



Collections Policy

Botanical Garden

This policy applies to all NHMD employees, contractors, associates, students and volunteers. Sections of this policy also apply to formal visitors and users of the collections.

This policy was approved by the Board of Directors on 3 June 2026 and shall remain in place until a revision is issued by the Deputy Director for Collections.

CONTENT	PAGE
1. Overview of Policy	3
2. The Botanical Garden and its Purpose.....	3
3. Description of the Collections	3
4. Legislation	4
5. Accessioning.....	4
6. Management of the Botanical Garden's Plant Collection	7
7. Access to and Use of the Botanical Garden	8
8. Policy Review Procedure.....	8

Collections Policy of the Botanical Garden

1. Overview of Policy

The Botanical Garden's collection policy defines the guidelines for the management, development, and limitation of the collections so the Garden can best fulfil its purpose.

The collection policy forms the basis for legislation regarding the handling of collection plants, resource planning, accession, maintenance, and deaccession of material. The policy thereby functions as a guideline for the Garden's staff and other Natural History Museum Denmark employees.

The collections must be maintained at a high scientific and horticultural standard. Prioritization of collections is carried out by the Botanical Garden's Head of Botanical Garden, Curators and Collection Managers (hereafter referred to as the Garden's Curatorial Team).

The Natural History Museum Denmark is part of the University of Copenhagen and operates within the policies of the University. The legal frame and the governance structure are outlined in the Collections Governance Policy.

2. Purpose

The Botanical Garden is a living scientific collection, with a focus on the conservation of threatened plant species. The garden therefore plays a special role at the Natural History Museum Denmark, as we:

- Curate Denmark's national living plant collections from Denmark and abroad
- Collaborate nationally and internationally to conserve and safeguard threatened plant species
- Research plant diversity and conservation with a focus on the garden's collections
- Maintain the highest horticultural expertise in growing and caring for our plants
- Engage the public through botanical outreach for a sustainable future, and offer an experience of a living plant collection in the middle of Copenhagen

3. Description of the Collections in the Botanical Garden

The Botanical Garden holds Denmark's largest collection of living plant species. The plant collection is the result of hundreds of years of plant collecting from around the world. In addition, the Botanical Garden has a seed bank, with a particular focus on Danish wild plant species. These collections are vital in expanding our understanding of the world's flora.

The development of our plant collection has largely followed the history of botanical gardens and their collection priorities. Whereas the focus originally was on medicinal plants, today our priorities are on conservation, research, education and public engagement.

The Botanical Garden contains approximately 8,000 different species of living plants (excluding duplicates), all registered in the IrisBG database. Nearly 300 families and about 2,200 genera are represented, as well as experimental plants that are not all registered.

The Botanical Garden houses many important collections, such as the large Palm House complex with the historical cycad collection, the special collection of South-East Asian orchids, the succulent collection, and plants from the Galápagos and Madagascar. Outdoors, notable areas include the Danish section, the Rock Garden, the Perennial Garden, the Rhododendron section, the conifer collection and the Prehistoric Garden.

A major focus of the Botanical Garden is the ex-situ conservation of plant species that are threatened or protected in nature and are often listed on national or international Red List databases such as the IUCN Red List. Maintaining healthy and genetically diverse collections is one of the Garden's most important responsibilities, achieved through seed harvesting and propagation for both internal uses and for other botanical gardens and seed banks. In the future we plan to increase our involvement with in-situ conservation activities both in Denmark and overseas. The Botanical Garden's seed bank contains seeds of threatened species from around the world, with an emphasis on Danish native plants. The seed bank is continuously updated with new accessions, with the goal of securing viable seeds from all wild Danish plant species.

Since 2018, the Botanical Garden has been accredited by BGCI (Botanic Gardens Conservation International) as a Botanical Garden, and since October 15, 2025, as a Conservation Practitioner. These accreditations entail an increased responsibility for the conservation of threatened plant species, both nationally and internationally.

4. Legislation

The Botanical Garden is obliged to comply with relevant national and international laws and conventions that Denmark and the EU have adopted, particularly:

- *The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES)
- *The Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD)
- *The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing* (ABS)
- *Regulation (EU) No 511/2014 on compliance measures for users of genetic resources and its Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1866* (EU ABS Regulation)

To meet these obligations, the Botanical Garden follows recognised best practice, such as the CETAF ABS Code of Conduct and BGCI guidance, and, where possible, uses IPEN for the non-commercial exchange of eligible living material.

5. Accessioning

Generally, plants cultivated in the Botanical Garden should have current or potential relevance to one or more of the garden's purposes. Plants with documented wild origin are preferred.

5.1 General Requirements for Plants Grown in the Botanical Garden

As a rule, plants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- conservation value (threatened and/or rare)

- Be taxonomically interesting and/or representative, contributing to a broad representation of families and genera that can be cultivated in the Botanical Garden (either outside or under glass).
- Have cultural and/or historical interest
- Be relevant for research
- Represent a prioritized geographical area
- Show unusual adaptations (e.g., carnivory or parasitism)
- Exhibit unusual morphology
- Have ethnobotanical or horticultural value, with a preference to species (and not cultivars)

Representatives of species that are critically endangered in the wild should only be collected if the purpose is to secure them through *ex situ* conservation.

Accessioning must not unnecessarily reduce wild populations of threatened species.

5.2. Accession and Maintenance of Plant Material

The Botanical Garden accepts new plant material of conservation, scientific or educational value and aims to expand its collections through field collecting, exchange with other botanical gardens, and potentially plant donations.

New accessions should meet at least one of the criteria in section 5.1. Accessions fulfilling these should be prioritized and may replace plants that do not meet the criteria. For example, wild-collected plants with complete metadata should be preferred over plants of unknown origin.

Before collecting new plant material in nature, the purpose must be defined: use, species, family, plant group, and quantity. Only necessary material should be collected, and populations must be left in sustainable condition.

All legal permits must be obtained, and collaboration with local experts or botanical gardens is strongly recommended.

All collected material must be documented with date, GPS location, habitat description, and other metadata, which must be entered into the database.

Living material is immediately placed in the designated quarantine facility (see section 6.2).

The Garden may receive plant and seed donations if they comply with legislation and the collection criteria and provided no special conditions (such as ownership rights) are attached. Plants or seeds from guests may not be accepted, unless the donor can document compliance with Botanical Garden guidelines and laws. The Garden may accept confiscated material handed over by police or customs authorities.

The Garden must ensure that:

- Material was collected legally in the country of origin, whether obtained through in-situ (fieldwork) or ex-situ activities (exchange, donation or purchase).

- It was exported and imported legally, including any CITES requirements.
- Any ABS rules (for example permits or agreed conditions on use and benefit-sharing) have been identified and recorded.

Information about ABS and any conditions or restrictions on use must be attached to the accession in IrisBG, so it can be followed by staff and shared when appropriate.

The seed bank contains seeds from wild collections and the Garden's own plants. The new and updated seed bank will become Denmark's national seed bank for both Danish species and international threatened species, supporting propagation and conservation work nationally and internationally.

All permanent accessions must be identified and registered in the database by the Collections Manager. Registration includes accession number, date, name, author, family, metadata, and location in the garden. The database is continuously updated by the Collection Manager and horticultural staff. Plants grown temporarily for research or teaching may later be accessioned if they meet the criteria in sections 4 and 5.1.

The Garden's Curatorial team and horticulturists jointly ensure quantitative and qualitative maintenance of the collections, including regular propagation to avoid losses.

A risk assessment must be performed before new accessions are introduced, following the *European Code of Conduct for Botanic Gardens on Invasive Alien Species*, so that invasive species that could harm the garden or the natural flora are avoided. This also applies to plant species intended for use in research contexts.

New plants must remain in quarantine for 6 weeks before entering the permanent collection.

The Garden must protect its collections from theft, vandalism, and other damage. Valuable plants should be placed as safely as possible (following the Botanical Garden's Value Preservation Plan).

Identification is handled by the curator. Horticulturists must ensure flowering accessions are brought to the curator for determination. External and internal experts may assist.

It is desirable that periodic revisions are carried out of the cultivated representatives of plant groups in the garden, such as genera or families, and at a minimum every five years. During a revision, it should also be assessed whether a group is reasonably represented in relation to the Garden's collection policy.

5.3. Deaccession of Plant Material

De-accession decisions are made by the Gardens Curatorial team. Horticulturists must present requests and reasons for a deaccession to the Gardens Curatorial team.

In the event of losses in the collections, it should be decided by the Garden's Curatorial team and the horticulturist responsible whether a replacement should be made.

If plants in the collections do not meet the requirements for plant material in the garden (sections 5.1 and 5.2), it will be appropriate to remove them from the collection.

No plants, plant material, or seeds may be sold, taken home, or given away, including deaccessioned material.

6. Management of the Botanical Garden's Plant Collection

The garden's collection plants must generally be kept healthy, well-presented, and free from disease so that they develop and display themselves as well as possible under the growing conditions in which they are cultivated.

Timely propagation of the plants is essential for the survival of the collection and should be carried out to the extent that space and resources allow. This assessment is made in consultation with the collections staff member.

Growing Red Listed plants requires understanding their natural conditions and replicating these as closely as possible. Red listed plants must be propagated if they do not thrive. Ideally more than one specimen should be maintained, possibly in separate locations or other Botanic Gardens.

Daily maintenance of the plants is described in the specific care plans for all areas of the Botanical Garden. These plans include, among other things, correct growing conditions, pruning, thinning, weeding, fertilization, as well as the use of biological control (beneficial insects) and if necessary, chemical control (pesticides or herbicides). Fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides used are all approved in accordance with EU and Danish legislation, and the least harmful alternative for the environment will always be chosen.

Areas in which plants are cultivated must appear well-designed and well-maintained, reflecting a high level of horticultural professionalism.

The plant collection should, if possible, be placed so that the plants/areas can be enjoyed and communicated in the best and most representative way.

Dangerous plants such as old diseased trees must be evaluated regularly. If a plant is deemed too unsafe, the Garden's Curatorial team must be informed, and propagation begins immediately for Red Listed species.

6.1. Placement and Division of Collections

Facilities inside and outside must support plants from different climates with relevant light, temperature, humidity, and soil conditions.

6.2. Protection of the Living Collections

The Botanical Garden always strives to use biological control against pests.

Pesticides and herbicides may only be used in cases of aggressive infestations that cannot be controlled by other means.

In connection with invasive pests that cannot be managed in any other way, toxins may be applied to protect the plants. The well-being of the plants will always take priority.

Invasive or aggressive plants already within the Garden must be removed manually or treated with herbicides.

All new plant material (rooted plants and cuttings) destined for the Botanical Garden must, upon arrival, be placed in isolation from the Botanical Garden's collection in a designated quarantine facility. There must be a continued focus on hygiene by the horticulturists, including the use of tools, soil and similar materials that are exclusively used in this area, to avoid the spread of any spores, eggs, etc. This practice also applies to plant material confiscated by Customs and forwarded to the Botanical Garden for identification.

Plant material must be monitored continuously for a period of 6 weeks before it can potentially be included in the Botanical Garden's collection.

The condition of seeds received from other botanical gardens and from wild collections is assessed upon arrival by the Garden's staff. If the seeds appear healthy and are not affected by fungi or small insects, they are transferred to the Garden's ex situ seed bank or sown by the horticulturists.

7. Access to and Use of the Botanical Garden

Use of the living collection for research, education and training is managed by the Garden's Curatorial team. Collections must be accessible as appropriate, though some areas and plants remain restricted.

Plant material for research may be requested and is released only after signing a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) which, where relevant, reflects any conditions or restrictions associated with the material, and is managed by the Gardens Curatorial team.

Only Garden staff may collect plant material unless otherwise agreed.

When sharing plant material with other botanical gardens, the health status of the plants is assessed before distribution. As a rule, plant material is only sent/provided as bare-rooted plants, cuttings, or seeds.

Loans of plants for exhibitions and events at the Natural History Museum Denmark require approval by the Garden's Curatorial team.

The Botanical Garden supports a variety of research and public engagement projects. All projects must first be discussed with the Curatorial Team prior to funding acquisition. Funding should be provided to support botanical gardens staffing and infrastructure expenses.

8. Policy Review Procedure

This Policy replaces any previous policy.

The Collection Policy for the Botanical Garden will be reviewed at least once every five years to maintain its validity and usefulness as a guide for the Museum staff and Board of Directors. The Deputy Director for Collections will submit proposed revisions to the Board of Directors for final approval.

The date when the policy is next due for review is noted below.

Name of governing body: Board of Directors, Natural History Museum Denmark

Date of approval by governing body: 3 June 2026

Date at which this policy is due for review: 3 June 2031