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Successful ex situ conservation of *Nymphaea candida*

Nymphaea candida J. Presl & C. Presl is a perennial herbaceous plant occurring in Xinjiang, Siberia, Central Asia and Europe. This species exhibits several potentially valuable medicinal properties and has ornamental value, but it has declined as a result of habitat degradation and loss, and collection. Globally, the number of mature individuals is < 10,000 and is decreasing. In China, this species is categorized as a national second-class protected wild plant. Although it is categorized as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, it is categorized as Endangered on the China Biodiversity Red List–Higher Plant Volume.

In August 2021, we discovered a wild population of *N. candida* in Gongliu County, Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture in Xinjiang. We took samples and the species was introduced and cultivated in Yili Botanical Garden. The cultivated *Nymphaea candida* seedlings developed leaves during April–May 2022, and flowered during June–July. The flowers open in the afternoon and close in the evening, for 3–4 days. The plants bore fruit during August–September 2022, and we were able to collect the seeds. In November, the stems and leaves withered and died.

The successful flowering and fruiting of *N. candida* in Yili Botanical Garden demonstrates the potential for ex situ conservation of this species. This success provides a practical foundation for establishing artificial cultivation centres and for future reintroductions of the species. We are conducting a comprehensive study of its genetics, reproductive biology, physiological ecology, medicinal value and ecology.



Propagated *Nymphaea candida* flowering at Yili Botanical Garden in late June 2022. Photo: Kaiyun Guan.

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Snow Leopard Network: 20 years of collaboration among practitioners

The Snow Leopard Network (snowleopardnetwork.org), a global group dedicated to snow leopard *Panthera uncia* conservation, is commemorating 2 decades of accomplishments since its inception in 2002. Initiated at the Snow Leopard Survival Summit in Seattle, USA, with 58 experts from 17 countries, the Network continues to grow and to play a pivotal role in safeguarding the snow leopard in High Asia. Current membership stands at 621 individuals and 31 organizations. As new challenges and opportunities arise, collaborative and innovative solutions are more crucial than ever.

Several key milestones have shaped the Network's success. The journey began in 2000 with the initiation of the Snow Leopard Survival Strategy, one of the first comprehensive approaches to address the various threats facing snow leopards across all 12 range countries (McCarthy & Chapron, 2003, *Snow Leopard Survival Strategy*, International Snow Leopard Trust and Snow Leopard Network). Conservationists from across the species' range and from elsewhere took part in a participatory process that identified threats, knowledge gaps and actions to address them, leading to the convening of the Snow Leopard Survival Summit in 2002. The Snow Leopard Network was established at this event, setting up a defined structure comprising elected members of the Snow Leopard Network Steering Committee and appointing a network Executive Director from the Snow Leopard Trust.

One of the Network's initial tasks was to create a comprehensive bibliography comprising publications in the

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