

Using Herbarium Specimen Transcription as Workforce Re-entry Training

Barbara M. Thiers

William and Lynda Herbarium

The New York Botanical Garden

The New York Botanical Garden Herbarium

- 7.8 million specimens of plants and fungi
- Worldwide, with emphasis on the Americas
- Avg. 50,000 new accessions annually
- Avg. 20,000 specimens sent on loan/year
- Avg. 2000 days worth of scientific visitors/year
- Digitizing on average 400,000 specimens/year



Digitization of Caribbean Plant Specimens



CREATING CAREER PATHWAYS

OUR WORK


TRANSFORMING LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM









A detailed photograph of a dragonfly perched on a thin, light-colored branch. The dragonfly has a reddish-brown head and thorax, with large, transparent wings showing intricate vein patterns. The background is a soft, out-of-focus tan color.

Decipher our collections, discover hidden archives and contribute to knowledge

Join our community of 1,000+ volunteers

Get involved ↓

Learn more

Image by John Tann from Flickr



Treasures of the New York Botanical Garden He...

Specimens The New York Botanical Garden

The New York Botanical Garden is digitizing all of specimens of oak, beech and chest...



5%
Validated

100%
Transcribed

2028
Tasks

NYBG



Operation RED List: Plants of the Caribbean

Specimens New York Botanical Garden - William & Lynda Ste...

What do the Red Panda, the Mangrove Hummingbird, and the Wild Almond have in common?...



18%
Validated

100%
Transcribed

3559
Tasks



Nick North

an hour ago

Transcribed 4 items from the [Flora of Bhutan](#) - [Kew specimens](#)



[Join expedition »](#)



Silvia Montesinos

an hour ago

Transcribed 2 items from the [Flora of Bhutan](#) - [Kew specimens](#)



[Join expedition »](#)



Silvia Delitala

an hour ago

Transcribed 16 items from the [Flora of Bhutan](#) - [Kew specimens](#)





Catalogue No.: E00691749

Taxa: Cyperus laevigatus L.

Copy from previous task

?

1. Museum details

Shrink

Genus

?

Species

?

Species Author

?

Infraspecific Rank

?

Infraspecific Epithet

?

Infraspecific Author

?

2. Collection details

Collector(s)

?

Collected with

?

Collection Number

?

Collection Date

(from) DD MM Year

(to) DD MM Year

?

Date as given

?

Cultivated

☐

?

3. Location details

Country

?

Country as given

?

State/Province/Territory

?

Locality

?

Verbatim Latitude

?

D°M'S"

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M

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Verbatim Longitude

?

D°M'S"



Lessons Learned

- Learning correct keyboarding skills is a useful outcome of herbarium specimen transcription
- Focus on data elements that are the easiest to interpret, e.g., location, date, collector name, but recognize that even these will present challenges, especially for older specimens with handwritten labels
- Try to have one assistant for every 2-3 transcribers – they will need quite a lot of help
- Just as with any transcription project, there are a few people who do the bulk of the work
- Be mindful of concerns about the presence of ex-offenders on your site.
- If the initial session is successful, try to follow up as quickly as possible with a plan for future events.
- Timing is everything!