

# Scotland, China Announce Plan to Preserve and Protect Herbs

Editorial Staff

Situated near the city of Lijiang, in the Yunnan Province in southwest China, lies the Yulong Xue Shan, or Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, one of the richest sources of herbs and botanicals on the planet. It's also the home of the Lijiang Botanic Garden and Research Station, where, for the past few years, scientists have attempted to document and categorize the thousands of plant species that grown on the mountain's slopes.

Unfortunately, continued growth and development in the region surrounding Yulong Xue Shan, combined with an increasing global demand for herbal medicine, have endangered the well-being of many plant species on and around the mountain to the point of extinction. To help limit the damage, the Scottish and Chinese governments have reached a scientific agreement that will help preserve the area's plant life through an exchange program between the research station and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh.

Under the exchange program, signed by First Minister Jack McConnell in Beijing, the Scottish Executive will fund £20,000 (approximately \$36,000) each year over a three-year period. The funds will allow people living in the Yulong Xue Shan area to travel to Edinburgh to learn modern techniques on plant conservation, cultivation and propagation. Another £15,000 (approximately \$27,000) will be used to fund a joint expedition between the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Kunming Institute of Botany to collect plant material for further study and analysis.

David Paterson, a curator at the Royal Botanic Gardens who will serve as co-director of the exchange program, emphasized that the preservation of endangered plants is just as important as the preservation of endangered animals.

"If these were animal body parts that folk were dealing in, there would be a huge outcry, but being plants, folk just think they go on growing by themselves," Paterson said.

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## Bastyr Reflexology Path Allows Public to Walk to Better Health

Bastyr University has opened what is believed to be the first publicly available traditional reflexology healing path in the nation. The path, which officially opened in September, was designed by Elizabeth Marazita, a licensed acupuncturist and doctoral student at Bastyr, and funded by Helen Higgen, a long-time friend and supporter of the university.

While reflexology paths are few and far between in the United States, they are a common sight in parks and gardens throughout Asia. "Just as we know what a football field is, everybody in China knows what a reflexology path is," Marazita explained.

The path is constructed based on the principles of reflexology, which links health and well-being to points on the feet, hands and ears. Reflexologists often use the foot as a guide to the rest of the body.

By locating tender areas on the feet, they apply pressure to areas that correspond to organs, muscles and nerves, and employ the therapy to help improve digestion and increase stamina and energy levels.

The reflexology path is three feet wide and 64 feet long, with benches set up nearby for those who need a break while walking. It was constructed using local river rocks placed in cement, and is located at the edge of Bastyr's medicinal herb garden, behind the university campus. Among the path's signature features are a concrete entrance with the words "Walk of Health" carved in Chinese, and a circular emblem that pays tribute to the five Chinese elements - Water, Earth, Wood, Metal and Fire.

In addition to serving the public, the path has applications for Bastyr's students. It will be used as a practical lab for reflexology coursework in Bastyr's natural medicine program, making it the first educational facility of its kind in the United States.

"The path is great because people can go down and do reflexology on their own feet just by walking on it," said Lisa Dowling, president of the Washington Reflexology Association. "It's like a type of self-care."

DECEMBER 2004