

Volunteering at the Western Australian Herbarium

The Western Australian Herbarium is the principal botanical research facility in Western Australia dealing with the taxonomy, distribution and status of all native and introduced plants in the State. Its core is the State Collection of more than 730,000 dried specimens of plants, algae, mosses, lichens and fungi. Staff at the Herbarium maintain, curate and study the collection with an aim to document and describe the State's botanical biodiversity.

The Herbarium runs a satisfying, interesting and popular volunteer program. The program has been running for 30 years, with many volunteers working with us for many years, an indication of the stimulating and supportive environment we provide.

Volunteers are involved in many aspects of Herbarium work ranging from mounting, incorporating and identifying specimens, processing images for FloraBase, creating electronic keys and maintaining the Reference Herbarium.

The Herbarium volunteer program has been closed for a couple of years whilst staff and the collection were relocated to modern new premises. The Herbarium is now moved and ready to reopen its doors to the public, to researchers, to its existing valued volunteers, and to new recruits to the volunteer program.

Herbarium volunteering opportunities:

Specimen processing	Mounting specimens by sewing and taping dried pressed flora and accompanying labels onto archival board. A great way to begin to recognise the flora. No prior botanical experience required, however patience and a fondness for sewing is desirable.
Plant Identification	Identifying specimens from around the state, especially from the Regional Herbaria network. Some experience with plant identification or a good working knowledge of the flora is desirable.
Image Capture and Storage	Processing electronic images for FloraBase, the Herbarium's website. This task may also involve scanning photos and slides. Familiarity with using computers and the Photoshop program is essential.
Creating electronic keys	Helping create interactive keys and other identification tools. Some experience with plant identification, using keys and a working knowledge of the flora is desirable. Some familiarity with computers is essential.
General Curation tasks	Helping curation staff with tasks such as locating specimens in the vaults, sorting backlogs, attaching slips. Some experience with Latin names useful, but not essential.
Reference Herbarium	Helping Curation staff manage and maintain the public access Reference Herbarium. No prior botanical experience required

The volunteer program opens Monday 5th March 2012.

Register your interest by contacting:

Karina Knight, Collections Manager

Phone: 9219 9130

Email: Karina.Knight@dec.wa.gov.au

Note that places will be limited in some volunteering projects.