

15 August 2008

## 1. PLANTS Reference/Documentation Data

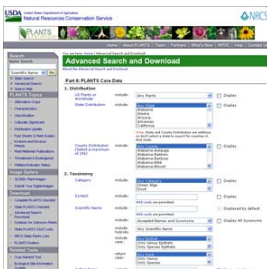


A number of items have been updated on the PLANTS Web site and moved to production. These include flyovers that are available on the distribution maps that provide information documenting the source of the distributional data, plus links to those sources.

National Information Technology Center [staff](#) added mouseover text documentation for PLANTS distribution data to the PLANTS state distribution map. That's right, no more guessing where the distributions come from! On any PLANTS Profile [distribution map](#), roll your mouse over any state where a plant occurs and the documentation for that distribution appears in a text box. Documentation is segregated into three types: literature reports, herbarium specimens, and observations from the PLANTS [Distribution Update](#). PLANTS county maps will soon show documentation in an identical manner.

Additionally, all this documentation is now shown at the [Data Source and Documentation](#) link at the top of each profile along with other references for that plant that are used at PLANTS. You can now sort the documentation to easily see how state distributions are supported, and copy this for future reference. As always, if you think our information can be improved, please [Contact Us](#).

## 2. PLANTS Advanced Search Is Being Updated



With the modernization of the Advanced Search, we are taking the opportunity to make a few improvements requested by users, plus make additional data available. The Advanced Search is toward the top of the left navigation box on the PLANTS Home Page. The improvements will be moved online this Fall.

Please remember that you can select output to the screen or download. You can also access the Advanced Search through the Download area and download the data.

## 3. PLANTS Performance Undergoing A Change

You may have noticed a little slower PLANTS performance in the past few months. PLANTS now has over 70,000 users accessing the database each day. This is a 40% increase from 2007. In an effort to improve performance and better serve its users, PLANTS is being converted from Oracle to SQL Server and being moved to newer servers. This is expected to take several months and eventually PLANTS will be moved from Fort Collins to another USDA Web Farm.

## 4. VegSpec

Many revisions have been made to the frontend of the [VegSpec](#) application to make it more user-friendly. 182 species were added (these also show up in Plant Characteristics), primarily focused on the Caribbean and Alaska. This brings to 2185 the total number of species covered, plus an additional 398 cultivars, for a total of 2583 plants. An effort is currently underway by Plant Materials staff in Florida, Idaho, and the NRCS Western

National Technical Service Center to update the Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) plant adaptation data within VegSpec to improve its accuracy. Again, remember that VegSpec is not intended to replace the recommendations in your Field Office Technical Guide. It was originally designed and supported by an interagency group to assist land managers in revegetation planning and design and furnish alternative native species for consideration in your FOTG.

## 5. Automated Plant Identification Keys

There are 22,225 species (not counting infraspecific taxa) of vascular plants that occur in the PLANTS Floristic Area (PFA) as of March 2008. About 3500 species or app. 16% are already [online](#) and in use. ID key data have been developed or are under development for the following groups:

- 150 Gymnosperms (done)
- 4215 Monocots (wetland monocots and all grasses done)
- 1846 Fabaceae and Ericaceae s.l.
- 2705 Asteraceae
- 1875 Lamiales (including Scrophulariaceae, Boraginaceae, Plantaginaceae, and Verbenaceae)

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10791 Total or 46% of the total number of vascular plant species in the flora.

## 6. Additional Collaborations Support PLANTS Information



Over the past few years, the NPDC has been broadening collaborations for data development and stewardship. These include new working relationships with the following: [Smithsonian Institution](#) Botany Department updating the Asteraceae and Poaceae (they are part of The International Compositae Alliance <<http://www.compositae.org/>> and maintain the Catalogue of New World Grasses <<http://mobot.mobot.org/W3T/Search/nwgc.html>>); [Oregon State University](#)-specialists revised all of our gymnosperms; [University of Kansas](#)-working with the *Flora of North America* taxonomic specialists to update many groups; [San Francisco State University](#)-developing pollinator conservation data in cooperation with the *Xerces Society*; [Bishop Museum](#)-compiled a vascular plant checklist of the Pacific Basin <<http://www.bishopmuseum.org/research/natsci/botany/botany.html>>; and the [Missouri Botanical Garden](#), which is developing extensive data for taxonomic keys and a glossary.

## 7. Some URLs That May Be Of Interest

### RESTORATION, GROWING PLANTS, AND SEED SOURCES

- **Plant Information Online:** Produced by the University of Minnesota, this site provides information on plant and seed sources, seed and nursery businesses, and citations/links for literature and images; <https://www.plantinfo.umn.edu/>
- **Native Plants for Coastal Dune Restoration: What, When, and How for Florida** [ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/FL/news/publications/flpmc\\_coast07.pdf](ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/FL/news/publications/flpmc_coast07.pdf)

### LICHENS AND BRYOPHYTES

- **A Field Guide To Biological Soil Crusts Of Western U.S. Drylands: Common Lichens And Bryophytes** [http://sbsc.wr.usgs.gov/products/pdfs/Field\\_Guide\\_Book\\_25.pdf](http://sbsc.wr.usgs.gov/products/pdfs/Field_Guide_Book_25.pdf)

### POLLINATOR CONSERVATION

- **NRCS Publications on Pollination** <http://plants.usda.gov/pollinators/NRCSdocuments.html>
- **North American Pollinator Protection Campaign** <http://www.nappc.org/>
- **PLANTS Links – Agriculture Related – Beneficial Insects** <http://plants.nrcs.usda.gov/links.html>

- **The Pollinator Partnership**

<http://www.pollinator.org/>

#### OTHER LINKS

- **PLANTS Links** Hundreds of other links can be found under *PLANTS Links* on the PLANTS Home Page. For example click on “PLANTS Links – Plant Groups A to W – Grasses” for an extensive list of sites with grass information OR “PLANTS Links - Noxious & Invasive” for hundreds of weed links, including sets parsed by state.

### *Your Feedback is Requested*



Please send comments regarding PLANTS, NPDC NewsNote, or other plant-related issues to <plants@plants.usda.gov>. Archived versions of [NPDC NewsNote](#) are available on the NPDC Web site.

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