



Young gardener Markus Finner among tropical waterlilies in Oxford. Photo: M. Finner

Young Gardeners Abroad

„The watering cans are sized in gallons, not in litres. Here they have peat-free garden moulds and ingenious tools and gadgets for mowing the lawn in checkerboard patterns and for trimming the edges. It is incredible how much I can learn from my English colleagues.” Markus Finner was very enthusiastic about the new experiences he is able to make at the Botanic Garden of Oxford University. He was serving an internship there after finishing his training at the Wilhelma at Stuttgart. Our foundation has supported him with a grant.

Not so very long ago it was customary for a young craftsman to spend some years as a traveling journeyman. The idea was that, after finishing his initial training, he was supposed to work at other places in order to widen his professional skills and his experience of life. Our modern training courses and employment practices do not allow for this anymore. Nevertheless, there are many young people who, when finishing their training, would like to visit other countries and work at other gardens. The International Gardeners Exchange Foundation is sponsoring these activities.

Our foundation has given grants to young gardeners since 2009. It is interesting to see how different the participants and their projects have been. It seems that every one of them has been searching for their own personal niche.

Timm Böhnert from Bonn got a first-hand experience of what typical desert climate is like when working at the Oman Botanic Garden in 2009. His main task there was collecting plants and seeds in the field. Biodiversity has remained his main interest, and in 2013 he finished a B.Sc. thesis on the diversity of epiphytes on Sumatra. Sandra Kirschbaum from Bochum travelled to Bali in 2011 and gained fresh insights for plant cultivation: “It is quite a difference to sweat with the orchid in the rain forest instead of just spraying it in the greenhouse.” Sandro Thomisch from Dresden worked at the famous garden of the Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley. He learned how the English treat their celebrated lawns, which includes, among others, striking of the dew from the grass leaves in the morning and closing off the lawn for walkers after rain. Today he is working at

the equally famous park at Pillnitz Castle in Saxonia. Saskia Mahrt from Kiel worked with the Fachjan Company in the Netherlands in 2011. They have a huge greenhouse 110 metres long and 16 metres tall where they produce large tropical plants for zoos and airport lounges. Michael Neumann and Anne Schulz from Bonn accompanied the excursion of the German-speaking superintendents of botanical gardens (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Technischer Leiter Botanischer Gärten) to the Val di Poschiavo in Switzerland. They identified plants, made vegetation assessments and finally produced a fine journal of their excursion. Anett Krämer took part in an excursion to Southern England in spring 2013, which was entirely devoted to snowdrops, and she was able to visit many famous collections. Güde Nissen from Hamburg had visited Nepal on a private holiday and had been able to make contacts with the Mountain Botanical Garden there. She returned to Nepal in 2015 to serve an internship at this garden. She was highly impressed by the botanical knowledge of the local people. “Everybody seems to know all the plants in his area and their uses as food or medicine.” Finally, Christina Schwerdtner from Dresden visited Japan in 2015 where she learned about the Japanese flora and about how to prepare tender perennials for the winter. Most of all, she was touched by the gracious Japanese hospitality.



Different substrates, Botanical Garden Nikko, Japan. Photo: C. Schwerdtner

Have we aroused your curiosity? You will find all the reports in full length on our homepage. Young gardeners from abroad applying for this grant must have a German botanical garden for a host institution.



2016

Gardeners Exchange Travel Reports for 2015

Fekadu Assefa travelled from Ethiopia to Germany where he visited the botanical gardens at Bonn, Münster and Hamburg. Fekadu works at the Arboretum of the Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources at Addis Abeba and wanted to go abroad in order to extend his horticultural skills. His programme was very tight. It included plant cultivation and propagation as well as garden design and landscaping. In addition to botanical gardens, Fekadu Assefa also visited garden centres and treenurseries.



Gardener's work: repotting. Photo: F. Assefa

Güde Nissen receives her horticultural training at the Hamburg Botanical Garden. Before taking her final examinations, however, she served an internship at the Mountain Botanical Garden at Daman, Nepal. In Germany, horticultural training is a matter of course, but not in Nepal. People working in the botanical garden have no training and are called just "workers". They get their orders from "officers" who have studied biology but never have worked with a spade and hoe. Güde Nissen was able to disseminate her skills e.g. in cuttage, which was received well by the "workers".

Christina Schwerdtner is also doing her apprenticeship just now at the Dresden Botanical Garden. Since she is fluent in Japanese, her choice of travel destination was rather obvious: The Botanical



Dionysia in the rocks, Iran. Photo: M. Mauser



Carefully taking cuttings of Dionysia. Photo: B. Fiebig

Garden at Nikko, Japan. As in all our projects, it was also obvious for her to compare the different techniques and styles of work in the different countries. "I found it highly interesting to compare the potting techniques they have at Nikko to those we apply at Dresden. And: Tea breaks are very important in Japan. Apart from the lunch break, there are two tea breaks each day when the complete staff sit down to chat around a large table with an integrated gas boiler. In Japan, they do everything in the team together."

Dionysias form a very special genus in the primrose family. Whoever has been hooked on this tricky group of plants sooner or later will want to travel into the Iran in order to see the plants growing in their native habitats. This is indispensable if you want to know how to cultivate them properly. **Michael Mauser** from Tübingen Botanical Garden was lucky to join a small team of specialists for his journey. He had ample opportunity to botanize and was even allowed to take cuttings home to augment his collection of Dionysia there.

STIFTUNG INTERNATIONALER GÄRTNERAUSTAUSCH

International Exchange Project of Gardeners between Botanical Gardens



Night shift doing cuttings of *Dionysia*. Photo: A. Gröger



Cuttings of *Dionysia*. Photo: M. Mauser



The *Dionysia* collection in the Botanical Garden Tübingen. Photo: B. Fiebig

Oliver König, also from Tübingen, is planning to reorganise the greenhouse for plants from the Canary Islands. He felt that he needed a first-hand knowledge of their vegetation first, so he went to Teneriffa together with some colleagues. "It was highly instructive to wander through the different vegetation

zones from sea level to well over 2000 metres, and especially to see how the pine trees gather the moisture they need by "milking" the mist of the clouds." His final conclusion: "The Canary Island greenhouse at Tübingen can safely look forward to its rearrangement."

David Eder is in charge of the succulent collection at Kiel and went to Namibia in spring: After working at the Botanical Garden at Windhoek for some time, he went out into the field for to study South African succulents in their native habitats. "On quartzite gravel fields



Hoodia gordonii on the roadside, Namibia. Photo: D. Eder

we saw many Mesembryanthea like *Brownanthus*, *Mesembryanthemum*, *Stoeberia*, *Eberlanzia*, *Lampranthus*, *Drosanthemum*, *Psilocaulon* und *Ruschia*, and also many species of *Othonna*. Great specialties were *Hoodia alstoni*, *Ceraria namaquensis*, *Tylecodon bucholzianus*, *T. hallii* und *Euphorbia gummifera*:"

Markus Finner was quoted already on the front page. In his spare time, he visited many private gardens of the Oxford area. They fascinated him so that he found it hard not to climb the fences for closer inspections.

Travels scheduled for 2016

Young colleagues from Hamburg, Kiel, Bonn and Kew will go abroad with grants from our young gardeners special programme. For two of them, Edinburgh and Cali in Colombia will be the host gardens. The others will visit Costa Rica, Teneriffa and India respectively.

Within our regular programme, **Markus Rauscher** from Tübingen will join a biological excursion of his university to Brazil in order to study the vegetation of this large and diverse country. The Botanical Garden München-Nymphenburg will continue its highly successful exchange with the Botanical Garden at León, Nicaragua. This year **Harald Loose** will go to León. **Anne Schulz** from the Botanical Garden Bonn will work at the Botanical Garden Oxford. And **Frederic Gilbert** and **Nils Kleissenberg** from the Hamburg Botanical Garden will tour the Appalachian Mountains in the US in spring in co-operation with local plantmen and specialists. There will be a special focus on the highly attractive genus *Trillium*.

Our best wishes got to all of them. Have a happy journey! Please remember that we are looking forward very much to your reports and to all the new ideas you will be bringing back to your home institution.



Our Board of Trustees

A hearty welcome to **Brigitte Fiebig** who was elected into our board of trustees in November 2015! She is superintendent of the renowned Botanical Garden of the Tübingen University. A professional gardener by training, she has formerly worked at Göttingen Botanical Garden. She has encouraged many of her staff members to participate in the International Gardeners Exchange, and has joined some of their journeys for her own botanical interest. She complements the present team of board members who have contributed so much to the success of our foundation for many years.

Matthias Bartusch is superintendent of the Botanical Garden of Dresden University and has been board member since 2006. **Heinz Holert** is a merchant from Hamburg who has been connected to the International Gardeners Exchange since the 1990s. **Nils Kleissenberg** is a senior head gardener at the Hamburg Botanical Garden and in charge of the plant geographical department. He has travelled to Gothenburg, to the Altai Mountains, to Mérida in Venezuela and to the prairies in North America.

Brunhild Köhl from Hamburg established our foundation in 2002 and provided the sustained basis for the activities of the International Gardeners Exchange.

Professor Dr. Reinhard Lieberei is chairman of the board of trustees. Until 2013 he was Professor for Applied Botany at the Biozentrum Klein-Flottbek of the Hamburg University.

Bernd Lohse is head gardener for the bromeliad collection at the Hamburg Botanical Garden. A true pioneer of the International Gardener Exchange, he has been associated with it since 1989. **Dr. Carsten Schirarend** has been scientific director of the Hamburg Botanical Garden since 1996. His garden is something like a home port for the International Gardeners Exchange which was started here in 1987 by the late Loki Schmidt, a renowned plant conservationist and wife of Germany's ex-chancellor, the late Helmut Schmidt.

Our Executive Board

Chairman **Dr. Hans-Helmut Poppendieck** is a professional botanist and curator emeritus at the Herbarium of the Hamburg University (HBG). He has been associated with the International Gardeners Exchange since 1990.

Vice chairman **Dr. Gisela Bertram** from Hamburg is a trained gardener with a Ph.D. in botany. At present she is chief executive officer of a charitable environmental foundation at Hamburg. **Frank Schneider** is a lawyer who for many years worked as an endowment administrator for a large bank at Hamburg. He has been chief financial officer of our foundation since its beginning. He counselled the donator and helped to write the charter of the foundation.

Applications for 2017

are open until September 15th, 2016. 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.

Contact and Information

Stiftung Internationaler Gärtneraustausch c/o Loki Schmidt Stiftung
Steintorweg 8, 20099 Hamburg.

Please contact the executive board hans-helmut.poppendieck@web.de
or gisela_bertram@gmx.de.

For additional information, please visit our homepage at
<http://www.gaertneraustausch.de/>

Our bank account

HypoVereinsbank IBAN: DE 7420 0300 0000 0042 8888
BIC: HYVEDEMM300

More photos from 2015



Japanese „bear paws“. Photo: C. Schwerdtner



Welwitschia in Namibia. Photo: D. Eder



Langtang National Park, Nepal. Photo: G. Nissen



Gardening at Oxford. Photo: M. Finner



Teneriffa. Photo: O.König