



For immediate release

Date: Monday 18 May 2009

Time: 9:30 - 11am
11:00 – 12.30pm
12 - 1:30pm

Where: Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne,
Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra

The ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE CELEBRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORLD'S FLORA ON PLANT CONSERVATION DAY

RBG Melbourne is celebrating the importance of plants to people and the planet on Plant Conservation Day, May 18.

Seeds for Survival – free tours through Melbourne's botanic ark

"Despite our daily reliance on the flora of the world for our existence, plants are the most threatened species on Earth," said Senior Conservation Botanist Neville Walsh. "Plants give us the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the medicines that protect us, along with our homes and clothes. If they all disappear, so will we."

"As many as 100,000 plant species are threatened with extinction today," said Neville. "Reducing the threats to plants in their native habitats is a priority for conservationists worldwide. Botanic gardens and zoos have a very important role in plant conservation."

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne has been selected by Botanic Gardens Conservation International to host free activities to celebrate Plant Conservation Day and help conserve the world's plants. Celebrations are part of a truly international program with gardens in China, Europe, Russia and the United States taking part.

Victoria is home to around 3,600 native plant species, but unfortunately over 800 are considered threatened and 44 extinct. Scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne are involved in a race against time in a bid to safeguard threatened plant species against extinction.

They are building the Victorian Conservation Seedbank to collect and preserve Victoria's seeds for the future.

On May 18 2009, as part of Plant Conservation Day, three free tours have been organised for the public to take a journey with these precious seeds, meet the people who have collected them and discover where they are stored in the Herbarium. Participants will also enjoy a guided tour of the Gardens new rare and threatened bed.

To book and public inquiries: (03) 9252 2429

Media inquiries: Penny Underwood (03) 9818 8540.

A picture opportunity before the tours can be arranged by contacting Penny Underwood.