

## **The Species Steward Training Program: building capacity for oak conservation in Mexico**

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Global Consortia for conservation are some of the most ambitious initiatives that BGCI has launched. They aim to tackle threatened species in some of the most important plant groups in the world. The Global Conservation Consortium for Oak (GCCO) works with oaks, members of the genus *Quercus*. Led by The Morton Arboretum, the GCCO has promoted its work in the three most diverse regions in the world: USA, Asia, and Mexico and Central America. This presentation is focussed on the last region, where a great deal of effort has been directed to education, training and research development, to promote the collaborative work of the GCCO in the conservation of priority oak species. We describe here what we have created and the strategy we have followed in Mexico and Central America to promote the work of GCCO Stewards to ensure the protection of 32 threatened species in the area. We will highlight three different case studies where the Stewards have reached considerable advances in the protection of selected species as well as other consortium objectives such as the development of metacollections and the promotion of new research areas.