

Progress Report CF 2011-111

The Western Australian Plant Census and Australian Plant Census

Plant Science and Herbarium

Project Core Team

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| Project Team | granted |
| Program Leader | granted |
| Directorate | granted |

The Western Australian Plant Census and Australian Plant Census

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Context

The Western Australian Plant Census (a component of WACensus) is the authoritative database of all names of plants in Western Australia, including synonyms created by taxonomic change. It is continually updated to reflect changes in our knowledge of the flora. The census constitutes the fundamental master list for many DEC processes and datasets, including the Declared Rare and Priority Flora databases maintained by the Species and Communities Branch, the Herbarium's specimen database, the Max database utility, FloraBase and NatureMap.

The Australian Plant Census (APC) is a project of the Council of Heads of Australian Herbaria, designed to provide a consensus view of all Australian plant taxa. Until now plant censuses have been only state-based, which has made it difficult to obtain authoritative information on what species occur in Australia as a whole and to obtain accurate national statistics. In addition to working systematically through the vascular plant families, the APC process provides for updates as taxonomic changes or new findings are published. The consensus also extends from family and genus level to an overall classification of the plants that occur in Australia. As the APC project continues, the Western Australian Plant Census is updated to reflect the consensus view.

Aims

Maintain an accurate and up-to-date listing of all plants and fungi in Western Australia, including both current names and synonyms, and integrate with the national consensus.

Progress

- 395 plant names were added to the plant census, comprising 274 names formally published and 121 phrase names; 479 other edits were made to the census, and 51 species were assigned conservation status.
- WACensus updates were regularly distributed to over 253 registered Max users on a quarterly basis.
- Major families processed for the APC were Ericaceae, Cyperaceae and Malvaceae.
- An update list consisting of two years of accumulated taxonomic changes was processed.

Management implications

- All DEC systems using Western Australian plant names are based on, or integrated with, the WACensus database.
- Staff maintaining plant databases can use Max and the regular WACensus updates to check name currency.

Future directions

The census currently includes names of all vascular plants, lichens, moss and algae, and future work will add liverworts and fungi.