



Department of **Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions**

Western Australian Herbarium

Western Australian Herbarium Visitor Information

The Western Australian Herbarium is a part of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. It is responsible for the description and documentation of Western Australia's botanical biodiversity, including its plants, algae and fungi.

The systematic sequence followed at the Herbarium for vascular specimens in both the Research Collection and Reference Herbarium follows the ordinal phylogeny of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APGIV 2016). This sequence can be viewed at <http://florabase.dbca.wa.gov.au/articles/>

Located at the Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre (17 Dick Perry Drive, Kensington), the Herbarium is open to visitors during normal working hours Monday – Friday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, except Public Holidays. To use the Herbarium outside these hours, you will need permission from the Curator or Collections Manager.

Access to the Herbarium including the Research Collection requires prior approval from the Curator or the Collections Manager and registration following an induction that explains specimen handling procedures, quarantine, security and evacuation protocols. Registration is for one year, and may be terminated if the terms and conditions outlined at registration are breached.

Please sign the Herbarium register at reception each day on entry, and again when you leave. A security swipe card will be issued daily at sign in. Please return the card to reception at the end of each day. Further security swipe cards will not be issued unless the first has been returned. Security swipe cards are not transferable, and card holders must not allow other people to use their card. Please report the loss of a security swipe card immediately to reception.

General Information

Herbarium specimens are vulnerable to damage from a range of insect pests. Visitor's specimens required for study in the herbarium are to be frozen for a minimum period of 3 days by the herbarium, or placed in a snap lock bag. Refer to the *PERTH Integrated Pest Management Plan* for further details.

The Collections Manager will allocate bench space and equipment for visitors.

Eating or drinking is not permitted in the Research Collection or storage areas.

Smoking is not permitted in the building or within 5 metres of any part of the building.

Familiarise yourself with the emergency exits and evacuation routes. In an emergency follow the directions given by fire wardens, moving as quickly as possible to the nearest exit.

The loans and type room have gas fire suppression; ensure you move quickly through these areas in time of emergency.

Do not open fire exits unless there is an emergency.

Please consider other patrons of the Herbarium at all times:

- Speak in quiet tones
- Switch mobile phones to silent
- Take phone calls outside
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Don't monopolise resources at the expense of others
- If other patrons' behaviour seems inappropriate, please inform staff.

Visitors wishing to use specimen driers and other facilities located in the Accession Preparation Laboratory will need to make prior arrangements with the Collections Manager.

Specimen Information

Specimens processed prior to 1974 may have been treated with mercuric chloride, or prior to that with LPCP (Laurylpentachlorophenate). Take care when handling the specimen; the mounting sheet is not contaminated.

Specimens in the Research Collection are kept in sealed plastic boxes to reduce the possibility of insect and water damage. Warning: full boxes may be heavy and weigh as much as 7 kg.

- Use a ladder to remove a box from specimen racks if the box is above shoulder height.
- Prior to moving a box, ensure the front lid is in the locked position.
- The box is to remain horizontal at all times.
- Carry the box holding the sides, with the lid facing your body.
- Carry one box at a time or stack multiple boxes onto a trolley.
- Do not mix specimens between boxes without prior permission; return specimens to same box they were removed from.
- Place the box back in the same position as removed (checking the address on the label).
- Check the lid is in the locked position.
- Be gentle when opening, closing, handling and moving boxes; abrupt, heavy and rough movement damages specimens.

Please take care when handling specimens:

- Ensure hands are clean so dirt is not spread over the herbarium sheets.
- Sheets and folders must not be turned over, tipped upside down, placed on end or bent.
- Ensure the specimen is inserted back into the original flimsy, and aligned neatly within.
- Slide sheets across to view the next one, never fold over like the pages of a book.
- Neatly tidy the specimens before returning to the folder.
- Place, not slide, the lowest folder back into a box.
- Do not slide folders between other folders, place within a box
- Do not slide specimens into a folder or between other specimens, remove the folder and place the specimen within it.
- Maintain a sensible number of specimens within a folder.
- Hold folders horizontal when returning to the box, to ensure it doesn't jam up against the moulding within the top of the box.
- Ensure the specimens are placed all the way into the box before closing the lid.
- Do not place heavy objects on, or lean on specimens.
- Place specimens down with care, do not drop or knock piles of specimens.

- DO NOT OVERFILL A BOX: A box is considered full when the top folder within a box is gently resting on the top inside of the box (this may not be obvious from the front of the box). If any resistance is met when placing a folder into a box then the box is overfull, incorporate into another box or alert Collections staff.
- Always use a support (plastic tray) when carrying specimens removed from boxes.
- The tray tag should be in a vertical position and captured within the box prior to closing the lid.

Specimens may be removed from the vault and studied in the associated vestibule. Permission must be sought from the Curator or the Collections Manager before removing specimens from the vestibule.

Permission must be sought from the Curator or the Collections Manager before removing any part of a specimen. All dissected portions of specimens are to be placed in 'cellophane' packets, folded and placed under a stem. Place these specimens aside for technicians to deal with.

Permission must be sought from the Curator or Collections Manager before removal of fragments of specimens for destructive sampling. Refer to the *PERTH Destructive Sampling Policy* for further details. Removal of any part of the specimen requires an annotation slip to be filled in with permanent ink describing what was removed, purpose of the study, by whom, the institution and date. Upon request technical staff will generate these slips. Place these specimens aside for technical staff to deal with.

Please notify the technical staff if you notice irregularities, damaged or insect attacked specimens, or consider a specimen to be type material.

Primary information on labels should never be altered, corrected or removed. Write interpretations of the primary data on supplementary labels when necessary.

If annotations or redeterminations are to be added to specimen sheets, they must be applied on the appropriate slip and placed under a stem, not glued down.

All annotations or redeterminations are to be legibly written in permanent ink (not biro, pencil or felt pen) or generated by technical staff on request. Please include the plant's name with author, your name and the date of determination. For types please include the current name as well as the basionym, the publication details and the category of type.

All annotated specimens are to be set aside and shown to technical staff so that the appropriate changes can be made to the computer database (WAHerb).

Return specimens no longer required to their original box in a tidy fashion, and re-shelve the box. When in doubt, folders/specimens should be left on the side table in a vault for technical staff to re-incorporate.

Specimens required for loan can be set aside and the Collections Manager notified. An official loan request is required from the visitor's institution before specimens can be sent.

Visitors may not photocopy specimens in the Research Collection. High-resolution scanning of herbarium specimens is available; if required please contact the Collections Manager.

The order of folders within a species must be maintained. At PERTH the specimens are housed in the collection in the following order within a species:

- Subspecific taxa are housed alphabetically within a species
- Specimens from WA are enclosed in a thick white folder
- Specimens from other states within Australia are enclosed in a coloured folder (each state is represented by a different colour; order within this category is unimportant)
- Specimens from outside Australia including Australian territories are enclosed in a black folder
- Specimens that have an affinity to the taxon (eg preceded by ?, aff., cf.) are placed at the end of the taxon

Ancillary collections available at PERTH include type, historical (<1829), spirit, microscope slide and carpological specimens. The carpological specimens are housed at the end of each genus or family. Contact the Collections Manager if you require access to other ancillary collections.

The W.A. Herbarium may be able to assist with electronic lists of specimen data; please discuss with the Collections Manager to obtain a listing.

Contacts

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Collections Manager: herbarium@dbca.wa.gov.au, 9219 9130