

Progress Report CF 2011-110

The Western Australian Herbarium's specimen database

Plant Science and Herbarium

Project Core Team

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Project Team	granted
Program Leader	required
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Context

The Western Australian Herbarium's specimen database (WAHerb) allows staff at the Herbarium to manage and maintain the Herbarium's collections, and provides core data on the distribution, ecology and morphology of all taxa for the Department and the community, through the FloraBase and NatureMap websites. Data from the specimen database is provided to researchers, consultants and community members on request, and to the Australasian Virtual Herbarium (AVH), Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) on a regular basis.

Aims

Capture, maintain and validate spatial, phenological, population and habitat data for all the Herbarium's collections, enabling curation of the collection and providing core data for FloraBase and Departmental decision support systems and research.

Progress

- 11,486 records were added to WAHerb, including 811 Priority Flora and 147 Threatened Flora. The following projects and significant collections were databased: Pilbara Biological Survey, South Western Australian Transitional Transect, Forestcheck Monitoring Program, G Byrne and K Syme.
- Regularly provided customised specimen data requests (species lists and label data) to Departmental officers, researchers and the public.
- 83,393 specimen records were edited during this period as part of activities aimed at ensuring the collection is scientifically valid, up-to-date and aligned with the Department's conservation codes.

Management implications

- WAHerb represents the most comprehensive database on Western Australian plants available and provides a source of information that managers can use for updates on biodiversity or conservation status, plant identification, clarification of plants in an area, and identification of knowledge gaps. This ensures that all research and management activities use update and valid plant species names.

Future directions

- Adding to, timely editing and validation of herbarium specimen records to maintain currency and connectivity between the Herbarium collection, the Western Australian Plant Census (WACensus) and external databases including AVH and ALA.