



For Immediate Release  
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## **Forbes honored for work with imperiled plants**

ST. LOUIS—Holly Forbes, curator at the University of California Botanical Garden, has won the 2011 Star Award from the Center for Plant Conservation, located at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, for her work with rare and imperiled plant species. The award was presented on April 8 in conjunction with the Center for Plant Conservation's national meeting, held this year in Denver, Colo., and recognizes individuals who demonstrate the concern, cooperation and personal investment needed to conserve imperiled native plants.

"Holly's contributions to the conservation program pervade every aspect of the Botanical Garden," said Dr. Paul Licht, director of the University of California Botanical Garden.

Forbes' tenacity and hard work have shown the recovery potential for even the smallest plant populations. Working with local partners, Forbes helped to augment plants such as the San Mateo thornmint, which exists in a single population close to an urban center and was once threatened by a proposed golf course.

Her contributions in seed banking, cultivation and restoration have clearly demonstrated the role of horticulture in saving imperiled species. Mt. Diablo buckwheat was thought to be extinct until the rediscovery of a tiny population in 2005 by a University of California, Berkeley graduate student. Since then, Forbes' team has worked with University of California researchers, California State Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to produce seeds that are being used in efforts to create more populations of the plant.

"Besides having full responsibility for curating our entire collection, she oversees the accession policy and is our main spokesperson for conservation issues – all this when she is not out in the field collecting seeds, cleaning seeds, following the propagation of our 'wards' or supervising the reintroduction programs derived from the seeds collected," Licht said.

Forbes' work has secured species facing imminent extinction, and has advanced conservation science. An example is her work with partners to establish new populations of the nearly-extinct Baker's larkspur. The only known natural population of this perennial herb is down to three flowering individuals due to roadside disturbance.

"I've known Holly for at least 15 years. It is a joy to watch the career of a real conservation hero," said Dr. Kathryn Kennedy, executive director for the Center for Plant Conservation.

"She has poured years of labor and passion in equal measure into work to help California's priceless native plants endure."

The Center for Plant Conservation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve and restore the imperiled plants of the United States to secure them from extinction. It has established a network of 36 leading botanical institutions across the country. By developing standards and guidance, conducting hands-on work and raising awareness, the Center and its partners strive to accomplish the research and restoration work needed to return these plants to their natural habitats. The Center coordinates the National Collection of Endangered Plants, securing seed from more than 750 of America's most vulnerable native plants, and is working on more than 200 restoration projects. The Center's program is managed by their national office in St. Louis, Mo. For additional information about the Center for Plant Conservation, visit [www.centerforplantconservation.org](http://www.centerforplantconservation.org).

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Photo by: David Kennedy

Dr. Kathryn Kennedy, executive director of the Center for Plant Conservation presents the 2011 Star Award to Holly Forbes, curator at the University of California Botanical Garden, for Forbes' work in conserving imperiled native plants.