

## **Letter of Support from the President of the Republic of Finland**

The United Nations has designated this year as the International Year of Biodiversity. The biosphere differs greatly in different parts of the world, and it can be easy to forget about the diversity of our own local environment when we think about more exotic regions. But respecting and cherishing the biodiversity of our own surroundings is the crucial issue. To do this, we need knowledge as well as the will to act.

NatureGate's innovative internet-based species identification service makes it easy and enjoyable for everyone to discover Finnish nature and recognise species. It is suitable for both children and adults – and is something the whole family can investigate together. The NatureGate website combines expert knowledge with superb photographs to help users refresh their knowledge and also learn new things. The use of high-speed techniques brings a new dimension to the lifelong process of learning about biology and sustainable development.

NatureGate is a scientific, technological, social and educational innovation that has been developed in Finland for more than 20 years – and for which there is also surely great international demand. Such new innovations are important for the whole world.

With best wishes inspired by our shared love of nature,

Tarja Halonen  
*President of the Republic of Finland*