

## **Project Update: May 2010**

In May 2009, the public organization “Ganji Tabiat” received financial support from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for the implementation of the project *Enhancing conservation of rare and endangered plant species by conduction of field researches and increasing the level of public awareness in Eastern Khatlon*. As part of the project, a demonstration plot “Alive Red Book” was organised in the Kulob Botanic Garden and some rare and endangered species of Kulob area were planted. In order to introduce students, pupils, other interested people and organisations to the current situation of rare and endangered species of eastern Khatlon that were included in the Red Book of Tajikistan, a Week of Open Doors was organized in the Kulob Botanic Garden.

The Week of Open Doors was officially opened on March 27th, 2010 by the project manager. In the opening ceremony, representatives from different spheres were invited to participate: representatives of Ecology Department at regional, town and district levels, representative of Government of Kulob town, directors of three schools, the dean and teachers of Kulob State University, faculties of Geography and Biology, Pedagogical and Medical colleges, radio “The 1<sup>st</sup> channel”, TV Kulob, TV The 1<sup>st</sup> channel of Tajikistan, UNDP, and Mission East.

The project manager described the project goals and objectives briefly as well as providing necessary information on Rufford Small Grants Foundation to participants. The project manager and coordinator informed participants about the current situation of rare and endangered species in eastern Khatlon and mentioned about the importance of protecting these plants. Prepared information leaflets were distributed to participants. The leaflets include brief information on natural characteristics of the selected species, their contribution in balancing the ecosystem, the reasons of their disappearance, their current situation and what to do to preserve them. After presentation of the project and necessary information on plants, participants were invited to visit the “Alive Red Book” demonstration plot and participants got acquainted with grown plants.

The representatives of Ecology Department, Government of Kulob town, UNDP and local television made speeches and noted that the issue is very important and, what is more, it was the first time it was highlighted by “Ganji Tabiat” in eastern Khatlon of Tajikistan. The Week of Open Doors gave an excellent opportunity to get feedback from other interested organisations and identify more problems on the one hand and potentials for overcoming challenges on the other. During his speech, the representative of the Ecology Department noted that in the last few years, people collect many herbs and flowers and sell them in the local markets which may cause the disappearance of all of them in 10-20 years. Moreover, to protect and conserve the rare and endangered species is not only the responsibility of Ecology Department, but every citizen of Kulyab area as well. Therefore, it is crucial to touch this issue and unite our sources and forces for conservation of these important plants of Kulyab area.

From 27<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2010, visitors from different educational departments, schools, university, local and international NGOs as well as individual people paid visit to Botanic Garden in order to see the “Alive Red Book”. Even pupils of secondary school # 13 of Muminobod district came to Botanic Garden with their teacher. Due to request of the

Director of Lyceum #1, the Week of Open Doors was prolonged for 2 more days to give the chance to other interested people and organisations for visit and it was lasted until 4<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

The Week of Open Doors was shown in 1<sup>st</sup> channel of Tajikistan, local television and it was in a live broadcast on local radio “The 1<sup>st</sup> channel” of Tajikistan in 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Furthermore, an article “Alive Red Book” was published in local newspaper “Kulyabskaya Pravda”.

In Tajikistanm, 2010 was announced as a Year of Science and Innovation Technology. Taking into account the importance of the conservation of rare and endangered species, the head of the Education Department of Kulob town, Mr. Amirov Hasan, requested Ganji Tabiat” to conduct lectures in the schools regarding the conservation of rare and endangered species of Kulob area. “Ganji Tabiat” accepted the request and will discuss the details with Mr. Amirov in the near future.

Overall, the Week of Open Doors was very educative and remained positive attitude of people towards local environment and nature as a whole. During the Week of Open Doors more than 500 people paid visit to the Kulob Botanic Garden to see the “Alive Red Book” demonstration plot. The method used was very effective and we have discovered other opportunities and ways to improve this direction in the future.

