



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

Living in harmony with nature

## Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

Plants are a vital part of biodiversity. In addition to the relatively small number of crop plants that we rely on for food and fibres, many thousands of wild plants have great economic and cultural importance—providing food, medicine, fuel, clothing and shelter for all human beings.

Many plant species are in danger of extinction, threatened by habitat transformation, overexploitation, invasive alien species, pollution and climate change. The disappearance of such vital components of biodiversity is one of the greatest threats facing humans.

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) aims to halt the loss of plant diversity, contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development, and promote the sharing of the benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources. The GSPC facilitates cooperation at all levels—local, national, regional and global—to understand, conserve and to sustainably use the world's immense wealth of plant diversity while promoting awareness and building the necessary tools for its implementation.

Fully applying the GSPC will have many positive consequences. Societies around the world will better understand the importance of plants, and they will use them in a more sustainable manner. People will continue to be able to rely upon plants for food, clean water, medicines and other vital ecosystem services, including climate regulation. The benefits from the use of plants will be shared, which in turn will improve human well-being and help to preserve the knowledge and traditions of indigenous and local communities.



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

[www.cbd.int/gspc](http://www.cbd.int/gspc)



## Fast Facts

- ▶ There are more than 300,000 known plant species on Earth
- ▶ Plants are the foundation of all food chains
- ▶ Compounds from plant species are the basis of 50% of modern prescription medicines
- ▶ Many plants contain elements that can cure human diseases, but not all have been discovered
- ▶ 80% of the world's people rely on traditional, plant-based medicine
- ▶ Medicinal plants are widely used throughout the developing world, as in Ghana, where 60% of childhood malarial fevers are first treated with traditional, plant-based medicines
- ▶ An appetite suppressant derived and developed from species of succulent plants in Southern Africa (*Hoodia* spp.) is used by the San people to stave off hunger and thirst
- ▶ Plant species and soils in water-related ecosystems such as forests and wetlands play a crucial role in water retention and purification
- ▶ About 34,000 plant species are currently in danger of extinction

## Learn More

The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

▶ [www.unep-wcmc.org](http://www.unep-wcmc.org)

The Plant Conservation Report ▶ [www.cbd.int/doc/reports/gspc-report-draft-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/reports/gspc-report-draft-en.pdf)

Global Partnership for Plant Conservation ▶ [www.plants2010.org](http://www.plants2010.org)

Botanic Gardens Conservation International ▶ [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)

Bioversity International ▶ [www.biodiversityinternational.org](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org)

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Faunas and Flora ▶ [www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

COP Decisions ▶ [www.cbd.int/gspc/decisions.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/gspc/decisions.shtml)

COP Decision VI/9 on the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation  
▶ [www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7183](http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=7183)

Flexible Coordination Mechanism ▶ [www.cbd.int/gspc/coordination.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/gspc/coordination.shtml)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) ▶ [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

### Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800  
Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1N9  
Canada

Tel.: +1 514 288 2220  
Fax: +1 514 288 6588  
UNBiodiversity@cbd.int

[www.cbd.int/gspc](http://www.cbd.int/gspc)