

Plant Conservation Progress in the United States¹

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Abstract

Effective national plant conservation has several basic needs, including: 1) accessible, up-to-date information on species distribution and rarity; 2) research and management capacity to mitigate the impact of threats that make plants rare; 3) effective networks for conserving species *in situ* and *ex situ*; 4) education and training to make sure the right people are addressing the issues; 5) policy that supports conservation; 6) funding to maintain the infrastructure for plant conservation; and 7) effective communications so that plants are valued and supported by the public. The more coordinated these efforts are, the more strategic, efficient and effective they can be. We argue that plant conservation still has a long way to go because plant species are becoming increasingly rare, threatened by habitat loss, fragmentation, climate change, and the continued introduction of new invasive species (pests, pathogens and plants). Here we outline areas where the United States is strong, and areas where it needs to improve in order to meet its plant conservation needs. We will discuss the role of the updated Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, the National Seed Strategy, and other recent policy documents in providing a road map for successful gene conservation.

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