

Year 2000 - should you worry?

With the millennium rapidly approaching there are many software programs that will not be able to cope with the year 2000, thinking that the year is 1900 instead. Do users of *BG-BASE* using *Advanced Revelation* need to worry? No. *BG-BASE* stores dates internally as numbers and not in the day/month/year format that appears on screens and in reports. The exact number stored internally is the number of days lapsed since December 31, 1967. For example, the date "15 January 1968" is stored as the number 15, while the date "1 December 1967" is stored as -30. Therefore, the date "January 1, 2000" will simply be "11689" to *BG-BASE*. Thus, in spite of all the press regarding the "Year 2000 crisis", from a software stand-point *BG-BASE* users have nothing to worry about.

Please note, however, that *BG-BASE* relies directly on the computer's system date to provide the correct information. If your computer's internal BIOS (which controls the system date, among other things) is not "Year 2000 friendly" then you will have trouble with *BG-BASE* and any other software packages that rely on the date. Be sure to contact your hardware manufacturer to verify that your system will behave properly on January 1, 2000. Don't delay -- do it today *before* you find out you have a problem!

As an aside, some of you may have experienced how dates entered with a 2 digit year instead of a 4 digit year are occasionally converted to the next century. When entering data into a date field and entering only a 2 digit year, the following rules apply: If you enter a year value of 0-29, the year is assumed to be in the next century. For example, if you enter an accession date from 1925 as "10 Mar 25", the system will convert that to "10 March 2025". Fortunately this is easy to see on the screen and correct. If you enter a year value of 30-99, the year is assumed to be the current century. If you do not enter a year value at all, the current year is assumed. Note however that entering a 4-digit year will always be unambiguous to the system.

Important update for LAN users using Windows 95

Revelation Software is now recommending a series of network products for applications written in *Advanced Revelation* (AREV) such as *BG-BASE*. These products are:

- Revelation Network Loadable Module (NLM)
- Revelation Network Performance Pack (NPP)
- Revelation Windows NT Service (NTS)

According to Revelation Software:

"All users of *Advanced Revelation* and Windows 95 on a Novell or Windows NT network should install one of the network products to avoid possible data corruption..."

In addition to curtailing data corruption (in the form of Group Form at Errors), the network products are also designed to improve the performance and functionality of AREV applications. Additional information and comments can be obtained on Revelation's Web site at:

www.revelation.com

or by contacting Revelation Software directly at (800) 262-4747 (US) or at 01908-233-255 (UK). Holders of support agreements should review the enclosed *Technical Tips* section for additional information. Please note that we take these statements from Revelation Software very seriously and urge you to do likewise.

Sorry we missed you at AABGA

For the first time in eight years neither Kerry Walter nor Mike O'Neal were able to attend the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta annual meeting. We apologize that this was the case and that a *BG-BASE* user's meeting was not held in New York in May. Kerry had previous commitments (international visitors) that were simply impossible to re-schedule, and Mike and his family were expecting their second child the first week of June -- which in fact arrived on June 3rd in the form of Kara McKenzie O'Neal.

Next year's AABGA meeting will be hosted by Longwood Gardens in Philadelphia – see you then, if not sooner!

Recent installations

- **Castlewellan Forest Park (October, 1996)** Situated in County Down, 30 miles south of Belfast, Northern Ireland, this garden is owned by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. [The name may ring a bell with readers due to the *Cupressocyparis* cultivar "Castlewellan Gold".] The garden is noted for its extensive walled garden in addition to various "Champion Trees" that are found at the estate, all of which are now being accessioned into *BG-BASE*.
- **ELTE Botanical Garden (November, 1996)** The Botanical Garden of Eötvös Loránd University in **Budapest, Hungary**, is one of the oldest institutions of its kind in Central Europe, dating back to 1771. The garden has been located at its present site since 1847. In 1945 aerial bombing during World War II destroyed the glass house and much of the collection. Today this 3.5-hectare garden houses various collections hardy to Hungary as well as extensive collections of palms, orchids, and bromeliads under glass. Records were converted from a word-processor into *BG-BASE*.
- **Museo Nacional de Historia Natural (November 1996)** Serving as the central Natural History museum for the **Dominican Republic**, this institution in Santo Domingo is using *BG-BASE* to record zoological specimens (e.g. birds, fish, etc.) as well as botanical specimens. As part of a larger Caribbean initiative, enhancements continue to be made to *BG-BASE* to serve the natural history museum community as a whole.
- **Leonard J. Buck Garden (December 1996)** This botanical garden in Far Hills, New Jersey, was begun in the late 1930's and donated to the Somerset County Park Commission in 1976. The garden consists of a series of alpine and woodland gardens situated in a 33-acre wooded stream valley, accentuated by several larger rock-outcroppings on the property. Notable groupings of plants include *Rhododendron*, ferns, and various rock garden plants. The garden had maintained their records on *FileMaker Pro* before switching to *BG-BASE*.
- **Singapore Botanic Gardens (January 1997)** The Singapore Botanic Gardens is located just north of the equator in the heart of the Singapore city. The garden pioneered early introduction of rubber, *Hevea brasiliensis*, a major crop that brought great economic prosperity to the region. Today among the garden's many jewels is the newly-opened National Orchid Garden, showcasing tens of thousands of orchids in a variety of settings. The garden's data were converted from an existing *dBASE III* application and imported into *BG-BASE*.
- **Descanso Gardens (February, 1997)** Located just 20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles (hence a popular site for motion picture filming) and bordered by the San Gabriel mountains, this 165-acre former estate opened to the public in 1953. The garden is highlighted by a *Camellia* collection that is second-to-none. Other significant collections include roses and a native plant garden. Data were converted from a Microsoft *Works* database into *BG-BASE*.
- **Andromeda Botanic Gardens (February, 1997)** This 6-hectare garden in **Bridgetown, Barbados** is administered by the Barbados National Trust in affiliation with the University of the West Indies. Founded in 1954, the garden is situated on a hillside overlooking the sea, providing a series of vistas of rocky coastline and surf for visitors. Special collections include heliconias, ferns, water plants, frangipanis, aroids, succulents, and palms. The garden also is involved with various conservation projects and is working on a project to describe all of the sedges and grasses on Barbados. *BG-BASE* is the first computerized record-keeping system to be used at the garden. Staff training was conducted at Holden.

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- **Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Garden (February, 1997)** Those of you who attended AmeriFlora in 1992 will be familiar with this garden located in Columbus, Ohio. The central historic conservatory contains 45,000 square feet of plant collections, simulating Tropical Rainforest, Desert, Himalayan Mountain Region, and Pacific Islands climatic zones. Specialty collections include palms, orchids, bonsai, and cacti/succulents. The site also contains a 29-acre botanical garden surrounding the conservatory.

 - **Gemini Botanical Garden (March 1997)** This private, ocean-front estate and botanical garden near West Palm Beach, Florida, is the home of William Ziff, formerly of Ziff-Davis (ZD) Publishing, a prominent PC publishing firm. We were delighted that after extensive comparisons with Microsoft *Access* and *Paradox*, *BG-BASE* was chosen as the plant records system for the garden. In addition to plant records, *BG-BASE* is also being used to generate embossed accession tags for every plant in the garden. The garden will also soon be storing digital images of plants found in the collection. Data were converted from an existing *FoxPro* database into *BG-BASE*.

 - **University of Miami, Tropical Fruit Program (April, 1997)** Mangos are the highlight of this South Florida collection at Four Fillies Farm. Currently a private collection that is being supervised by the University of Miami, it is one of the most diverse plantings of *Mangifera* cultivars anywhere in the world. The collection also contains a wide selection of other tropical fruits including Lychee, Longan, White Sapote (Woolly Leaf Smathers variety), Avocado, and Persimmon.

 - **National Botanic Garden of Wales (May 1997)** This, the newest botanic garden in Great Britain, forms an interesting contrast to two other *BG-BASE* UK sites - University of Oxford Botanic Garden and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (both founded in the 1600's). Unlike its two venerable sister institutions, this new garden has no permanent planting yet on

the grounds and relatively few accessions. However, with generous funding from the Millennium Commission (21.7 million pounds), and an ambitious master plan with an expected opening date of summer, 1999, this is a garden to watch! There were no existing data to convert, but RBGE supplied its NAMES file to ease the task of data entry.

BG-BASE initiatives in Hungary

A three-year project has begun to improve the information management and data exchange capabilities of botanical gardens and arboreta in Hungary. Ultimately this will lead to the development of a standardized national plant database to be administered by the Hungarian Institute for Agricultural Quality Control (OMMI). The first step was taken in November with the installation of *BG-BASE* in the ELTE Botanic Garden in Budapest (see "New Installations")

In conjunction with the installation, a one-day workshop focusing on botanical information management was held for approximately 35 plant and information specialists from throughout Hungary. In addition to presentations, 15 computers were pre-loaded with *BG-BASE* for the participants to use and explore. The workshop was led by Elizabeth Ley (U.S. National Arboretum) in conjunction with Mike O'Neal and Kerry Walter.

In May, Dr. István Bach and Ms. Zsuzanna Pete from OMMI and Dr. István Isépy from ELTE Botanic Garden visited the U.S. National Arboretum, Scott Arboretum, Morris Arboretum, Longwood Gardens, and The Holden Arboretum as a continuation of the project. Funding for the project was provided by the USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, Research and Scientific Exchange Division, U.S. - Hungarian Joint Technology Program.