



University of Washington Botanic Gardens
Collections Policy
Revised November 1, 2012

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to guide the development and management of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) living collections at Washington Park Arboretum (WPA) and the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH).

Mission Statement

Sustaining managed to natural ecosystems and the human spirit through plant research, display and education

The UWBG collections policy addresses the requirements of the mission statement in the context of the stewardship of a world-class collection of woody plants (largely at WPA), an outdoor classroom and display gardens, including herbaceous plants at the CUH. Development and modification of the collection is dictated by the mission statement. Central to the mission is the concept of sustainability particularly with regard to conservation and restoration of plant resources and habitats. UWBG subscribes to the St. Louis Codes of Conduct and this document reflects their recommended measures.

Curation Committee

The Curation Committee has the responsibility for discharging the duties set in this policy. The Chair is to be appointed by the Director of the UWBG. It shall consist of the UWBG Administration, UW Faculty, representative(s) of the Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium (WTUH), UWBG Horticulture and Plant Records, UW Student(s), and a Seattle Parks and Recreation Representative (ad hoc). The Committee (through the Chair) has the capacity to co-opt further temporary members as the occasion requires. The Committee will generally meet every two weeks.

The Curation Committee is responsible for defining the policy as well as, governing the development and maintenance of the living collections. The Director is responsible for the administration of the policy. The Horticulture and Plant Records Office staff will implement the policy.

COLLECTION TYPES

Taxonomic Plant Collections

This is a type of specialty collection focusing on natural *taxa* from a known wild source; the genera *Rhododendron* and *Sorbus* are examples of this. This type of collection may also include groups of cultivars such as *Acer palmatum* cultivars to serve as a reference and registration authority. A taxonomic plant collection will possess the following qualities:

- ◆ High educational value
- ◆ Potential and actual landscape value
- ◆ Significance within a regional, national, or international collection

Ecological and Geographic Collections

This type of collection includes plants from homologous climates with similar annual patterns of precipitation and temperature. Ecological and geographic plant collections will possess the following qualities:

- ◆ Ability to grow in the Puget Sound basin. Most commonly, these plants originate from temperate regions with similar rainfall and temperature
- ◆ Potential and actual landscape value
- ◆ Origin from native and/or local habitats of significance
- ◆ Research and educational interest

In the Pacific Northwest, the value and beauty of native plant use in the landscape is highly recognized. UWBG will strive to ensure that plants native to our region are used to demonstrate landscape value and vigor, in addition to creating a more ecologically sound landscape.

Horticultural and Functional Plant Collections

This type of collection can be used to represent current horticultural trends or to illustrate various garden types, such as drought-tolerant, pest-resistant, and low-maintenance plantings. Functional landscape plant collections can also demonstrate collections of plants that are new and currently available for particular landscape applications. Functional landscape collections will possess the following qualities:

- ◆ Potential and actual landscape value
- ◆ Educational in nature
- ◆ Regional significance
- ◆ Demonstrate landscape management and ecology techniques
- ◆ Issue based

ACCESSIONING

Woody plants in the collection must be accessioned. Exceptions to this may include plants for sale, research plants, and plants used for educational purposes..

Herbaceous plants are not the focus of the collections, but they play an integral role. While they are generally used only as companion plantings, they also can be a major part of the Ecological, Geographic, and Functional Landscape Collections. To be accessioned, herbaceous species must meet the major guidelines for acquisition as well as one or more of the following criteria:

- ◆ Species characteristic of a certain geographic display, e.g. Pacific Connections Garden
- ◆ Species characteristic or important to a Functional Landscape display, e.g. *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Ebony Knight' in WPA Winter Garden
- ◆ Taxon is rare and/or endangered
- ◆ Educational or research interest
- ◆ Plant is not invasive here

All acquisitions will be accessioned through the Plant Records Office before being incorporated into the collection. Propagules and whole plants will be accessioned under the same system. Accessions will be recorded in the current accession book and properly logged into the computer records system. Plants propagated from existing accessions will be given a new accession number with the parent plant accession number retained as a lineage number.

Non-Accessioned UWBG Living Plants

Native Plant Matrix

This is, in general, a non-accessioned part of the collection, but it plays an integral ecological role at WPA. It is considered to be, in part, one facet of the Eco-Geographic Collections. The majority of the Native Matrix is a managed forest, representing various Pacific Northwest plant associations. However, existing native trees also provide a forest ecosystem vital to support many of the non-native collections in the WPA. Trees of exceptional size or age will be accessed after the Curation Committee has considered the merits of any such proposal.

DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessions may be recommended by any member of the Curation Committee, but must be approved by the Committee.

Plants shall be deaccessioned under one or more of the following conditions:

- ◆ The accession is no longer relevant to the purposes of UWBG as interpreted in this policy
- ◆ The accession has deteriorated, died, or been stolen. If possible, an attempt should be made to repropagate significant accessions before deaccessioning the specimen
- ◆ The accession has been replaced by a more desirable accession as determined by evaluation
- ◆ The accession can be more efficiently preserved in a seed bank
- ◆ The accession has been determined to be invasive here

The accession record of a deaccessioned specimen should be preserved as part of the permanent collection records and, whenever possible, also as herbarium material in the WTUH.

Plant Evaluations

Certain plant groups or plant species may be grown for evaluation purposes only. These may include annual or perennial (herbaceous or woody) plants that are being tested for performance in this area. Information is tracked over a designated period of time in order to determine the value of the plants. Simple labeling that designates the plants or groups should be maintained. At the conclusion of the evaluation period, plants determined to be worthy of inclusion in a particular collection by the Curation Committee will be entered into the accession system or maintained as a non-accessioned plant. Plants that do not fall into either category will be disposed of in the proper manner, whenever possible also preserved as herbarium material in the WTUH.

Research Plots

A university researcher may request that certain plants be grown on the grounds for the purpose of study. These plants will be evaluated solely by the researcher for a designated period of time and labeled in a simple manner that designates them as non-members of the collection. At the end of this research period, plants may be determined to be worthy of inclusion into a particular collection by the Curation Committee and be entered into the accession system or remain as non-accessioned companion plantings. Plants that do not fall into either category will be disposed of in the proper manner at the conclusion of the project, whenever possible also preserved as herbarium material in the WTUH.

Herbaceous Plants

Herbaceous plants will not be accessioned when they do not meet the criteria listed above; that is, if the herbaceous plants are commonly grown natives, e.g. species of *Fragaria chiloensis*, or they are used in the role of amenity plantings and not a collection type.

CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITION

Acquisition

Accessions may be acquired by purchase, gift, exchange, or collection. The Curation Committee will approve all acquisitions. The collections will conform to five major guidelines:

- ◆ The source of the plant must be known
- ◆ The breadth of taxonomic diversity at the family level, including naturally important genera, should be represented in the collection as a whole

- ◆ Conservation collections of natural taxa should be sanctioned by, or consistent with, national and international conservation programs
- ◆ Plants will be reasonably hardy

In general, plants of known provenance are desired and will be given highest priority in acquisition and nursery trade cultivars will be given lowest priority.

Herbaceous Plant Acquisition

Herbaceous plants may be sought out if they meet these criteria:

- ◆ Must meet general guidelines for acquisition
- ◆ Species typical to an established Eco-Geographic Collection.
- ◆ Educational and research interest

Gifts of Living Plants

Gifts may be accepted only if the plant *taxa* meet the criteria for acquisitions. The staff will not make appraisals of gifts. Extensive gifts of plants or collections must be accompanied by a sufficient endowment to enable curatorial and horticultural maintenance. The Curation Committee must approve these gifts and has the right to waive the endowment. If an endowed collection is deaccessioned, efforts will be made to return the collection to the donor.

RECORD KEEPING

Records

All accessioned plants will have updated records documenting their identity and other relevant data for conservation, research, and education. Records are accessed by reference to the accession number for any given plant.

Each accession record should have at a minimum the following information:

- ◆ Accession number
- ◆ Scientific name
- ◆ Provenance
- ◆ Date acquired
- ◆ Propagation records
- ◆ Collection data (if acquired wild)
- ◆ Location in UWBG

Records should be as complete as possible; any other relevant information about the plant should be included in the record.

The Plant Records Office is responsible for the management of the records system. The staff is responsible for the implementation of the records system. Location and movement of accessions must be registered with the Plant Records Office for updates. Summaries of accession, deaccession, and evaluation activities will be regularly

reported to the Director. All accession records of deaccessioned specimens will be archived for future reference.

Labels

All accessions will have a label that consists of the following information:

- ◆ Accession number
- ◆ Scientific name
- ◆ Cultivar name (if applicable)
- ◆ Native origin

Inventory and Verification of Collections

The Horticulture and Plant Records Office has oversight responsibility for the horticultural inventory of all accessions in the collection. Rare, threatened, and endangered accessions will be given top priority in the evaluation system. As a goal, all plant collections will be inventoried no less frequently than every five years. More frequent inventory may be done in some collections. The purpose of these inventories is to verify the collection, confirm the health of specimens, determine if specimens require labels, and identify plants in need of repropagation.

The remainder of the collections will be prioritized for inventory according to the volume of change a particular collection has undergone during the interim period relative to its overall importance in the collection as a whole. Written records will be kept on all evaluation results.

Where useful and beneficial for inventories, data will be drawn from existing inventory records utilized by societies and special interest groups dedicated to particular collections. Inventory and maintenance programs will be coordinated for mutual benefit.

Maps will be continuously updated and inventories may be performed on a continuous basis. Maps and inventories will be grid-based and maintained on computer with computer aided design software.

Maintenance

The Horticulture and Plant Records Office is responsible for the care and maintenance of all UWBG living plant collections. Maintenance will be planned and implemented according to a maintenance management system, which includes priorities, maintenance intensities, tracking procedures, and scheduling information. Maintenance will utilize data from the plant records and mapping systems for tracking and reporting maintenance activities. Maintenance activities will be taken into account in the design and installation of collection displays.

PLANT DISTRIBUTION AND DISPOSAL

Access to Collections for Propagation

Institutions, organizations or individuals may apply to the Curation Committee for permission to obtain plant material for purposes of propagation. Plant material may only be collected for research or individual use. Plant material may not be collected if it, or propagules from it, will be sold for profit unless specifically authorized by the UWBG. If a permit is issued, a member of the grounds staff must accompany the representative or individual collecting the plant material. A notation will be made in the accession record including the date, type of material taken, for what use it was taken and by whom it was taken.

Disposal of Plants

Disposal of deaccessioned plants may occur by sale, donation, exchange or destruction. Approval must be obtained from the Curation Committee before disposing of deaccessioned plants. Invasive and diseased plants will be destroyed.

If the plants are sold, all money made from the sale will be returned for use in managing and curating the collection.

Codes of Conduct

The University of Washington and UWBG have endorsed the St. Louis Codes of Conduct (<http://www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives/>) and implemented an invasive species policy. The collection policy, as stated above, includes elements of the Codes. Others that are relevant and should be kept in mind by the curatorial committee include:

- Exclusion or marking of invasive species in Index Seminum listings
- Promptly managing any new invasions detected at UWBG
- Promoting alternatives to regional invasives through new accessions
- Reporting concerns of new invasions to county and state noxious weed boards