



Photo: freeeye.tv

"Knowledge transfer is a two-way street", says professor Susanne Renner, Director of the Munich Botanical Garden. She was a prominent guest at an expert panel convened at the Foundation for International Gardener Exchange on 12 July 2017, in the former home of Loki and Helmut Schmidt in Hamburg. Renner first met Loki Schmidt in 1982 during a joint expedition in the Brazilian rain forest on the Rio Negro near Manaus.

The Munich Botanical Garden and the Foundation for International Gardener Exchange

Susanne S. Renner: The Munich Botanical Garden's mission is to show wild and domesticated plants from throughout the World. To fulfill that mission is only possible if ever new generations of gardeners get to see plants in their natural habitats and are given the opportunity to exchange expertise in plant cultivation and display from colleagues at other gardens. The Foundation for International Gardener Exchange has supported us for many years. We are now receiving gardeners from other institutions, and are sending our own staff out, almost on a yearly basis. What are our criteria for choosing which exchanges to organize?

During a panel discussion on the occasion of the 30-year jubilee of the International Gardener Exchange in 2017, I tried to answer this question for our Garden. Our criteria are: The gardener exchange should match the foci of our plant collection; the exchanges should involve experienced, but also junior staff; and thirdly, we are hoping to build long-term, sustainable partnerships that exceed one-time visits. To meet all criteria is not always possible.

Naturally, alpine plants are a focus in Munich, and international collaboration

in this regard is important for us. Next to our large alpine rock garden in Munich-Nymphenburg, we maintain an Alpine Garden at almost 1900 m altitude in the northern calcareous alps near Garmisch-Partenkirchen. This garden is open during the summer months. In 2011, Philippe-Chauvet, the head gardener of the Haut-Chitelet Garden in the Vosges Mountains of France, visited our garden and spontaneously organized a highly successful workshop in constructing and using hypertufa containers. In 2012 followed a visit by Anne Prestige from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh who helped us with phenological monitoring, and in 2014, Katrin Weisheit from the 'Lindauer Hütte' garden at 1700 m in the Rätikon, Vorarlberg, visited our alpine garden. Further alpine focused exchanges involving the garden in Tromsø and renewed visits from Munich to the Katse Botanic Garden in Lesotho are reported in this Newsletter. Clearly, this series of 'alpine gardener exchanges' fulfills all criteria – matching our collection strengths and staff expertise and interests; sustainability; and involvement of senior and junior staff.

Since 2013, we have been building a similar 'long-term chain' of exchanges

with the Arnold Arboretum in Boston (USA), one of the World's premier collections of trees and shrubs, which excels in staff experience and the provenience documentation of every single one of its planted individuals. Our arboretum head gardener, Andreas Stadlmayer, and his young colleague, Viktoria Domel, in the summer of 2013 spent several weeks in the Arnold Arboretum. In 2015, Wesley Kalloch from Boston visited our garden for three weeks, and in June 2018, our new arboretum head gardener, Pierre Steppke, will be visiting the Arnold Arboretum. In addition, the technical directors of the Arnold Arboretum and the Munich garden, Stephen Schneider and Stefan Wiegert, have mutually visited and are planning further exchanges.

Other exchanges have involved staff from gardens in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the Botanical Garden in Batumi (Georgia). All are comparatively young gardens in countries with a huge botanical diversity. Horticultural staff from these institutions are acquiring ideas and insights while visiting European gardens that can help enhance staff training back home and, in some cases, also the local garden infrastructure. For our gardeners, joint excursions to local natural sites in these countries have been the most exciting. Improved knowledge about the cultivation of – often endangered – plants is another important outcome.

At the Munich Botanical Garden, we hope to continue our established exchange programs and collaborations for many more years. At the same time, we will strive to build on our gardener exchanges with leading collections, for our staff, to have the opportunity to spend time at cutting-edge collections and thereby improve the horticultural expertise at the Munich Garden. I think that such a mix is in keeping with what Loki Schmidt's wanted to achieve with the idea International Gardener Exchange: Learning by hands-on joint work, right there in botanical gardens or natural habitats. Gardening together is what she had in mind!



Germany, Norway, Sweden, Georgia, China, South Africa, USA and Chile. In 2017, the International Gardeners Exchange Foundation connected botanical gardens from eight countries and five continents with their German partners.

Altogether 23 gardeners participated in exchange projects last year, for which our foundation supplied a total of 16.000 €.

Munich - Tromsø. These two gardens are both members of the alpine and arctic botanic gardens network. Last year they exchanged specialist gardeners for the first time. Clara Friedrich from Munich visited Tromsø in Norway during the peak season in June. At this time helpers are highly appreciated, because of the very short vegetation period. In September, Kristian Nyvoll repaid the visit and worked at Munich's satellite alpine garden at the Schachen. For him it was very interesting to observe the different treatments which the same species received in the alpine and the Nordic environments, respectively. *"It seems to be very different which plants are considered as weeds and how these are dealt with. At the Schachen, some species are allowed to seed themselves in special areas of the garden. Compared to Tromsø, the spontaneous native flora is much more integrated into the garden at the Schachen. The soils are very different too, neutral to slightly acidic at Tromsø and calcareous at the Schachen."*

South Africa - Hamburg. Neil Mac Donald is specialising on the cultivation of highly succulent Flowering Stones and Mid-day Flowers (Aizoaceae or "Mesembs").



Preparing cuttings of Mesembs at Hamburg.
Photo: N. MacDonald



Quiver tree (*Aloe dichotoma*) in Namibia, Photo: A. Mehrfort

Working as a biodiversity officer in the Swartberg Mountains, his job is to collect and cultivate Mesembs and other rare succulents from areas where mining takes place, in order to conserve them and prepare them for re-introduction. In Hamburg they have one the largest collection of Mesembs and decades of experience of how to cultivate them. Sharing some of this experience was why Neil wanted to visit the Hamburg Botanical Garden. Living in a very dry country, he was surprised to learn that at Hamburg succulents have to be grown in greenhouses because of the rains.

Germany - Namibia. A party of 11 expert gardeners from Germany specializing in the cultivation of succulent plants travelled Namibia in order to explore the rich succulent flora of this country. Their report is packed with botanical details and observations of their pet plants. This expedition was a very special one



Poison euphorbia (*Euphorbia virosa*).
Photo: K. Werner

and will surely stimulate further co-operations both among the German gardeners and with their Namibia counterparts. *"We stopped abruptly when, leaving the canyon, a flowering Hoodia currorii caught our attention. It was the largest*



Hoodia currorii, Foto: K. Werner

specimen which have seen on our tour, and it was in full bloom. A dream plant for the connoisseur of succulent plants."

Bremen - Seattle: Martin Monthofer works as a gardener at the Rhododendron-Park at Bremen which is the leading institution for Rhodos in continental Europe. Before visiting the equally famous Rhododendron Species Foundation at Seattle, he had prepared a long list of questions which he wanted to ask the colleagues there. *"During our collecting trips, we discussed the cultivation of the tricky species from my list, especially of those from the border triangle of China, India and Burma. Steve Hootman agreed that those were not the ea-*

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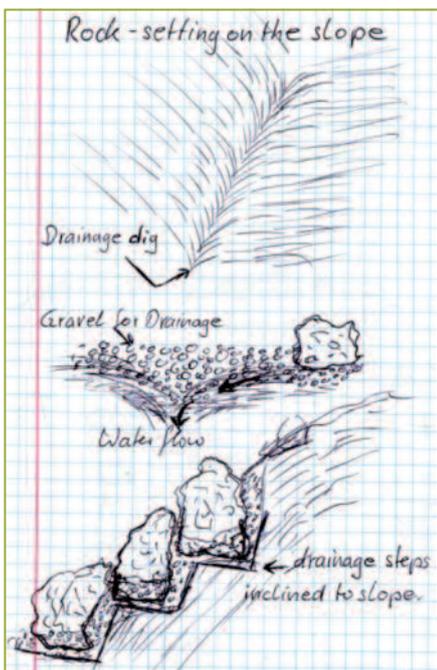
International Exchange Project of Gardeners between Botanical Gardens



Variety of bud structure in species of *Rhododendron*.
Photo: M. Monthofer

siest ones to have in cultivation. The main problem seems to be that at Bremen, our summer temperatures are too high while the humidity is too low. We also discussed the cultivation of *Rhodo* species from the section *Neriiflora*. Steve's ultimate answer to all questions: Drainage."

Munich - Batumi (Georgia). The Botanical Garden at Batumi has started to create an alpine satellite garden situated in the Lesser Caucasus near the Guderzi Pass at 2000 metres altitude. Helmut Wiesmet from Munich went there to help with its construction. Most of his time he spent "rock hunting" together



Rock garden construction. Drawing by H. Wiesmet

with his Georgian colleagues: "For a start, we surveyed a scree for rocks which suited our needs in the garden. With the help of a winch and much muscular power we then loaded them on the platform of a Russian Ural vehicle. We looked especially for those with fissures and small hollows which are ideal habitats for plants adapted to living in rock crevices." Botanical expertise is essential when choosing the rocks, because it is very important to have a clear picture of which plants one wants to cultivate on or between them.

Chile - Dresden: The partnership between the botanical gardens at Dresden in Germany and Talca in Chile started in 1999



M. Tapeia in garden centre. Photo: S. Hahn

and is still going strong. This year Miguel Tapeia from Talca visited Dresden - it was his first flight and his first experience in a foreign country. He made many observations in his host garden: "At Dresden, they have a department for plants from Chile, most of which were collected in the wild by colleagues who had visited our country on grants from the International Gardeners Exchange Foundation... It was very helpful for me to work in the nursery and to learn about the various methods they use for plant propagation at Dresden. Thanks to all gardeners who explained all this to me despite of the language difficulties. Commercial garden centres have always been a favourite place to visit for our foreign colleagues. "We do not have this horticultural variety in Chile. I found it amazing to see how many plants species and varieties or even topiary trees you can buy in Germany for your home and garden. Even Chilean species like *Araucaria araucana* are available."



Discussing *Dionysia* cultivation at Gothenburg, Photo: U. Hörner

Hamburg - Gothenburg. These two gardens have been cooperating for nearly twenty years. No wonder that during this time many personal friendships have developed. Last year Frédéric Gilbert, Tobias Brose, Ulrich Hörner, Susanne Barlag and Eva-Maria Marold visited the Gothenburg garden on a short trip in order to renew the bonds of friendship and, of course, to exchange plants. The gardeners are aware of how important these connections are today: "In times when there are many restrictions governing the acquisition of plants in the wild it is vital to strengthen the cooperation and the mutual exchange of plants and ideas between botanical gardens."



Visitors from Shanghai - T. Brose mit Y. Jiang und L. Shao, Photo: H. Holert

Shanghai - Hamburg: Yun Jiang and Li Shao from Shanghai Chenshan Botanical Garden visited Hamburg for five weeks in summer and worked in various departments there. In addition, also Executive Director Hu Yonghong and scientist Jun Yang paid a short visit to Hamburg and strengthened the long-standing partnership between the gardens of the twin cities Hamburg and Shanghai.

You will find more details about all these projects on our homepage.



Group picture of travelling gardeners after the anniversary lecture in December 2017. Photo H. Holert

Christmas lecture ends anniversary year.

It was a very special occasion when in December 2017 a team of gardeners from German Botanical Gardens lectured about their exchange projects before the Society of Friends of the Hamburg Botanical Garden. The tradition of these lectures was started many years ago by Loki Schmidt who in 1987 had initiated the International Gardeners Exchange. Due to the enthusiasm with which the colleagues relate their activities, this has always been a very vivid event. Katrin Baumgärtner for instance told us how she communicated to Neil Mac Donald in Low-German which is similar to his native Afrikaans. Also David Eder, Martin Monthofer, Anna-Lena Tack and Don Tengeler told us many interesting details about their travels. Special guest was Juan Gaviria, founder and former director of the Botanical Garden at Mérida, Venezuela.

Projects for 2018.

This year our foundation will provide some 14.000 € for projects. In several cases, we will contribute only a part of the money needed because there will be additional grants from other institutions.

Bayreuth - Perth, Australia. Working at Bayreuth, Anna Reichel is in charge of the temperate greenhouse and cultivates many plants from Australia and New Zealand, some of which she hopes to encounter on her travels.

Tübingen - Costa Rica. Markus Rauscher will join an excursion to Costa Rica organized by the University of Göttingen. This is very welcome both for him and the Tübingen Botanical Garden because he will take over the responsibility for the tropical greenhouse later this year.

Munich - Arnold Arboretum, Boston, U.S.A. In continuation of the exchange programme between these two gardens, Pierre Steppke from Munich will work with the arborists at the Arnold Arboretum for three weeks.

München - Lesotho. The cooperation between Munich and the Katse Botanical Garden started in 2005 and, after an eight years gap, will be revived in 2018. The foundation will sponsor the travels of Jenny Wainwright und Clara Friedrich. They will be accompanied by curator Andreas Gröger.

Hamburg - Innsbruck, Austria. Philipp Bornemann is head of the alpine department at Hamburg. He wants to visit Innsbruck both for its alpine garden at the botanical garden proper and for the satellite garden they have on the Patscherkofl mountain at 2000 Meters altitude.

Young gardeners programme. In 2018, young gardeners from Germany sponsored by our foundation will travel from Bonn to Berlin, from Bayreuth to Chile, and from Hamburg to Jerusalem and to Indonesia.

Applications for 2018 are open until September 15th, 2018. Young gardeners may apply any time for travel funds up to 500 Euro. For applications from outside Germany, a partner garden in Germany is required.

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How to pollinate *Disa uniflora*. Photo: U. Hörner



Succulent specialists from Germany in the field and in the Botanical Garden Windhoek. Photo: S. Gasper