

Arizona's Boyce Thompson Arboretum Saves 6000 Desert Plants

Arizona's Boyce Thompson Arboretum Acquires 5,870 Plants from the Wallace Desert Garden. Of 19,000 desert plants- 502 are Globally Threatened

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES, March 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Boyce Thompson Arboretum, (BTA) a nationally-recognized desert botanical garden dedicated to the collection, preservation and display of desert plants, is just east of Phoenix, Arizona in the Sonoran Desert. Recently, BTA, along with Native Resources International completed the monumental yet delicate task of transferring 5,870 new plant specimens from The Wallace Desert Garden in Scottsdale to a winding, trailed landscape within BTA. The Wallace Desert Garden is an example of how a small group of people can help to preserve and protect plant biodiversity. H.B. Wallace and his wife, Jocelyn, lovingly collected and preserved their carefully selected plants for 23 years. Now those taxa are scheduled to be revealed to the public at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum--Wallace Desert Garden Grand Opening on March 28, 2020.

Incredibly, H.B. Wallace's grandfather and great grandfather both served as the Secretary of Agriculture under three U.S. Presidents. H.B.'s fascination and study as an agriculturist flourished when he moved to Arizona in 1987 to start his garden, just as W. Boyce Thompson had done in 1924. H.B.'s garden consists of cultivars, hybrids, and unique varieties of taxa that were replanted within the Arboretum's sprawling 353-acre Upland Sonoran Desert just an hour east of Phoenix.



Visitors to Boyce Thompson Arboretum walk on trails lined with 19,000 desert cacti and succulents from around the world.



Boyce Thompson Arboretum Grand Opening of the Wallace Garden will open 13 more acres to the public.

"According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, cacti are among the most

threatened taxonomic groups worldwide, with 31% of the 1,478 studied now being threatened, so the unprecedented decision to save this collection was made, even though moving these sensitive plants would be dangerous for their survival," said Executive Director Lynne Nemeth. "Biodiversity has become part of the international conservation agenda for 2020 as studies indicate that a high proportion of species will be severely threatened within the next 20 years due to climate change."

In 2014 the H.B. Wallace Foundation proposed moving their garden to BTA to save the unique taxa. "Our Board was thrilled to be able to acquire the Wallace Desert Garden," said Jay Ream,

Chairman of the BTA Board of Directors. Lee Brownson, Executive Director of the Wallace Desert Gardens Foundation, proposed that their Foundation would donate millions to pay for the move and Brownson led the effort to make the transfer of more than 1,600 species from Africa, North and South America, Australia, the Arabian Peninsula and Madagascar. This collection includes at least 50 kinds of agave, 40 types of acacia, five salvia species and 20 aloe types. There are treelike cacti, 25 boojum plants, leafy South American trees, thorny African bushes, hairy Peruvian columnar cacti, numerous saguaros and hundreds of yuccas in the collection. "The Wallace Foundation saved this collection from being destroyed or disbursed after the private Wallace land in Scottsdale was being sold," said Ream. "Jeff Payne, the BTA's Director of Horticulture, and other horticulture staff recently completed transferring and replanting the 100 semi-truck loads of plants, and even the huge boxed cacti and trees are doing well at BTA.

According to Nemeth, "We know habitat loss and drought are the key reasons that cacti to face extinction. BTA's goals include recovering endangered desert species and using our botanical expertise to protect these plants." Forty years ago, when the Endangered Species Act was signed to prevent plant and animal extinction, W. Boyce Thompson had already recognized this biodiversity danger and had acquired hundreds of plants for his Arboretum. Today other leaders like these two remarkable conservationists can participate by getting involved as members of BTA. For more information about Boyce Thompson go to [BoyceThompsonArboretumVideo](#) or call (520) 689-2723.

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6,000 Wallace Desert Garden plants are saved and moved to Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Grand Opening of 13-acre Wallace Garden is March 28, 2020

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