

A new Centre for Documentation on Plant Biodiversity

Last autumn (1-10-2002) the Centre for Documentation of Plant Biodiversity (CeDocBiV) was officially opened at "The Pedralbes Campus of Barcelona University". It is part of the Centre for Research into Plant Biodiversity (CERBIV) of the University of Barcelona, and assembles the document resources on plant diversity generated by the researches of CERBIV, as well as by other allied groups. The CeDocBiV's main goal is to enable and assist researchers, public bodies, private institutions, and members of the public to



consult Plant Biodiversity resources both directly and virtually. These document resources are organised in two sections: the Herbarium and the Data Bases on Plant Biodiversity.

The Herbarium (internationally recognized as BCN) is the result of the integration of the scientific herbaria previously housed in the Faculty of Biology (former BCC) and in the Faculty of Pharmacy (former BCF) of the University of Barcelona, and benefits from the activity of the ongoing research activities by the CERBIV members. It is located in a properly equipped area of the "Parc Científic de Barcelona" (Barcelona Science Park), neighbouring other research facilities.

The Herbarium holds about 300,000 specimens or samples (the third biggest herbarium in Spain), mainly from the Iberian Peninsula, but also from other neighbouring regions. The Herbarium includes several historical collections, such as those of P. Font i Quer, M.T. Losa, J. Planellas, W.H.P. Rothmaler and Fr. Sennen. The collection of Cormophyta is the largest (about 250,000 samples), and the Lichen collection (about 22,000 samples) and Fungi collection (about 20,000 samples) are among the largest for their groups in the Iberian Peninsula. Services provided by the herbarium are those usually offered by other herbaria: study of the reference collections in the equipped laboratories at the Centre, loans and exchanges with recognised institutions, technical assistance in plant identification, etc.. Moreover, the center has the equipment necessary to acquire digital images of the specimens and is developing a virtual herbarium of selected samples (type specimens, etc.), which is now partially available via Internet. The research projects most directly supported by the Herbarium are synthetic floras and chorological studies, such as *Flora iberica*, *Flora dels Països*

Catalans, *ORCA Atlas*, etc., as well as systematic works. Also, some special collections hosted in the herbarium (i.e., of seeds and fruits and of seedlings) reinforces the Cormophyta collection in studies on plant biology and comparative ecology.

The Data Bases on Plant Biodiversity are made up by several documentation units, most of them available through the web site of the CeDocBiV (<http://www.ub.es/cedocbiv>). The largest one is the Biodiversity Data Bank of Catalonia, BioCat (<http://biodiver.bio.ub.es/biocat/homepage.html>). It stores bibliographic citations and biological data of groups of taxa (about 1,300,000 citations of Cormophyta, and about 31,000 citations of Fungi), and of plant communities of Catalonia (about 17,000 phytosociological relevés). The unit of Vegetation Cartography includes some 80 maps corresponding to Catalonia and neighbouring areas, mainly at the 1:50,000 scale. All of them are available at the Centre, and those corresponding to “Cartography of habitats of Catalonia” can be consulted at <http://www.gencat.net/mediamb/sig/habitats.html>. Other documentation units cover Cytogenetics, Ethnobotany, Phytosociology and specialised library on Plant Biodiversity. All these data bases constitute a powerful tool for plant biology researchers, but also for the technical staff of public and private institutions involved in landscape management and planning.

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