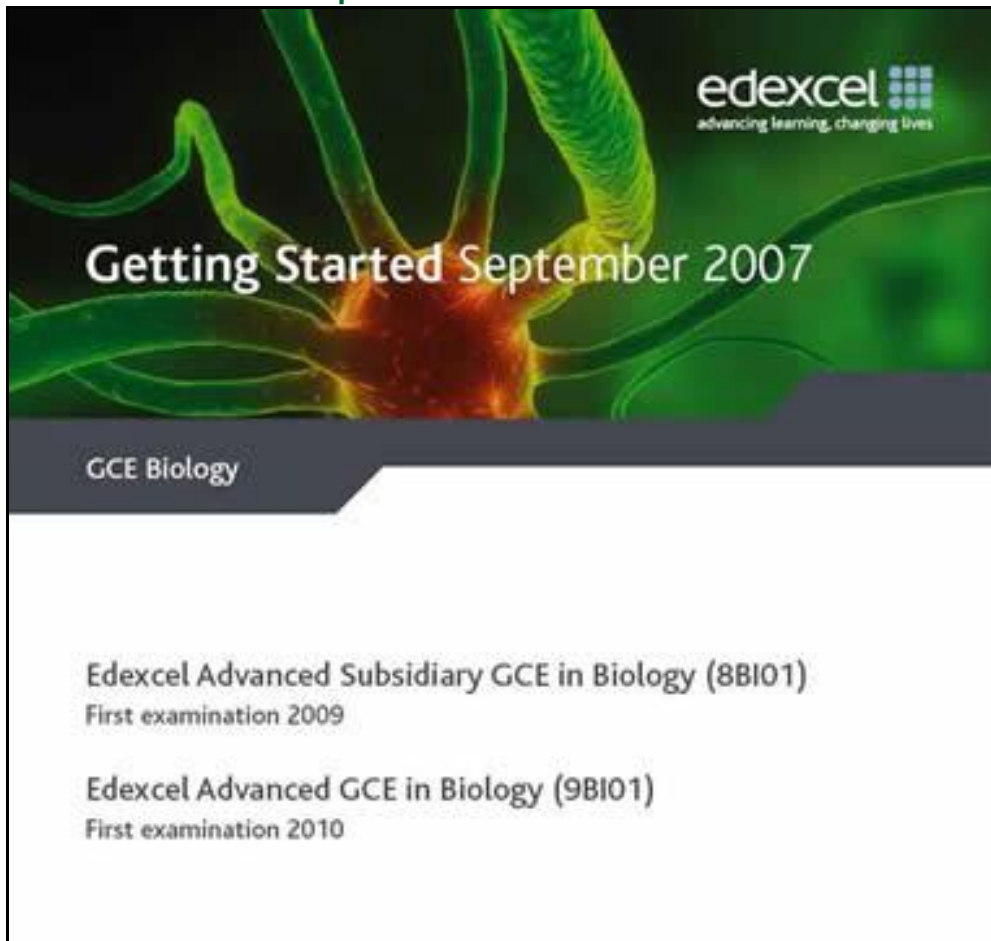


Gibraltar Botanic Gardens

News Archive 2007

1 December 2007

Gibraltar plant work in A-level curriculum



Work on plants carried out at the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens with the collaboration of GONHS (the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society) has been included in the recently published Edexcel GCE AS and A Level Biology curriculum for 2009 and 2010.

In a section on seed banks, the document reads:

Growing out

This allows some plants to be grown in the glasshouse to allow the production of 'fresher' seed to be placed in the bank. This is known as regeneration or multiplication. So far, mainly UK native species have been regenerated to improve stock and in support of English Nature's Species Recovery Programme. This has also been done for *Silene tomentosa*, a species thought to be extinct in the wild on the Rock of Gibraltar and reintroduced. (1) This successful research will lead to other examples in the future if viable seed is kept in seed banks. Some species that lose viability quickly will have to be repeatedly grown out to keep stocks fresh.

Both the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens and GONHS are pleased that their work in Gibraltar has caught the attention of the examination board and has been chosen, among thousands of similar initiatives around the world, as an example of successful conservation work.

11 November 2007

Monarchs back in the Gardens



A Monarch butterfly on *Asclepias*

C.Perez/GONHS

Monarch Butterflies are once again flying over the Alameda Gardens. These butterflies, originally from the Americas, and which later colonised the Canaries in the 1800s, established a breeding population in the Gardens in the early 2000s. The caterpillars fed on plants of *Asclepias curassavica*. They were a common sight in the Gardens for several years, until they were killed off during the cold spell in January 2005, which included the only day in recorded history when frost lay on the ground for several hours in parts of the

Gardens. Monarchs were seen once again in Gibraltar, in the gardens of the Convent, about three weeks ago, but during the past few days a few individuals have been seen again in the Botanic Gardens. It is hoped that they will have found the *Asclepias* plants and that they will once again establish a population here.



A Monarch caterpillar

C.Perez/GONHS

7 November 2007

New arrivals in the Wildlife Park



On the 6th of November the Alameda Wildlife Park welcomed the birth of a pair of Cotton-topped tamarin twins. The cotton-top tamarin is a small monkey about the size of a squirrel. It weighs less than 0.5 kg (1 lb). The proud parents, Itchy and Scratchy, were brought to the park in 2006 as part of a Breeding programme with Newquay Zoo, UK.

Cotton-top tamarins are one of three Amazonian species of tamarin and are found in a small area of northwest Colombia. They are listed as endangered. It is estimated that there are only between 300 and 1000 cotton-top tamarins left in the wild and there are 1800 in captivity.

Unlike humans, it is quite the norm for Tamarins to give birth to twins. To cope with this responsibility, both parents will take an active role in rearing the young. After the first week riding on mum, the babies will be passed over to the male, who will take over much of the hard work, very much a new age dad! When the youngsters grow up, they will remain with their parents and help to raise their siblings; this ensures they have experience in rearing offspring for their future reproduction. Parental behaviour is not instinctual but learned, and both males and females that are inexperienced are unsuccessful caregivers. Obviously this pair of tamarins has this valuable experience as they have settled into their parental roles with ease.

Cotton-top tamarins live for an average of 13.5 years, up to 24 years in captivity. In the wild, cotton-top tamarins eat insects, fruit, plant juices and nectar. At the Wildlife Park, staff aims to follow the animals natural diet as closely as possible, feeding the tamarins, fresh fruit, mealworms, crickets and arabic gum.

Visit the Alameda Wildlife Park to see the tiny new arrivals, open every day between 10am and 4.30pm.



21 October 2007

Director live on BBC Radio

Garden Director Dr John Cortes was interviewed live for 30 minutes this morning by Johnnie Amos on BBC Radio Northampton, in the second instalment of a new weekly series dedicated to Botanic Gardens of the Commonwealth.

John answered questions on the history, plants and work carried out on the Gardens and the Botanic Garden team was congratulated on their work and in how the Alameda gardens are becoming increasingly known by garden lovers around the world and in the UK in particular.