



The environmental value of botanic gardens—conserving

As well as beautiful and interesting places to visit, many botanic gardens are scientific storehouses of plant resources, knowledge and expertise. They are leaders in plant conservation, research and education—unique living museums that provide a safety net for plant species.

Biodiversity

All life on earth depends on plants. Healthy ecosystems—based on plant diversity—sustain life and are essential to the wellbeing and livelihoods of all humankind. Plants are a vital source of oxygen, food, shelter, fuel, clothing, and medicines. However, as many as two-thirds of the world’s plant species are in danger of extinction this century. Australia has experienced the largest documented decline in biodiversity of any continent over the past 200 years. Currently in Australia, a total of 1,342 species are listed as threatened flora.

Botanic gardens are advocates for plants and life on earth, playing a key role in safeguarding the world’s plant diversity. Many are involved in projects that identify and protect rare or threatened plants.

Research and conservation

Over four centuries, botanic gardens have led research and generated much of our knowledge about plants and how to grow them. Botanic gardens are important sites of plant conservation because they maintain plants away from their natural habitat (ex situ conservation). This is a particularly valuable role, especially for regional gardens, as ex situ conservation work links in with other local land care and natural resource management initiatives, creating strong centres for regional conservation.

Awareness and climate change response

Botanic gardens play a significant role educating people about environmental issues and sustainability. These outdoor classrooms provide a unique learning environment for students, teachers and the wider public.

Botanic gardens are also involved in educating about and adapting to climate change during this critical decade for action. Plants are central to cycles of the planet. People and plants will determine the future of climate change. Plants do, and people can, reduce the impact and adapt to climate change.

In addition, many botanic gardens provide expert advice and positively influence decisions and planning beyond their boundaries. For example, they provide advice on tree scapes, master planning and planting plans, weed management and care of native landscapes, plant selection and sustainable gardening at home.



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