

# Plant diversity and development: the activities of the Botanic Garden Meise in Central Africa



# Botanic Garden Meise

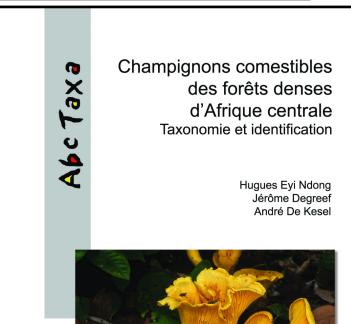
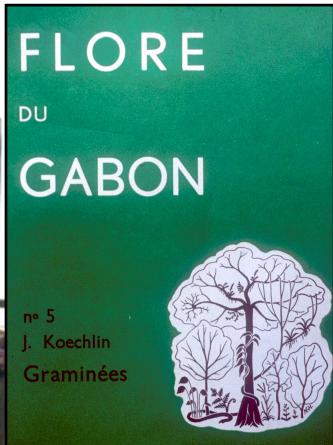
- Founded in 1796
- 92 ha
- 18,000 kinds of plants
- 4 million herbarium specimens
- An extensive botanical library with 200,000 volumes
- 187 employees, 100 volunteers, 20 guides



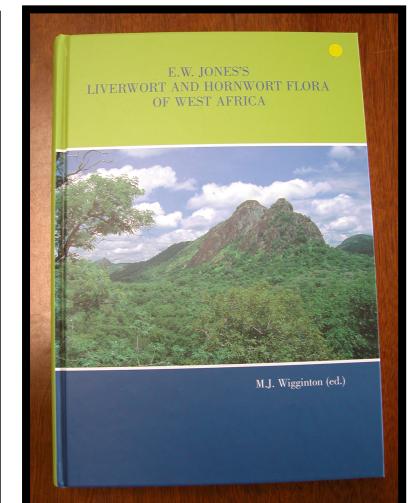
**Mission:**  
**Building a sustainable future through discovery,  
research and conservation of plants**



# Botanic Garden Meise and (Central) Africa

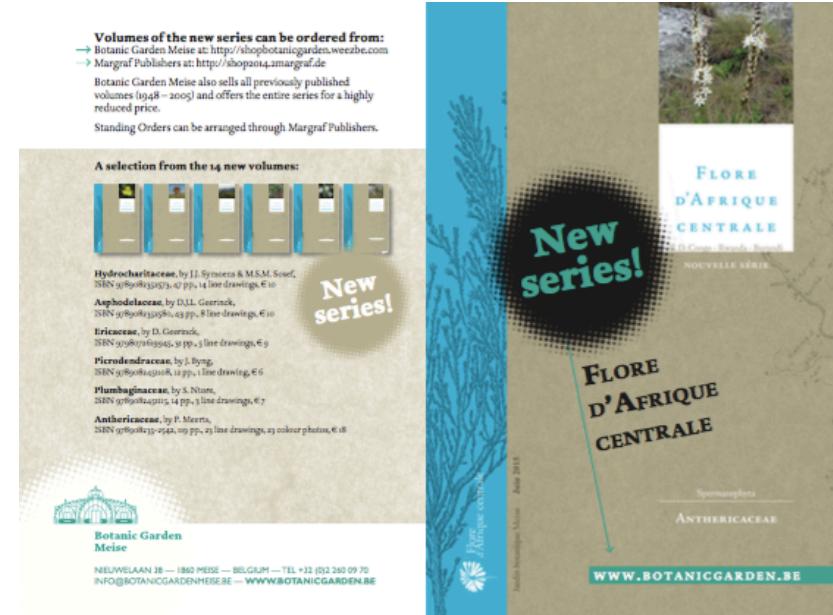


- The largest collection of central African botanical data in the world
- 85% of all herbarium specimens collected in DRC
- Vast research expertise in the flora of Central Africa
- Long standing collaborations in Congo, Gabon, Cameroun, Madagascar, Benin, South Africa, ...



# Flora of central Africa: knowledge base for conservation and sustainable exploitation

- Taxonomic reference work with descriptions of and identification keys to 10.000 plants of Central Africa
- Only 60% completed, hence incomplete knowledge of diversity jeopardising ecological, economic (impact), ethnobotanical and conservation studies
- New ambition to finish the flora by 2030
- Similar project for Gabon with Naturalis (Leiden).



# Fungi for conservation and development

- Training local scientists & capacity building
- Ecosystem functioning and services
- Conservation through valorisation

**It's about people and fungi**



# Restauration and capacity building in DRC gardens

Since 2004 BGM played an important role in implementing the restoration of major DR Congo gardens.

**Les jardins botaniques en R.D.C.**

Les jardins botaniques sont des institutions possédant des collections documentées de plantes cultivées pour la conservation, l'éducation et la recherche scientifique.

La République Démocratique du Congo héberge trois jardins botaniques :  
-Eala-Mbandaka en Equateur (370 ha),  
-Kisantu au Bas-Congo (225 ha)  
-Kinshasa (7 ha)

Ces trois jardins, actuellement en voie de réhabilitation, sont destinés à devenir des centres botaniques importants.

Les Jardins Botaniques en RDC participent à la conservation de la biodiversité et à la protection de l'environnement au même titre que les Parcs Nationaux

**La conservation**  
Les jardins botaniques constituent un endroit privilégié pour la conservation ex situ (hors du milieu naturel) des espèces végétales.

**L'éducation environnementale**  
Les visites guidées, les ateliers scolaires, les cours et les expositions, permettent le partage des connaissances scientifiques acquises dans les jardins botaniques et sensibilisent, de ce fait, la population à la sauvegarde de l'environnement et à la préservation du patrimoine naturel congolais.

**La recherche**  
En participant à la recherche en biologie, écologie et gestion durable des espèces végétales les jardins botaniques contribuent à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations locales par la préservation des plantes utiles.

Realisation: A. DEBAL, F. LANATA / Crédit photo: D. ASSINE, J. MAMPAI, F. LANATA, A. MANDUNGU / Année de la nature et des jardins

Logos: Institut National de Conservation et de Protection de la Nature (INCPN), ICBN, Botanique.be, Botanique.be

## The results are:

- Reinforcing the role of botanical gardens in the National Parks Institution
- Reviving botanic research capacity (including herbarium management)
- Establishing links between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation: DRCongo botanical gardens (Kisantu and Kinshasa) as showcase for the parks
- Building links between urban populations and *in situ* conservation

# Capacity building in Central African herbaria

- Rehabilitation of collections
  - Advice on rehabilitation of infrastructure
  - Restauration of specimens
  - Protection against insects
  - Digitalisation of the collections
  - Creation of databases
- Training of personnel (technicians and scientists)
- Fund raising



# Virunga National Park

## 1. Managing trade-offs between conservation and development

Matebe Hydroelectric plant: rural electrification as a catalyst for job creation and poverty alleviation

- To harmonise hydroelectric plant with the natural landscape;
- To restore degraded habitats;
- To identify, study, and conserve botanical species;
- To train agronomists staff
- To promote environmental education in schools, civil society and media



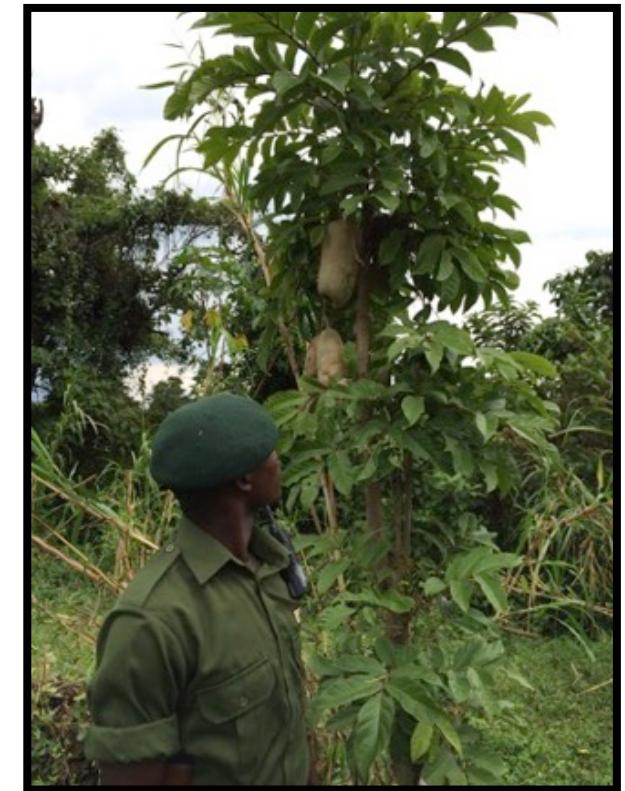
**Hydroelectric plant  
Matebe:**

- 12,6 Mw
- 140.000 users
- 300 - 450 workers each day
- 20 million US\$
- Buffet Foundation, EU



## 2. Preserving local flora using *in situ* and *ex situ* methods

- **Research:** Identifying and inventorying species to restore degraded habitats.
- **Nurseries:** producing seedlings from local plants , production of ornamental plants.
- **Training:** horticulture, agronomy, botany



### 3. Environmental education: a new challenge in post conflict area

- Highlighting the role of the park among the population in preserving one of the richest regions for biodiversity in Africa;
- Reinforcing the linkage between park, ecosystem services and development in a "modern botanical garden" around a sustainable energy resource;
- Rising awareness and sensitivity about plants and ecosystems (showing different plants from other regions of DRCongo);
- Launching guide training program;
- Organising school visits.





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- Mellon Foundation
- SEP
- Virunga Foundation
- EU
- Biodiversité au Katanga(BAK, asbl)
- Mikembo Sanctuary (asbl)
- Belgian development cooperation

... the most amazing things happens  
outside your comfort zone...

**Thank you**