



UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDAMENTALS

Collections Overview

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Plant Collections Professional Section “Collections Clarity”

What is a plant collection?



A set of plants assembled for a purpose

Like objects in a museum, plants that are documented and labeled can be part of a public garden's living collection

Different Kinds of Plant Collections

Herbarium



Cryogenic



Seed Bank



Today's Focus: Collections of Living Whole Plants



How do plant collections relate to a garden's mission?



- “Primary sources” for display, education, research, conservation, enjoyment
- Purpose should serve garden's unique mission and be relevant

Why are plant collections important?



- Foundation of public garden - reason for its existence
- Provide beauty
- Connect us to natural world
- Valuable to science, heritage, conservation

Long-Term Commitment



- An investment – use sound strategy, actively manage, re-invest dividends
- Prioritize collections –allocate adequate resources, include in disaster plans

Many Types of Collections



Which fits best in your garden?



TAXONOMIC

Rhododendron Collections

Tyler Arboretum

Jenkins Arboretum

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden



THEMATIC

Alpines of the World Collection

Denver Botanic Gardens



HERITAGE

Historic Peony Collection

Matthaei BG and Nichols Arboretum



RESEARCH/ EVALUATION

Grass Collection

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum



BROAD SCOPE

Cacti & Agave Families Collections

Desert Botanical Garden



NARROW SCOPE

Trillium Collection

Mt. Cuba Center – Piedmont Region



How do you build a collection?



- Start with your garden's mission
- Consider growing conditions, available resources, strengths
- Research
- Identify a niche
- Develop a plan

Where do you acquire the plants?



- Collect from the wild
- Other gardens/ seed exchange
- Breeder/Specialist plant society
- Private Collector
- Federal confiscations of illegally shipped plants
- Commercial vendor

Regulations, Permits, & Ethics



- Follow laws & treaties regulating how plants are collected
- Honor plant patent restrictions
- Avoid any conflict of interest with personal collection activities

It's Important to Document!

Standards for Collections Excellence



- High diversity
- Depth within specialization
- Thorough record keeping
- Records linked to plants
- Documented origin
- Cultivars from breeder
- Verified names & identities
- Well-maintained plants
- Plants of conservation concern
- Staff expertise
- Accessible, relevant & useful
- Safeguarded
- Guided by policy & plans



**Plant
Collections
Network**

AMERICAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION



Excellence * Collections * Synergy

www.publicgardens.org/programs/plant-collections-network

