

Notes from ...

...the garden

Horticulture interns at the Garden design their own personal projects. To explore the relationship between horticulture and plant conservation, I designed a project this past summer to follow the life cycle of a rare plant under cultivation.

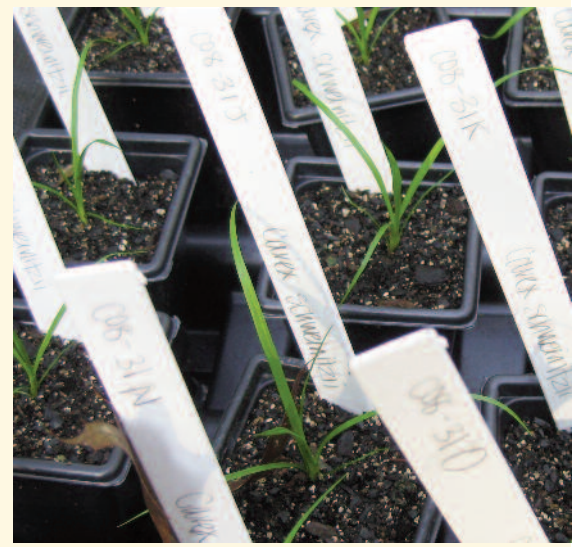
I worked closely with the Society's Conservation Biology department, which operates a seed bank that preserves the seeds of rare and endangered plants from New England. Throughout the year, they conduct germination trials that test the viability of the seeds. The seeds are germinated on dishes of agar (a gelatinous medium derived from seaweed) in the growth chamber, which controls the light and temperature conditions necessary for germination.

I monitored the seeds in the growth chamber for germination and mold con-

tamination. Upon germination, we cut the seedlings from the agar medium and transferred them into two-inch pots. Managing the sun exposure and moisture levels for such small, delicate transplants was a sensitive task—they're so vulnerable at this stage!

My goal was to locate the plants in the Rare and Endangered Plant Garden for educational purposes. I had expected to transplant the seedlings into the Garden this fall. However, they were too small for transplanting and will have to winter over in the greenhouse.

The project helped lay the ground work for the transfer of seedlings germinated from the seed bank into the Rare Plant Garden. By collaborating with Horticulture and Conservation staff as well as volunteers, I was able to expand my knowledge of rare



IN THE BEGINNING: Anna's recently transplanted rare plant seedlings upclose. Each plant is labeled and tracked with an accession number on the tag. With plant record software, the horticulturalists track each seedling individually, from germination through its life in the Garden.

plants, rare and endangered plant propagation, and seed collection and storage.

Upon the completion of my internship, I feel satisfied knowing that these rare plant seedlings will remain part of the Garden in the Woods botanical collection. 🌱

— ANNA MULLIGAN, HORTICULTURE INTERN, SUMMER 2008