pavia, Italy

² Trento Natural History Museum, Trento, Italy

Plant reintroduction or population strengthening of threatened species is an effective tool for plant conservation largely credited by the scientific community at European level but not so widely implemented as it deserves. Specific targets of the GSPC and the EPCS urge contracting parties to actually undertake plant recovery programmes on varying proportion of threatened species.

Reintroduction can be considered an ideal follow up activity for *ex situ* conservation initiatives such as seed bank projects. In this way there is no need to heavily impact on threatened populations, collecting individuals or parts of them, and the genetic diversity might be effectively maximised taking advantage of the large quantity of seeds that can commonly be stored in seed banks.

However from a practical point of view only general guidelines have been published so far by the IUCN in 1998. Well documented activities and structured projects on reintroduction (e.g. in the context of Life projects) are scarce and very few reports or papers are available to guide plant conservationists.

To fill this gap the Italian Botanical Society launched a project to document plant recovery and reintroduction activities carried out by botanists and wild life managers, aimed at compiling a national database. It is hoped that this initiative will contribute to discuss and adopt scientifically sound and widely agreed guidelines and standard operating protocols for plant reintroduction in Europe.

WORKSHOP 3 - Session 1

THE NORDIC DAY OF WILD FLOWERS

Mika Kalliovirta¹, Eija Kemooainen¹, Erik Hammer², Signe Nepper Larsen²

¹ Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Nature Division, Helsinki, Finland

² Dansk Botanisk Forening (Danish Botanical Society), Copenhagen, Denmark

This paper is about the Nordic Day of Wild Flowers and promoting public awareness of plants in cooperation with all Nordic Countries. The tradition of free public field excursions was started by the Danish Botanical Society in 1988. In Sweden, Norway and Faroe Islands excursions on the same principle have been arranged since 2002, in Finland since 2003 and in Island since 2004. The aim of the Day of Wild Flowers is to introduce the local flora, promote botanical leisure activities and offer common nature experiences free of charge to all interested in plants. The excursions are held on the same day in all Nordic countries, in 2007 on June 17th.

The excursions have been extremely popular. In 2006 a total of about 9 250 people took part in 446 excursions all over the Nordic Countries, of which about 2 560 in Finland and 1 506 in Denmark. The number of participants per excursion varies from a few to over a hundred. During the excursions, the most common local early summer species are introduced and identification of species is studied together. Local and current topics are discussed with participants, for example the ecological demands of the species and issues on plant conservation. Some material is sent in advance for the guides and some is also distributed to the participants, such as lists of the most common vascular plants.

In Finland these events have given an opportunity to gather information of some declined species. For instance, the knowledge of the distribution of a vulnerable esker plant, *Pulsatilla vernalis*, was greatly improved in 2006, when the species was described in the media.

The Nordic Day of Wild Flowers is an example of local, national and Nordic cooperation between several actors, including botanical and nature conservation societies, nature conservation authorities, botanical museums, educational organizations, local governments and local people. The activities support the European and global tasks for raising public awareness and building the capacity for plant conservation.