

Introduction

The snow is gone from northeastern Ohio and the days are growing longer in Edinburgh... it must be time to write another newsletter! Yes, we still write these things, and yes, we know we do not write them as often as we *should*. Much to our surprise, many of you actually read this newsletter and have asked us about it! In any event, we promise to get the newsletter back on track and out to you again on a regular schedule.

So what have we been doing? Read on! Much of our time has been consumed preparing version 4.5 of *BG-BASE*, which will be available mid-June. We have also installed *BG-BASE* in many new and exciting institutions over the last few months. New projects also abound. A Caribbean initiative will lead us to modify *BG-BASE* in order to track animals as well as plants, while a new "horticultural maintenance" module is being tested and will be released with version 4.5.

We look forward to seeing many of you at AABGA next month to give you a full accounting.

Mike O'Neal

Kerry Walter

BG-BASE Users Meeting Thu., May 30, 5:15 pm; AABGA, St. Louis.

The sixth annual *BG-BASE* users group meeting will be held in St. Louis, Missouri on **Thursday, May 30th, from 5:15-6:30 pm**, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA). New features of *BG-BASE* will be demonstrated, followed by a question-and-answer session. This is YOUR opportunity to guide the future development of *BG-BASE*! **All interested parties are encouraged to attend.**

To register for the AABGA annual meeting (which includes the *BG-BASE* users meeting), contact AABGA, 786 Church Road, Wayne, PA 19087, phone (610) 688-1120. See you there!

Advanced Training Seminars

The first *BG-BASE* Advanced Training Seminars were held at The Holden Arboretum on October 22-23, 1995, and on March 10-11, 1996. Participants included:

Todd Forrest	Arnold Arboretum
Starr Urbatsch	Desert Botanical Garden
Ethan Johnson	Holden Arboretum
Barbara Shifflett	Morven Estate
Angela Brown	North Carolina Arboretum
Lydia Newcombe	Rancho Santa Ana BG
Judy Chavez	Rio Grande BG
Kevin Tunison	U.S. National Arboretum

The seminars were held in The Holden Arboretum's new state-of-the-art Horticulture Science Center. Two days were spent exploring the "nooks and crannies" of *BG-BASE*, focusing on little-known techniques and short-cuts to improve efficiency in using the system. Each participant was provided with their own computer with copies of data from each institution pre-loaded, making this very much a "hands-on" workshop.

The next U.S. training seminar will be held September 15-16. Space is limited to five registrants and there is a registration fee. Contact Mike O'Neal at The Holden Arboretum for more information.

BG-BASE version 4.5 available June 15th

Version 4.5 of *BG-BASE* will be available for shipping on June 15th, 1996. Upgrade information will be distributed at the *BG-BASE* users meeting on May 30th in St. Louis, after which a general mailing will be sent to all users. In conjunction with the upgrade, a completely rewritten **users manual** will also be available. The new manual will be sent to all users of *BG-BASE* versions 4.0-4.5. We are really *excited* over this latest update, and we think you will be, too! Many thanks to those of you who provided input and suggestions.

Recent Installations

- **Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Garden (June 1995)** This 65 acre botanical garden in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands opened to the public in February 1994. Approximately 40% of Grand Cayman's native flora occurs in the garden, as well as important breeding populations of the endemic Parrot and the endemic Iguana. While 40 acres have been designated a nature preserve, the remaining acreage is being developed with an emphasis on the lowland seasonal flora of the greater Antilles and traditional ornamental, medicinal, and economic plants of the Cayman Islands. *BG-BASE* is being used to keep track of the entire collection.
- **Fort Worth Botanic Garden (September 1995)** This 110 acre municipal garden in Texas was founded in 1933, making it the oldest botanic garden in the state. A creation of the Great Depression, highlights include several rose gardens, a conservatory (just recently re-opened after a 1994 hail storm) and a 7.5 acre Japanese garden. The installation of *BG-BASE* represents a new commitment towards documentation of the garden's collection, as a first-ever accessioning strategy was defined. The garden will also be using *BG-BASE* to generate display and accession labels using a New Hermes engraver.
- **Inniswood Metro Gardens (November 1995)** *BG-BASE* and Windows '95 co-exist! Inniswood Metro Gardens was the first institution (to our knowledge) to run *BG-BASE* through Windows '95. Future plans also call for installing *BG-BASE* on a Banyan Local Area Network, thereby facilitating access to plant records by several staff simultaneously. This 92 acre former estate in Westerville, Ohio, (just outside of Columbus) is part of the Metro Parks of Columbus and Franklin counties. The garden features herb, rose, and woodland rock gardens. Perennial and seasonal displays complement the mature wooded setting.
- **Albuquerque Biological Park (December 1995)** The Albuquerque Biological Park combines an existing zoo with the soon-to-be-open Rio Grande Botanic Garden and nearby aquarium. *BG-BASE* will be used to track the plant collections for all three organizations. The NAMES files from Desert Botanical Garden and Denver Botanic Gardens were merged and pre-loaded into *BG-BASE* in order to give Rio Grande garden staff a head start on data entry. *BG-Map* was also installed at the park in February, 1996. There is much anticipation in Albuquerque as the garden nears its scheduled opening date of October 1996.
- **Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática, Cuba (January 1996)** Housed on the outskirts of Havana at the former country estate of a Cuban president, the Institute of Ecology and Systematics (IES) is one of Cuba's premier scientific institutions. IES is currently using *BG-BASE* to maintain information in its herbarium. The installation was facilitated by the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC, Washington, DC). At CMC's request, future *BG-BASE* modifications are planned to allow for the tracking of other biological collections within Cuba and within other Caribbean countries. Despite the current unsteady relations between the U.S. and Cuba, we are hopeful that the use of *BG-BASE* within this floristically rich and diverse country will continue to grow.
- **Fellows Riverside Gardens (February 1996)** This 11 acre former estate is part of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District of Youngstown, Ohio. Located in Mill Creek Park, the garden explodes each spring with a display of +50,000 bulbs. Other highlights include an extensive rose garden, herb garden, rock garden, shade and moss gardens, several perennial borders, a Victorian gazebo that hosts special events throughout the summer, and sweeping views of Mill Creek. A new visitor center is also slated as part of the garden's overall master plan. Accession records dating back several years will be entered into *BG-BASE*.
- **Cox Arboretum (March 1996)** This 159 acre garden in Dayton, Ohio, features nine specialty gardens, including a Rock Garden, Synoptic Shrub Garden, Water Garden, Conifer Knoll, Crabapple Collection, and a nationally recognized

Edible Landscape Garden. Also featured at the arboretum are several acres of woodlands and meadows. Included in the visitor center is an art gallery where local artists display their works on a rotating basis. Prior to obtaining *BG-BASE*, plant records were kept on a *FileMaker Pro* (Macintosh) database that had been designed in-house.

● **Reeves-Reed Arboretum (March 1996)**

The estate and gardens of Reeves-Reed Arboretum in Summit, New Jersey, represent design trends by prominent landscape architects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Formally founded in 1974, the property originally was the country estate of John Horner Wisner. His residence, built in 1889, still serves as the library and offices of the arboretum. Woodlands, formal gardens, and rolling lawns are interspersed among kettles, or depressions, caused as the Wisconsin glacier retreated. In addition to maintaining plant records, Reeves-Reed staff will also be using *BG-BASE* to generate display labels using a New Hermes engraver. The arboretum is listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

● **Mount Auburn Cemetery (April 1996)**

Exquisite maintenance and wise management have ensured that Mount Auburn, America's first garden cemetery, is also one of the world's most beautiful landscapes. Founded in 1831 in Cambridge, Massachusetts and now comprising 174 acres, the cemetery is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. A 1990 inventory recorded nearly 4000 specimens, several of which have been nominated as either state or regional champion trees. Mount Auburn is also the first garden to be using the new horticultural maintenance files in *BG-BASE*, allowing them to keep detailed information on pruning, spraying cabling, etc.

User Profile

Highstead Arboretum, Redding, CT. One of the questions we are asked most frequently is "Will *BG-BASE* be 'over-kill' for my institution? After all, we're so small..." This question is perhaps answered by profiling the Highstead Arboretum in Redding, Connecticut.

In 1986 Mr. and Mrs. James Dudley founded Highstead Arboretum, putting aside 32 acres of typical wild Connecticut woodland and wetland for the purposes of preservation, exhibition, land management, horticulture, and the appreciation of the natural landscape. A plant collections policy was written which included guidelines for documenting the collections. Plant records initially were kept using the spreadsheet program *Lotus 1-2-3*.

The Arboretum's data set is small at this point, with fewer than 500 plants, 400 accessions, and 300 taxa recorded to date. It is also projected that the collection will grow by no more than 50 accessions per year. Records are maintained by one person. So why did the arboretum decide to acquire *BG-BASE* in March of 1994?

Several reasons prevailed. One, the *Lotus* spreadsheet was not "relationally" structured, meaning that the same information was being typed in over and over again. Secondly, the spreadsheet did not provide a high enough level of data validation or checks for data integrity. Third, the Director (who is also responsible for maintaining the records) was spending more and more time trying to get *Lotus* to do things that it just wasn't meant to do. Ultimately, the arboretum opted for *BG-BASE*.

So was *BG-BASE* over-kill for Highstead? They do not think so. While they will likely never use *BG-BASE* to its full potential, in all likelihood neither will anyone else. With over 2500 fields, 75 files, and 75 data entry screens in the system, it would be practically impossible to record every possible piece of information one could record within the system.

More importantly, the records at Highstead are now being maintained in an environment that provides for increased data integrity, reduced data entry, with plenty of room for expansion -- important points regardless of a garden's size!

Technical Tip

In this issue we offer several tips for users of *BG-BASE* versions 4.0-4.5.

Housekeeping in the LISTS file

As most of you know, lists that you save using the SAVELIST command are stored in the LISTS file. However, many processes in *Advanced Revelation* (AREV) and *BG-BASE* also create records that are stored in the LISTS file. Lists created automatically by AREV will have two asterisks (**) imbedded in the list name, while *BG-BASE* lists will have the word "key" or "keys" in the list name. By typing at TCL

```
:LIST LISTS
```

you will likely see many of these types of records. As a part of regular *BG-BASE* maintenance, these lists should be periodically deleted from the system. A quick and easy way to accomplish this are with the following TCL commands:

```
:SELECT LISTS CONTAINING "KEY" "***"  
>DELETE LISTS
```

Run these commands every few weeks to keep your LISTS file manageable.

Printing from the Report Viewer - Beware!!

Using the LIST command at TCL calls AREV's *Report Viewer* in which the results of your LIST statement are displayed. Above the *Report Viewer* is the menu option *Print*. Unfortunately, choosing this option *ignores* any SELECT or GETLIST command you might have issued prior to your LIST statement. Consequently, choosing *Print* from the *Report Viewer* will print the entire contents of the file, not just the report displayed on your screen! As this programming code is inherent in AREV (not *BG-BASE*), we are limited in what we can change. Therefore, the only safe way to print your reports from TCL is by using the (P) option at the end of your LIST statement.

Working in data entry windows - did you know?

- Most data entry windows have pre-defined tab stops that allow you to move more quickly through a window. While in a window in which a record has been retrieved, press Alt-T to move the cursor

to the next tab stop. (Not all windows have tab stops)

- The Alt-K combination while in a window will return you to the first field on the first page of the window, regardless of what page you are currently on.
- You can retrieve a previously saved list directly from an entry screen. Press Ctrl-F10, then choose Browse Selections, GetList. Once the list has been read into the entry window, you can use Alt-F and Alt-B to move forward or backward through each record.
- Every field in a window contains an "edit mask" as a background character. Edit masks are characters that are displayed when your cursor is in a field. Most fields display a block (█) as an edit mask, but fields may also display chevrons (») or lines (-). What do these different edit masks mean?

Data entered into a field with a **block** will be accepted as free text **or** the data will be validated against a set of system-defined codes. If the data is validated against a set of codes, the user is unable to change these codes. Example: The *accept* field in the NAMES file.

Data entered into a field with **chevrons** will be validated against information stored in a separate file. The user then has the ability to change or add information to this separate file. Example: The *spec.char* field in the NAMES file (which is validated against the SPEC.CHARS file).

Data typed into a field with a **line** will be accepted as free text **and** the system will convert the first letter of a word into upper case while converting the remaining letters in the word into lower case. Example: The *institution* field in the PSOURCES file.

Next issue: Windows '95, memory management.

Technical Support

Many of you have recently renewed your *BG-BASE* technical support contracts. Technical support gives you, the user, the opportunity to receive advice on how to best solve problems, become more efficient at using *BG-BASE*, and (perhaps most importantly) receive direct intervention from us if a situation warrants such action. Holders of technical support contracts also receive first priority for upgrades, receive reduced prices for upgrades and for training seminars, and receive the *Technical Tips* insert in the newsletter.

As the number of *BG-BASE* users increase, so do the technical support questions we receive. Here are some tips to improve the quality of support you receive from us:

- 1) Write down any error messages you may receive **exactly** as they appear on the screen. If the message is particularly long or technical in nature, please print the screen and fax it to us.
- 2) Be in front of the computer and logged into *BG-BASE* prior to calling. Make sure you know which version of *BG-BASE* you are using.
- 3) Configure your modem and communications software in advance with your technical support office. That way, if and when you need technical support via the modem, time can be spent on the problem itself and not on communication logistics.
- 4) If the matter is non-urgent, consider documenting the pertinent information then faxing it or emailing it to us.

By following these few tips we will likely be able to expedite any support we provide. In the U.S., technical support is available M-F from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, while in the U.K. support hours are M-F from 10:00 am to 5:00 GMT. Technical support is available only to those holding a technical support contract. Contact your nearest *BG-BASE* support office for more details.

New Director at Holden

Dr. Richard H. Munson was named Executive Director of The Holden Arboretum effective September 5th, 1995. Dr. Munson comes to Holden from the Botanic Garden of Smith College, where he served as Director and Lecturer in Biological Sciences. Prior to that he served at

Texas University, Ohio State University, and ironically, The Holden Arboretum where he began his career as plant propagator.

In regards to *BG-BASE* activities at Holden, Dr. Munson states:

"I am very pleased that The Holden Arboretum is able to play a role in the continued development of BG-BASE, and I look forward to the continuation of this relationship."

Please join us in welcoming Dick Munson to the *BG-BASE* user community!

Questionnaire results

Most of you received a questionnaire last year asking you to give us detailed information about your collections. The results of this questionnaire will be published in the next issue of *BG-BASE* News. We have set a cut-off date of July 1st, 1996, in order for your responses to be counted. If you have not yet sent in your questionnaire, please do so!

Notes...

- We now have **new email addresses**:

Kerry: bg-base@rbge.org.uk
Mike: moneal@pop.holdenarb.org

While our old addresses are still active, we encourage you to use the addresses listed above.
- Future *Technical Tips* will be expanded to two pages and will be distributed as an insert to *BG-BASE* News *only* to holders of technical support contracts. All users and interested parties will continue to receive the regular newsletter.
- Can't make the *BG-BASE* users meeting this year in St. Louis? Plan now for the meeting next year at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, May, 1997.
- Should others at your institution see this newsletter? Please remember to pass it on!