

# **OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY HERBARIUM**

## **ACCESS AND USAGE POLICY**

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The combined Oregon State University (OSC) and University of Oregon (ORE) herbaria contain approximately 518,000 vascular plant, bryophyte, algal, lichen, and fungal specimens. Another 32,000 specimens, the Morton E. Peck Herbarium (WILLU) from Willamette University, are maintained as a separate collection. The combined collections and a library are stored in 410 steel herbarium cases mounted on one stationary and 22 mobile carriages. The collections are housed in Cordley Hall 2512. A preparation room, located in Cordley 2512B, supports the work of the herbarium with work stations for mounting specimens, microscopic examination of dried and frozen material, database entry, and label preparation. An adjacent room, Cordley 2517 allows for microscopic examination of fresh material, houses our drying cabinet and freezers, and serves as storage.

The mission of the Oregon State University Herbarium is to serve as the central resource for the documentation and study of Oregon's diverse flora. The herbarium is dedicated to research in plant and fungal systematics, public service through the identification of plant and fungal specimens, and answering inquiries about plants and fungi of the Pacific Northwest. In addition to providing the principal training ground for students in plant and fungal systematics, the herbarium serves as a source of information and specimens for researchers at OSU and other institutions.

The Oregon State University Herbarium is a regional resource that is utilized by a wide range of people in addition to OSU researchers and staff. Visiting scientists, representatives of federal and state agencies, non-profit institutions, as well as private consultants and businesses all make use of the collection. The following guidelines are designed to facilitate the use and study of the collections while preserving their integrity for future users.

### **I. HERBARIUM ACCESS**

- A. The OSU Herbarium is open to the public and welcomes all users. New users are expected to make an appointment with a Curator first to get oriented before using the herbarium. Normal operating hours are Monday-Friday, 8-5. After hours and weekend access may be arranged with the Herbarium Director or a Curator, at their discretion.
- B. Keycard access to the OSU Herbarium is available to OSU faculty, staff, herbarium research associates, and students actively engaged in herbarium-based research. Keycard access is reviewed annually and may be revoked at any time by the Department Chairperson or the Herbarium Director.
- C. Persons not formally affiliated with OSU who are actively engaged in herbarium-based research may apply for Herbarium Research Associate (HRA) status by supplying a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to the Herbarium Director. HRA affiliations are appointed by the Herbarium Director and subject to departmental approval. HRA status must be renewed annually.

### **II. HERBARIUM ETIQUETTE**

- A. All visitors utilizing the collection are requested to sign into the visitor logbook.
- B. Visitors unfamiliar with the arrangement of the herbarium or the proper handling of herbarium specimens should request assistance.

- C. Only freezer-sterilized specimens may be brought into the Cordley 2512 space and the herbarium. The entrance of live or freshly-collected specimens into the herbarium is prohibited. The freezer room (2517) is available for the study of such material.
- D. No food or drink may be brought into the herbarium or preparation room, and backpacks and coats should be left outside when possible. Cordley 2512A is set up with shelves, a food/beverage cart, and a coat rack for convenient storage of those items while working in the collection.
- E. Herbarium cabinets should be left open for as short a time as possible in order to limit the entrance of insects. Cabinets must be closed as soon as specimens are removed. Do not leave carts or foot stools in the aisles.
- F. Before using the compactor system, check aisles for people. Do not attempt to move more than two mobile carriages at one time.
- G. Visitors may use the tables along the front wall of the herbarium, and those in the preparation room for the study of specimens.
- H. Return specimens to their original location. If unsure, give specimens to herbarium staff or, place them in cabinet #419 (to the right of the center door) so they can be re-filled properly.
- I. Herbarium users must clean their work area when finished. A dust pan and brush are located near the table area to the right of the central herbarium door, and at the far-left end of the tables.
- J. Specimen donations should be approved by a curator or the herbarium director, at their discretion.
- K. Visitors who will be using the collection for longer periods of time may request temporary storage space from a Curator (subject to availability).
- L. Persons making use of the collections must cite the Oregon State University Herbarium as the source of their information in publications and reports. Upon publication, a copy of reports and publications referencing the herbarium collections should be sent to the Herbarium Director.

### **III. SPECIMEN HANDLING**

- A. In general, specimens should be handled in a manner that will conserve them for future study. Please observe the following guidelines and best practices:
  - Specimens and library books may not be removed from the herbarium
  - Do not remove individual specimens from the cabinet. When withdrawing specimens, remove the entire folder. Take folders to an available table for examination.
  - Plant specimens should always be kept horizontal and flat and must never be bent; hold both sides of the sheet when handling specimens; when carrying specimens, support from below, preferably with a stiff piece of cardboard.

- Look through plant specimens by stacking and unstacking each specimen individually with the plant facing up. Do not flip specimens like pages in a book or stack specimens with the plant facing downwards.
  - Never shuffle specimens as the edges of sheets may cut underlying specimens.
  - Never rest an object on a specimen.
  - Keep cabinet doors closed to prevent insects and dust from entering.
  - Specimens may not be left outside of cabinets overnight. These specimens pose a threat to the collection by potentially harboring insects.
  - If you annotate specimens, please give them to herbarium staff so they can be recorded.
  - Specimens must be returned to the same folder from which they were taken and, in some cases, in the same order. Make sure to return folders to the proper cabinet in alphabetical order and in the proper color-coded region. If unsure, give specimens to herbarium staff, or place them in the specially marked cubby in cabinet #419 (to the right of the center door) so they can be refilled.
  - When replacing specimens in the cabinet, make sure the sheets are all aligned, as protruding edges may be damaged.
  - Please clean your work area when you are finished. A dust pan and brush are located near the table area to the right of the central herbarium door, and at the far-left end of the tables.
- B. Materials may be removed for anatomical, palynological or biochemical study only with the permission of a Curator or the Director. If such approval is obtained, an acid free annotation label should be affixed to the specimen indicating the material removed, purpose, researcher name, and year.
- C. Various dissection tools, rulers, glue and writing utensils are situated in small bins along the herbarium tables. Please put back what you use. If you need something not present, please ask herbarium staff.
- D. Dissections and removal of parts for special study should be done judiciously. Please place all removed material in a packet mounted on the sheet. Packets are available near dissecting scopes or upon request.
- E. The annotation of specimens is appreciated. Permanent ink and the labels provided by the herbarium (next to all dissecting scopes) should be used. Annotated specimens should be given to herbarium staff (or placed in designated area in cabinet below visitor logbook) so they can be recorded.
- F. The identification of non-vascular plants and fungi often requires microscopic examination. Please consult with the Curator of the Mycological Collection for recommendations concerning the documentation and preservation of microslides.
- G. The assistance of a Curator or the Director should be requested for access to the type specimen cabinets.

#### **IV. PLANT IDENTIFICATION BY HERBARIUM STAFF**

The identification of plant specimens is an important service provided by the herbarium staff. The limited resources available to provide this service require the following restrictions.

- A. The primary user of staff identifications is the Agricultural Extension Service. Identifications provided to them will have the first priority. Other federal, state, and non-profit institutions may submit plants for identification. In general, specimens will not be identified for "for-profit" purposes. There is currently no charge for the identification of specimens.
- B. In cases of medical emergency, identifications of suspected poisonous plants will be attended to promptly.
- C. Plants to be identified may be submitted in any form. Identification will be greatly facilitated, however, if well-preserved or fresh, flowering material is submitted with complete label data. The herbarium staff should be consulted for advice on preserving plant materials for identification. We are aware that at times only incomplete or fragmentary plant material is available (for example, forensic samples) and, although reasonable effort will be made to identify such material, the reliability of the identification may be diminished.
- D. In general, entire collections or material of unknown provenance will not be identified. Persons submitting plants for identification are expected to have made an effort to identify them with the resources available to them before resorting to the herbarium staff.
- E. Plants sent in for identification will not be returned to the sender, unless special arrangements have been made in advance.
- F. Although every effort is made to insure the accuracy of identifications, the Oregon State University Herbarium and the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology assume no liability for the consequences of misidentification.
- G. We are not able to certify mushrooms as edible.

#### **V. HERBARIUM ACCESSIONS AND DEACCESSIONS**

Specimens added to the herbarium collection originate from staff collections, donated specimens from state and federal agencies or private individuals, and in exchange from other herbaria. Due to space limitations, the acceptance of any specimen into the collection is subject to the approval of the Herbarium Director.

- A. Specimens incorporated into the herbarium collection must be of high quality. In general, only complete, well-preserved specimens with full label data will be accepted. A complete specimen is one that includes fertile material (flowers, fruits, cones, or spores), roots for small herbaceous plants and graminoids, and sufficient material from woody plants to document leaf arrangement. Oregon specimens should always be accompanied by geographic coordinates (latitude / longitude, UTM, or TRS are acceptable).
- B. Specimens from all geographic regions may be incorporated into the collection. Specimens from Oregon and the Pacific Northwest will have the highest priority.

- C. It is the responsibility of the collector to ensure that all specimens are legally collected and that all necessary collecting permits have been obtained.
- D. Specimens from localities that are already well-represented in the collection (e.g. the Corvallis area) will not be added to the herbarium unless they are of special significance.
- E. Many journals require the citation of a herbarium specimen documenting the identity of a studied species. The herbarium encourages the deposition of such "research vouchers" from Oregon State University faculty and staff into the collection. Research vouchers, however, must meet the same standards of quality applied to all other specimens. A specimen which is incomplete, poorly preserved, or lacking accompanying data is of limited value to other researchers and defeats the purpose of depositing vouchers.
- F. It is expected that scientists requesting grants for work that will generate substantial numbers of voucher specimens will budget funds to cover the cost of processing vouchers. Please consult with the Director for specific recommendations.
- G. Duplicates of specimens incorporated into the collection will be included in the exchange program with other institutions. The continuation of existing exchanges and the initiation of new exchanges is dependent on the quality and geographic origin of the specimens received.
- H. The deaccessioning of specimens is the responsibility of the Curators. Accessioned duplicates, and specimens of no scientific value, should be brought to their attention for possible deaccessioning (please include a note explaining rationale for possible deaccessioning).

## **VI. SPECIMEN LOAN AND BORROWING POLICY**

- A. Loans of specimens are made only to recognized institutions of botanical research, and not to individuals. Loans are for a period of twelve months. An extension of twelve months may be requested in writing to the Herbarium Director.
- B. Specimens may be temporarily removed from the collection for display or teaching purposes by OSU faculty and staff only with the permission of a Curator or the Director.
- C. Receiving loans of herbarium specimens is an important part of the research of several OSU faculty and students. Herbaria typically only loan specimens to other herbaria, and the institution is ultimately responsible for the proper care and maintenance of borrowed specimens. For this reason, all requests for loans from other institutions should originate from either the Herbarium Director or a Curator. Faculty and students should contact either the Director or Curators if they wish to borrow specimens. Sufficient details regarding the requested specimens and the institution to which they belong must be provided so that we can compose the loan request letters.
- D. Once borrowed specimens have been received by the OSU Herbarium, the paperwork will be processed and the specimens placed in the care of the person studying them. Specimens are loaned to the OSU Herbarium and must remain at OSU until they are returned to the lending institution. When the specimens are ready

to be returned, they must be given to the OSU Herbarium which will be responsible for needed paperwork and their safe return.

- E. Loans are always for a limited period of time [typically 6-12 months]. Although requests for extensions can be made, borrowers should try to complete their study of the material in a timely manner.
- F. All material borrowed or loaned must be properly annotated by the investigator before returning the material. Please use permanent ink or laser printing on 100% cotton, acid-free paper. Annotation labels should contain the complete scientific name (genus, specific epithet, authority), annotator's name, annotator's institution, and date (at least to year). Do not write on the specimen sheet, label, or another (pre-existing) annotation slip.
- G. If specimens are to be used for DNA extraction or other destructive sampling, this requires the written permission of the loaning institution; please submit these requests through the OSU Herbarium Curator or Director.