Introduction to Herbarium Collection and Management

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What is an herbarium?

- A book about medicinal plants
- A museum/library of dried plants

- Other types of collections
  - Liquid-preserved collections
  - Collections for molecular studies
  - Living collections
Why an herbarium?

100 Uses For a Herbarium
(well at least 72)

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Basic functions and research – 19
Related research – 27
Education and training – 7
Outreach – 17
Money-making ventures – 2
Why a herbarium?

• Resource material for systematics research
  - naming, classification and evolutionary history

• Reference material for named taxa
  - Voucher specimen
  - Type specimen
Why an herbarium?

- Jostelle’s mysterious *Medicago*

*Medicago syriaca*, a new species

**Medicago syriaca** E. Small sp. nov.  
Documenting vegetation

- Collecting
- Pressing
- Drying
- Mounting
- Curating
Documenting vegetation: collecting

• Evaluate whether the species should be collected.
  o 1 to 20 rule
  o Never endanger the local population!
  o Pictures not bad!

• At least one whole plant (herbaceous) or representative of all parts

• Avoid diseased and/or damaged specimens
Documenting vegetation: collecting

- Date of collection
- Specific locality
- Latitude and longitude (with accuracy)
- Elevation
- Collection number
- Photographic documentation
- Collector(s)
- Characteristics that may disappear upon preservation (e.g. color)
- Abundance/ Community or vegetation type
Documenting vegetation: pressing
Documenting vegetation: drying

- Best specimens obtained with rapid drying
- Best dryer: a simple wooden box with lights and a fan in the bottom
Documenting vegetation: mounting
Documenting vegetation: mounting
Quercus × campitica

H. Hadjikyriakou & R. Hand 2005


Herbarium Ralf Hand • Flora of Cyprus

Quercus alnifolia x Qu. coccifera

division 2 (sensu Meikle 1977/85)
Kamos
Agia Anastasia SW above village, semi-open slope with scattered trees at the water tank
alt. 767 m

28.03.2005
coll. number 4449
leg. R. Hand
det. R. Hand & G. Hadjikyriakou
2 trees only

det. confirm.
Documenting vegetation: curation

- What is the fastest, most effective, and most accurate way to identify a plant?
  - Use herbaria.
Documenting vegetation: curation

Survival package!
Documenting vegetation: curation

• What is in a plant name?

Medicago orbicularis (L.) Bartalini
Herbaria as data
Thank you!

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