



CASE STUDIES - ESPC Target 14

The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, education and public awareness programme

PlasciGardens: Plant Science Education for Primary Schools in European Botanic Gardens

GSPC Target 14 (ESPC targets 4.2-4.3)

Project coordinators	Innsbruck University Botanic Garden (Austria)
Partner organisations	University of London Institute of Education (UK); Trento Natural History Museum, (Italy); University of Sofia Botanic Garden (Bulgaria), Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (UK)
Funding mechanisms	EU Sixth Research Framework



Description

This project aims to improve plant science education in schools by highlighting the opportunities of partnerships among botanic gardens, primary schools and national school boards and to utilise the expert knowledge, first hand experience and educational facilities of botanic gardens. Currently there are four countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, UK), 112 teachers and 60 primary schools involved in the project. One of the project outputs will be a multi-lingual, multi-cultural education tool targeted towards 8-10 year old children with four parts:

- Teachers pack
- Teacher resources
- Botanic garden activities
- Teacher training seminars

The topics covered by these educational tools will be:

- Threatened species conservation and sustainability
- Food
- Plants in art and daily life
- Ecology

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Description (II)

The problems identified in plant science education were that teachers did not have the time or the expertise to teach plant science, in part because they had not learnt about plants at school or during their teacher training. The problems for botanic gardens were that the educators rarely had any information about what the children already knew, they did not usually have any contact with pupils or teachers before their visit, and the children were expecting a fun trip not an education experience

The methodology of Plasci-gardens involves a bottom up approach developed by national working groups including primary school teachers, representatives of national school boards, botanic garden educators and teacher trainers. The teaching of plant science will involve pre-processing in schools (preparation for botanic garden visits), experiments and activities in botanic gardens, post-processing and assessment in schools.

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Date of case study October 2005-October 2007

Citations and Publications

Contacts

Websites <http://botany.uibk.ac.at/>
http://www.villeeuropeennedessciences.fr/uk/projet_UK_90.htm
<http://www.plantscafe.net/>

