

Preserving the natural habitats of endangered flora must be a first priority. However, when natural habitats suffer from severe environmental damage and can no longer support particular plants, the flora can be transported to and cultivated in artificial growing environments. This is called “ex-situ conservation” and has proven to be an effective means for preventing many wild plants from becoming completely extinct. The goal is to preserve the natural genetic diversity within each species, and extreme care is always taken to ensure that the genes of one species or regional variety are not mixed with those of closely related forms.

In addition to displaying rare and unusual plants in the garden, Shinjuku Gyoen also cultivate plants to use in research and to protect genetic resources. Ecological research is carried out on the interactions of plants with each other and with their environment. Large botanical gardens serve as centers for plant conservation, taxonomy, and education by combining collections of research materials, preserved botanical specimens, and the collections of living plants.

In addition, Shinjuku Gyoen, as a member of Japan Association of Botanical Gardens, are working on preserving endangered species and conducting research in support of conservation activities. The role of botanical gardens will only increase as the need to protect endangered flora from ecological damage grows ever greater.