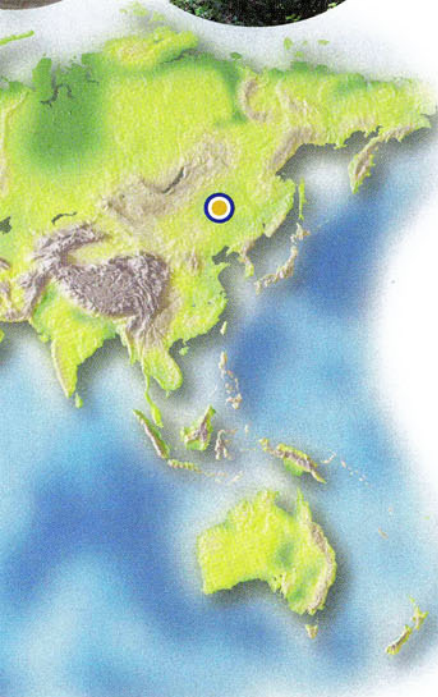


The experience gained from MSB enables them to provide technical support to the new national seed conservation network and facilitate large-scale seed collecting activities across the country.

In addition to seed collecting activities, the network will also play an important role in developing collaboration in seed biology research, both abroad and in-country, and will support a comprehensive plant conservation strategy in China.



Left to right: *Psammosilene tunicoides*, important medicine plants endemic to China
Fruit of *Rosa* sp.
Shaking to collect the dogwood (*Cornus* sp.)



Laboratory and greenhouse support from Marcos Acosta and Ana Sandoval has enabled germination tests to be carried out on over 100 species, and recent test data will be provided to the MSBP for reference. With continuation of support for two further years by Rio Tinto Plc, the propagation trials for priority species are yielding important information for species such as *Dalea azurea* (Fabaceae). Species profiles will be periodically updated at the web page www.inia.cl/recursosgeneticos/bancobase/propagacion/

Renewal of the Access and Benefit Sharing Agreement between INIA and Kew to December 2009 will enable further consolidation of the network of Chilean collaborators, including the University of Concepción, the National Botanic Garden and, from 2007, the University of Talca. This will allow the partners to extend collecting to a wider range of habitats and species and to continue to meet MSBP seed conservation targets.

Italy

New collaboration in Sardinia

Sardinia is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea (after Sicily), occupying an area of 24090 km² and comprising a flora of 2407 species. The isolation and the high geological diversity in this island have created a wide range of habitats with high level of endemism (347 plant species), especially on the Gennargentu, Supramonte and Sulcis-Iglesiente mountains.

At the beginning of September 2006 a Memorandum of Collaboration was signed between RBG Kew and the Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (CCB), in the Department of Botany at the University of Cagliari (in Sardinia), aiming to contribute to the plant conservation of the island.

The collaboration will focus on seed collecting, conservation and research on seed ecophysiology, plant demography and phytosociology of Sardinian native plant species. All targeted species will be representative of the Mediterranean flora and will be prioritized according to their conservation importance and phytogeographical interest.

Dr Tiziana Ulian (RBG Kew) joined an expedition in mid September 2006 in which seeds were collected from 30 endemic species, including two of the 'Top 50' most threatened Mediterranean Island Plants: *Lamyropsis microcephala* (Asteraceae) and *Ribes sardoum* (Grossulariaceae). These species, both endemic of Sardinia, are considered critically endangered (CR), with *L. microcephala* found only in two populations in the Gennargentu massif and *R. sardoum* recorded from just one site in Supramonte.

The seed lots collected during the joint expedition are now conserved in the Bank of Sardinian Germoplasm (BG-SAR) of the CCB in Cagliari and duplicates with an adequate number of seeds will be sent and stored in the MSB.

Together with seed collecting, field surveys were carried out for nineteen of the species collected and for seven additional ones. Their phenology, ecology, population structure and phytosociological associations were analysed in order to contribute to the ongoing conservation assessment for the species carried out by the team at CCB.

At the end of November 2006, Efsio Mattana, a PhD student from CCB, visited the MSB for a period of one month. He received training in seed processing, conservation and germination, working with Janet Terry and Natasha Ali and discussed his PhD research on seed ecophysiology with Dr. Matthew Daws.

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Above top: *Lamyropsis microcephala* (Asteraceae) PHOTO: GIANLUIGI BACCHETTA

Above left: *Ribes sardoum* (Grossulariaceae) PHOTO: EFISIO MATTANA

Above right: Staff from the Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (CCB) (from the left Giuseppe Fenu, Efsio Mattana, Bianca Alvau and Prof. Gianluigi Bacchetta) preparing for fieldwork in September 2006 in Orgosolo, central east of Sardinia PHOTO: TIZIANA ULIAN