



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SEATTLE IS NOW HOME TO SEED STORAGE FACILITY FOR WASHINGTON'S IMPERILED PLANTS**

#### *Construction is done at Center for Urban Horticulture facility*

SEATTLE, WASH., March 10, 2003 – Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) staff have begun using their new Miller Seed Vault to securely store seeds from Washington's imperiled, native plants. CUH collects and stores seeds as a participating institution in the Center for Plant Conservation.

“Stored seed and plant tissue is a valuable conservation resource,” said Kathryn Kennedy, Ph.D., executive director and president of the Center for Plant Conservation. “For species seriously declining in the wild, conservation seed banks keep restoration options open, as scientists can grow the species from stored seed, study it and hopefully restore it to its native habitat.”

The 200-square-foot Miller Seed Vault is equipped to store millions of seeds. The vault has two rooms and is located in the Douglas Research Conservatory at CUH, a department of the University of Washington. A small lab provides space where seeds will be cleaned, dried, weighed and packaged for long-term storage. The short-term storage room is temperature and humidity controlled for optimum storage. The laboratory room will contain freezers set at -20 degrees C. Seeds will germinate after more than 15 years of storage if they are kept at this temperature.

“This is such a valuable resource for the state of Washington,” said Sarah Reichard, Ph.D., director of CUH's Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program. “Washington has more than 460 rare species. We plan to collect and store seeds from the most imperiled plants first. Our goal is to obtain and store seeds that represent all of Washington's rare plants.”

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The Miller Charitable Trust, a private Seattle Foundation, has donated more than \$75,000 to build and staff the seed vault.

Staff and volunteers with the Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program collect seeds and prepare them for storage. The building of this seed vault is a natural extension of the program of rare plant research, rare plant monitoring and public education, said Dr. Reichard.

Berry Botanic Garden, in Portland, Ore., also maintains a seed bank that contains seeds representing imperiled plants that grow throughout the Pacific Northwest. Berry is also a participating institution of the Center for Plant Conservation.

The Center for Plant Conservation is dedicated solely to preventing the extinction of America's imperiled native flora. The center is a coalition of America's leading botanical institutions. By conducting conservation programs in horticulture, research, restoration, awareness and information exchange, the center's network is striving to save America's most imperiled plants from being lost forever. For more information about the Center for Plant Conservation, please visit [www.centerforplantconservation.org](http://www.centerforplantconservation.org).

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***Photos of the Miller Seed Vault are available. To request an electronic copy, e-mail [jessica.little@mobot.org](mailto:jessica.little@mobot.org).***