

Introduction

Six months ago all users received a letter from us announcing that The Holden Arboretum and the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh had become the new support and development homes for *BG-BASE*.

Your support since then - both moral and financial - has been gratifying. It is a great satisfaction to us that you, the *BG-BASE* users, have affirmed your desire to see the *BG-BASE* version 4 software continue to grow and evolve. When it came time to make the commitment (which many of you had professed a willingness to make the last two years), you did. Now it's up to us

The initial fruits of this commitment appeared with our first newsletter, distributed three months ago to well over 150 people, both users and other interested parties alike. Your comments and suggestions since then have been much appreciated. Additionally, technical support for those holding service contracts continues to be readily available via fax, phone, electronic mail, correspondence, and in some cases, on-site visits. Never hesitate to contact us - that's what we are here for!

Of greatest satisfaction to us is the progress made on *BG-BASE* version 4. Those of you who were able to attend the users meeting in July at AABGA saw a prototype of this latest version, incorporating many of the features that we have been heralding and that you have been asking for. No longer is an Advanced Revelation version of *BG-BASE* a goal - it is a reality.

The release date is still anticipated to be later this fall. (A special mailing will be sent to those of you that have already ordered the upgrade; in this we briefly outline what the basic process for upgrading versions 1.0 - 3.5 will be.)

So, progress continues. We have enjoyed re-establishing many old acquaintances over the last six months. We have also enjoyed speaking with the many of you that are considering for the first time the use of *BG-BASE* at your institution. It is all of your ideas, suggestions, and feedback

that make our job interesting and challenging and, ultimately, that make *BG-BASE* a better plant records and membership management system for use by the garden and conservation communities.

Michael J. O'Neal

Kerry S. Walter

BG-BASE version 4

Work on *BG-BASE* version 4 continues. Many current users of version 1.0 - 3.5 have asked for details on how the upgrade will be handled. First and foremost, the upgrade will not require a site visit, but will be conducted in two phases.

In phase one we will ask those of you who have ordered the upgrade to send us an initial copy of your system as "test" data - in fact, some of you have already done this. Over the years we have provided several gardens with institution-specific fields and screens. This test data will allow us to verify where your versions may have diverged from the core set of screens and fields that we maintain centrally (We have since adopted new methods for handling institution-specific variants; these methods will make future upgrades easier.) We can then customize your version of *BG-BASE* in advance to handle these special cases.

In phase two we will ask you to send us a second set of "live" data, against which we will run the actual conversion. The upgrade will take us 2-3 days to complete, after which we will return the new system to you. During this second phase you should not edit any of your records, as these changes will not be reflected in the upgrade version returned to you. However, you will be able to continue to use the old system to look up records, generate reports, etc., until the new system is installed.

Those of you wishing to upgrade to *BG-BASE* version 4 will need to also upgrade your version of Revelation to Advanced Revelation, version 3.1 or higher. We can purchase this for you or you can order it directly from Revelation Technologies at [(800) 262-4747]. We also strongly encourage all gardens to obtain a Microsoft-compatible mouse for each workstation that will be using *BG-BASE*, if you do not already have one. Finally, see the following section for the latest

minimum suggested hardware requirements, as specified by Revelation Technologies.

As mentioned previously, upgrade priority will be given to gardens that have purchased support contracts, after which orders will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

Note to new users: Those of you considering purchasing *BG-BASE* for the first time should contact Mike O'Neal for details on this process.

Technical update

From the Advanced Revelation 3.1 Quality Assurance Known Problem Report, distributed with all new copies of Advanced Revelation, comes this announcement:

```
"Advanced Revelation will
operate without expanded
memory, but you may not be
able to perform some
operations that require the
use of large amounts of
memory, such as moderate to
complex R/LIST statements that
use BY... WITH...
CONTAINING... or other sorting
logic...
```

To ensure maximum performance and functionality, Revelation Technologies strongly recommend the following minimum system configuration for most applications:

```
Intel-based PC with a minimum
of a 386SX MS DOS 5.0 or latter
2MB expanded Memory (EMS
-LIM4.0 standard)
```

From discussions with support staff at Revelation, we have learned that the LIST problem mentioned above will generally only surface on systems not using (or not able to use) expanded memory that are also managing files containing more than 100,000 records. As such, few BGBASE users (other than the World Conservation Monitoring Centre) will be affected. Still, with the new graphical user interface found in AREV and the demand this puts on the rest of the system, a 386-class machine (or higher) and expanded memory is nearly a must.

Revelation also counsels that users of Advanced Revelation and Novell 3.1 should avoid using any NET.EXE, EMSNET.EXE, or XMSNETX.EXE version higher than 3.26 for the time being due to reported file corruption problems (your version number will generally be displayed on the screen as you attach to your network).

We are assured by Revelation that a fix is in the works. Until then, use one of the several available Novell EXE drivers prior to version 3.26 if you are using Advanced Revelation.

Recent Installations

- Royal Botanic Gardens - Kew (July 1993) *BG-BASE* was installed primarily to handle bibliographic and specimen-based information for two units - the Conservation Unit and the Micropropagation Unit. Work is under way to enable Kew and WCMC to share a common bibliographic database on plant conservation (currently numbering over 17,500 records) as well as to design the necessary files, screens, and reports to track the extensive micropropagation activities performed at Kew (this design work is being carded out in conjunction with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh).
- The Arboretum - University of Guelph (August, 1993) This 400-acre arboretum located in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, had the MEMBERSHIP and EDUCATION modules installed. An existing 1300 record membership list was converted from DBASE and imported into *BG-BASE*. In addition to facilitating basic membership functions such as logging gifts, tabulating results, and generating acknowledgment letters, the system will also be used to track arboretum course registrations, code arboretum members into several different categories (trustees, volunteers, staff, horticultural societies, etc.) and prepare various mass mailings in-house.

User profiles

New England Wildflower Society (NEWF) in Framingham, Mass., has used *BG-BASE* at its botanical garden, Garden in the Woods, since 1987. They use a Novell Netware network (version 3.1 1) to connect 9 PCS and 2 printers to a 20 MHZ, 386 file server with 245 Mb hard disk capacity. The network also has a 120 Mb tape backup unit for archival purposes. To date the system has been used to log 4000 taxa, 7000 accessions, and over 800 educational courses.

In addition to course registrations and plant records management, NEWF is using *BG-BASE* to generate pot labels for its annual plant sale. These labels include the common and botanical name, price of the plant, and growing condition for the plants being sold. A catalog for the plant sale listing similar information is also produced. Other uses include the generation of Index Seminum lists as well as the preparation of mailing labels for distributing the lists.

BG-BASE is also playing a role in the Society's new conservation initiative, the New England Plant Conservation Program (NEPCoP). NEPCoP is a voluntary association of private organizations and government agencies in each of the six states of New England working to prevent the extirpation and promote the recovery of New England's endangered flora. *BG-BASE* is being enhanced so that NEPCoP can track species at the population level, track conservation status at the state level, and track historical changes to indicate the degree of recovery or decline for a particular species. (in many ways, NEPCoP's regional data activities are similar to those as carded out nationally by the Center for Plant Conservation and internationally by WCMC.) Ultimately, *BG-BASE* will be used to produce *Flora Conservanda*, a list of the region's endangered flora.

computer system by installing a Novell network, linking 5 workstations in two buildings.

As a leading botanical garden for, plant conservation in the Pacific Northwest, thorough documentation has become a staple of the garden's conservation program. Exact collection localities and collection dates are entered into *BG-BASE* for all wild-collected and garden-grown taxa. Documentation continues once material is at the garden with the recording of (among other things) current condition, location, quantity, and propagation efforts.

Although *BG-BASE* was obtained primarily to maintain records on the garden's central living collections, it has found other uses as well. Records on the seedbank (representing over 2000 accessions of approximately 150 taxa), and the garden's portion of the Center for Plant Conservation's National Collection are also maintained on the system. To assist the garden's cooperative efforts with the Bureau of Land Management, *BG-BASE* has been configured to allow staff to flag which accessions are from specific BLM districts. This information is then used to keep track of accessions for particular taxa that occur both on and off BLM land, and in writing reports.

BERR has also implemented a unique accessioning system which allows them to track specialized collections independently. This is done by adding one of several prefixes to the accession number. For example, all seed in the Baker Seed Herbarium is assigned an accession prefix of "BSH". To make a list of these accessions, the garden uses the TCL command:

:LIST ACCESSIONS WITH ACC.NUM STARTING "BSH"

[Note: Mechanisms are in place in version 4 of *BG-BASE* that will allow gardens to track such collections without having to "code" the accession number.]

At just over 6 acres and with a staff of 10, **Berry Botanic Garden** (BERR) in Portland, Ore., is the smallest garden using *BG-BASE*. Installed in 1987 and upgraded in 1990, *BG-BASE* is being run on a Compaq Deskpro 286, 8 MHZ PC with a 40Mb disk drive. The garden is currently undergoing a major renovation and expansion of the main building as well as construction of a new greenhouse and associated horticultural buildings. As part of this renovation, BERR will upgrade its

Command - entry screens

PERFORM vs. EXECUTE

There are two commands within BG-BASE (versions 1.0 - 3.5) and Revelation that have often confused users, even long-time users. The differences between PERFORM and EXECUTE are subtle but extremely important because using the wrong one can lead to frustration.

At the simplest level both PERFORM and EXECUTE can be used to issue a TCL command directly from an entry screen. If you are at the CHANGE prompt in the ACCESSIONS.ENTRY screen, you can type

```
PERFORM LIST ACCESSIONS "92-100"  
PLANTS
```

and you will see a list of all the plants within accession 92-100. When that report is finished and you press Enter, you will be returned directly to the ACCESSIONS.ENTRY screen as if you had never left it. Or, you might type the following from the CHANGE prompt of the NAMES.ENTRY screen

PERFORM DS.ENTRY

to temporarily suspend the names screen and take you to the DS screen. At this point, you could look up or edit one or more DS records, create a new DS record, delete a DS record, etc. When you have filed the last DS records, you type END (or Control-E) and you will be returned to the point where you typed the PERFORM statement (in this case, the NAMES.ENTRY screen). Other examples: if you are worried about missing lunch, you could type

PERFORM TIME

or if you are concerned about who is currently logged into the machine, you could type

PERFORM WHOAMI

PERFORM WHO

PERFORM USER

depending upon your version of BG-BASE and what network you are using.

In each of the above examples, you could have substituted the word EXECUTE for the word PERFORM. So, what is the difference between

these commands?

PERFORM will take any record keys that are sitting "waiting" in a SELECT list and pass those keys to the next process you call, while EXECUTE will not pass these record keys to the next process you call.

Consider this example: Suppose you want to edit all the NAMES that are not yet verified (ACCEPT = "U"). If you have learned to use the SAVE-LIST and GET-LIST commands properly, you will have done something like

```
:SELECT NAMES WITH ACCEPT = "U"
```

```
>SAVE-LIST TEMP
```

```
:GET-LIST TEMP
```

```
>NAMES.ENTRY
```

Since you started the NAMES.ENTRY screen with an active select list, each record is brought into this entry screen when the previous one is filed. Now, if you want to look up or add a data source, you might be tempted to type

PERFORM DS.ENTRY

but if you do so, the active select list of NAMES record keys will be passed into the DS.ENTRY screen - not exactly what you wanted! To make matters worse, when you finally get out of the DS.ENTRY screen, those records that were inadvertently passed to the wrong screen will have been "thrown away" by the system (that is why we strongly encourage you to do a SAVEDLIST 1 GET-LIST combination after any SELECT statement so that you do not have to do the SELECT again). However, you can avoid this problem by typing

EXECUTE DS.ENTRY

instead of PERFORM DS.ENTRY; the NAMES keys are not passed to the DS screen. You can do whatever you need to in the DS file, and then when you leave that screen, you will be returned to the NAMES.ENTRY screen exactly where you left off - and with all the remaining record keys that were selected still waiting.

You may wonder why anyone would ever want to use the **PERFORM** command instead of the **EXECUTE** command, but often times you do. Whenever you type a backslash (or if the system inserts one for you automatically), a **PERFORM** command is taking place behind the scene, because you want to be able to pass the

selected value back from the cross reference screen. Also, at points where you can type "NEW" at a prompt, the system uses a **PERFORM** to go over to the new file. In this case, if you have an active select list and you need to go over to another file to create a new record, you should type **EXECUTE** screen_name (as noted above) instead of typing NEW.

In summary, use **EXECUTE** when you are in an entry screen with an active select list and you are trying to go over to another file's entry screen, and use **PERFORM** when you want to pass the results of one process entry screen to another, as in cross-referencing.

News from Botanic Gardens Conservation International

BGCI will shortly publish a new newsletter designed specifically for plant recorders and documentation specialists in botanical gardens and arboreta. Entitled *The Recorder*, the publication's goal is

"to promote the development of plant records systems in botanic gardens and similar institutions; to enhance their ability to undertake and document efficient and comprehensive plant conservation programmes and to link the plant records staff of many institutions to share news, ideas, and information..."

Submissions and inquiries to BGCI are welcome.

Work also continues on **The International Transfer Format for Botanic Garden Records (ITF)** - an international standard becoming widely used around the world. A revised version of the ITF export program within BG-BASE (which will be part of version 4) was recently used to export 32,000 BG-BASE accession records from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh to the Botanic Garden Conservation International, one of the largest such transfers yet undertaken by BGCI from a single institution. BGCI currently tracks over 85,000 accessions of (mostly) rare and threatened plants. The estimated 250,000 accessions that exist as *BGBASE* records around the world will be an extremely important addition to BGCI's data holdings.

We encourage all gardens to become members of BGCI and to exchange accession information with them using ITF protocols. For further information on *The Recorder* or the International Transfer Format, contact: Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Descanso House, 199 Kew Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3BW, United Kingdom.

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Notes...

- The 1994 American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA) Annual Conference will be hosted by Huntington Botanical Gardens in Pasadena, California. Sessions will run June 15-18, at which time we will also hold the *BG-BASE* users meeting. As always, user meetings are open to all those interested. Plan to attend!
- Be sure to review the October issue of *The Public Garden*, AABGA's quarterly magazine. This latest issue is devoted to information management in gardens. In addition to an article on *BG-BASE*, you will also find articles on mapping, library management, and fund raising (among others.) Don't miss it!
- Many *BG-BASE* installations have been funded by the Institute of Museum Services (IMS). Deadlines are approaching! To request a grant application and an information booklet, contact IMS at [(202) 606-85391]
- Orders are now being accepted for *Flora of North America*, Volumes 1 and 2. For more information contact Oxford University Press at [(800) 451-7556]