



Editorial

Bernd Kirchner – 80th birthdayIrina V. Belyaeva,^{1,2*} and Lidia A. Semkina²¹Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, TW9 3AE, UK*Corresponding author. Email: i.belyaeva@kew.org, willow.belyaeva2017@yandex.com²Botanical Garden RAS, 8 Marta str., 202A, Yekaterinburg, 620144, Russian Federation

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Bernd Kirchner, the former Technical Director of the Botanical Garden of the Ruhr University (Bochum, Germany), turns 80 years old on 21st September this year. During his employment in the Botanical Garden RUB (1972–2005) he played a key role in building the garden, one of the ten largest gardens in Germany. The implementation of an educational programme for Ruhr University, Bochum, was Bernd's scientific target and was refracted through his artistic vision accompanied by his motto "less is more." Under



Bernd Kirchner and Lidia Semkina at the Botanical Garden in Frankfurt on the Main, 2003

Bernd's leadership such major projects as the Tropical House, Desert House, Chinese Garden and Savannah House were completed. Comprehensive information about these projects can be found in [Wikipedia](#) and at the [website of Ruhr University Bochum](#).

Anyone who has even a small garden can understand what preparative work must be done in studying plants, their growing conditions and the building itself to achieve harmony of nature in artificial garden conditions. Bernd read scientific literature, studied plants and the conditions in their natural habitats, not only during his working hours but also when travelling around the world on holidays, while making friends everywhere. Bernd's passion for



Looking at fossil plants, Botanical Garden, Frankfurt on the Main, 2003

plants and gardens is contagious when he talks about them. He has his favourite plants, such as tillandsias, fuchsias, orchids, willows and carnivorous plants, some of them growing in his private garden. He described *Pinguicula esseriana* B.Kirchn. and named it after the first



Botanical excursion in the Urals, 2003. Bernd with nice headgear (left) and with Pavel Kulikov and Lidia Semkina (right)



Bernd makes notes in his diary, botanical excursion in the Urals, 2003



Bernd and Annette Höggemeier celebrate the end of the botanical excursion in the Urals with Russian brandy, 2003



Bernd studies plants in the Croatian mountains, 2005

(Yekaterinburg, Russia) Irina Belyaeva and Lidia Semkina (Belyaeva *et al.*, 2001a; 2001b; Belyaeva and Kirchner, 2004; Belyaeva *et al.*, 2004). He organised botanical excursions and participated in studying willows in the mountains of Austria, Croatia, France, Spain, Switzerland and the Urals and visited private willow collections in Germany. Thanks to Bernd, many arcto-alpine willows are growing in the Botanical Garden UB RAS, Yekaterinburg and in the private willow collection of Irina Belyaeva at Willow Mount (Gloucestershire, UK).

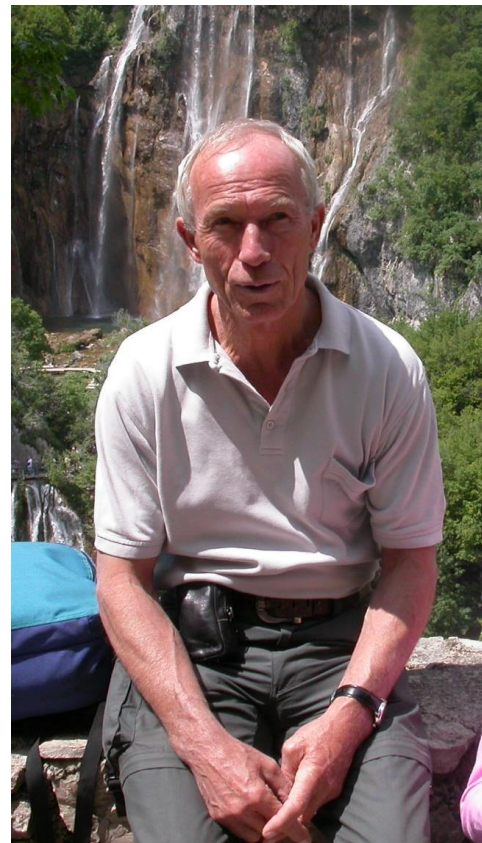
One of Bernd's special projects was the Chinese Garden, the story of which was captured by Zhang and colleagues (2015). Another lifelong project which Bernd has been hugely involved in is the Botanical Garden at Bodrum in Turkey (König *et al.*, 2002).

One would say, what a wonderful, happy and successful life to celebrate! Everyone who knows Bernd is celebrating his big birthday with him.

All photographs are from the personal archive of Irina Belyaeva.

director of the Botanical Garden RUB, Karl Esser. Bernd's love of the Botanical Garden created by him is reflected in the Botanical Garden guide (Höggemeier and Kirchner, 2004).

Bernd's interest in willows was fulfilled in a collaborative study of the *Salix bicolor* complex and other European willows with scientists from the Botanical Garden of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences



Bernd Kirchner, botanical excursion in the Croatian mountains, 2005

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