

Montgomery Provides National Leadership To safeguard our trees

Montgomery was awarded a NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANT by the Institute of Museum and Library Services!

The project, *Safeguarding our Plant Collections*, will develop clear protocols to protect plants, starting with Montgomery's cherished palms and cycads. The project will carefully select which groups of palms to grow by exploring their DNA, and will help protect other trees, from oaks to magnolias, by adapting proven conservation methods from zoos. This research continues a successful line of study on the genetics of botanic garden plant collections led by MBC.

Called "one of the largest advances in tree conservation since the 1970s,"

this project will ensure that botanic garden trees can benefit future generations. Led by Montgomery, the project brings together experts at other botanic gardens, organizations and zoos: the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the Center for Plant Conservation, Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago Zoological Society, Morton Arboretum, National Tropical Botanical Garden, and the USDA. The group studies a carefully selected group of plant species, providing comparative case studies which can benefit work at most every garden.

The National Leadership Grant is the largest and most prestigious grant awarded by the IMLS, designed to

address critical needs of the museum field and improve services for the American public. It is thus a highly competitive program with only 13 awards made this year! Within the entire, nationwide museum field – including art, science, history, and even zoos – Montgomery was the only botanic garden thusly honored; another demonstration of how the MBC Team innovates and advances the science of plant collections. As this grant affirms, Montgomery is a NATIONAL LEADER.

Patrick Griffith, Executive Director
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Background: the work builds on and expands upon Montgomery's innovative, IMLS-funded conservation research. Projects in 2012 and 2014 studied the Central American cycad, *Zamia decumbens* (pictured here), and the Caribbean cycad, *Zamia lucayana*. Museum experts sounded a nationwide call for expanding these studies beyond cycads – thus providing the motivation for this new project, which compares the conservation genetics of cycads and palms to other long-lived tree species.



Patrick and Tracy assembled experts from around the nation at the Morton Arboretum in October to begin the project.



For more information, and to download our GUIDES FOR LIVING COLLECTIONS, please see our Collections Genetics webpage:

http://www.montgomerybotanical.org/Pages/Collection_Genetics.htm