Introduction to
Plant Collections Network

Pamela Allenstein, Plant Collections Network Manager
American Public Gardens Association, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
American Public Gardens Association

- Founded in 1940
- 575 Institutional Members
- 9000 Individual Members
- 18 Professional Sections
- Headquarters in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
- www.publicgardens.org

Mission: To serve public gardens and advance them as leaders, advocates, and innovators.
Plant Collections Network*

Mission:

- Coordinate a continent-wide approach to plant germplasm preservation among public gardens and
- Promote professional standards of plant collections management

*formerly North American Plant Collections Consortium
Objectives Supporting APGA Goals

- **Build Awareness** – of both Plant Collections Network & value of documented plant collections
- **Promote Standards of Excellence** – in plant collections management
- **Expand Diversity of Collections** – target existing collections, identify gaps for future collections
Nationally Accredited Plant Collections

Snapshots (Jan 2016 stats):
- 75 participating gardens
- 129 Nationally Accredited Plant Collections™
- 4 Multisite Collections
Multisite Collections

Best approach for…

✓ Large taxonomic groups
✓ High horticultural & economic significance
✓ Diversity sufficient to encourage preservation across a wide range of geographic and climatic conditions in North America
Criteria for Network Participation

- American Public Gardens Association Member
- Active Collections Management Program including plant records database, accession labels, maps
- Long-Term Commitment to maintain collection
- Endorsement of Governing Body
- Current Collection has 50% or more of ultimate collection scope
- Collections Policy
- Curator for Collection
- Access to Collection for research, evaluation and plant introduction
Wide Scope Reflects Diverse Gardens

Woody Ornamentals
Herbaceous Ornamentals
Economic Crops
Natives/ Exotics
Wild Species Conservation
Cultivars & Horticultural Hybrids
Specialty/Thematic Plant Groups

Botanical Gardens
Arboreta
Display Gardens
Conservatories
Estate Gardens
Cemeteries
Zoological Parks
Application and Review Process

- Pre-application Guidance
- Application Submitted
- Reviewed/Approved by Network Manager
- Network Manager assigns Site Reviewer
- Site Visit of Peer Reviewer
- Written Site Evaluation with recommendation
- Recognition of Nationally Accredited Plant Collection™, or 1-3 year Provisional Status
Mt Cuba Center Challenge Grant

- Offsets expenses for applying to Plant Collections Network for accreditation
- 1st-time applicants
- APGA member gardens in North America
- $1,000 awarded after recognition achieved for a Nationally Accredited Plant Collection™
Elements of an Exemplary Collection

- Active collections policy and planning
- Breadth in taxa and germplasm
- Depth within specialization
- Rigorous record-keeping
- Elevated maintenance practices
- Verification program
- Plants of documented origin
- Cultivars from breeder or verified standard reference
- Taxa of conservation concern
- Staff expertise in collection
- Access to collection
- Plant exploration or evaluation program
- Relevant to science and society
Curatorial Standards Elevated

Available Resources:
Professional Development
Peer Mentoring
Reviewer Training
Online Resources
Electronic Forums
Rigorous Documentation Maintained

Database
Accession Maps
Permanent Labels
Herbarium Vouchers
Digital Images
Disaster Preparedness for: Natural/Man-Made Disasters
Theft/vandalism
Natural Senescence
Competing Priorities
Loss of Records
Collections Safeguarded

- Replicates at your institution
- Replicates at other gardens
  - Consider proximity
  - Agreement for replacing propagules
- Herbarium vouchers
- Seedbanks/Clonal Repositories
- Records kept offsite
Partnership with USDA since 1985

American Public Gardens Association

USDA Agriculture Research Service
Collaborations Advancing Conservation

Activities:
✓ Coordinating ex situ collections
✓ Exchanging & collecting germplasm
✓ Sharing information & expertise
✓ Developing & implementing strategies
Tree Gene Conservation Project

- US Forest Service – Forest Health Protection Division
- Focused on at-risk US forest species which can’t be traditionally seedbanked
- American Public Gardens Association funded four collecting trips in 2015
- Partnership extended through 2017
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT...

Pam Allenstein
Plant Collections Network Manager
610-708-3015_pallenstein@publicgardens.org