

VANISHING ACTS: TREES UNDER THREAT



ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

Conserving trees for our future

How do we protect these and other vanishing tree species for the future? Scientists, governments, botanical gardens and arboreta, and conservation organizations around the world are working every day to protect trees. There are three primary sets of actions being taken:

- Halting the degradation of tree habitats and rehabilitating land already damaged. Protecting air and water from pollution, reducing global carbon emissions, limiting the use of land for grazing and agriculture, managing lands for agricultural production in a sustainable manner consistent with conserving plant biodiversity, and using selective logging practices will all help protect tree habitats. Reforestation and restoration of natural habitats will further improve the habitats that are critical to the survival of threatened trees.
- Conserving as much as possible of the remaining natural and semi-natural vegetation. Strategic creation of reserves and other protected lands in areas identified as important for conservation of threatened tree species or for worldwide plant biodiversity will protect critical habitats and resources for the future. Local and international restrictions on the trade of threatened species through regulation by local governments or through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) can also play a key role in reducing or halting overharvesting of threatened species.
- Preserving the genetic diversity of the world's trees by collecting seeds in seed banks and by cultivating and studying plants outside of their natural habitat in botanical gardens and arboreta, other scientific institutions, and in the landscape. In some cases, these seeds and cultivated plants can be used as reservoir to repopulate natural habitats where tree species have gone extinct or are in danger of extinction.

While work is clearly still needed to achieve the international goals for tree and plant conservation, there is already a great deal of work being done to protect trees and there are clear actions that can be taken immediately to move toward these goals.

How Can You Help?

While the conservation tasks and goals ahead can seem lofty, there are simple steps that all of us can easily take to have a major impact on tree conservation:

- Recycle all wood and paper. Using resources wisely takes some of the burden off habitats facing destruction.
- Reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change by walking, riding a bike, or taking public transportation rather than driving. You can also reduce carbon emissions by making changes in your home and in your workplace to help conserve energy.
- Find a recent book on endangered trees and tree heroes, such as Ann Linnea's *Keepers of the Trees: A Guide to Re-Greening North America* or Arnold Newman's *The Tropical Rainforest: A World Survey of Our Most Valuable Endangered Habitat*. Read it with friends and start a discussion.
- If your community or home is a suitable environment, plant a tree! You can even plant some of the trees described in this exhibit; just make sure that your tree distributor obtains their seeds or saplings according to the sustainable practices for that species.
- Volunteer to help manage and restore natural areas in your community. In many communities, you can also volunteer to help monitor and control the spread of invasive species that can damage plant populations.
- Support your local arboretum or botanic garden or organizations such as The Global Trees Campaign or Plantlife International that are working to preserve the threatened trees and plants of the world.
- Tell a friend about this exhibit and about the importance of conserving threatened trees!

Does one of these steps sound appealing to you? Try it out today...and help protect trees for our future.

Acknowledgements and Additional Resources

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Want to learn more about endangered and threatened trees, and how you can help? The following websites contain more information:

ARKive: Images of Life on Earth: www.arkive.org

Botanic Gardens Conservation International: www.bgci.org

IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources):
www.iucn.org and www.iucnredlist.org

Center for Forestry Research (CIFOR): www.cifor.cgiar.org

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES):
www.cites.org

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): www.biodiv.org

Fauna and Flora International: www.fauna-flora.org

Forest Stewardship Council: www.fsc.org

The Global Trees Campaign: www.globaltrees.org

The Morton Arboretum: www.mortonarb.org

People and Plants International: www.peopleandplants.org

Plantlife International: www.plantlife.org.uk

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: www.rbgekew.org.uk

USDA Plants database: plants.usda.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program: www.fws.gov/endangered/

World Resources Institute: www.wri.org