

Continuity and change – Singapore, biodiversity and BGCI

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It is in our nature to wish for continuity and stability in the world around us, yet we are living through a time of unprecedented change in the global environment. For botanic gardens the great challenge of our times is to work together to secure the future of plant diversity - our life support system. Achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of a shared future for all life on Earth requires us to conserve plant biodiversity at every level, from ecosystems, to species and genetic diversity. This mission includes the diversity of cultivated plants including those of agricultural, horticultural or cultural significance. I will explore these issues through personal reflections on Singapore, biodiversity, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). Singapore has changed beyond measure since I first visited over 60 years ago thanks to the vision of designing a city in nature and numerous other responses to the environmental challenges of the future. Many lessons can be taken from the strategic sense of purpose at work in Singapore. The adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework should further inspire us to take these lessons, together with positive experiences of conservation and restoration built up by botanic gardens around the world, and envision designing a planet in nature.