

solvents with aqueous cleaners, and dry-ice-based cleaning. Reusable part-shipping containers and the refurbishing and remanufacturing of returned parts are Xerox's world-wide practices. The Corporation was the first to introduce two-sided copiers and laser printers.

Xerox Corporation's 'Environmental Leadership Program' addresses all aspects of company operations with increased focus on environmental product-design and resource conservation. 'Cradle-to-grave' life-cycle design requirements have been adopted to minimize environmental impact and provide savings through parts' recovery, remanufacturing, and recycling.

Environmental education and training are keys to achieving Corporation policy objectives. Environmental information reaches shareholders, employees, customers, and the community at large. Xerox Corporation's Social Service Leave and Community Involvement Programs encourage employees to work on community projects, in-

cluding environmental protection. 'Business Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling', a comprehensive 'how-to' manual on implementing waste reduction, was originally intended for in-house use but is now widely distributed.

In its commitment to continuous improvement for a better environment, Xerox Corporation has adopted the belief that 'environmental health and safety concerns take priority over economic considerations', and that environmental responsibility is 'a race without a finish-line'. In the words of its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Paul A. Allaire, such an approach '... makes good business sense for Xerox Corporation'.

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The Healing Forest Conservancy

In 1989, the non-profit Healing Forest Conservancy was founded to promote the conservation of tropical forests and the welfare of tropical forest peoples, both of which are, today, threatened with extinction. It has been calculated that, every second of every day, a tropical forest the size of a football field is destroyed, eroding the biological diversity of life itself, and diminishing forests' ability to moderate climate and maintain ecosystem — and ultimately ecocomplex — functions. Forest peoples thereby lose their homelands and Humankind loses generations of knowledge and the use of forest resources. A vicious cycle of poverty, destructive population and consumption practices, poor land-use, and inappropriate development policies, has doubled the rate of tropical deforestation in the past decade.

Yet tropical forests — habitat of almost half the plant and animal species on planet Earth — represent veritable laboratories of critical biological resources of Humankind — medicinal plants. The amount and value of this wealth of biological diversity is still uncalculated, even though as large a proportion as one-fourth of the prescription drugs on the market in the US today are plant-derived. It is conservatively estimated that, in 1989 alone, American consumers spent over US \$8 thousand millions on prescription drugs which contained active ingredients that are still extracted from higher plants.

Peoples who have traditionally lived in or near tropical forests represent libraries of information, accumulated over millennia, on the use of plants for medicinal purposes. The World Health Organization estimates that, today, 80% of the population of developing countries — about 4 thousand million people — depend on traditional medicine for their primary health-care. Likewise, traditional knowledge of plant use in the gene-rich developing world proves valuable to the gene-poor developed world when scientists focus this knowledge to lead their plant research. Of the 120 active compounds that are currently isolated from higher plants and used in Western medicine, 74% have the same therapeutic use as in traditional societies.

This knowledge is embedded in forest peoples' cultural systems which are as rich and diverse as their biological resources — and as threatened! Since 1900, due to outside encroachment and loss of habitat, extinction has been the fate of an average of one indigenous culture each year in the Amazon region alone. As the

medicinal value of this biocultural diversity for present and future generations world-wide becomes more and more apparent, its conservation becomes more and more urgent.

In response to this *lacuna* in the capability of fulfilling human needs, the Healing Forest Conservancy was founded through a donation from Shaman Pharmaceuticals, Inc., to secure the long-term survival of the traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and the biological diversity of tropical forests. Shaman is a Northern California-based company focused on the discovery and development of novel pharmaceuticals derived from higher plants. The Conservancy will funnel part of the profits generated by the commercialization of plant-derived compounds to the people and countries where medicinal plant research and harvesting are conducted. The Healing Forest Conservancy responds to immediate needs of its counterpart enterprises as well, through development and support of projects that:

- (a) promote sustainable development by local harvesting of natural products in forests which might otherwise be cut for timber or cleared for cattle-grazing;
- (b) train local people as parataxonomists in methods for species collection, identification, and inventory, of local genetic resources;
- (c) build and strengthen indigenous institutions through collegiate relationships;
- (d) exchange and merge traditional and non-traditional scientific methods and processes;
- (e) empower local people through education and communication between groups and the outside world;
- (f) promote the health and welfare of indigenous cultures; and
- (g) include sponsoring and administering the Richard Evans Schultes Award 'for outstanding contributions to the field of ethnobotany or to indigenous peoples' issues related to ethnobotany'.*

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* See also the following item in this issue. The Conservancy is now accepting nominations for the 1994 Richard Evans Schultes Award. — Ed.