

## César Gómez Campo

The late César Gómez Campo was justly renowned for his innovative work on plant conservation in Spain. His achievements include the establishment in 1966 of the seed bank (ETSIA-UPM now BGV-UPM) for native Spanish species at the Polytechnic University of Madrid, the first of seed bank in the world to be devoted to the conservation of wild species. He pioneered novel seed storage approaches and encouraged the setting up of wild plant seed banks in other parts of Spain and in other countries using the techniques he had developed. He travelled widely in Spain and throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East to collect seed. The BGV-UPM seed bank now contains samples of 350 threatened Spanish species and subspecies, about 25% of the threatened flora of Spain, either collected by him or at his instigation. Gómez Campo had a lifelong interest in Crucifers and studied various aspects of their agronomy, physiology, taxonomy and conservation. He established a collection of crucifers. He edited a major work, *Plant Conservation in the Mediterranean Area* (1985). He was also editor of the first Red Book of Threatened Plants of Spain (1987) and of the Canary islands (1996). He was enormously influential and inspired generations of students to become active in conservation programmes. The leading role that Spain occupies today in conservation in the Mediterranean region is largely due to his efforts. He received many awards in Spain and can rightly be regarded as the dean of Spanish plant conservation. Professor César Gómez Campo died in Madrid on September 5, 2009.

I have pleasure in attaching my confidential letter of support for the nomination of the late Professor César Gómez Campo as a Guardian of Diversity.

Best regards

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17 March 2010

Biodiversity for Life Organization

**To whom it may concern**

**Professor César Gómez Campo**

I have great pleasure in supporting the nomination of the late Professor César Gómez Campo as a posthumous Guardian of Diversity in the Mediterranean.

Professor Gómez Campo was renowned for his innovative work in plant conservation in Spain. His achievements included the establishment in 1966 of the seed bank (ETSIA-UPM, now BGV-UPM) for native Spanish species at the Polytechnic University of Madrid, the first of its kind in the world. Seed samples from the bank have been used in a wide range of conservation and reintroduction programmes. He pioneered novel seed storage approaches and encouraged the setting up of wild plant seed banks in other parts of Spain and in other countries using the techniques he had developed. He travelled widely in Spain and in other parts of the Mediterranean and in Middle East to collect seed. The BGV-UPM seed bank now contains samples of 350 threatened Spanish species and subspecies, representing almost a quarter of the threatened flora of Spain, either collected by him or at his instigation.

He had a life-long interest in Crucifers (Brassicaceae) and studied various aspects of their agronomy, physiology biology, taxonomy and conservation. He established a germplasm collection of Crucifers and produced a list of these from 1969 onwards, published by the Instituto de Investigaciones Agrarias from the 6<sup>th</sup> edition in 1974 and subsequently.

He organized and edited a major work *Plant Conservation in the Mediterranean Area* (1985), the first synthesis of the conservation issues and problems in the region. He was editor of the first Red Book of threatened plants of Spain (1987) and of the Canary Islands (1996).

He was enormously influential and inspired and encouraged generations of students in Spain to develop conservation programmes. The leading role that Spain occupies today in Mediterranean conservation is largely a testimony to his efforts. He received many awards in Spain including the National Environment Award in 1994 and can rightly be regarded as the doyen of Spanish plant conservation. I can think of no more suitable candidate for recognition as a Guardian of Diversity in the Mediterranean, a description that could have been coined specifically for him.

## VernonHHeywood

Vernon Hilton Heywood

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Formerly Chief Scientist, IUCN and Founding Director of Botanic Gardens Conservation International.



