

## **BG-BASE for Windows update**

Kerry Walter and Mike O'Neal, the developers of *BG-BASE*, recently spent three days at the headquarters of Revelation Software in Cambridge, Massachusetts, attending intensive training sessions on *OpenInsight*. As many of you know, *OpenInsight* is the Windows-based database manager that will serve as the next software platform for *BG-BASE*. While we have been experimenting with *OpenInsight* for over two years now, we both felt that formal training would provide the necessary "kick-start" as we develop the next generation of the software. We were not disappointed! A few thoughts from those sessions:

To those of you who are already familiar with and like Windows, the new system will be a delight. We will be implementing as much of the "look and feel" of Windows into *BG-BASE* as we can. Ensuring that the system is as consistent as possible with your other Windows applications will make using *BG-BASE* that much easier and intuitive.

If you are a long-time user of *BG-BASE* and have *never* worked in Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, in all honesty it might take you a bit of time to "warm up" to the new version. We base this on the fact that some of you had a similar reaction when we upgraded to our current platform, *Advanced Revelation*, back in 1994. Looking back on it now, does anyone regret making that switch? Of course not! At the time, *Advanced Revelation* offered many advantages over *Revelation*, the database system we were then using, just as *OpenInsight* now offers additional advantages over *Advanced Revelation*.

Perhaps one of the most important things we came to realize during our visit last month is that we have underestimated the complexity involved in converting *BG-BASE* into this environment, especially since development will be simultaneously taking place in both the U.S. and U.K. Although as much as 80% of *BG-BASE* will convert into the Windows environment quite readily, several areas, most notably the user interface, will need to be completely revamped.

We will also be putting into place stringent quality control provisions to assure that this first Windows version is as stable and error-free as humanly possible. Finally, documentation will be written *in conjunction* with the development of the software, and not afterwards. The result is that all of this will take longer to finish than we had anticipated. Those of you who know us also know how loath we are to speculate on software release dates! Holding true to form, at this time we cannot provide you with a firm date -- but it will be worth the wait. We are as anxious to move *BG-BASE* into this environment as you are.

In the meantime, because many of you have expressed an interest in obtaining upgrades regardless of the platform (and some institutions are not yet ready for a Windows environment anyway), we have decided to release one final *Advanced Revelation* version of *BG-BASE*, version 5.0. By a separate mailing (sent first to technical support subscribers) we will document the benefits of upgrading to version 5.0, even if you intend to upgrade to our Windows version as soon as it becomes available. There have been many significant enhancements made to version 5.0 that we think users of earlier versions of *BG-BASE* will greatly benefit from, even in the short-term. Additional information will be made available shortly.

## **BG-BASE Advanced Training Seminars**

The fifth U.S. *BG-BASE* Advanced Training Seminar will be held this September (exact dates to be determined) at The Holden Arboretum. Two days will be spent exploring the "hooks and crannies" of *BG-BASE*, focusing on little-known techniques and short-cuts. Much of the time will be spent working at TCL and on report-writing. All participants are provided with their own computer with copies of data from each institution, making this very much a "hands-on" workshop. Space is limited to five registrants and there is a registration fee. Contact Mike O'Neal at The Holden Arboretum for more information.

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## Recent installations

- **Eden Project (September 1997)** This massive new series of steel-framed geodesic domes to be built in the U.K. will replicate a Mediterranean climate as well as an equatorial Rainforest. Constructed against the face of a clay pit, the site is located 30 meters *below* the water table, and as such will require massive drainage and overflow systems. At the same time, huge quantities of pure water will be needed to support the 10,000 species of plants that are expected to be grown here. The domes themselves will be constructed using a high tech transparent polymer foil which will be kept inflated by solar-powered compressors. They will also be large enough so that teak, mahogany, and rosewood will be able to attain mature height -- nearly 200 feet in some cases! Half of the \$100+ million cost was funded by the Millennium Commission while additional funds were raised from the European Regional Development Fund and various other local public and private sources.

- **Institute of Ecosystem Studies (December 1997)** Located at the Cary Arboretum in Millbrook, New York, the Institute of Ecosystem Studies was formed in 1983 as a division of The New York Botanical Garden. In 1993 the Institute became an independent, not-for-profit corporation. The focus of the Institute's work is ecological education and long-term study of disturbance and recovery. Collections of special interest include the Perennial Garden, consisting of over 1000 taxa of plants, and the Fern Glen, highlighting native and rare plants in addition to ferns. Other collections include the Howard Taylor Lilac Collection, Meadow Garden, a display greenhouse, as well as the original Cary Arboretum woody plant collections. In addition to a Visitors Center (originally built in 1817 as a private residence), the Institute also has a state-of-the-art Plant Sciences Building that houses research laboratories, teaching facilities, and a reference library.

- **Leila Arboretum (January 1998)** Although Leila Arboretum's history began in 1922 with the donation of 72 acres to the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, it was the formation of the Leila Arboretum Society in 1982 that has re-invigorated the institution. In addition to continuing to build its collections, the Arboretum has developed an exemplary community outreach program called BC Green, and is also playing a vital role in beautification of the city of Battle Creek by maintaining the Kellogg Community Flower Garden located downtown. Data from a *Clarion* database was converted into *BG-BASE*.

## **BG-BASE home page**

It is here at last! The official **BG-BASE home page** can be found at

<http://www.rbge.org.uk/BG-BASE>.

This site contains a great deal of information about the system, including sections covering: features, frequently asked questions, glossary, history of development, modules, outputs, references, standards, support, system requirements, training, and users. In addition, it contains copies of all issues of *BG-BASE News*.

## **News from BG-Map**

Use of BG-Map, the mapping software written specifically for use with *BG-BASE*, continues to grow. As of April, 1998, over twenty institutions are either using the system or have installations scheduled. A new Windows version has also recently been released. For more information on BG-Map, contact Mark Glicksman at (215) 887-1100, or visit the BG-Map web site [www.libertynet.org/~bgmap](http://www.libertynet.org/~bgmap)

## **BG-BASE User's Meeting**

The 8th annual U.S. *BG-BASE* users meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 18**, in conjunction with the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA) annual conference in Philadelphia. In addition to demonstrations, future directions and initiatives will also be discussed. The meeting is open, informal, and **all conference attendees are welcome to attend**. Please also note that we will have an **exhibitor's booth** at the conference as well. See you there!

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## BG-BASE used to produce book

The first-ever global list of threatened plants has been published using BG-BASE both to manage the information and as a publication tool. Compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), the 862-page 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants lists 33,798 species of vascular plants that are threatened with extinction throughout the world -- 12.5% of the world's flora.

More than 20 years in the making, the book represents the efforts of hundreds of individuals, botanic gardens and herbaria around the globe. Since the late 1970s WCMC has produced many regional and topical lists of threatened plants; however, this is the first time that the entire

world list has been made available. Information from the book is also available on the Web (<http://www.wcmc.org.uk>) both as summary tables and as a searchable database.

The nearly 34,000 species listed in this book represent only a small part of WCMC's database holdings, now totaling over 140,000 taxa. Other information not found in this book but available on the database includes common names, synonymy and uses (when known). Additionally, there are links to WCMC's protected areas database (over 40,000 records), and to data on national and international legislation.

This book belongs on the library shelf of every botanic garden (we'd say that even if one of us wasn't a co-editor!). The information in it is of critical importance to botanic gardens as they assess their living collections for plants of conservation concern and decide how best to manage these plants.

Walter, K.S. & Gillett, H.J. (eds.). 1998. 1997 IUCN Red List of threatened plants. Compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. IUCN - The World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland & Cambridge, UK. Ixiv + 862 pp. ISBN 2-8317-0328-X. £30 / \$45.

## BG-BASE Quick Tip

### Using Shift-F6 at TCL

When building a custom report from TCL using either the LIST or SELECT command, one of the more difficult things to remember are the names of the fields that you wish to retrieve or display. The SHIFT-F6 key combination can help. For example, if you type:

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:LIST PLANTS
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then press Shift-F6, you will see an alphabetical listing of all of the fields in the PLANTS file. You can then scroll through this list by using the up and down arrow keys, PgUp and PgDn keys, or by typing in a few letters of the field name and pressing <enter>. By moving your cursor to the desired field and pressing <enter>, you will "tag" this field for inclusion in your TCL command. The color of the field will change to red on the screen once a field has been chosen. To "untag" a field, simply press <enter> on that field again. More than one field can be selected for inclusion in the TCL command.

After tagging all of the desired fields, press F9 to return to TCL, at which point all of the fields you highlighted will be copied to the colon prompt. At this point you can edit the command further (for example, you might wish to add a "by" clause or a "with" clause, depending on the type of report), or you can run the command immediately by pressing <enter>. If you need to make further modifications after running the report, remember that you can press F2 at the colon prompt to recall that command for additional editing.

Please note that Shift-F6 displays all of the fields in a file, even those fields that were never intended to be used at TCL. For example, any fields that end with a .dflt extension are generally used in entry windows, and should not be used in a LIST or SELECT command. Also, the Shift-F6 combination will only function after you have typed in your TCL command and file name, such as SELECT NAMES Pressing Shift-F6 directly at the colon prompt will not give you the desired results.

NOTE: BG-BASE users who have subscribed to technical support also receive Tech Tips, a two-page insert to BG-BASE News containing additional tips and techniques for interacting with the system.

