

## FIRST WORKSHOP OF PLANTAS DO NORDESTE

PNE's first General Workshop, held in April 1996 in Recife, Pernambuco State, Northeast Brazil, demonstrated just how much has been achieved in the programme over the last three years as a result of teamwork, dedication and co-operation at an international level.

As the first round up of Phase I of the PNE programme, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to assess critically the programme's results thus far, to discuss the best way forward and to promote new projects to interested funders and the public. The staff and students from each project presented their work through a series of colourful and informative posters and leaflets of a very high quality.

The proceedings were opened by the President of the PNE Association, Prof. Francisco J. de Abreu Matos, followed by speeches from Prof. Sir Ghilleen Prance, Director of The Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG, Kew), Dr José Galizia Tundisi, President of The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and Dr Fernando Dantas de Araujo, PNE's Brazilian General Co-ordinator. Presentations were then given covering the programme's three main areas of activity: Economic Botany, Biodiversity, and Information, Dissemination and Training.

The rest of the workshop was divided into three sections, each led by an experienced external observer: Biodiversity (Dr Bráulio Dias, Ministry of the Environment), Forage Plants (Dr Henrique de Barros, UFPE) and Medicinal Plants (Dr Ernesto Paterniani, ESALQ/SP). A debate followed in which all present were encouraged to participate - students, trainees, project leaders, specialists from the scientific community, funders, non-governmental organisations, the media, national and international authorities and the general public.

This prompted some lively discussions on the aims of the scientific work and the best means of implementing them. Time

was also devoted to discussing the overall management of each project, in particular how to improve the handling and efficient distribution of important information.

Findings ways of integrating the various strands of the programme - of pooling information and resources so as to keep all projects in the same basic framework - was a key issue during the two days of workshop debate. It was recognised that better communication among project leaders working in the same area was needed to reinforce their individual capabilities, and to prevent duplication of work.

The discussion leaders and others produced brief summaries of the discussions which had taken place, with a further view into PNE's future strategy and continued success. The response was open and positive. This kind of feedback will be invaluable in improving PNE's future. Of crucial importance is that PNE's overall impact brings real socio-economic benefits to local people.

Many of the suggestions put forward to the PNE Association are now being considered by the Association's Advisory Committee, namely to:

- have the new management to formulate a programme plan for the next 10 years;
- hold group discussions within each area in order to revise existing strategies;
- review the needs of small holders and local communities, and reassess the present allocation of resources in the light of new information;
- introduce external appraisal of all technical/scientific work, if funds permit;
- improve integration of NGOs into a project from its initial stages;

- give priority to applied integrated research projects, concerned with problem solving and opportunity development;
- establish the importance of medicinal plants and extend Living Pharmacies throughout Northeast Brazil;
- continue to support the biodiversity area of the three ecosystems, *caatinga* (deciduous thorn forest), *brejos* (relict high altitude moist forest) and *campo rupestre*;
- ensure that any plant identification within integrated projects is undertaken by taxonomists;
- encourage periodical meetings between project co-ordinators working in the same area;
- continue the process of identifying the different kinds of information needed for the various end-users;
- establish contact with international institutions specifically interested in arid and semi-arid regions;
- encourage all Association members and project participants to take an active role in seeking funding for PNE projects.

The PNE Workshop was funded by CNPq and RBG, Kew. The proceedings of the event, containing articles from project co-ordinators, special guests and students, together with conclusions from the Workshop, might be published by CNPq in book form.

Karen Pipe-Wolferstan, PNE General Coordinator, UK is leaving the PNE programme at the end of February 1997 now that the hand over to the Brazilian Coordinator is completed. There will be a brief profile of Karen's contribution to PNE in the next issue of the newsletter. Her new E-mail is: [kpw@enterprise.net](mailto:kpw@enterprise.net)

## PNE GROUP AT KEW

In February 1996 the formation of a PNE Group took place at RBG, Kew. The Group comprises at least one representative from each department or section with involvement in PNE.

The working Group are currently as follows: Dr Hew Prendergast (Chair), Dr Bob Allkin, Karen Pipe-Wolferstan, Amélia Baracat (Centre for Economic Botany), Dr Simon Mayo, Dr Daniela Zappi, Dr Nicholas Hind, Sandy Atkins (Herbarium), Dr David Cutler, Dr Monique Simmonds (Jodrell Laboratory), Michael Way (Seed Bank), Nigel Taylor, Mike Marsh (Living Collections Department) and Sylvia Fitzgerald (Library).

The idea behind the PNE Group is to improve coordination of inter-departmental input into PNE and to improve communications between all those interested, involved or affected by PNE activities and the PNE Coordinator in Brazil.

**PNE Group meeting at Kew. From left to right Fernando Araujo, Hew Prendergast, David Cutler Amélia Baracat, Daniela , Bob Allkin, Michael Way, Karen Pipe-Zappi Wolferstan.**

## KEW - CENARGEN CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH PNE

In September 1996 the Kew Seed Bank made its fifth collecting expedition to the semi-arid zone of the Northeast in collaboration with CENARGEN-EMBRAPA, Brasília.

This and previous expeditions (in 1983, 1992, 1994, 1995) have amassed a wide taxonomic range of quality seed from species of known or potential socio-economic interest. A significant proportion of the collections comprises forage and woody legumes such as *Cassia*, *Acacia*, *Mimosa*, *Stylosanthes*, *Galactia*, *Caesalpinia*, and *Piptadenia* spp., with good representation of some other taxa e.g. *Astronium* and *Schinopsis* (Anacardiaceae) spp.

The 1996 expedition additionally focused on species of value for research into long-term seed conservation, e.g. *Magonia pubescens*, *Capparis jacobinae*, *Spondias lutea*, *Swartzia* sp. and *Kielmeyera* sp. In addition to the strong logistical support received from CENARGEN (represented by collector Glocimar Pereira da Silva with researchers Dr Antonio Medeiros (1994) and Dr Lidio Coradin (1983, 1992), the collecting teams have benefited greatly from field assistance by botanists experienced in the flora of the Northeast, including Dr Haroldo Cavalcante de Lima (Rio de Janeiro Botanic Garden, 1983), Luciano Lima (CPATSA, 1994), Lygia Funch (1995), Dr Ana Maria Giuliatti (UEFS, 1996) and Dr Ray Harley (RBG, Kew, 1983, 1996).

The Kew Seed Bank is keen to make contact at a local level with PNE projects or other institutions working in any of the following areas:

- phenology, ecology, and floristics of *caatinga* and transitions to *cerrado*, *campo rupestre* and *restinga* vegetation within the semi-arid zone of the Northeast;
- conservation of native species by seed, particularly non-domesticated species with socio-economic value, e.g. as forage, timber or fuelwood, or yielding medicinal or edible products;
- development of 'low' and 'intermediate technology' solutions for seed-drying and medium-term conservation of seed collections at the local level.

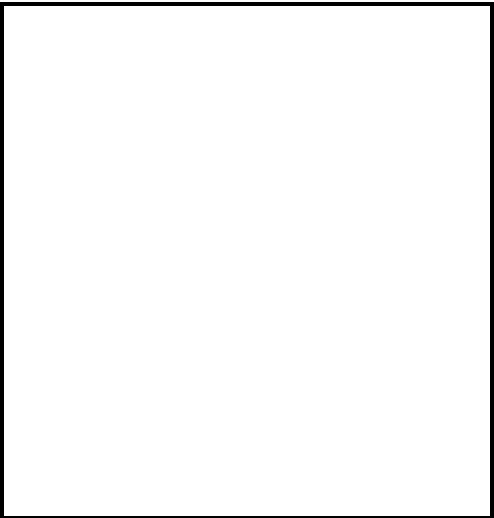
It is hoped that interested local botanists will be able to participate in Kew-CENARGEN seed collecting expeditions, planned for 1998, 1999 and 2000. Closer collaboration should facilitate better integration of Kew's expertise in seed conservation of wild species, CENARGEN's field and laboratory skills, and PNE's experience in co-ordinating local botanical resources to the benefit of the Northeast.

**Contact:** Michael Way, Kew Seed Bank, Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6TN Fax: +44-(0)1444-894 069; E-mail: m.way@rbgkew.org.uk

### The Millennium Seed Bank

For the last twenty years, Kew has been working to save some of the world's rich and varied plant life by storing seed in its Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place, about 50 km south of London.

The Millennium Seed Bank, a new project which has been part funded by the Millennium Commission, will mark a dramatic expansion in the scale of this work, constituting one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken. It aims to: collect and conserve representative samples of all the UK's 1400 native plants and some 10% of the world's dryland flora in the tropics; undertake training and technology transfer to pass on Kew's expertise in seed conservation to other countries; educate the public about the importance of conserving the Earth's plant life.



**CENARGEN/RBG, Kew seed collecting expedition in 1995**

## ODA EVALUATION OF FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR PNE's INFORMATION, DISSEMINATION AND TRAINING SUBPROGRAMME

Considerable progress has been made towards obtaining funding from the British Government to establish PNE's Information, Dissemination and Training Subprogramme (SIDT). Early in 1996 a proposal was formally submitted by the PNE Association to the Agência Brasileira de Cooperação Brazilian Government, (ABC) to establish and support the SIDT during its first five years. The proposal was approved by ABC and forwarded for consideration by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the British Government.

In April this year independent consultants contracted by ODA visited Northeast Brazil to attend the PNE Workshop and undertake a ten day preliminary assessment of the SIDT proposal. In May consultants returned for a full three weeks evaluation and travelled widely in Pernambuco, Bahia, Ceará and Paraíba states to evaluate existing activities, review the PNE programme as a whole and to assess details of the SIDT proposal submitted to ODA.

The four consultants, Fred Bennetts (team leader), Pat Stocker (socio economics), Valerie Kapos (environment) and Chris Addison (information management and communication), met with those currently participating in PNE projects, those representing organisations that will participate in our planned SIDT activities and others from organisations that to date have had no direct input to PNE or benefit from it.

### Consultants appraisal of PNE's SIDT for ODA

The response throughout the region and from all sectors of society - academic, technical, NGO or community leaders - was a resounding vote of confidence in PNE and SIDT in particular. It would be impossible to thank individually the hundreds of people involved in the evaluation but we would like to warmly thank all those that gave of their time, knowledge, and experience when meeting the ODA team.

The consultants wrote various reports, all of which were very favourable.

The three week evaluation was a positive experience for the SIDT committee. Each consultant brought their own experience to the review and generated new ideas for

us to consider. We thank each of them wholeheartedly for their friendly enthusiasm and input.

The consultants' reports are now being considered by ODA. Everardo Sampaio (UFPE), Pablo Sidersky (AS-PTA), and Fernando Araujo (PNE Coordinator) have had meetings with ODA's own internal advisors in London and the SIDT committee is now revising the formal proposal documents at ODA's request.

A final meeting with ODA's own advisors and the entire SIDT committee will be held in Recife at the end of January 1997. A decision about funding is expected to be taken by ODA shortly afterwards.

## PUBLICATIONS

### ✻ Important New

The Northeast section of SBB (The Brazilian Botanical Society) has published an important volume that reviews the state of botanical knowledge in NE Brazil. *Pesquisa Botânica Nordestina: Progresso e Perspectiva* is edited by Dr Everardo Sampaio (UFPE), Dr Simon Mayo (RBG, Kew) and Dr Regina Barbosa (UFPB).

The book brings together chapters by regional specialists from many different botanical disciplines from fungi to medicinal plants. Each attempts to summarise knowledge of plants of NE

### Publication Appears

Brazil from the available literature and to give some indication of how their own discipline is evolving. A notable inclusion is the final chapter written by various authors which is an attempt to present a preliminary checklist of all the angiosperms of NE Brazil based upon available critical literature.

Copies of this essential work can be obtained from Dr Marlene Barbosa, Depto de Botânica, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Av Prof. Moraes Rego, s/n, 50.670-901 Recife - PE, Brazil Tel: +55 (0)81 271 8352, Fax: +55 (0)81 271 8348 - Price: US\$20.00 (excluding packing and postage).

### ✻ Biodiversity Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice.

The Department of Environment in the UK has published a *Manual for Biodiversity Assessment* intended to help those who have responsibility for surveying and assessing the biodiversity of their own country. Extensively illustrated and using case studies from projects world-wide, this three volume work provides a reference to the UK resources available for biodiversity assessment, and the field techniques needed to survey a wide range of plant and animal groups

For further information and order copies please contact: HMSO Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, Tel: +44 (0)-171 873 9090, Fax: +44 (0)-171 873 8200.

## ✠ PNE Association

Sincere thanks to the Empresa Pernambucana de Pesquisa Agropecuária (IPA) for granting office space on its premises for the PNE Association in April 1996. The new address is: Programa Plantas do Nordeste Av. General San Martin, 1371 IPA - Bloco 7 Bonji 50.761-000 Recife - PE Brazil  
Tel/Fax: +55 (0)81 445 3008  
E-mail: araujo@lamepe.ipa.br

## ✠ BRAHMS Database Course for PNE

From 3 - 7 June 1996, in the 'Universidade Federal da Paraíba' (UFPB), João Pessoa, PNE ran a training course in the use of the Brahms specimen and herbarium data management system.

The course was given by Denis Filer (Oxford Forestry Institute, UK), author of the Brahms system, and organised by Dr Regina Barbosa (UFPB). PNE is enormously grateful to them both for their enthusiastic effort which made the course such a success.

People from all around NE Brazil participated in the courses, six from current PNE Biodiversity projects and nine from herbaria. This was the first opportunity for most of those present to appreciate the capabilities of Brahms and participants took the system home to undertake a 6 - 9 month trial period in their own herbaria. We plan a second course at which people's experiences will be shared. The course enabled us to incorporate regional gazeteers and PNE's vegetation and habitat standard descriptors into a baseline PNE Brahms database, and provides an opportunity for botanists to further debate data standards for use in the region.

## ✠ Course in Seed Conservation

In June, Roger Smith and Dr Robin Probert (Kew Seed Bank) gave a course on seed conservation techniques to 60 Brazilian scientists at UNESP University, São Paulo. Opportunities for collaboration with the Millennium Seed Bank project were also explored with several institutions in Brazil.

## ✠ PNE Executive Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome Lysias Enio de Oliveira as Executive Coordinator for PNE in Brazil. Mr Oliveira graduated in economics at the University Federal of Rio de Janeiro in 1964 and has many years experience in project administration.

*Lysias Enio de Oliveira*

## ✠ KEW awards for WESTON

Mr Garfield Howard Weston, businessman and Kew supporter, is the recipient of one of the 1996 Kew Awards - made each year to individuals from outside the organisation who have done most to further Kew's work or to support its wider aims and objectives.

Garfield Weston and his family have generously given encouragement and financial support to several of Kew's most important programmes, including Plantas do Nordeste (PNE), The Classification and Cultivation of Madagascan Orchids, the Millennium Seed Bank and Museum No 1.

## CONFERENCE

### ✠ "Combating Desertification, Connecting Science with Community Action" 12-16 May 1997, Tucson, Arizona

The objective of this Symposium and Workshop is to provide a significant exchange of ideas between 1) the developers of science and technology related to combating desertification, and 2) the community-level decision makers who must deal with the problems of desertification and drought on a day to day basis.

For further information Contact: Mr. McClure, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Office, P.O. Box 16563, Phoenix, Arizona 85011-6563, U.S.A., *Telefax:* 602-650-0398.  
*E-mail:* bmcclure@attmail.com

✠ **Dr Margareth Sales** (Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil) spent few weeks in Kew during September/October working on recent collections from the Darwin Initiative/PNE project "Brejo Forests of Pernambuco" of which she is the co-ordinator.

✠ **Dr Fernando Dantas de Araujo**, General Coordinator for PNE in Brazil, visited Kew from 14/10/96 to 06/11/96. He visited ODA headquarters together with Dr Bob Allkin (Co-ordinator SIDT, UK) and Karen Pipe-Wolferstan (PNE General Coordinator, UK) to discuss the SIDT proposal and spent considerable time on PNE's administration and project developments.

✠ **Dr Everardo Sampaio** (coordinator SIDT, Brazil) and **Pablo Sidersky** (AS-PTA) paid a two day visit to Kew/PNE in October to attend a meeting with ODA regarding the SIDT proposal.

✠ **Glauter Souza Pinto**, responsible for PNE within the International Co-operation Department of CNPq, Brazil arrived in Kew/PNE on the 4 December for a three day visit to learn about aspects of Kew's work with a view to future collaboration.

✠ **Nine delegates** from ODA's Pilot Programme to Conserve Brazilian Rain Forest project in Brazil spent one day at Kew/PNE on a study visit in November.

## WHAT IS PNE?

Plantas do Nordeste (PNE) is a multi-disciplinary research and information dissemination programme concerned with biodiversity and sustainable use of native plant resources in Northeast Brazil. PNE aims to combine the conservation and improvement of ecosystems with positive socio-economic benefits for local communities.

PNE raises funds independently to support its activities.

Please direct any comments or contributions on this publication to Amélia B. Baracat, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.  
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