

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, Max, 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. The APC provides the key name list for the Atlas of Living Australia.

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

- 303 plant names (281 formally published and 22 informal names) were added to WACensus.
- 1249 other edits were made to the WACensus.
- WACensus updates were regularly distributed to 252 registered Max users.
- Name changes in the APC were reviewed for the Federal *EPBC Act* list of Threatened flora and communicated the state viewpoint in discussions on APC updates.
- Annual records of changes to WACensus were published in *Nuytsia*.
- The national plant names database was edited for taxonomic changes relevant to Western Australia.

Management implications

- WACensus provides users with a single, authoritative official list of plants for Western Australia, with their currently accepted classification, scientific name, correct spelling and authority. Delivery of this information is through the FloraBase website, Max (departmental software for information based on taxonomic names) and other linked databases or websites.
- Users of plant names are able to access WACensus information to ensure that current information on names, taxonomic acceptance and occurrence in Western Australia is available for conservation status lists, publications, signage and legal requirements. Outdated names can be traced to their current status or updated name through WACensus.
- WACensus feeds Western Australia information to national biodiversity systems such as the Atlas of Living Australia, the Australian Plant Census (National Species List) and the Australasian Virtual Herbarium.

Future directions

- Provide a comprehensive and up to date census across all plant groups.

- Finalise modifications based on the globally accepted list of families and family circumscriptions of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG) IV (2016) and APC.