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Seeds for the Future

How does the article argue for the importance of seed banks?

1 **Seed Banks** Living creatures rely on plants not only for food,
2 but for the very air we breathe and the clean water we drink.
3 In a laboratory in England, about an hour from London, an
4 ambitious project in botany* is underway. It is happening at
5 the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB). This is a state-of-the-art
6 facility for collecting, studying, and preserving seeds from
7 plants all over the world. It boasts large underground cold
8 rooms. In them, scientists have been accumulating hundreds of
9 thousands of botanical species.

* **botany**
branch of
science that
deals with
plants and
plant life

10 **Which Seeds...** The botanists at MSB target plants most at risk from
11 climate change and from habitat destruction. They collaborate with
12 botanical gardens and other seed banks across 80 countries in this effort.
13 MSB strives to acquire plants before they become extinct. They provide
14 optimum circumstances to safeguard the seeds for centuries to come.
15 This will ensure their survival into the future. Botanists believe that with
16 endangered seeds safely stored, they can regenerate them as needed.

17 **...and Why** Scientific understanding always moves forward. Because the
18 botanists at MSB protect saved seeds, they can one day sprout plants to use
19 in as-yet undiscovered applications. For example, medical advances might
20 suggest new plant-based uses against diseases or life-threatening conditions.
21 Or botanists might regenerate drought-resistant plants that could be
22 supplied to regions where water becomes scarce.

23 **Challenging Goal** The stated goal of
24 the Millennium Seed Bank is to collect
25 25 percent of the world's plant species by
26 2020. So they are gathering seeds from
27 Kentucky to Kyrgyzstan. MSB currently
28 has more than two billion seeds in
29 storage. But with close to 100,000 other
30 plant species facing extinction, the
31 mission is a race against time.



Botanist at MSB sorting seed samples