

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### EXPLORING LIFE ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL: CANOPY SEASON AT EDEN

The Eden Project is a 50-ha modern day 'botanical garden' in Bodelva, Cornwall, U.K., which opened to the public in 2000. Many of its 100,000 plants representing 5000 species grow within two landmark giant conservatories (FIGURES 1, 2). These biomes, constructed of 9-m hexagons, consist of galvanized steel frames covered with a triple layer of Ethylene Tetra Fluoro Ethylene Co-Polymer (ETFE) foil.

The Eden Project was founded to promote understanding of the vital relationship between plants and people, leading to responsible management of natural resources and a sustainable future. In keeping with this mission, "Exploring Life on a Different Level: Canopy Season at The Eden Project" is a 7-week educational program being held 13 September through 31 October 2004. The onsite event involves participants in workshops, theatrical and aerial performances, talks, debates, and creative activities dealing with forest canopy research. Eden is working with the Global Canopy Programme, Pro-Natura International, International Canopy Network (ICAN), and other groups to provide the canopy scientific community an opportunity to connect their treetop world with colleagues and the public.

Among the canopy research access methods displayed are a Tower Crane, IKOS, Canopy Bubble, Canopy Raft, Flybot, and Canopy Glider. A rolling program of events includes stories by canopy scientists, debates, and interactive projects to engage visitors and raise awareness of the science and biodiversity of forest canopies locally, nationally, and globally.

The first two weeks focused on canopy scientists, with the first Big Canopy Conversation on 16–18 September 2004, to provide an opportunity for the canopy community to exchange information and ideas. Canopy scientists interested in the program may contact [dmurray@edenproject.com](mailto:dmurray@edenproject.com).

Following the Big Canopy Conversation, the next three weeks focus on educating school children to raise awareness of the importance of canopy science and biodiversity. The program initiates and engages visitors, including young people and their families, in debate and discus-

sion of canopy biodiversity; the need for research in this area, the scientific adventure in exploring this unknown frontier, and canopy science methods and technologies. The final two weeks focus on Eden Project visitors (1.4 million annually) to illustrate canopy science methods, technological innovations, research, and findings and to demonstrate that science is fun, an adventure, and an exploration.

—Donald J. Murray  
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Donald Murray's interest in canopy science began in 1992 when he arrived at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, to begin a horticultural internship. He came seeking knowledge of tropical plants and received, as well, an introduction to canopy research. As an intern, he worked in all areas of Selby Gardens, including grounds, greenhouses, display areas, education, public events, herbarium, and plant taxonomy and systematics. He then returned on several occasions to continue work as a research intern. For four years, his botanical research concentrated on tropical trees and their canopies. He notes, "The links I formed with Selby Gardens and the steps I took to learn new research techniques expanded my canopy field experience." After working as a principal investigator in Belize and Peru, he returned to the U.K. in 1997 for a Master of Science degree in Pure and Applied Plant Fungal Taxonomy at the University of Reading. Afterward, he returned to Selby Gardens to take part in a field trip to Peru. He concludes, "My Selby Gardens training provided tropical experience that opened many doors. Upon returning to the U.K. in 1999, I took up the Director of Horticulture post at Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouses. This was my first senior management post, and, combined with horticultural and ecological experience prepared me to become Curator—Tropics of The Eden Project. Selby Gardens has influenced my career and helped prepare me for the challenge of my current position. I look forward to maintaining my links with Selby Gardens—a place my heart has never really left."

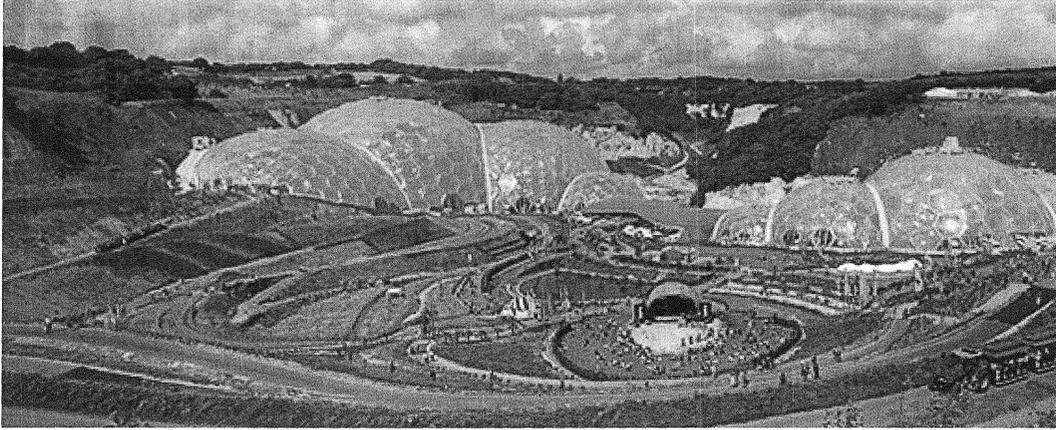


FIGURE 1. At the Eden Project, the Humid Tropics Biome (left), the world's largest greenhouse, covers 1.55 ha and is home to rain forest plants. The Temperate Biome, covering .65 ha, is filled with Mediterranean plants.



FIGURE 2. Inside the Humid Tropics Biome at the Eden Project.