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INFORMATION SHEET

Background

You are being invited to participate in this survey which is part of a PhD project titled ‘**Garden plants: a threat to the natural environment due to climate change?**’ This research is being conducted by Tomos Jones, a NERC SCENARIO PhD student at the University of Reading, supervised by Dr Alastair Culham, Dr Brian Pickles, and by Dr Eleanor Webster at the RHS.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research will investigate the possible impacts of climate change on the future distribution of garden plants and their interaction with the natural environment in Britain and Ireland. The aim of this survey is to gather information on which garden plants (as non-native plants) are perceived to be a future threat to the natural environment in different parts of Britain and Ireland.

Who is eligible, to participate in the study?

This initial survey has been sent to BSBI vice-county (VC) recorders as you have good knowledge and experience of plant distribution in your VC. There will be opportunities for the wider BSBI membership, and the general public, to engage with this PhD project at a later date.

How can you be involved?

You are invited to complete this online survey which should take 5-15 minutes to complete. If you would rather complete a hard-copy of the survey, please contact me with your postal address. They can be returned to the address provided above.

Do I have to take part?

Participating in this survey is voluntary and there is no obligation on VC recorders to participate. You can withdraw at any time without detriment.

Confidentiality, storage and disposal of information

The survey is split into Section A and Section B. Section A focuses on your attitudes towards garden plants in Britain and Ireland generally, for which the data will be completely anonymised. Section B focuses on garden plants in your VC and this data will be analysed with reference to the individual VCs (in order to analyse distribution). For that reason, although no VC recorder will be connected

directly to either the results or analysis, it is not possible to guarantee complete anonymity because the name of each VC recorder is freely available on the BSBI website. You will be given the option of giving your name at the end of the survey, which would only be used for the purposes of acknowledgments.

The online survey will be conducted using Bristol Online Surveys (with which the University has a licence). Data will be stored securely on a password-protected University account and will not be transferred onto any personal computer/laptop.

What will the results of the study be used for?

This survey will inform subsequent elements of the PhD, including computational modelling and a citizen science initiative that will encourage people to observe patterns of garden plants naturalising ‘beyond their garden fence’. It will be an opportunity for the wider BSBI membership, and the general public, to also engage with this PhD project at a later date. The results from the survey might be used in published research and will be made available to BSBI members through the BSBI’s social media platforms and with an exhibit at the BSBI AEM 2018.

Who has reviewed the study?

This survey has been reviewed by the School of Biological Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Reading and has been given a favourable opinion for conduct.

Contact details for further questions, or in the event of a complaint

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the project further, please email Tomos on mk818656@reading.ac.uk.

Thank you for your help.