

Horticultural Plants and Horticulturists of China

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Four years ago, China operated Shanghai Maglev Train, which ground speed could reach 501 km/hr. Today, the development of China in all areas is the same as her ground transportation, at the speed between bicycles (16 km/hr) and maglev train. Horticulture is not an exception. I have explored Chinese plants with great horticultural potentials for at least 10 months since 2002. During my trips, I also had the opportunities to exchange ideas with many Chinese horticulturists. China indeed nourishes many potential horticultural plants, which could be introduced to the rest of the world and improve our daily life. From heirloom vegetables to diversity of fresh fruits, from living fossil, dawn redwood, to newly discovered red magnolia, from traditional tea oil camellia to 27 new golden camellia species, China has so many new horticultural crops to offer. With pressure of habitat loss, it is imperative that we should preserve these natural treasures and manage to bring them to the worldwide attention. Chinese horticulturists, such as Jinyu Chen (mei flower), Huairui Shu (apple), Mingzhu Wu (melon), Xiuxin Deng (citrus), Hongwen Huang (kiwi), and Qixiang Zhang (ornamentals), have contributed tremendously on major horticultural crop germplasm collection and breeding. With so many minor horticultural crops, China needs to educate many more horticultural professionals and invests more capitals for horticultural research and development. General public knows little of horticultural research findings and national extension service should be established for helping and educating horticultural crop growers and consumers. Recent advances in Chinese horticulture mean opportunities. It is right time to explore your niche fields in China and collaborate with Chinese horticulturists. Together, we can bring much better horticultural products for our challenging world.