



## **Western Australian Herbarium Visitor Information**

The Western Australian Herbarium is a part of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. 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 (APGIII 2009). This sequence can be viewed at <http://florabase.dpaw.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 (Kevin Thiele) or Collections Manager (Karina Knight).

Access to the Herbarium including the Research Collection requires prior approval from the Curator or Collections Manager and registration which 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 transferrable, 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. For this reason, un-sterilised specimens and fresh material must not be taken into the herbarium under any circumstances. Visitor's specimens required for study in the herbarium are to be frozen for a minimum period of 3 days 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.

To use the phone, dial 0 to access an outside line then dial the number.

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. 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 can be quite heavy and weigh as much as 5 kg.

- Use a footstool or ladder to remove a box from specimen racking 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 at the sides, with the lid facing your body.
- Carry one box at a time or stack onto a trolley
- Do not mix specimens between boxes: place specimens back into the 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

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.
- Slide sheets across to view the next one, never fold over like the pages of a book.
- Do not place heavy objects on, or lean on specimens.
- Place specimens down with care, do not drop or kick boxes or piles of specimens.
- Always use a support (cardboard or plastic tray) when carrying specimens.

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

Permission must be sought from the Curator or Collections Manager before removing any part of a specimen. All dissected portions of specimens are to be placed in cellophane packets, folded and placed on the specimen sheet. 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 photograph or 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, 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 see the Collections Manager to obtain a listing.

**Contacts**

Kevin Thiele, [Kevin.Thiele@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:Kevin.Thiele@dpaw.wa.gov.au), 9219 9128

Karina Knight, [Karina.Knight@dpaw.wa.gov.au](mailto:Karina.Knight@dpaw.wa.gov.au), 9219 9130