

## **Meise Botanic Garden showcases a multidisciplinary approach to safeguard local biodiversity**

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Botanical gardens, as centres of expertise on botany and horticulture, can play an important role in conservation of local biodiversity. Conservation and restoration of plant diversity is a complex and multidisciplinary process. Depending on the design, infrastructure and natural condition of the garden, there are several ways to contribute. Meise Botanic Garden showcases that gardens with a considerable area of land and the presence of natural spaces can provide a sustainable habitat for local plant species through nature-based management and nature restoration projects. Notwithstanding our location close to the European capital, more than one third of the native Belgian plant species occur spontaneously in the natural areas of our garden. Targeted management of these natural areas will significantly increase that amount in the coming years. Nature-based interventions and solutions in landscape development, water management, grassland and forest management additionally contribute to the resilience of ecosystems under changing climatic conditions. Regardless of the presence of natural land, botanical gardens are ideally placed to establish a seed bank dedicated to the conservation of rare and endangered indigenous plant species. In our seed bank we save seeds for the future. We currently conserve 70% of the endangered species of the Belgian flora, and our seed collections have made it possible to resurrect a globally extinct species. In Meise Botanic Garden, the combined provision of botanical expertise and state-of-the-art seed bank and plant propagation facilities, offers the opportunity to actively contribute to in-situ conservation of selected plant species by reintroduction and reinforcement of populations in threatened ecosystems. Our multidisciplinary approach contributes to the conservation of plants in their natural habitats as well as in the living collections and seed bank of our garden. Nature-based management and development of our natural areas contribute to resilient ecosystems and secure vital ecosystem services.