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I am thrilled to present the Center for Plant Conservation's (CPC) 2023 Annual Impact Report, a testament to the extraordinary achievements of CPC's network of Conservation Partners and our collective commitment to plant conservation.

Each of the achievements and initiatives you'll read about in the coming pages exemplify CPC's mission: To safeguard and conserve imperiled native plants by advancing science-based practices, connecting and empowering plant conservationists, and inspiring

people to protect biodiversity for future generations. Together with CPC's network—a unique consortium of word-class botanical gardens, arboreta, and plant-centric organizations—we understand and are committed to the prevention of plant extinction. CPC's goals and accomplishments are firmly rooted in the values we share—that the preservation of the diversity of species and biological communities is essential to human welfare, all life on the planet, and global environmental sustainability.

In 2023 the CPC network grew to 74 Institutional Conservation Partners and, through a shared commitment to collaboration and knowledge-sharing, we have made remarkable strides in advancing science-based conservation practices, empowering plant conservationists and inspiring global action to protect biodiversity.

The CPC National Collection continued to see extraordinary growth due to an enduring commitment to conservation throughout CPC's network of Conservation Partners. With 255 new species secured in collection in 2023, CPC Participating Institutions collectively possessed an impressive total of 2,605 North American rare plant species stored safely in ex-situ conservation

collections by the close of the year, bringing the CPC network to nearly 60% of the way towards our goal of securing all 4,400 rare and endangered plant taxa in the U.S. and Canada in ex-situ conservation collections. Acceleration of the completion of CPC's National Collection goals has been accomplished in part with well-established regional partnerships, California Plant Rescue (CaPR) and Florida Plant Rescue (FLPR), which focus on preserving and protecting the concentrated populations of native plants in these biodiverse areas with high concentrations of rare and endangered flora.

Beyond fieldwork, CPC and its partners have been a leading voice in advocating for native plant conservation. In 2023, CPC hosted the first of several regional summit events to raise awareness of the vital role native plants play in ecosystem health and human well-being—providing an opportunity to engage with new communities and stakeholders, highlighting the success of the CPC network's model for preserving and protecting plant species and demonstrating how the application of advanced science provides effective solutions to address the urgent threats of extinction and the increasingly devastating climate challenges we face globally. Additionally, federal grant-funded research projects spearheaded by CPC continue to uncover groundbreaking insights into rare plant conservation, while our free professional development training and educational resources hosted through the CPC Rare Plant Academy equip practitioners with cutting-edge skills and knowledge, empowering them to tackle today's conservation challenges.

Our work would not be possible without the support of donors and partners like you. As we look ahead, CPC remains committed to safeguarding plant diversity to ensure a sustainable future for all life on Earth. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support for CPC's mission. Together, we are making a lasting impact, and I look forward to the opportunities and milestones that lie ahead.

With gratitude,

Barbara 9 Millen

Dr. Barbara Millen, Board Chair & President | Center for Plant Conservation

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CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

In October 2023, CPC was thrilled to present its inaugural summit event, Unleashing the Power of Native Plants: A Resilient Future for Our Planet, which took place at the renowned Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, MA. The summit brought together over 120 guests from the region's CPC partner institutions; Boston-area conservation organizations, garden clubs, and universities; and friends and supporters of CPC to discuss the importance of protecting and conserving native plants and their habitats as well as the pivotal role of plant species in establishing sustainable responses to global environmental crises.

CPC was honored to host distinguished scientists and conservationists from throughout its nationwide network of botanical organizations for a keynote presentation and panel discussion during this event to share insights into CPC's conservation model. The event's keynote speaker, Dr. William (Ned) Friedman, Director of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University, was joined by an expert speaker panel which included Dr. Emily E.D. Coffey, Vice President of Conservation & Research at Atlanta Botanical Garden; Wesley Knapp, Chief Botanist of NatureServe; and Dr. Lucinda McDade, Executive Director & Judith B. Friend Director of Research at California Botanic Garden.

The lively panel discussion highlighted the critical urgency, challenges, and opportunities in our network's shared goal to save plants from extinction, with an overarching theme for success: collaboration. By working together and developing partnerships—with fellow conservation organizations, federal agencies, funders, plant enthusiasts, and more—we can amplify our efforts and save more plants than would ever be possible alone.

Watch highlights from the Boston Summit by scanning the QR code!





Top photo: The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Dr. Lucinda McDade, and Dr. William (Ned) Friedman.

Lower photo: Panelists (left to right) Dr. Emily E.D. Coffey, Wesley Knapp,

1 NATIONAL COLLECTION



GROWING THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

In collaboration with our Conservation Partners, the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) maintains the National Collection of Rare and Endangered Species—a collection of more than 2,600 of North America's most imperiled native plant species. The collection is stewarded by CPC's network of world-class botanical gardens and arboreta that preserve plant material in ex situ conservation collections, including seed banks and living collections.

Primarily consisting of seeds, the National Collection serves as an emergency backup in case a species becomes extinct or no longer reproduces in the wild. This crucial conservation action of collecting and banking seeds helps safeguard rare plant species from extinction, preserves their genetic diversity, and supports future conservation actions such as reintroductions back into the wild.

In 2023, more than 250 rare plant species were added to the National Collection. These new additions represent collections from 19 different Participating Institutions, with species spanning 18 states and territories.

In the marshy wetland and cienega habitats of southern Arizona lives the federally endangered Canelo Hills ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes delitescens), a rare terrestrial orchid that, in the past, has proven challenging to find in the wild. Desert Botanical Garden (DBG) in Phoenix, AZ, has taken an innovative approach to uncovering this elusive species—they are utilizing scent detection dogs to sniff out and locate this rare orchid. Renowned for their exceptional olfactory abilities, these remarkable dogs were trained on a related species from just outside of Death Valley in southern Nevada, Ash Meadows ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes infernalis), due to the absence of actual samples of the Canelo Hills orchid for training. Because the two orchid species are in the same genus, scientists hoped (but weren't sure) that their scent signatures would be similar enough that the dogs would be able to detect both. After successful tests in a training facility, conservationists were ready to put the dogs' noses to the test in the wild.

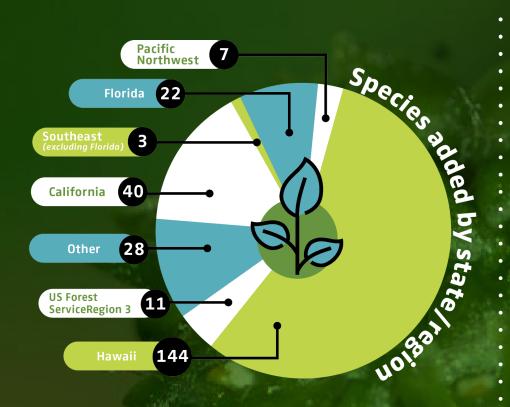
Amid challenging natural conditions—and a variety of other enticing scents found in nature—the dogs located both flowering and barely emerged Canelo Hills orchids. The dogs' orchid-sniffing prowess was so strong, scientists even had to get on their hands and knees to find what the dogs were alerting them to because the plants couldn't be detected simply on sight. This success marks a significant step in monitoring and conserving this rare plant species, and next steps involve taking the dogs to historic sites where the orchids haven't been seen in decades.

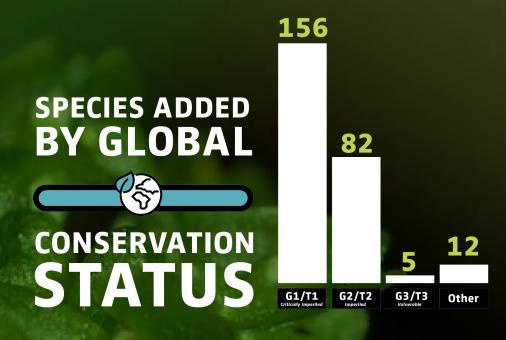
DBG's conservation of this imperiled orchid is further supported by a grant for seed collection and propagation. In situ, the orchids require a specialized fungus to assist germination and provide nutrients. Without this fungus, in vitro methods are being used to cultivate them. Collaboration with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) and the North American Orchid Conservation Center (NAOCC) has been crucial in this process, with these institutions helping to identify and culture the necessary fungus. The ultimate goal is to produce hundreds or thousands of Canelo Hills orchids for reintroduction into their natural habitats.



Lower photo: Detection dog Muon finding and pointing out a Spiranthes delitescens plant in flower in its habitat. Photo credit: Eirini Pajak.







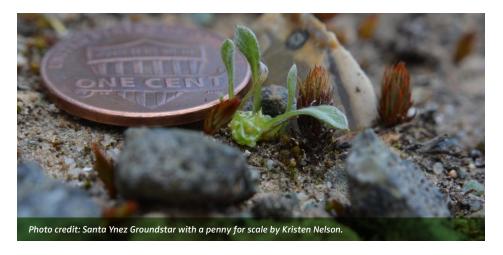
TOTAL SPECIES 255 ADDED IN 2023

TOTAL SPECIES IN THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

2605

SPECIES ADDED BY PLANT GROUPS

11	Legumes	2	Orchids
28	Asters	9	Ferns
3	Mustards	1	Palms
9	Buckwheats	1	Conifers
21	Cacti & Succulents	170	Other







Santa Ynez Groundstar (Ancistrocarphus keilii) is a critically imperiled species known only from Santa Barbara County, California. For 30 years, no individuals of this diminutive species were observed or documented. In 2023, a collaborative group of botanists from Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and California Native Plant Society conducted a successful expedition to survey the last documented occurrence of this plant. The scientists collected new voucher specimens, completed conservation seed banking, acquired the first-ever photos of this plant in living condition, and collected detailed data about the status of the population and its habitat. Seed collection of Santa Ynez Groundstar was funded by the California Plant Rescue initiative in 2023, and this species is now held in the National Collection at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

Peck's Milkvetch (Astragalus peckii) is listed as Threatened by the state of Oregon where it is endemic to the central part of the state, growing along the Cascade Mountain Range. It is one of the many species named in honor of renowned Oregon botanist Morton E. Peck. According to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, it is threatened primarily by off-road vehicles, invasive weed encroachment, and urbanization. Peck's Milkvetch is held in the National Collection at Rae Selling Berry Seed Bank, where over 16,000 seeds from 163 maternal plants, representing 7 wild populations, are safeguarded. Peck's Milkvetch was sponsored in 2023 as part of CPC's 40th Anniversary Campaign, helping to fund conservation efforts for this rare plant at Rae Selling Berry Seed Bank.

Manasota Pawpaw (Asimina manasota) is a critically imperiled species endemic to Manatee and Sarasota Counties in southern Florida. As an exceptional species with seeds that cannot be stored using traditional methods, techniques such as tissue cryopreservation must be employed to conserve Manasota Pawpaw in long-term storage. As part of the Florida Plant Rescue (FLPR) initiative in 2023, this species was targeted in an exceptional species project and brought into the National Collection at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden's Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW). With funding from FLPR, Selby Gardens collected immature shoot tissue from the wild to use in tissue culture and cryopreservation. Selby Gardens partnered with CREW to cryopreserve Manasota Pawpaw, and CREW staff have since successfully grown three germplasm lines in vitro from collections made in 2023.

REGIONALINITIATIVES



REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Within a broad nationwide network encompassing the United States and Canada, the Center for Plant Conservation stewards regional collaborations bound by common goals and circumstances. Currently, CPC supports two state-wide seed collection initiatives in regions of rich, yet threatened, biodiversity—California Plant Rescue (CaPR) and Florida Plant Rescue (FLPR). CaPR is dedicated to conserving the diverse flora of California and the California Floristic Province, while FLPR focuses on securing and protecting Florida's rare native plant species within conservation collections. Both initiatives exemplify the CPC ethos of collaboration, demonstrating that by sharing knowledge and working together, we can save more plants from extinction than would ever be possible alone.

CAPR PARTNERS















FLPR PARTNERS





















CALIFORNIA PLANT RESCUE

CPC and its California-based partners continued to make remarkable progress for the CaPR initiative throughout 2023. In addition to collecting 283 new species last year, CaPR partners also successfully recollected 13 species. While CaPR's primary focus is securing novel collections of previously uncollected rare California plants, the initiative includes funding for recollections of taxa already in seed banks if previous collections meet a set of criteria deeming new collections necessary to ensure better genetic diversity representation ex situ. Another major milestone was the introduction of the CaPR database, an innovative tool designed to synthesize information about target California species, encompassing data from occurrences to accessions.

This comprehensive database features a Seed Collection Targeting Module that allows partners to filter species based on various metrics, including taxonomy, protection status, accession characteristics, geographic region, and land ownership status. By integrating ex situ collection data with in situ occurrence records from natural heritage programs and government agencies, this tool enables more efficient targeting of priority species and populations for conservation. The CaPR Seed Collection Targeting Module is being expanded to include regions beyond California as well, including the state of Nevada through an agreement with the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage. Additionally, collaborations with USFS Region 3 will extend its reach to Arizona and New Mexico, and a new agreement with the Department of the Interior (including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will incorporate several intermountain region states.

By combining resources into this new tool, CPC and its partners can effectively facilitate the collection of high-priority rare plant seeds, ensuring they make their way into seed banks. This progress not only enhances the conservation efforts within California but also sets a precedent for expanding these efforts across other regions of the United States.





FLORIDA PLANT RESCUE

CPC and its partners continued to make significant strides towards securing even more of Florida's 200 globally rare species in conservation collections through the FLPR initiative in 2023. Partners successfully made over 17 seed collections to preserve in seed banks at botanical gardens and the National Laboratory for Genetic Resource Preservation, including first-time collections for 11 species. Field visits provided valuable data on population size, extent, reproductivity, and habitat conditions, enhancing understanding of these rare plants.

Beyond traditional seed banking, FLPR is also focusing on exceptional species projects for plants that cannot have their seed stored via conventional freezing methods. Exceptional species projects in 2023 included those for the rare Manasota pawpaw and Smallcup spiderlily, which were managed by Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Naples Botanical Garden, respectively. Another notable achievement in the past year was the launch of an interactive accessions database, integrating seed bank data from FLPR partners with rare plant occurrence data from the Florida Natural Areas Inventory. This tool helps prioritize species for collection and allows for continuous updates. Lastly, to further expand capacity, new agreements with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service were put in place to streamline permitting and expand collection efforts in high-priority areas, including Florida's National Forests, Everglades National Park, and Big Cypress National Park.

Through these strategic conservation efforts, FLPR partners have now secured 50% of Florida's most imperiled plant species and have great momentum to conserve additional target species in 2024.

We wish to thank the following donors and foundations for their integral support of FLPR:

Josephine Bush | Coleman and Susan Burke | BAND Foundation | Curtis & Edith Munson

Foundation | River Branch Foundation | National Park Service



NATIONAL MEETING BY THE NUMBERS

The 2023 CPC National Meeting was hosted at Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Arizona and included a field trip to the Verde Valley to visit three sites that are home to several pre-contact domesticated agaves grown by the Sinagua peoples.





CONSERVATION PARTNERS



NEW INSTITUTIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERS

The Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) was thrilled to welcome two new plant conservation organizations to CPC's network of Institutional Conservation Partners in 2023. At 74 members strong at the close of 2023, the CPC network brings together plant conservationists from institutions across the globe and is grounded in the spirit of collaboration and scientific innovation to save imperiled plants from extinction. Together, CPC's network saves more plants than would ever be possible for any partner to acomplish alone.







Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens
Participating Institution | Boothby, ME

The mission of Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens (CMBG) is to inspire meaningful connections among people, plants, and nature through horticulture, education, and research. CMBG is currently developing a new conservation and research program with a focus on mitigating climate change impacts to plants in Maine's ecoregions. The planned Plant Science and Horticulture Center at CMBG will house a growing team of conservation biologists and horticulturists conducting research alongside labs, a new seed bank and preparation room, CMBG's growing herbarium of 6,000+ specimens, a research library, office space, and connected greenhouses. CMBG curates living collections of many North American native plants including several rare and endangered species native to Maine and nearby states. In addition to native plant collections in display gardens, CMBG is building an ex situ conservation collection of Asclepias (milkweed) species.



The Landscape Restoration & Adaptation Branch (LRAB) of the Biological Resources Division of the National Park Service (NPS) is based in Fort Collins, Colorado. Its mission is to support landscape restoration and adaptation by providing the policy, tools, and technical assistance necessary for national parks to restore disrupted ecological processes and degraded landscapes, improving ecosystem response. LRAB helps over 400 national park units to conserve and preserve resources and restore and maintain healthy ecosystems by caring for the plants, animals, and landscapes within their boundaries. Throughout any given year, NPS plans and implements hundreds of plant conservation actions, including surveying, monitoring, seed collection, propagation, and restoration. In partnership with CPC and its network of botanical institutions, NPS aspires to streamline the process for conducting rare plant conservation actions on its lands to better ensure the survival of these imperiled species.

2023 INSTITUTIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Arizona

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Desert Botanical Garden The Arboretum at Flagstaff

California

Botanic Gardens Conservation International * California Botanic Garden California Native Plant Society Mattole Restoration Council Regional Parks Botanic Garden San Diego Botanic Garden San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance Santa Barbara Botanic Garden The Huntington University of California **Botanical Garden** University of California Davis Arboretum & Public Garden University of California-Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden

Colorado

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens

Denver Botanic Gardens

National Park Service*

National Laboratory for Genetic

Resource Preservation (USDA-ARS) *

Delaware

Mt. Cuba Center

District of Columbia

Plant Conservation Alliance *
United States Botanic Garden

Florida

Bok Tower Gardens
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Natural Areas Inventory *
Institute for Regional Conservation *
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
Montgomery Botanical Center
Naples Botanical Garden

Georgia

Atlanta Botanical Garden
The State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Hawaii

Harold L. Lyon Arboretum
Honolulu Botanical Gardens
Laukahi: The Hawaii Plant
Conservation Network *
National Tropical Botanical Garden
Waimea Arboretum Foundation

Illinois

Chicago Botanic Garden
The Morton Arboretum

Indiana

Newfields

Maine

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

Maryland

North American Orchid
Conservation Center

Massachusetts

Native Plant Trust
Polly Hill Arboretum
The Arnold Arboretum of
Harvard University
Zoo New England

Minnesota

University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Missouri

Missouri Botanical Garden

Nebraska

Lauritzen Gardens

New York

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Cornell Botanic Gardens The New York Botanical Garden

Newfoundland

Memorial University of

Newfoundland Botanical Garden

North Carolina

North Carolina Botanical Garden The North Carolina Arboretum

Ohio

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden Holden Forests and Gardens The Dawes Arboretum United Plant Savers

Oregon

Institute for Applied Ecology
Rae Selling Berry Seed Bank &
Plant Conservation Program

Pennsylvania

American Public Gardens Association *
Longwood Gardens

Tennessee

Southeastern Grasslands Institute

Texas

Botanical Research Institute of Texas /
Fort Worth Botanic Garden
Mercer Botanic Gardens
San Antonio Botanical Garden
The Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center

Utah

Red Butte Garden and Arboretum

Virgin Islands

St. George Village Botanical Garden

Virginia

NatureServe *

Washington

University Of Washington Botanic Gardens

Australia

Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc. *

United Kingdom

Millennium Seed Bank Partnership at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew *

- * = Network Partners
- ** = Collaborating Partner



4 SCIENCE & PROGRAMS



SCIENCE & PROGRAMS

CPC's commitment to science-based research and best practices is at the heart of its mission to save rare plants from extinction. By leveraging the strengths and expertise of its network of Conservation Partners, CPC fosters a dynamic environment where innovation and learning thrive. Federal grant-funded research studies spearheaded by CPC are pivotal in uncovering new insights into rare plant conservation, while CPC's free professional development trainings and educational resources empower practitioners with the latest skills and know-how. Additionally, CPC's valuable database tools serve as essential resources for tracking and analyzing plant populations, ensuring that data-driven decisions guide conservation efforts.

By championing the application of science-based best practices, CPC not only enhances ex situ curation for imperiled plants, but also ensures that conservation strategies are grounded in the most effective and current methods that are adaptable to the ever-evolving challenges facing rare plants. CPC's emphasis on knowledge-sharing resources fosters a collaborative environment, empowering the entire conservation community to stay informed and engaged with the latest advancements. Together, our network sets the standard for excellence in the field of rare plant conservation through these crucial initiatives, creating a lasting impact for the preservation of endangered plant species.

These efforts expand our collective knowledge, aid practitioners' work, and improve ex situ curation for imperiled plants—driving meaningful progress in the preservation of our planet's biodiversity and ensuring the survival of our most vulnerable plant species for generations to come.

Seed Bulking Grant is a Big Win for Small Seeds

In 2023, CPC secured a three-year \$598,833 National Leadership Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services to advance the scientific understanding of seed bulking, a critical practice for rare plant conservation that involves growing plants from seed to reproduction in a botanic garden setting to increase seed available for restoration. While necessary, seed bulking can impose unnatural filters on the genetics of rare plant populations—and little is known about how growing a plant outside its native range affects plant health or genetic filtering. This grant, achieved in collaboration with seven members of the California Plant Rescue network, including co-Principal Investigators from the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and California Botanic Garden, will focus on studying the effects of seed bulking on 15 rare annual California native plant species, tracking propagation techniques and maternal line survival across two growing seasons in different locations.

The project will also assess the genetic impact of seed bulking on two rare California annuals in the CPC National Collection: Saltmarsh bird's beak and San Diego thornmint. The findings, together with insights from our broader network, will contribute to the development of CPC Best Practices Guidelines for Seed Bulking, enhancing the quality of rare plant conservation efforts. This funding underscores CPC's pivotal role in securing resources to further scientific research and establish best practices in the conservation of rare plants.







Launching the Applied Plant Conservation Course

Since 2021, CPC has been developing a brand-new educational resource for the Rare Plant Academy (RPA)—the Applied Plant Conservation Course. This online professional development course is free-of-charge and serves to train our current and future botanical workforce in the best practices of rare plant stewardship and conservation. Participants will learn from leading experts in the field of plant conservation through dynamic video lectures, animated lessons, knowledge checks, and integrated RPA resources.

In May 2023, CPC was thrilled to announce the launch of the first module of the course, *Introduction to Rare Plant Conservation*, at our National Meeting at Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, AZ. Taught by several of CPC's Conservation Partners—including the Institute for Applied Ecology, NatureServe, and the California Native Plant Society—this module introduces fundamental plant conservation concepts, such as the nature of plant rarity, conservation rankings, rare plant ecology, and more. The content featured in Module 1 underpins the CPC network's collective mission to save plants from extinction and serves as an informative primer for conservation minded-individuals, plant enthusiasts, and practitioners who are newer to the plant conservation field.

By the close of 2023, CPC had 19 of its partner institutions contracted to create approximately 72 hours of lesson content, and 187 individuals had enrolled in the course. Remaining course modules will launch throughout 2024, bringing CPC's best practices guidelines to life as an educational resource for those working with rare and native plants at any stage of their career.



Seed Longevity Study Update

For the past several years, CPC has been collaborating with its network of Conservation Partners and the National Laboratory for Genetic Resources Preservation (NLGRP) to test the aging and longevity of wild rare plant species' seeds in long-term orthodox seedbanks. This Institute for Museum and Library Services-funded Seed Longevity Study has shown promising results for the rare and endangered species stewarded in the CPC National Collection.

The study—which utilizes RNA integrity number (RIN) as a metric of seed aging—compared the germination-based viability and RNA integrity of seeds held in frozen storage for 15+ years to seed recollected or regenerated from the same plant population. Collaborators tested the hypothesis that RIN can help approximate seed health in storage, which can be used to inform curation and management decisions surrounding rare plants. Preliminary results show high-quality RNA in about 70% of older seed pairs, indicating minimal aging during storage, and that RIN assays, which require fewer seeds and provide quicker results than traditional germination assays, show promise in detecting seed health. Additionally, research indicates that ecological factors heavily influence seed longevity, including habitat, life form, bloom period, and more.

The Seed Longevity Study enters its final year in 2024 and results of the study will be published in peer-reviewed publications and will be refined into new best practices guidelines for rare plant curation methods





Introducing the Revamped Reintroduction Database

The Center for Plant Conservation launched the new and improved Reintroduction Database (CPCRD) in 2023, which aims to enhance collaborative efforts and inform future reintroduction practices by providing a comprehensive data resource. This database is designed to track project information and follow-up monitoring of rare plant reintroductions, allowing users to submit and access vetted reintroduction projects. Contributors, including those outside the CPC network, can now input data, although access to sensitive information like outplanting site coordinates is restricted to protect plant populations. This database contains over 400 projects (and counting!) involving 187 species across 25 states.

The reintroduction efforts documented in the CPCRD are crucial for informing CPC's Best Practices Guidelines, which are recognized internationally. The new CPCRD integrates data from historical CPC reintroduction efforts as well as new submissions from CPC's partner organizations, while synthesizing data from the historic CPC International Reintroduction Registry and the REDCap Reintroduction Database for US Rare Plants, originally developed by scientists at Missouri Botanical Garden. Dr. Joe Bellis played a significant role in harmonizing old and new data fields, contacting contributors, and facilitating manuscript preparation to evaluate factors influencing translocation success. The CPCRD and its future analyses are expected to significantly improve the success of rare plant translocations by providing valuable insights into effective management techniques and site attributes.

Watch and learn about the CPCRD!

5 CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS



2023 CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

The CPC network is more than just a group of dedicated individuals—it's a vibrant community of experts that is strengthened by the unique skills and expertise each person and institution brings. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing, our partners create powerful synergies that amplify the impact of their work. Whether it's sharing best practices, conducting groundbreaking research, or developing innovative conservation strategies, these passionate professionals are united by a common goal: to safeguard our planet's botanical diversity. Our collective efforts not only drive progress but also inspire a broader movement towards global plant conservation.

Throughout the year, CPC has highlighted individuals from our network who are doing meaningful work that both supports our broader conservation community and saves plants from extinction. Known as our Conservation Champions, these practitioners and advocates are at the forefront of our fight to save rare plants from extinction—protecting plants and our planet for the benefit of all.





DR. JOE BELLIS

Postdoctoral Researcher, CPC

With a conservation research focus on the application of reintroductions and other forms of conservation translocations as a tool to help avert biodiversity loss, Dr. Joe Bellis has been the perfect collaborator to shepherd the re-launch of the CPC Reintroduction Database. Through this tool, Joe has helped document and share the knowledge of experts throughout CPC's network to advance our collective understanding of these critical plant-saving methods.



JIM LOCKLEAR

Director of Conservation, Lauritzen Gardens (retired 2024)

Jim Locklear has dedicated himself to the preservation of imperiled grasslands habitats and plant species, particularly the Central Grassland of North America, and has helped advance our knowledge and conservation expertise for these delicate species.



Reader in Conservation Ecology, Biological and Environmental Sciences, Liverpool John Moores University

Through her research on the impacts of climate change on conservation actions such as reintroductions, Dr. Sarah Dalrymple helps us to innovate new ways to effectively safeguard rare plant species and advocate for their preservation. As she says, "If you can enthuse others with your love of plants, you're helping to grow our community of plant people and that's a crucial first step in making sure we protect them in the future."

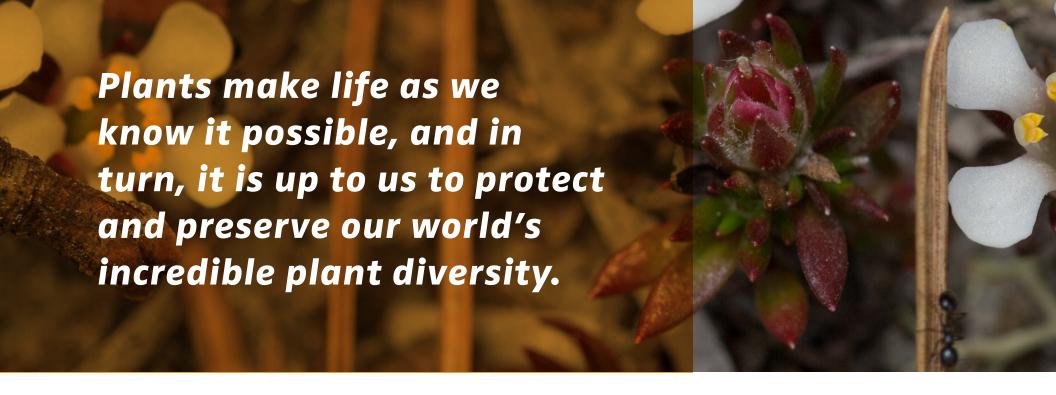


SHEILA MURRAY

Research Biologist, The Arboretum at Flagstaff

Sheila Murray is a longtime partner of CPC whose commitment to the conservation of the rare and native species of the Colorado Plateau region in northern Arizona helps protect these unique species from extinction. As a collaborator on CPC's US Forest Service grant, Sheila supports seed collections initiatives on Region 3 USFS lands, helping secure vulnerable species, such as Goodding's onion (Allium gooddingii), in conservation collection.







STEVE BLACKWELL

Conservation Collections Manager, Desert Botanical Garden and 2023 CPC Star Award Recipient

Steve Blackwell has made many valuable contributions to the field of plant conservation, particularly in support of Southwest species. Among his many successes, his contributions to the Arizona hedgehog cactus (Echinocereus coccineus var. arizonicus) salvage and reintroduction project exemplifies how excellence in conservation horticulture can save imperiled plants at risk of extinction.



EMILY GRIFFOUL

Conservation Scientist, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens

Emily Griffoul is dedicated to the conservation of rare and endangered alpine plant species that live in high-elevation habitats and face severe impacts from climate change and other threats. Emily's work centers on the North American Strategy for Alpine Plant Conservation—a blueprint for the protection of alpine plants with a focus on the role of botanic gardens in their preservation.



MEG ENGELHARDT

Seed Bank Manager, Missouri Botanical Garden

Meg Engelhardt integrates technology and out-of-the-box thinking with established conservation best practices to safeguard the rare plants in her care. By utilizing innovative technology such as X-ray imagery to evaluate seed quality, Meg and her seed bank team can make informed decisions on how to best steward and use the precious seeds, saving time and resources.





DR. SEAN GRIFFIN

Director of Science & Conservation, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Dr. Sean Griffin is no stranger to plant-insect interactions, having a life-long interest in bees and other pollinators.
Sean utilizes his background in pollinator ecology to lead restoration-focused research and rare plant conservation projects which help to restore the incredible plant diversity of native grasslands.



DR. PETER ZALE

Associate Director, Conservation, Plant Breeding and Collections, Longwood Gardens

Dr. Peter Zale channels his passion for native orchids and scientific expertise to advance orchid conservation science through innovative lab-based seed germination techniques, establishing living collections, peerreviewed research, public education, and more. While some native orchid species may prove elusive to work with at times, Peter proves that patience and dedication can result in long-lasting, meaningful impacts for these delightful plants.



DR. HEATHER SCHNEIDER

Senior Rare Plant Conservation Scientist, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

Dr. Heather Schneider's work to conserve the rare and endangered plants of the Channel Islands highlights the unique challenges and opportunities faced by practitioners working to protect island species, and the progress that can be made through partnership and collaboration. As Heather states, "We can all be a force for rare plant conservation, whether our actions are big or small."



SPONSOR A PLANT, SAVE A PLANT

Plant sponsorships play an important role in the Center for Plant Conservation's (CPC) mission to prevent plant extinction. When a Participating Institution (PI) accepts responsibility for a National Collection species, it commits to preserving that species for the future. Pls dedicate substantial resources and effort to secure and maintain the threatened plant material, as well as research and innovate the best ways to grow, manage, and restore these rare species. CPC created the Plant Sponsorship Program to help offset the costs associated with these conservation activities.

Through plant sponsorships, PIs receive consistent, dependable funding to support their long-term conservation efforts. Donors can sponsor a plant at various levels, starting at \$10,000, with contributions coming from a single donor or multiple donors. Premium sponsorship levels are also available at \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$100,000. While sponsorships do not cover all expenses, they offer significant financial support and stability to our partners. This program ensures that PIs can continue their critical work in conserving endangered plant species and advancing conservation best practices. In 2023, CPC secured \$244,605 in plant sponsorship funds, and paid out \$138,657 in annual stipends to our conservation partners stewarding sponsored plant species.

In anticipation of its milestone 40th anniversary year in 2024, CPC soft launched its '40 for 40' campaign in 2023. This campaign seeks to raise \$200,000 to sponsor 40 plant species in the National Collection in honor of CPC's 40 years of saving plants from extinction. Contributions from the CPC Board of Trustees toward \$200,000 in campaign matching funds, combined with preliminary public donations, saw a successful start to this special campaign and significant plant sponsorship funds raised in 2023.

PROSTRATE MILKWEED



Scattered amid the shrubs and groves in the open grasslands of South Texas grows the Prostrate milkweed (Asclepias prostrata), a critically imperiled species of milkweed known from fewer than 10 occurrences. The name prostrate is due to the plant growing low to the ground, where it is outcompeted by widely-planted—and quickly spreading—non-native pasture grasses. From April to October, rain can often bring this low-lying plant out of dormancy to show off inch-long creamy white hood flowers that extend beyond pale green hooked leaves.

In addition to non-native grasses, Prostrate milkweed faces significant threats to its survival due to agricultural and urban development—which often results in the habitats of this rare plant being bulldozed by developers. Poaching is also a threat, and conservationists work to educate landowners about this imperiled species.

Prostrate milkweed is stewarded in the CPC National Collection by San Antonio Botanical Garden (SABG). In addition to maintaining a wild-collected seed collection, SABG also holds this species in living collection and has conducted propagation research. Sponsorship will have lasting impacts in the preservation of Prostrate milkweed while providing support to the conservationists working to protect this rare Texas native species from extinction.

Sponsor this plant by scanning the QR code!

7 DONORS & KEY PERSONNEL

Our National Office Partners Armanino Toni Baril Sonya Calderon **Community Boost** Jules Cooch Joe Davitt **Evergreen Alliance Amie Forest FYC Labs** Hanna Rosner-Katz Laura Russello, Constellation Consulting San Diego Zoo Wildlife

Alliance

Our Fellows &
Volunteers
Madeline Bednar, 2022
Catherine H. Beattie
Fellow
Erin Eichenberger, 2023
Catherine H. Beattie
Fellow
Kathy Elliot, CPC

Newsletter Volunteer



The CPC National Office is proud to be headquartered at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in Escondidio, California, in partnership with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, a CPC Participating Institution. We thank the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance for their support and collaboration in our mission to save plants from extinction.

2023 Staff

Matora Fiorey, Ph.D. Director of Operations

Shannon Fowler, M.A.
Director of Communications
& Public Programs

Tina Stanley
Conservation Program Coordinator

Carlos L. de la Rosa, Ph.D. Former President & CEO

Katie Heineman, Ph.D. Former VP of Science and Conservation

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Ms. Lynde Uihlein

**Deceased

2023 DONOR RECOGNITION

\$25,000 and Above

Anonymous
BAND Foundation
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Conservation Foundation
James and Alison Luckman
Lynde B. Uihlein

\$10,000-\$24,999

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Truffula Seed Fund
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\$1,000-\$2,499

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Elizabeth Elser Doolittle
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\$500-\$999

Susan M. Baird
Mrs. Graham M. Brush
Chestnut Hill Garden Club
Mr. Lee Clippard
Evelyn and Brian Fairchild
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Nicholas and Marjorie Greville

Csanad Gurdon Mr. Clifford Hague Hortulus Inc. Roger and Tracy Jeanty Mr. and Mrs. Warren B. Lammert, Jr. Katharine Luther Lindsay Marshall Mr. Steven McKay Miramonte Christian School 7th Grade Class Amv Mvers North Country Garden Club of Long Island, Inc. Piscatagua Garden Club William and Alicia Robertson, IV Emma White Seymour Charitable Gift Fund, a Donor Advised Fund of Renaissance Charitable Foundation Mrs. Carol Sherman Flizabeth Strauch Emily V. Wade Jennifer Whipple

\$500 and Under

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Daniel C. Shively

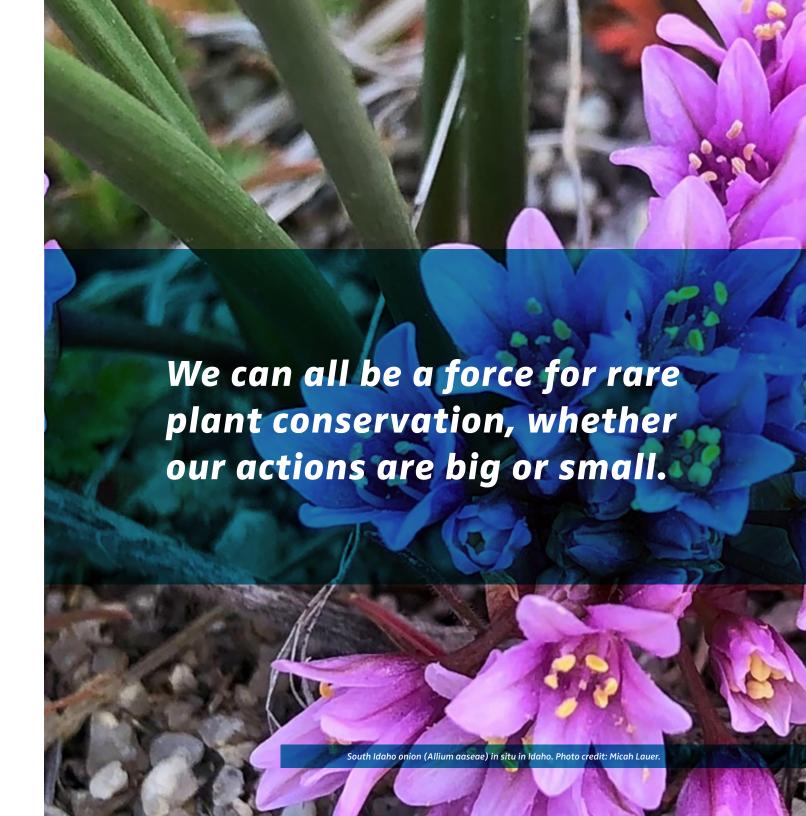
Mrs. Robin Inman

Mrs. Leslee Newton-Reed

In Memory Of:

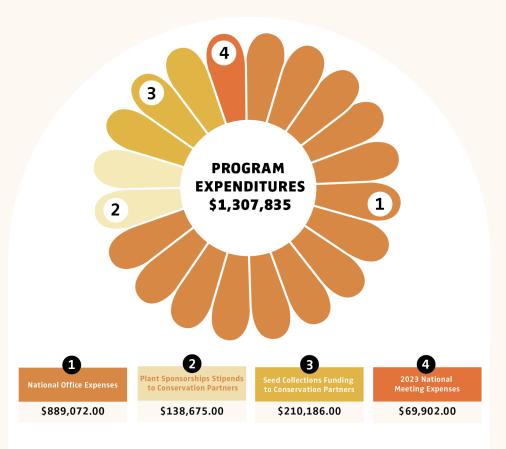
Richard Driskill
by Jeff Elliott
Mary Ann Streeter
by Catherine Felton
by Susan Karcz
by North Shore Garden Club
of Massachusetts
by Peter and
Romayne Timms

We strive to ensure the accuracy of this list. Should you find any omissions or errors, please contact the CPC National Office so that we may update our records: info@saveplants.org



8 FINANCIALS

We are pleased to share financial information for the Center for Plant Conservation's fiscal year January 1 through December 31 derived from audits for 2021, 2022, and 2023. For more detailed financial information, please see CPC's audited financial statements on our website at saveplants.org/about-us/reports-and-finances.



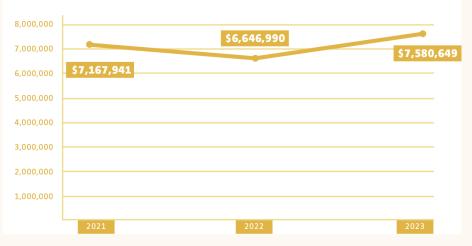
OPERATING REVENUES \$1,856,494

OPERATING EXPENSES \$1,826,256

NET OPERATING INCOME \$30,238

ENDOWMENT ASSETS AT FAIR VALUE

CPC's endowment, named the Plant Conservation Fund, includes funds established by donors to provide for specific activities and general operations.



The annual distribution from the endowment is based on the Board approved draw policy. The rate, determined and adjusted from time to time by the Board, is applied to the average fair value of the endowment portfolio for the prior three years at December 31. During 2023, the draw rate was 5%.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES			
OPERATING DATA	2023	2022	2021
Operating Revenues Grants and contributions without donor restrictions	\$326,437	\$792,147	\$569,864
In kind contributions (SDZWA)	162,250	244,308	406,327
In kind contributions	101,980	47,699	-
Government grants and contracts without donor restriction	298,863	454,574	211,197
Participating institution fees	105,300	77,785	75,925
National Meeting - meeting registration fees	48,725	36,650	10,725
Special events revenue	12,400	-	-
Draw on Endowment from accumulated investment earnings to general operating	324,226	306,590	257,169
Other net assets released from donor-imposed restrictions	475,165 ^{1/}	92,993 ^{1/}	30,000 ^{1/}
Gain on forgiveness of Paycheck Protection Program Loan	-	-	51,967
Other income	1,148	6,428	44
Total Operating Revenues without donor restrictions	\$1,856,494	\$2,059,174	\$1,613,218
Operating Expenses			
Program Services:			
National office	\$889,072	\$712,154	\$612,660
Plant sponsorships	138,675	139,675	138,000
Seed collecting at Conservation Partner institutions	210,186	362,315	86,350
National meeting	69,902	53,456	5,219
Sub-Total Program Services	1,307,835	1,267,600	842,229
Management and General Support	361,286	369,177	291,743
Fundraising	157,135	93,889	117,730
Total Operating Expenses	\$1,826,256	\$1,730,666	\$1,251,702
Net operating income (loss) after draw from accumulated investment earnings	\$30,238	\$328,508	\$361,516
Effect of changes in funds subject to donor restrictions			
Draw from accumulated investment earnings (released from donor restricted endowment)	\$(324,226)	\$(306,590)	\$(257,169)
Other net assets released from donor restrictions	(475,165) ^{1/}	(92,993) ^{1/}	$(30,000)^{1/}$
Government grants + contracts with donor restrictions	115,000	776,817	100,000
Contributions with donor restrictions - Additions to endowment	245,105	106,786	46,075
Subtotal	\$(439,286)	\$484,020	\$(141,094)
Net income (loss) before non-operating income and expenses	\$(409,048)	\$812,528	\$220,422
NON-OPERATING / INVESTMENT EARNINGS /CHANGE IN NET ASSETS DATA:			
Net operating income (loss) before non-operating income and expenses - Investment earnings, net	\$(409,048)	\$812,528	\$220,422
Non-operating income (loss) - Investment earnings, net	1,063,504	-320,784	1,741,310
Change in Net Assets	\$654,456	\$491,744	\$1,961,732
ENDOWMENT DATA			
Endowment at fair value, beginning of year	\$6,646,990	\$7,167,941	\$5,638,603
Investment earnings, net of expenses	1,012,780	-321,147	1,740,432
Draw from accumulated investment earnings (5% of 3 year rolling average endowment)	(324,226)	(306,590)	(257,169)
Contributions	245,105	106,786	46,075
Endowment at fair value, end of year	\$7,580,649	\$6,646,990	7,167,941
Approximate annual percentage return on endowment	15.2%	-4.5%	30.9%
Surplus of Investment earnings over (or shortfall from) Draw from accumulated investment earnings	\$688,554	\$(627,737)	\$1,483,263

TEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION DATA ETS	2023	2022	2021
Current Assets	LULJ	LULL	2021
Cash and cash equivalents - operating	\$569,750	\$1,165,941	\$1,007,288
Cash and cash equivalents - CA Biodiversity overhead for 2020 through 2023	-	30,000	30,000
Investments - operating	\$727,559		
Accounts receivable, net	10,829	6,264	24,807
Grants receivable	432,694	743,002	20,065
Prepaid and other assets	58,329	64,569	16,797
Total Current Assets	1,799,161	2,009,776	1,098,957
Cash and cash equivalents - endowment	98,802	50,764	37,630
Cash and cash equivalents - restricted funds held for others (including CDs)	259,968	1,790,815	2,285,215
Investments - restricted funds held on behalf of others	863,130		
Cash and cash equivalents - CA Biodiversity overhead for 2020 through 2023	-	-	30,000
Property and equipment, net	1,625	3,633	2,893
Endowment investments (at fair value)	7,481,847	6,596,226	7,130,311
TOTAL ASSETS	\$10,504,533	\$10,451,214	\$10,585,006
Liabilities			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$138,864	\$74,021	\$192,006
Deferred revenue	1,737	-	13,151
PayCheck Protectoin Program Loan	-	-	-
Fund held on behalf of others	1,123,098	1,790,815	2,285,215
Total Liabilities	\$1,263,699	\$1,864,836	\$2,490,372
Net Assets			
Without donor restrictions			
Undesignated	\$1,176,526	\$1,095,564	\$766,693
Designated by Board for an endowment	608,744	608,744	608,744
Accumulated endowment investment earnings	446,474	327,625	374,914
Total without donor restriction	\$2,231,744	\$2,031,933	\$1,750,351
With donor restrictions			
Donor restricted - temporary in nature	\$483,659	\$843,824	\$160,000
Endowment - perpetual in nature	2,561,376	2,316,271	2,209,485
Accumulated endowment investment earnings	3,964,055	3,394,350	3,974,798
Total with donor restriction	\$7,009,090	\$6,554,445	\$6,344,283
Total Net Assets	9,240,834	8,586,378	8,094,634
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$10,504,533	\$10,451,214	\$10,585,006

Thanks to the dedication and generosity of our staff, Board of Trustees, Conservation Partners, and donors, the Center for Plant Conservation continues to be a vibrant and sustainable organization that saves plants from extinction.

Seed capsule on experimental reintroduction site plant of Neches River rosemallow (Hibiscus dasycalyx). Photo credit: Kari Hernandez.







CENTER FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

CPC safeguards rare plants by advancing science-based conservation practices, connecting and empowering plant conservationists, and inspiring all to protect biodiversity for future generations.



Make a Gift to Save Endangered Plants

The Center For Plant Conservation (CPC) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization (EIN# 22-2527116) Photo credit: Greg Bluffin.

National Headquarters

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saveplants.org | info@saveplants.org | 760.796.5686



The CPC National Office is proud to be headquartered at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in Escondido, California, in partnership with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, a CPC Participating Institution. We thank the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance for their support and collaboration in our mission to save plants from extinction.