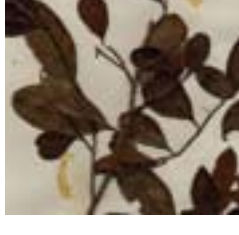
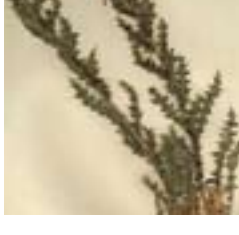
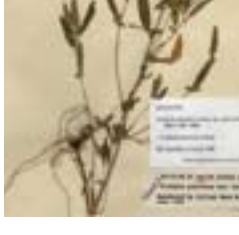
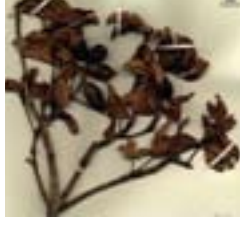
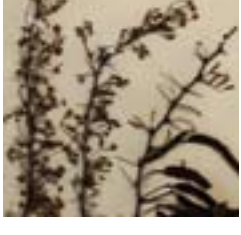
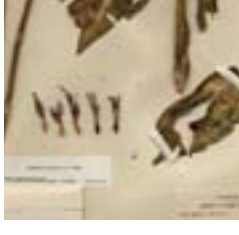
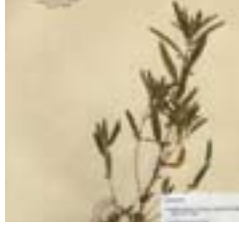
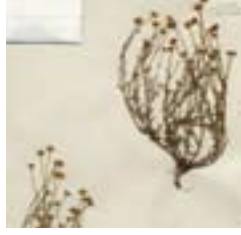


BRIT

BOTANICAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

2009

ANNUAL REPORT



2009

The year the BRIT building became real.



One of the most important and significant events for BRIT occurred on December 14, 2009. That is the day we broke ground on our state-of-the-art building on the corner of University and Harley avenues adjacent to our colleagues and friends at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Except for the fact that we can actually see it rise, most of us at BRIT can hardly believe it is really happening. Construction has led quickly from groundbreaking to tangible structures as we write this. One may actually walk about in the building at this point, albeit with a hard hat and safety vest and with a member of the construction team. One may now actually stand in what will be the atrium of the “Think Block” and see where the gift shop will be, and in the “Archives Block” one may see the floors where the library and herbarium, with its compactorized mobile storage, will be.

Gabriel Hernandez, the architect for H3 Hugh Hardy Collaborative Architecture, created the “Archives” and “Think” block nicknames for the two parts of the BRIT building. When he got to where he really understood what we do, the nicknames for these two parts of the building became obvious to him since the names followed his understanding of the programs that will occupy the spaces. In the “Archives Block” all of the collections of plants and

books will be housed, and in the “Think Block” all of the other activities of BRIT (research, education, publications, visitor area, and gift shop) will take place.

It has taken a long time and a great deal of effort to get to this point. The lease with the City of Fort Worth for the 5.7 acre site was signed on March 10, 2004. And most importantly, the approval to begin construction was granted on October 1, 2009. This was more than a two-year delay that actually worked to our advantage as construction costs came down nearly 25% in the interim!

As we look back now, it is difficult to recall all of the many steps necessary to get to this point, not least of which was finding the donors who believed in what we are doing and who wanted to be a permanent part of our future by supporting the shared vision that the board and staff have developed over the years. A board/staff retreat in early March of 2010 consolidated that process.

The staff has spent a good part of 2009 preparing the groundwork for the building and the evolution of the programs. All of this was made possible when the board passed the organization’s fiscal year 2010 budget in November of 2009. This budget made it possible to begin a hiring process that will result in a significant number of

new positions, without which we would not be able to operate the building we will soon occupy.

What really is important about all this? What really matters? Is it the possible platinum LEED rated building we might have at the end, a building that tangibly embodies our conservation ethic and sustainable development concepts? Is it the living roof and recreated natural prairie we will have as our backyard? Is it the fact that we will actually have space to mount educational exhibits as a service to the community, adding to the critical mass of Fort Worth’s Cultural District? The answer to all those questions is yes, but there is more...

At the end of the day it is important to remember that any building is but a vessel, and the most critical factor is how that vessel will be filled and how it will be steered. Therefore, the programs housed in BRIT’s building will be the most important factors in our future, and who we get to run those programs will be of the utmost importance. Here will stand a cutting-edge structure that will allow us to nearly double the storage space for collections we now have so that we might better fulfill our obligation to document the rapidly vanishing plant diversity of this planet. And there will be top-of-the-line space for BRIT’s amazing botanical/horticultural library. Our research programs will soon be expanded and reorganized as we begin

a series of new hires. The education program will get an immense boost, not just because of the space they will now have to work with children, teachers, and students, but also because of a gift from the Rainwater Foundation to create an important teaching program to honor the memory of Suzy Rall Peacock.

We have also been fortunate to raise money for endowing the building and some of the programs, assuring for them a steady flow of income. And I foresee that the next major goal will be to more than double the size of that endowment, as well as enhance our annual campaigns to achieve a secure future for the organization.

Our ability to achieve our mission of conserving planetary biodiversity for those who come after us is dependent on this next step.

Sy Sommer

Jim Overmyer

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BRIT 2010 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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OUR MISSION:
To conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value plants bring to life.

Andes Biodiversity Program to Amazon

The discoveries and overall progress of this unique, productive research program would not be possible without the support, patience, and “boots on the ground” philosophy of BRIT’s board, staff, and friends.



The BRIT-AABP team continued to work towards the five principal components of the research program:

- (1) Investigate the diversity and ecology of the flora, fauna, and ecosystems of the Andes-Amazon region
- (2) Conduct research and development in tropical horticulture, agriculture, and forestry
- (3) Design and develop new technologies for biodiversity science and conservation
- (4) Execute education and training for community-based biodiversity science and conservation
- (5) Support conservation in the Andes-Amazon region of southeastern Peru with real data and expert knowledge



- During January and February 2009, we finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Regional Government of Cusco to collaboratively implement new regional conservation areas in one of the most biologically diverse states of Peru. Through the MOU, we provide real data and expert knowledge about the flora, fauna, and ecosystems of this region. Expeditions with the Regional Government of Cusco were carried out May–December 2009.
- BRIT-AABP worked closely with the San Diego Zoo to investigate and document the ecology, behavior, and conservation of the Andean Spectacled Bear in the Department of Cusco, Peru. In early April 2009, Dr. Mathias Tobler visited the Zoo where he presented a scientific seminar and discussed research plans. The Zoo contributed 60 camera traps that will be used to inventory terrestrial mammal populations in the Andes-Amazon region.
- Dr. Tobler continued to collaborate with the WWF AREAS project on large mammal studies in Madre de Dios, Peru. The project’s datasets now include seven different camera trap surveys from five sites, and new sites will be added during 2010, both in collaboration with WWF and

the San Diego Zoo. Mathias has also been involved in the testing of two new brands of GPS collars to be used on tapirs, peccaries, and jaguars.

- Atrium® CameraBase, a database developed by Dr. Tobler for managing and analyzing camera trap data, keeps attracting new users from around the world. Projects currently using the database do research in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, French Guiana, Brazil, Mexico, the US, South Africa, Indonesia, Namibia, and Nepal.
- Clayton Sublet, a Junior Biology major at Austin College, received an international internship to work with BRIT-AABP in Peru. Clayton conducted an independent study on the diversity and abundance of hawkmoths (Sphingidae).
- BRIT collaborated once again with the Pinhead Institute of Telluride, Colorado. From June through August 2009, BRIT-AABP hosted two high school student interns from Colorado, Nakoa Martinez and Caleb Lewis. Caleb, a senior at Ridgeway High School, joined the team in Peru collecting biodiversity data from the forests surrounding the primary research base in the jungle town of Quincemil. Nakoa, a senior at Ouray High School, was

based at BRIT in Texas during the summer. He worked on various projects in the Herbarium, Press, Research, and Education departments.

- We offered Summer 2009 internships to two Texas high school students, Delaney Vail and Cai Hopkins. They worked closely with research and herbarium staff on various tasks including literature research and collection of field data.
- *Guide to the Seeds of Amazonian Plants*, written by Fernando Cornejo and John Janovec, was accepted for the final phase of publication at Princeton University Press in December 2009. The book will be published in September 2010, but is already available for ordering through the publisher’s website (<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9139.html>).
- A 2004 Toyota Hilux 4x4 truck was purchased for field work in Peru. The truck enables the team to travel into new areas for expanded botanical exploration of the Andes-Amazon region. This purchase was made possible thanks to a private donation and funding from a conservation award from the Como Zoo in Minnesota.
- Through funds received from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), Division of Environmental Biology, Biotic Surveys and Inventories program, small research scholarships were provided to two Peruvian graduate students, Jefferson Ballón and Miguel Rodriguez. Ballón is studying orchid diversity, ecology, and conservation in the districts of Camanti and Marcapata, Peru. Rodriguez is studying the diversity and phenology of food plants used by the rich butterfly fauna of the region. Results from both of these projects will enhance the on-going botanical and ecological investigations by the BRIT-Peru field team.
- In November 2009, two U.S. journalists participated in three days of field research led by the BRIT-AABP team in the Andes Mountains and the upper Amazon. The result was the publication of a short article in Time Magazine (online) entitled, “How a Little Town in Peru is Becoming a Hotspot.” Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1942387,00.html>.
- During November 2009, orchid expert Dr. Eric Christenson accompanied the BRIT-Peru team

on field expeditions. The BRIT-Peru team has developed a collaborative relationship with Eric through the years, and he has helped to identify hundreds of orchid collections. Search “Orchidaceae” at the Andes-Amazon Atrium to learn more about this work (<http://atrium.andesamazon.org>).

- Chicago-based artist Sharon Bladholm participated in field expeditions. Her goal is to produce a series of sketches, paintings, prints, and sculptures based on her unique field experience with the BRIT-AABP team. That series will be the basis of a future art exhibition.
- BRIT-AABP has been collaborating with the University of Guelph to develop and improve methods of DNA barcoding. Colleagues at the University are analyzing the DNA barcodes of BRIT-AABP plant collections from southeastern Peru. The first set of collections represents a diverse set of tree species from the Peruvian Amazon.
- In December 2009, a two-year project (funded by the Interamerican Development Bank in Peru and

focused on wild vanilla orchids) came to a close. That project was built on more than five years of studies of the Amazonian wetland habitats where the wild vanilla orchids are grown, often in abundance. In collaboration with Renan Valega, Robert Ugas of La Molina University, and Dr. Helena Maruenda, the project served as phase one of a longer project vision, with focus during 2008–2009 on ecological, agricultural, and chemical investigations of vanilla. Project results were very positive and productive and are now leading to a second phase of the project vision that will focus on building larger experimental vanilla plantations in the Peruvian Amazon. This project started with a simple botanical discovery by the BRIT field team in 2002 and has led to what is now a research project aimed at introducing a wild vanilla species to commercial production.

- Throughout the year, the team sought funding from donors, foundations, and other organizations. The AABP team received over \$191,058 in total funding, including grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation, Interamerican Development Bank, Discovery Fund, Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. Seeds for



Life program, and BRIT donors for the continued enhancement of Atrium and biodiversity research and conservation activities in Peru.

- During 2009 the team was involved in several key conferences where they gave presentations and made important connections for future collaborations. Mathias Tobler attended the 10th International Mammalogical Congress in Argentina where he presented a lecture on his Amazonian mammal research and results from camera trapping. Janovec presented information concerning BRIT and BRIT-Peru, the AABP, and the Atrium Biodiversity Information System at a conservation workshop sponsored by the Regional Government of Cusco, Peru. Participants included representatives from other conservation NGOs, officials from the Peruvian government, and members of local communities from Cusco and other states of Peru.
- During 2009, the BRIT-AABP team presented 17 public lectures and published seven articles related to ongoing activities and results from research in Peru and Texas.

...A SIMPLE
BOTANICAL
DISCOVERY
by the BRIT field team...
is now a research project
aimed at introducing a
wild vanilla species to
commercial production.



New Guinea Update

2009
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- Robert Johns continues to work diligently to inventory the diverse flora of New Guinea through the generous support he received from the Christensen Fund. This funding supported travel and expeditions to various locations within New Guinea through November 2009.
- Two members of the New Guinea team, Muhammad Berman and La Hadidu, continued to database and photograph the New Guinea collections in Bogor, Indonesia. This information will soon be integrated into the Digital Flora of New Guinea (<http://ng.atrium-biodiversity.org/atrium/>).
- In Leiden, Netherlands, Johns studied important historical collections made by early collectors.
- Johns spent time at Kew databasing information pertaining to the Norman Cruttwell collection (3,500 specimens). Records on the ecological data were also photographed for later entry into the New Guinea database.
- Johns worked on adding new records as well as correcting and adding locations to the ever-growing database of New Guinea specimens. The main emphasis has been placed on the collections of R. Schodde, an Australian botanist, which resulted in the addition of 3,500 new records (collecting numbers and identification) to the database. Much work has been done on collections of other botanists, both present and past: Beccari (Italian

naturalist, 1843–1920), Mahyar (botanist from the herbarium in Bogor, Indonesia), Kanehira and Hatusima (Japanese botanists, 1882–1948 and 1906–2008 respectively), and van Royen (Dutch botanist, 1923–2002). Johns calculates the total number of records in the database at about 203,000.

- Fresh collections from the islands of Misima, Sudest, Rossel, and Fergusson were dried at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby. This was a very time-consuming task since there is only one plant dryer available. A series of conservation checklists will be developed from these collections for each island.
- In August, Johns returned to the United States to spend some time at BRIT. During his visit he gave a lecture about his current research to the public through the BRIT Brown Bag Program.
- Several student interns volunteered time at BRIT toward the New Guinea project. Heather Hillard, a recent graduate from the College of William and Mary, finished up databasing the entire collection of rhododendron photographic slides from New Guinea. Deanna Callahan (former Vital Link student from the Education Program) and Michael Mendias digitized several habitat information tables from a book on New Guinea that will further assist Johns in his research.
- Johns has been extensively studying New Guinea collections at various herbaria. He worked in the New York Botanical Garden herbarium with specimens collected by the Brass expedition in 1936 (see *Iridos* 20: 2, page 12). He also spent time studying the fern genus *Lygodium* to try to confirm a new species he collected from Sudest.
- The New Guinea Program purchased a film scanner to digitize original color slides of New Guinea specimens. Many of these original slides are degrading, and this will enable the preservation for posterity of at least some of the very large collections of color slides. Most institutions are not interested in storing these slides and within a decade many will be destroyed. These slides will be integrated into the New Guinea Atrium database under the type species where these have been photographed or under individual collections in the database. Mark Coode has agreed to digitize his slides of New Guinea, and we plan to get George

Argent and other New Guinea collectors with extensive photographic color slides to digitize their collections before all this information is lost.

- Johns collaborated with other organizations and prepared several proposals to obtain further support for the New Guinea Program at BRIT. These included proposals to Christensen Fund, Australian Aid, National Science Foundation, and European Union.
- Johns gave seven presentations to various organizations and interested parties over the past year.



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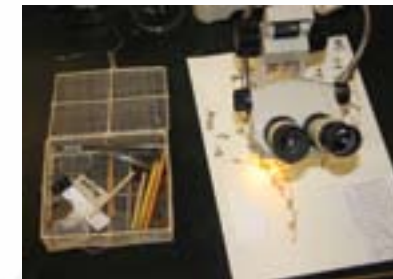
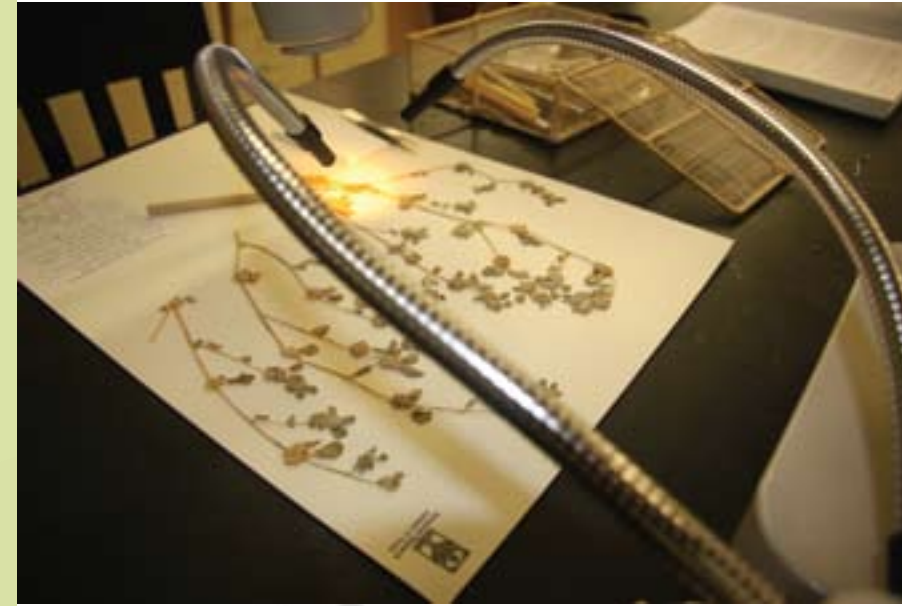


Herbarium Notes

The collection of dried plant specimens in the BRIT-SMU-VDB Herbarium serves as a basis for botanical research worldwide. All accumulated specimens become potential research material to be examined by visiting botanists or loaned to other institutions for study. Herbarium collections also play an important role in conservation and are an essential resource for those concerned with protecting and managing endangered natural resources. Increasing the rate of documentation of remaining areas of high biodiversity as well as increasing the Institute's ability to accept orphaned collections are important objectives fulfilling BRIT's mission of conserving our natural heritage.

	BRIT-SMU	VDB	TOTAL
ACQUISITIONS*			
Specimens Mounted	3,638	1,749	5,387
Exchange Received			
Transactions	24	9	33
Specimens	4,797	2,678	7,475
Gifts Received			
Transactions	26	1	27
Specimens	2,880	276	3,156
OUTGOING GIFTS & EXCHANGE			
Exchange Sent			
Transactions	0	8	8
Specimens	0	1,229	1,229
Gifts Sent			
Transactions	1	0	1
Specimens	1	0	1
LOANS SENT			
Total transactions	33	23	43
Total specimens	1,579	1,247	2,826
To US institutions			
Transactions	28	21	37
Specimens	1,069	1,236	2,305
To foreign institutions			
Transactions	5	2	6
Specimens	510	11	521
To student investigators			
Transactions	11	6	12
Specimens	594	303	897
To professional investigators			
Transactions	22	17	31
Specimens	985	944	1,929
LOANS RETURNED TO BRIT			
Transactions	38	16	48
Specimens	1,960	207	2,167
LOANS RECEIVED			
Transactions	6	0	6
Specimens	72	0	72
LOANS RETURNED FROM BRIT			
Transactions	4	0	4
Specimens	332	0	332

*Total number of specimens added to the herbarium



- During the past year, BRIT received and processed 43 loan requests, sending out 2,826 specimens to other institutions. Of specimens sent on loan, 32% were sent to graduate students for their research.
- “Virtual loans” of digital images and label data requested in this format by borrowing researchers composed 42% of loans from BRIT in 2009. (Previous years’ percentages: 2008: 28%; 2007: 12%; 2006: 2%.)
- Researchers at BRIT received 72 specimens as loans from other herbaria.
- BRIT received over 10,631 specimens as gifts and exchanges from individuals, botanical institutions, and university herbaria worldwide.
- Gifts and exchanges sent from BRIT to other institutions totaled 1,230 specimens. BRIT had gift and exchange transactions with 36 herbaria.
- 1,043 specimens were received in exchange for page charges or subscriptions to the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*.
- In the last year, 5,387 specimens were mounted and filed at BRIT. With 610 additional mounted gifts and exchange, 5,997 specimens were accessioned into the BRIT collections.
- Forty-four wonderful volunteers worked 1,620 hours in the herbarium and mounted 5,387 specimens.
- Over 1,000 people toured the herbarium.
- Approximately 14 researchers visited the BRIT-SMU-VDB collections in 2009.
- Over 100 inquiries from researchers and the general public were answered by BRIT Herbarium staff on the topics of plant information, herbarium information, and other botanical issues.
- More than 100 plant identifications were made for the public, often via e-mailed photos.



- As part of our outdoor education philosophy, we initiated the pilot program “Bee-ology and Botany.” The pilot targeted a diverse audience of teachers, mentors, and administrators of preschools and child care centers. We provided them with effective methods and practices for engaging young children in outdoor exploration and discovery through scientific inquiry-based learning strategies and activities.
- The National Science Foundation awarded us a research coordination grant entitled “Open Science: An education network in Ethnobiology” to advance the field of ethnobiology education through the exchange of curriculum ideas and methodologies across institutions and cultures.
- We received a monetary donation, along with books and collector’s items, from the personal collection of Mr. Bill Burk to enrich The Oliver G. Burk Children’s Library.
- We dedicated BRIT’s teacher resource collection to Mr. Val Wilkie (see *Iridos* 21:1, page 16).
- We provided the public with information about sustainable building practices through the BRIT Distinguished Lecturer series, “Green from the Ground Up: sustainability by design.”
- Opportunities were provided for life-long learners to stay current with local research and improve their own botanical knowledge through Botany 101 Continuing Education classes and BRIT’s Brown Bag series.
- Hundreds of children and adults were engaged in the study of plants and the work of BRIT through outreach to schools through career days, talks at various clubs, and special events such as Prairie Fest.

Education

Once again, the small education staff has performed herculean feats in a year’s time. Here are some of the highlights of 2009.

- We welcomed over 7,400 students to learn about botany and BRIT through on-site and virtual field trips. This included students from Fort Worth Country Day, the Lone-Star Leadership Academy, and numerous rural schools across Texas via our distance learning programs.
- A grant from the Rainwater Charitable Funds allowed us to serve more than 1,500 teachers across the metroplex through professional development and field studies. Teachers learned skills and content that will facilitate outdoor learning with their students.
- The Great Tree contest (see *Iridos* 20:2, page 22), part of a collaborative project which engages children in the study of plants, secured a nomination for an award from the Texas Garden Club Council.

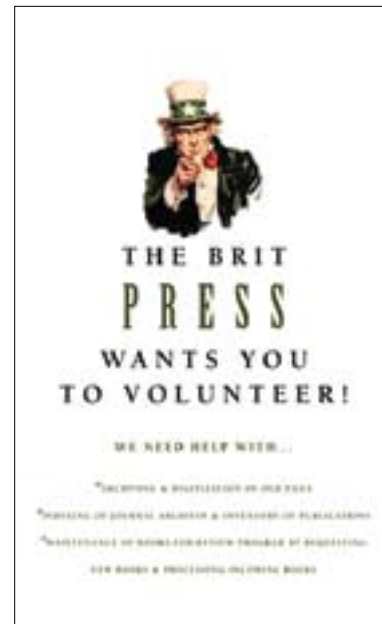


BRIT Press & Scientific Publications

The BRIT Press...bringing out the best in botanical science for plant conservation and education

Spanning the Globe

BRIT Press strives to further the conservation mission of its parent institution, Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), through innovation and excellence in preparation, manufacture, and worldwide distribution of botanical research and scientific discoveries for the 21st century. For nearly five decades, the Press has served the scientific and lay communities through its scholarly periodical, the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas* (formerly *Sida*, *Contributions to Botany*), and books devoted to the comprehensive study of one topic, ranging from floras to systematic monographs to botanical histories.



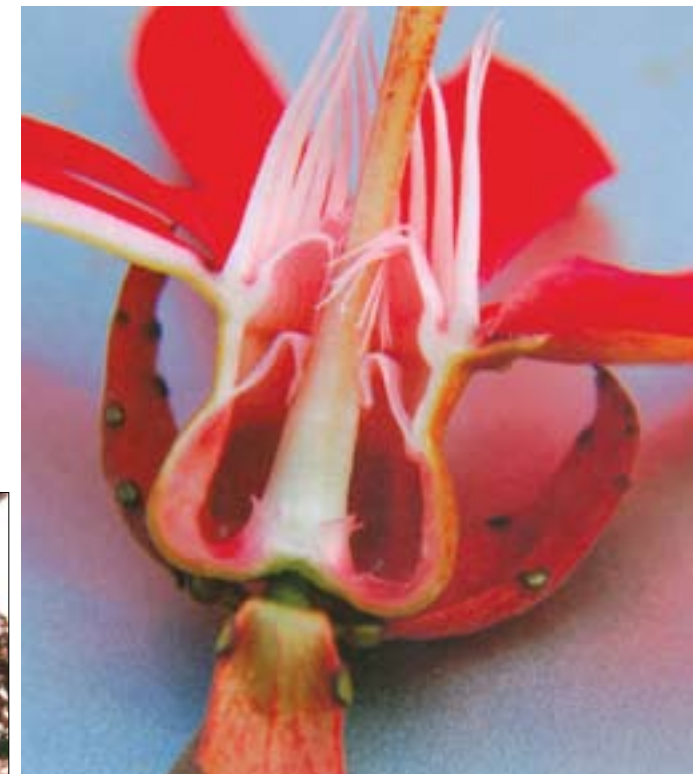
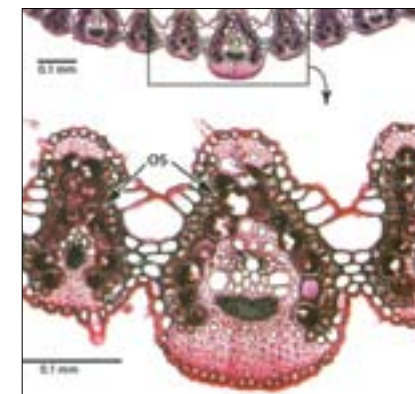
BRIT's Flagship Publication

The *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas* is a semi-annual, peer-reviewed, scientific publication. Volume 3, No. 1 was published July 15, 2009, with 468 pages; Volume 3, No. 2 was published November 25, 2009, with 541 pages. The combined 1,008 pages comprised 111 articles contributed by some 189 authors, making 2009 a successful year for the journal.



- Barney Lipscomb, head of the press and holder of the prestigious Leonhardt Chair of Texas Botany, presented 15 lectures/programs to 452 school children and adults. He also consulted on five forensic cases.
- The Press was represented at two meetings: the 2009 Botany and Mycology meetings in Snowbird, Utah, and the 56th Annual Systematics Symposium held at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis.
- A book entitled *The Beauty of Houseplants* by Tom Gough and David Longman was begun and is deep in the process of editing. The focus is on growing plants in the house and gives detailed notes about pests, propagation, and which plants do well in which rooms of the house based on the typical microenvironments of each room.
- Volume 3 of the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas* was published and distributed to nearly 1,000 subscribers. The communication linked producer and recipient, writer and observer/reader, researcher and educator, scientist and conservationist around the world.
- The book *A Fifth Checklist of Tennessee Vascular Plants* was published by the press in 2009. It is the fifth such publication beginning with the first checklist in 1883. This 102-page book benefits from the four previous checklists and the combined experience of the four authors which represents over 100 years in the field. One hundred and seventy species new to the state are recorded since the last checklist of 1993.
- The BRIT Press secured \$139,742 in grants, miscellaneous gifts, and book sales.
- The Mary M. Hennen Scientific Publications Endowment fund, which supports the preparation, manufacture, and distribution of botanical research and scientific discoveries, had a slight increase during the tough economic year.
- Through its book reviewing program, BRIT Press obtained 50 new titles for the library, valued at over \$2,800.
- Over 1,000 herbarium specimens, including several type specimens, were received in exchange for page charges or subscriptions to the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*. These specimens are valued at approximately \$2,600 and were added to the BRIT collections.
- The BRIT Press received a donation for the production of a book on the ferns of Texas. The donation also goes toward producing an online version of the book and will be accompanied by interactive web-based data and information components through BRIT's proprietary database Atrium®. The book, currently titled *Ferns and Lycophytes of Texas*, will be written and produced through the now well-known collaboration of BRIT and the Austin College Center for Environmental Studies. The book covers more than 140 different kinds of ferns and lycophytes found in Texas. It's designed as a field guide for both the scientist and interested layperson. Every species will be accompanied by a full page of illustrative components including line drawings, color photographs, and maps with both Texas and U.S. distributions. Also included are keys, descriptions, habitat information, and more!

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Passiflora curva (photo: C. Feuillet) (above)
Photo from Peterson, P.M. and J.T. Columbus. 2009.
Muhlenbergia tarahumara, a new species from Mexico. *J. Bot. Res. Inst. Texas*. 3:530 (left)



Administration

BRIT saw great progress in 2009. A number of new board members were elected: Mr. Brad Barnes, Mr. Dwight Cumming, and Mrs. Alice Puenta. Unfortunately, one of our board members, Ms. Suzy Peacock, passed away in October. She will be remembered as instrumental in the evolution of a number of important education programs, including the teacher learning center at BRIT which will bear her name.

- Four board meetings, four executive committee meetings, and a number of board sub-committee meetings were organized by the administrative staff.
- The FY 2009 budget was carefully monitored and, due both to holding the line on expenses and an increase in donations and grants, BRIT once again finished the year in the black.
- The FY 2010 budget was successfully brought through the budget process and was passed unanimously by the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in November. This budget includes several new positions in anticipation of the move to our new facility in 2011.
- The 2008 audit was successfully completed.
- The land lease with the City of Fort Worth for the new building was effective October 1, 2009.
- The Owners Group met numerous times with the Project Manager and planned, discussed, and made decisions for our new facility.
- Project management sessions were held on site for the leadership council to help with planning the move to our new facility.

- A Peer Review was conducted in November as part of a preparation for strategic planning and consisted of the following team members:

Gregory Long, President of the New York Botanical Garden – review leader

Will McClatchey, Professor at the University of Hawaii – reviewed the research program

Jim Miller, Vice President at the New York Botanical Garden – reviewed the research program

James Macklin, Director of Collections and Informatics at the Harvard University Herbaria – reviewed the collections and biodiversity informatics programs

Blair Collis, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii – reviewed public programs

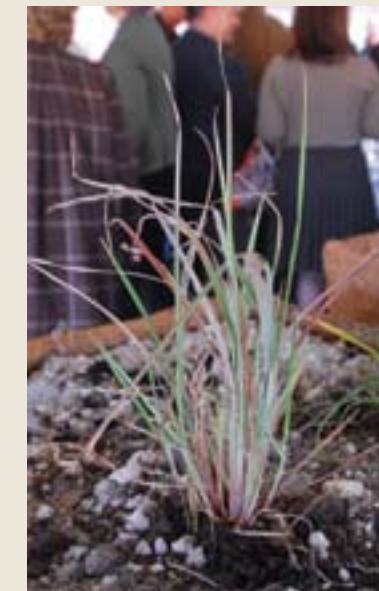
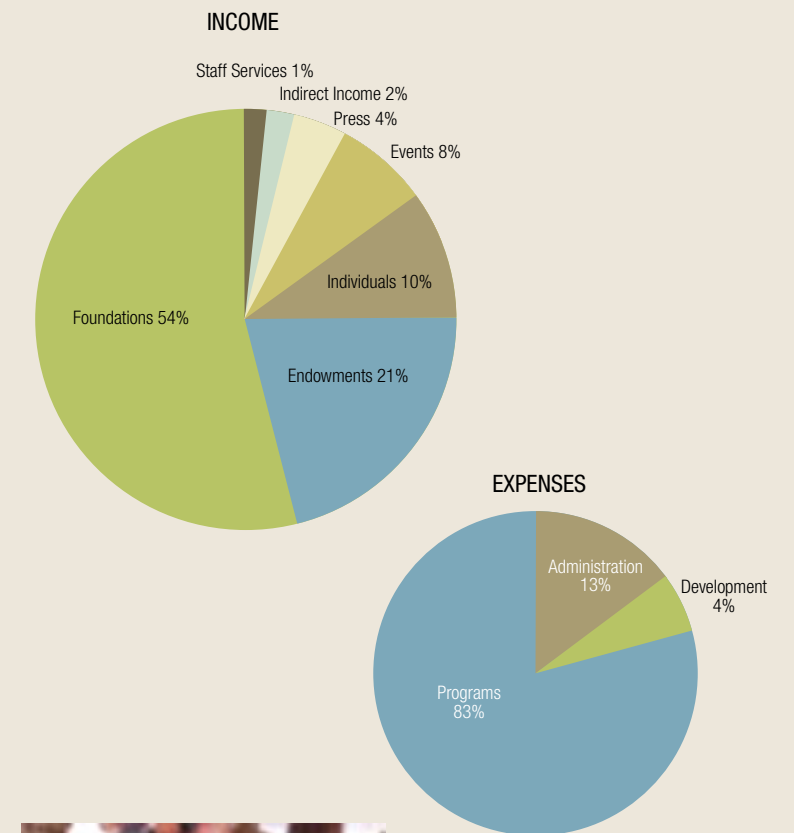
Alison Brown, Chief Finance and Operations Officer of the California Academy of Sciences – reviewed finance, development, and administration programs

Development

The year 2009 held tremendous excitement for our donors who have long waited for the beginning of the construction of BRIT's headquarters next to the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. Under an azure December sky, Tim McKinney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, announced to over 200 guests, "This is a great day for BRIT and an important day for the City of Fort Worth." Each guest attending had contributed in some way to the momentous day of December 14, when the ceremonial planting of native species that will comprise the living roof on BRIT's new home served as the groundbreaking event. Construction has continued non-stop since that day.

Last year also marked the 15th year of the International Award of Excellence in Conservation. BRIT was honored that the legendary Dr. E. O. Wilson accepted the award for his many decades of work in biodiversity and ecology and his leadership in the discourse on the importance of science to all people. And Fête du Vin celebrated its 3rd anniversary with another successful wine auction and dinner at the Fort Worth Club.

Contributions to the Annual Fund, which provides the funds to keep the programs healthy and growing, exceeded the goal for gifts from individuals. Individual, foundation, and corporate funding are the life blood of BRIT.



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Biodiversity Informatics

The BRIT Biodiversity Informatics Program supports all research activities at BRIT through the development of two revolutionary technological tools: the Atrium® Biodiversity Information System and Apiary. Apiary, our newest project, uses computer technology to aid in gathering the all-important information on specimen labels. The information can then be managed, accessed, and shared through Atrium®. These tools facilitate the interaction of researchers and scientific information, accelerating the advancement of science. Furthermore, since its formalization as a distinct program in 2009, it has been diligently working to enhance this technology and make it available to researchers for managing, sharing, and analyzing data. We do this not only to facilitate research at BRIT but also with the goal of making both Apiary and Atrium available for use by other researchers and institutions. Through these tools, societies and our planet will benefit from better science done faster. These technologies developed at BRIT have direct applications to real conservation activities. We are currently searching for funding to support the ongoing mission of the Biodiversity Informatics Program.

- In May, the team released a major new version of Atrium® (version 1.7). The new enhancements include substantial improvements for managing taxonomy, new interface design, and enhancements to the specimen annotation features. One unique feature that was added to this new release is the ability to view and compare two different specimen images side-by-side, much like one would compare specimens in the herbarium. In September, version 1.7.1 was released, which added new management features that make it easier to upload new data. You can view the new version for the Andes-Amazon Biodiversity Program at <http://atrium.andesamazon.org/>.

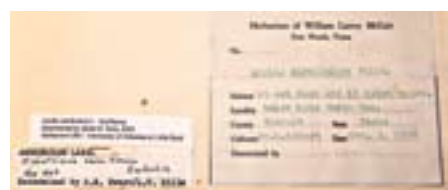
The technologies developed at BRIT have direct applications to real conservation activities.

- The BRIT-AABP team and scientists at the Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, set up a prototype Atrium site for Selby's data and images of orchids, epiphytes, and other plants held in their unique live plant and herbarium collection at <http://dev.andesamazon.org/selby/>. Selby researchers and collections managers are using the prototype to support their own funding requests to support the establishment of a new Selby Atrium.
- A database developed by Mathias Tobler for managing and analyzing animal camera trap data, Atrium® Camera Base, keeps attracting new users from around the world. Camera Base is currently the only software specifically designed to manage thousands of images and associated data produced by camera trap surveys. Researchers currently using the database are located in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, French Guiana, Brazil, Mexico, the US, South Africa, Indonesia, Namibia, and recently Nepal. Further details are available at <http://www.atrium-biodiversity.org/tools/camerabase/>.
- Work continues on the Apiary workflow and framework with information science and computer science students from UNT. They are working closely with the BRIT herbarium staff to refine the data terms and structure that are extracted from the specimen sheets. With the help of Jason Best and Sean Murphy, UNT computer science students are also continuing development of the various technology components of the Apiary workflow. Further project details are available at <http://www.apiaryproject.org>, and the current demo can be viewed at <http://demo.apiaryproject.org> and accessed using the username "demo" and password "demo."
- In September, Moiz Bhukhiya, a graduate student in Computer Science at UNT, joined the Apiary team as a software developer.
- We completed work on the newest installation of Atrium®, which hosts BRIT plant specimens, primarily those from Texas. This new instance now includes floristic collections by BRIT staff Tiana Franklin and



Keri McNew Barfield from the Fort Worth Nature Center Reserve and Refuge. The BRIT Atrium also displays all BRIT type collection specimens. You can easily view these images and data on the BRIT Digital Herbarium website (<http://atrium.brit.org>).

- Amanda Neill, Bob O'Kennon, and Tiana Franklin attended the annual Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) meetings held in Wichita Falls, Texas. Neill and Franklin gave a presentation on the newest installation of Atrium®—the BRIT Digital Herbarium, which now includes all species (in the BRIT Herbarium) from Gillespie and Denton counties. These specimens were digitized by summer interns with support from two NPSOT chapters.
- The Atrium® team received a portion of a donation to the BRIT Press to scan and database the herbarium's Texas fern specimens. The addition of this data to Atrium® will enhance the planned publication of a book on the same subject. Texas A&M undergraduate Megan Proska interned with the project and completed the majority of the scanning and databasing. Becca Swadek, BRIT Herbarium Assistant, and Andrew Lutz, BRIT volunteer, also assisted in this process.
- The Biodiversity Informatics team attended four conferences during 2009 and gave five oral presentations and two poster presentations. Information pertaining to Atrium® and its functionality were published in two journal articles. The team also presented to various organizations and groups about the advances in Atrium® and Apiary.



BRIT Library

The library seeks to provide access to all aspects of botanical documentation and serve as a resource for research and education for the Institute's staff, visiting scientists, and the public.



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- During the period January 2009 through December 2009, the librarian presented 44 programs or tours to 385 students and adults. Among our visitors were high school students, college students, the interested public, garden club members, and science teachers. The groups include:

- AP Biology teachers
- Denton County Master Gardeners
- Elm Fork Master Gardeners
- Fort Worth Country Day students
- Garden Clubs of America
- Garden History Design Program Committee
- Parker County Master Gardeners
- SMU Environmental Science students
- Southwestern Adventist University students
- Tarrant County Birdwatchers Group
- Tarrant County Master Gardeners
- TCU students
- Teton Science School staff
- UNT administrators
- UNT School of Information staff
- Weatherford College Agricultural students

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- Bibliographic records for all cataloged material in the botanical library were merged into a combined database, the first step in enhancing access to the collection both at BRIT and via the Internet. At the end of August 2003, 100% of the cataloged botanical library collection was accessible online. At the end of December 2009, the material available online had increased from 11,515 titles to 17,454, which is an increase of 5,945 titles. This reflects a 51.6% increase in the number of books/monographs available for research use. The number of volumes (books/monographs) in the library has increased from 15,955 to 22,775. This total excludes some 90,000 volumes of journals as well as the Oliver G. Burk Children's Library of over 4,000 volumes.
- We are supported by a dedicated core of volunteers. John Kovach is assisting with filing reprints and managing space in the stacks. Joann Karges is helping catalog our newly acquired books. Laura Negrus and Meredith Stewart are assisting with our retrospective classification project. Penny McCook and Pam Braak have been assisting with special projects.
- Those who review books for the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas* are also assisting the library because when their review is published in the *Journal* the book reviewed is added to the library's holdings.
- The library recently received an extraordinary gift from Dr. Hugh Iltis consisting of two particularly rare books dealing with the botanical exploration of South America and one in which the art forms of nature are explored microscopically for the first time. We will be adding these items to the collection as time allows.
- The library has received from William R. Burk (Chapel Hill, NC) a complete collection of writings and book publications by Dr. Ronald L. Stuckey. Dr. Stuckey is an internationally recognized authority on the identification and geographical distribution of aquatic and wetland plants in North America. He has also written extensively on the botanical history and exploration of eastern North America. We will be adding these items to the collection as time allows.

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Thank You, Volunteers!

Seventy-six volunteers worked a total of 3,612 hours in 2009. They are an indispensable part of daily activities here at BRIT. In the herbarium they mount and file many of our specimens. They provide services to students and teachers. In the library they catalog and shelve books and journals and archive materials. Volunteers are also always willing to lend a hand with our successful special events and fundraisers. Our hats are off to you.

Special thanks to volunteers who contributed more than 100 hours in 2009:

Kay Yount - 407 hours mounting plants and training volunteers

Clayton Sublett - 312 hours working in Peru doing entomology research

Joann Karges - 235.5 hours working in the library cataloging books

Caleb Lewis - 232 hours assisting with botany and entomology research

John Kovach - 222 hours working in the library

Karen Burkett - 183.5 hours mounting plants and assisting with education programs

Sharon Bladholm - 128 hours assisting the AABP field team and developing outreach through art

Diane Cutler - 110.25 hours mounting plants and inventorying genera in the BRIT collection

Nakoa Martinez - 100.75 performing literature searches, field assistance, and Myristicaceae research