

Building bridges and growing genomes: an awards program to support international collections and genomics infrastructure

D.M. Dotson^{1,*}, M.R. Gastel^{2,3}, R.T. Mims¹, P. Malcolm⁴, C. Ely⁴, R.M. Toppila⁵, E. Thomas⁶, and A.J. Meyer⁵

¹United States Botanic Garden, Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

²National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

³Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Fort Worth, Texas, United States of America

⁴Botanic Gardens Conservation International-UK, Kew, Richmond, United Kingdom

⁵Botanic Gardens Conservation International-US, San Marino, California, United States of America

⁶University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, United States of America

*Corresponding author email: Devin.Dotson@aoc.gov

Keywords: awards, botanic gardens, conservation, genomics, GGI-Gardens, research

Access to high-quality tissue samples is a limiting factor for plant genomics research in the 21st Century. Recognising this need, the Global Genome Initiative for Gardens (GGI-Gardens) was founded in 2015 for the purpose of collecting and preserving genome quality tissues for all species of plants on Earth. Since this time, GGI-Gardens has grown to an international partnership of more than 50 botanic gardens that has supported the collection of more than 15,000 herbarium and genomic vouchers and over 3,000 vascular plant genera. The partnership is rooted in building capacity to support collections at botanic gardens and foster collaboration with the genomics community. Botanic gardens are home to a remarkable proportion of plant biodiversity and work on the front lines of plant conservation, which makes them ideally suited to support the rapidly expanding opportunities for plant genomics research. In 2017, GGI-Gardens started the GGI-Gardens Partner Award program in collaboration with the United States Botanic Garden and Botanic Gardens Conservation International. To date, this award program has supported 36 botanic garden programs from 31 partners in 21 countries. This poster highlights our plan for strategic success of this program that is driven by a perspective focused on outcomes for our partners. We highlight statistics from these awards that reflect the success of this collections program and our partners as well as statistics that demonstrate the relative impact of this award and the effectiveness of our strategic sampling approach that focuses on current taxonomic gaps in existing collections.