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International Association of Botanic Gardens Meeting, Edinburgh, Scotland: August, 1964  
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Reviewed work(s):  
Source: *Taxon*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Apr., 1965), pp. 134-135  
Published by: [International Association for Plant Taxonomy \(IAPT\)](#)  
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1217444>  
Accessed: 26/10/2012 07:00

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# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOTANIC GARDENS

Meeting, Edinburgh, Scotland - August, 1964

The fourth meeting of the International Association of Botanic Gardens was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, on the morning of 3 August, 1964, during the Tenth International Botanical Congress. The first part of the session was devoted to a discussion on various technical matters; this was followed by the election of officers of the Association and by four illustrated talks dealing with particular gardens.

The President, Dr. Richard A. Howard (Director, The Arnold Arboretum), opened the meeting. He outlined the history of the Association and explained that one of its first objectives had been achieved with the publication of the International Directory of Botanic Gardens (Regn. Veg. vol. 28, 1963).

The problem of the standard and quality of the seed exchange lists issued by botanic gardens is one of considerable interest to the Association and Dr. Howard introduced a discussion on this subject. He pointed out that the matter had been raised at the meeting of the Association at the 16th International Horticultural Congress held in Brussels, Belgium, in 1962, and that as a result of further consultation amongst a few participants at the Belgian discussions, a review of the subject had been published in *Taxon* (13: 90-94, 1964). He then called upon Mr. Peter S. Green of the Arnold Arboretum to present a summarized review of the seed lists which had been received at the Arboretum.

In this review the diversity in format, arrangement of contents, quality of production, and methods of distribution of seed lists were emphasized. Even more important than this, stress was laid on the frequent doubts which arose over the accuracy of identity, purity, and viability of the seeds offered. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of about half the lists examined was the inclusion of seeds of known wild origin, both for the value of such seeds for modern botanical research and for the increasing need for accurately named, recorded, and documented collections of living plants in botanic gardens.

Dr. Peter Yeo of the University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, proposed a scheme for the standardization of the more important explanatory phrases and abbreviations used in seed exchange lists. He suggested that these standards be published in Latin and English and that their use would simplify seed lists and, at the same time, help to increase the accuracy and the amount of information presented in them.

In the discussion that followed several people participated. Amongst them, Mr. J. R. Sealy of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, stated that in his opinion botanic gardens should not publish seed lists as such, but rather catalogues or lists of the plants growing in these gardens. These could then be used as the bases for requests for material. Dr. J. S. Beard (Director, Botanic Garden, Perth, Western Australia) pointed out that the exchange of seeds from wild plants was most important, and Dr. W. C. Steere (Director, New York Botanical Garden) mentioned how frequently seeds were required for biological and pharmaceutical study. It was very apparent that the value of the seeds offered in botanic garden seed lists depends in large measure upon the accuracy of the naming of the collections grown in the garden, as well as upon the origin of the seeds (including whether they arose from open or controlled pollination).

The chairman invited Dr. G. Buchheim of the Botanischer Garten und Museum, Berlin, and the Hunt Botanical Library, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to speak about a proposal, made by Dr. H. R. Fletcher at the 16th International Horticultural Congress, in Brussels in 1962, to promote an international organization for the study of the taxonomy of cultivated plants. Dr. Buchheim explained that the main objects of the proposed organization were to further the scientific study of the taxonomy of cultivated plants and to stimulate the assemblage of authentically named plant materials, both in the garden and herbarium, in various centres throughout the world. In the discussion

that followed it was pointed out that one way in which these objectives could be approached would be for individual gardens to undertake the study of definite genera and, as a result, build up authentic collections of these plants. However, one of the problems would be to find trained taxonomists to undertake this work. Another way would be by the exchange of herbarium specimens of cultivated plants; but the question of how many herbaria would be interested in such an exchange was raised. During the discussion it became clear, that the phrase "cultivated plants", in this context, was not intended to include crop plants. Therefore it was agreed that the aims of the proposed organization clearly fell within the sphere and interest of the International Association of Botanic Gardens and that there was hardly need for an additional organization. As a result it was decided that the subject be referred to the Council of the Association and that a special committee be set up to consider how best the scientific study of the taxonomy of cultivated plants, as well as the assemblage of authentically named and documented plant collections, could be stimulated.

After a short break, elections were held for new office-bearers of the Association, to constitute an Executive Committee. Dr. H. R. Fletcher (Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh) was elected President, Drs. N. V. Tsitsin (Director, Main Botanical Garden, Moscow) and H. G. Baker (Director, University of California Botanical Garden, Berkeley) Vice Presidents, and Mr. P. S. Green, Secretary. As Dr. Fletcher was unable to be present, Dr. R. A. Howard, Past-President, continued in the chair. The new officers undertook to nominate a Council and were given the task of formulating a constitution for the Association, to be ratified at the next meeting of the Association, at the 17th International Horticultural Congress in 1966.

The chairman then set the precedent of calling upon a speaker to give an account of local gardens of interest to the Association and Mr. J. E. Robson spoke about these belonging to the National Trust for Scotland. After this Mr. I. Velez (Puerto Rico) talked about Water Island, one of the Virgin Islands, which he called the Caribbean's youngest botanic garden, and Dr. J. S. Beard described the new botanic garden being established in the King's Park at Perth, Western Australia. Lastly, Dr. H. B. Rycroft, Director of the National Botanic Garden of South Africa, showed a beautifully coloured film of the Botanic Garden at Kirstenbosch, made in commemoration of the Garden's 50th anniversary, celebrated in 1963.

The meeting ended with thanks from the chair to the various speakers and an expression of regret that the time available in one morning had limited discussion on many items.

At a later meeting of the Executive Committee a resolution which arose out of the discussion on the taxonomy of cultivated plants was submitted to the International Congress on behalf of the Association. The resolution, passed by the Congress at its final plenary session, was as follows:

"The Tenth International Botanical Congress, recognizing the increasing role of botanic gardens and arboreta in supplying materials and information for research in all botanical disciplines, recommends the expansion of such activities and the development of documented collections of authenticated taxa in Botanic Gardens throughout the World.

The Congress further recommends that those responsible for the financing and staffing of Botanic Gardens should ensure that adequate provision is made for this expansion and development."

Finally, the following were nominated by the Executive Committee to constitute the Council of the Association and have subsequently accepted: B. K. Boom (Netherlands), J. S. L. Gilmour (Great Britain), A. T. Hunziker (Argentina), F. Markgraf (Switzerland), R. T. M. Pescott (Australia), H. B. Rycroft (South Africa), Rev. H. Santapau (India), T. Sørensen (Denmark), and J. S. Womersley (New Guinea).

P. S. GREEN