



# Plant heritage and the national plant collections

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Conserving cultivated plants is a tricky business; balancing the cultural imperative to preserve human history and achievement and the global need to conserve biodiversity with scarcity of resources at a human and financial level.

## History

Plant Heritage, formerly National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, has been working to conserve the cultivated plants of UK and Ireland since its inception in 1978. Born out of an era in which financial and political pressures meant that plants were disappearing from commerce at an alarming rate, Plant Heritage has a wide mandate:

- Conserving cultivated plant diversity
- Understanding and documenting cultivated plant diversity and using it sustainably
- Educating and disseminating information about cultivated plants and their conservation
- To communicate, network and cooperate with other organisations to facilitate our priorities

## National Collections

The primary vehicle for achieving these aims is the National Plant Collections. From recruiting the first collections in 1981 there are now 624, ranging from *Abelia* to *Zingiber*: 61 in Scotland, 521 in England, 32 in Wales, 4 in Northern Ireland and 5 in the Republic of Ireland. Of these 624 Collections: 214 are held by private individuals, 133 by commercial

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