

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
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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 Parks and Wildlife processes and datasets, including the Threatened 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 Australasian 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, to obtain accurate national statistics, and to deal with differences in opinion and knowledge for taxa that cross state boundaries. 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 timely listing of all plants, algae and fungi in Western Australia, including both current names and synonyms, and integrate this with the national consensus.

Progress

- 301 plant names were added to the plant census, comprising 283 names formally published and 18 informal names and 773 other edits were made to the census.
- WACensus updates were regularly distributed to 257 registered Max users.
- The last major family processed for the APC (Orchidaceae) was progressed and is still ongoing.
- An APC update list is being finalised covering latest changes to a number of taxa in families including; Asteraceae, Cyperaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae, Hypoxidaceae, Lamiaceae, Liderniaceae, Myrtaceae and Phrymaceae.

Management implications

- All Parks and Wildlife 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 smuts and additional fungi.