Give Plants a Chance

Consider the dwarf lake iris: it may not seem to have much in common with the giant panda, but both are at risk of extinction. The Center for Plant Conservation, a nationwide network of thirty-six arboretums and gardens, aims to recover more than 700 species of vanishing flora—hibiscus and larkspur, gardenia and phlox—by securing seeds and restoring them to their native habitats. Support the center through membership (from $35) or sponsorship of an endangered plant in your area ($10,000; partial sponsorships are also accepted). 314-577-9450; centerforplantconservation.org.

Jane Garmey

Forest for the Trees

During the past century and a half, logging and real-estate development have decimated America’s ancient redwood forests: of the original two million acres of these arboreal titans ranging from central California to southern Oregon, only 5 percent remain. Thanks to the San Francisco–based Save the Redwoods League, however, tens of thousands of acres of coast redwoods—200- to 300-foot-tall behemoths that can live for two millennia—and giant sequoias, with trunks ten yards wide, have been protected over the course of ninety-one years. With the aid of private contributions, the league develops various preservation programs, such as purchasing forests from timber companies and donating them to the California State Parks system; it also gives research grants to scientists for studying what redwoods need to thrive. You can help by becoming a member (from $19) or establishing a bequest; the most meaningful act is to plant a seedling in honor of a loved one ($50).

“Redwoods are majestic, powerful and beautiful,” says executive director Ruskin Hartley. “But they’re also fragile: a logger can come in, and in one day they can be gone.” 888-836-0005; savetheredwoods.org.

Mandy Behbehani