



University of Washington Botanic Gardens
Collections Policy
Revised February 6, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to guide the development and management of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) living collections at the 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 CUH and WPA. 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 of the committee is the Curator of Living Collections. The committee shall consist of a members of the UWBG administration, UW faculty, representative(s) of the Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium (WTUH*), UWBG horticulture, 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 Curator in conjunction with 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 Curatorial and Plant Records Office staff will implement the policy.

* WTUH is the acronym for the Hyde Herbarium, as it was first abbreviated from "Washington Territorial University Hortorium" to differentiate it from the existing main UW campus/Burke Museum herbarium, WTU. WTU was established prior to Washington statehood in 1889.

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
- ♦ Diversity of species that can be grown in our climate

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 main focus of the collections, but they play an integral role. While they are generally used as companion plantings, they also can be a major part of the Ecological, Geographic, and Functional Landscape Collections. All perennial herbaceous species and taxa are to be accessioned from 2015 onward. This was a historical practice that seems to have ended in the 1980s. This is critical for record keeping and to track the performance of plants in the collections. Annual plants will typically not be accessioned unless they are to be used for ongoing display and maintained over the winter months in nursery facilities, or are intended to self-seed in a particular situation.

All acquisitions will be accessioned through the Curatorial & 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 spreadsheet 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.

The Native Plant Collections

In the past, native plants have largely been a non-accessioned part of the collection, and were referred to as the “Native Matrix” forming the backdrop of the accessioned collections. Native plants play an integral ecological and display role at WPA. It is considered to be, in part, one facet of the Eco-Geographic Collections. The majority of the “Native Matrix” is managed, representing various Pacific Northwest plant associations. It arose from the remnants of the historical logging of the property prior to the establishment of Washington Park, or that had spontaneously grown after the establishment of the Arboretum. However, existing native trees also provide an ecosystem vital to support many of the non-native collections in the WPA. They have been a means to provide shade or other growing conditions for other accessioned plants. Unintentionally or spontaneously arising native trees, like the rest of the plants in WPA, are managed through needed pruning or removal. Trees of exceptional size or age for their species have occasionally been accessioned in the past after the Curation Committee has considered the merits for each proposal.

It is the goal to formally accession all major native matrix trees beginning in 2018. The native plant collection is a core collection within the Arboretum, and our native flora is one of the characteristics that make it unique among botanic gardens. As with any other collection, it is essential to document the core components to best manage, interpret and care for the collection. In the same way UWBG has documented other living accessions within the Arboretum, this practice allows for better management and development of the overall collections including native plants.

DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessions may be recommended by any member of the Curation Committee, but must be approved by the Curator or 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. These plants should be accessioned when they are received. At the conclusion of the evaluation period, plants determined to be worthy of inclusion in a particular collection by the Curator or Curation Committee will be maintained as an accessioned plant. Plants that do not fall into either category will be disposed of in the proper manner, and also, whenever possible and 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 Curator or 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.

CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITION

Acquisition

Accessions may be acquired by purchase, gift, exchange, or collection. The Curator and/or 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 should further the educational and research value of the overall collection
- ◆ Plants will be reasonably hardy

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

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 Curatorial and 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 metal label with the accession number.

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

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

If appropriate and if there is room, a widely used common name may be included.

Inventory and Verification of Collections

The Curatorial 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

UWBG Horticulture staff 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 Curator and/or 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 Curator or 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.fleppc.org/FNGA/St.Louis.htm>) 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