**Invitation to take part in Let it Grow activities on
International Day for Biological Diversity - 22 May 2017**

Dear BGCI Member,

BGCI would like to invite you to join the Let it Grow campaign and take part in an **international day of action on the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22nd May 2017** to highlight to the potential of botanic gardens, zoos, aquaria and science centres to support the delivery of the European Union Biodiversity Strategy.

In the mid-term review of the European Union Biodiversity Strategy, the European Commission identifies barriers to the implementation of the strategy and recommends actions needed to overcome them. The conclusion of the report states:

The mid-term review assessing progress under the EU Biodiversity strategy shows that the 2020 biodiversity targets can only be reached if implementation and enforcement efforts become considerably bolder and more ambitious.

Achieving the 2020 biodiversity objectives will require strong partnerships and the full engagement and efforts from key actors at all levels.

Since last year, BGCI, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the European Network of Science Centres and Museums (Ecsite) have been collaborating on a campaign to promote European biodiversity awareness and conservation. This campaign, called Let It Grow, represents an important contribution towards the unification of public engagement efforts across the leading science engagement facilities in Europe.

The Let It Grow coalition is uniquely placed to assist the European Union to achieve the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The campaign recognizes that despite significant efforts by Member States to educate citizens on the concepts of biodiversity and biodiversity loss, a significant proportion of people across the EU still have little awareness these concepts, and few avenues to help stem biodiversity loss.

Following the recommendations of the mid-term review, we therefore propose a considerably bolder and more ambitious approach to reaching the 2020 targets: namely the establishment of a strong partnership between the European Union and the Let It Grow coalition to engage communities with the Strategy and its targets.

Engagement by our Members will also help address Headline Target 14 of the Parliamentary Resolution on the mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 which:

calls for a multi-stakeholder approach and stresses the vital role of national, regional and local actors, and of their full participation in this process; stresses that funding and greater public awareness and understanding of, and support for, biodiversity protection are also essential

and UN Sustainable Development Goal 15:

To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The Let It Grow coalition proposes to demonstrate the potential strength of this partnership through a series of events held across Europe on the International Day for Biological Diversity, 22nd May 2017. Our Members will conduct a variety of citizen engagement actions aimed at significantly improving public and business awareness of biodiversity and biodiversity loss and encouraging them to take action to help protect native species in their communities.

Getting involved is really easy. Simply join the campaign by signing up on the **Let it Grow website,** then start planning your activity for 22nd May. Activities may include, a workshop about gardening with native species, a bioblitz, a lesson about making bug hotels or a tutorial about how to make a garden appealing for pollinators. The activities can be very varied but should have a focus on European biodiversity and the Biodiversity Strategy.

Make sure you use the Let it Grow logo to highlight this new collaboration between botanic gardens, zoos, aquaria and science centres!

Find more information and sign up

www.bgci.org