



BETTY FORD ALPINE GARDENS COLLECTIONS POLICY

MISSION: TO PROTECT THE ALPINE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EDUCATION, CONSERVATION AND LIVING PLANT COLLECTIONS.

This collections policy, updated July 2023, defines the purpose of the living plant collections at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. By defining these objectives, we drive the development of the plant collection in a way that supports the mission of the Gardens. Plant collections includes the living plants in the gardens and greenhouse as well as the seed collections.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens (BFAG) currently consists of around five cultivated acres within a 39-acre park, with some natural riparian acreage along Gore Creek. Established in 1986 the Gardens originally had a purpose of displaying plants that would grow and flourish at 8,200 feet in the Rocky Mountains. That purpose along with the Gardens mission has grown to be a more conservation based objective in conjunction with the growth of the community. The Gardens, located in a sheltered position just east of Vail, Colorado has rough, alkaline, rocky soils and a climate where the majority of precipitation falls as snow in the winter. Currently the collection comprises about 3,000 taxa, recorded using BGBase botanical software.

The objectives of the living collection are:

- To establish a unique collection of the world's high mountain flora.
- To curate the nationally accredited collection of Colorado's alpine flora.
- To develop a comprehensive collection of the Rocky Mountain alpine flora, to educate the public on the importance of protecting the biodiversity of the Rocky Mountains and other mountain ecosystems.
- To display mountain perennials together in dramatic and pleasing, well-managed displays to show the variety of plant material that thrives at 8,200 feet.
- To establish collections of threatened mountain plants for the purposes of ex-situ conservation, education and wild re-introductions
- To show the use of native plants in the landscape.
- To bank the seed collections that support the 2020 North American Botanic Gardens Strategy for Alpine Plant Conservation.

LIVING PLANT COLLECTIONS

The plant collection is comprised of

1. Collections based on habitat type
2. Collections based on geographic origin
3. Taxonomic collections
4. Collections for conservation

ACCESSIONS

BFAG is committed to the ethical acquisition of plant materials for its collections. In its own collections, BFAG adheres to all local and regional protocols including collecting permits.

We acquire living plant material from the following sources:

- Reputable nurseries
- Reputable seed collectors/companies
- BFAG sponsored exploration and local collections
- Donated plants/seeds that meet the botanical objectives

Emphasis given to materials collected or originating from known wild sources.

For accessioning into the plant collection, the following must apply:

1. The plant supports the botanical objectives of the collection.
2. The plant is named accurately with origin and date of collection if applicable.
3. The plant is healthy and free from disease.
4. The accession is in compliance with the intentions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and in compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES)
5. For wild collections, the plant must comply with the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens wild collecting procedures. (see below)

DE-ACCESSIONS

Plants are de-accessioned (removed permanently) from the collection for the following reasons:

1. If they do not support the botanical objectives of the collection
2. If they cannot be identified (only if they are known to have no conservation value). We make exceptions for materials that have an important aesthetic or architectural role.
3. If they are diseased.
4. If they prove to be invasive.
5. If they fail to thrive.

PLANT COLLECTIONS NETWORK

BFAG participates in the American Public Gardens Association's (APGA) Plant Collections Network. This is a network of national accredited collections, both taxonomic and geographic. BFAG holds the accredited collection of Colorado's alpine flora. Additional alpine taxonomic collections are under consideration such as *Gentiana* and *Primula*.

ALPINE STRATEGY SEED BANK

Currently under development, this seed bank is part of the conservation strategy work of BFAG. The aim is to collect and bank the native alpine flora of North America, around 2,500 species. Locally, efforts are focusing on the Colorado and Wyoming mountains, but BFAG is working to encourage other botanic gardens to help build this collection. Primary collections go to the USDA seed bank and we will use the BFAG seed bank as a backup.

WILD COLLECTING PROCEDURES

Only species that support the botanical objectives of the collection are collected. Only seed is collected from the wild (an exception can be made for cuttings from material that is known to establish poorly from seed) in full compliance with

all necessary permits such as BLM and USFS. Collections will not include species suspected to be invasive or harboring any kind of pest or disease.

CENTER FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

BFAG is a member of the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC). CPC has clear guidelines for responsible seed collection best practices. These practices are followed completely to ensure the preservation of the growing plant material.

PLANT COLLECTING COLLABORATIVE (PCC)

The Plant Collecting Collaborative (PCC) is a group of botanic gardens and arboreta dedicated to the collection and conservation of wild collected germplasm. The PCC encourages the sharing of resources and plant collecting expertise. PCC shares germplasm from its expeditions with other members of the collaborative.

We maintain the living collection in good order in accordance with the Gardens 'Operations Handbook'.

PLANT RECORDS

1. On an ongoing annual basis, we enter all plant materials into BGBase, including all known information about the plant and its origin. The Horticulture or Curatorial staff is responsible for maintenance of the plant database.
2. The goal is to have all plants in the garden labeled with botanical name and accession number. These labels are inserted into the ground at 12 o'clock to the plant. By fully inserting the labels, we preserve the appearance of the bed and protect the print on the labels. We are currently reviewing other printing options.
3. Display labels with botanical name, common name (if known), family, and habitat if known and country of origin (if applicable) are given to all the main plant specimens in the garden.

MAINTENANCE



**VISIT BETTY FOLD ALPINE GARDENS
IN VAIL'S FORD PARK - OPEN DAILY 10AM - 4PM**

For additional information regarding this policy, contact Executive Director Nicola Ripley
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