

Survey for Herbarium Users

by Jason Andrew Alexander, Ann Pinzl, Jackee Picciani

Introduction

Since its creation at the Reno Rare Plant Workshop in 2012, the Nevada Herbarium Task Force has been developing a series of initiatives to help with the funding problems at the larger herbaria in Nevada. Although the staff and faculty overseeing the Reno Herbarium have scored a major success by acquiring a larger and renovated facility and funds for Arnold Tiehm to be its part-time curator, the funding situations at other herbaria in Nevada are still in decline.

The UNLV Herbarium has been operating intermittently since it still does not have a faculty curator and a full time collection manager. At the 2014 Reno Workshop, a plan to assist the UNLV Herbarium seek institutional support for the creation of a new botany faculty position to oversee the herbarium was developed. The implementation of this plan, it seems, will be a longer and more complicated process than we thought. It is clear to me we really need some educational information to assist this effort, since the current goal at UNLV is to push the department toward a medical school emphasis. This is where everyone interested in native plants and Nevada Herbaria can help.

This is a survey for botanists at any level of expertise, from amateur to professional, who are interested in helping with the effort to preserve the herbaria in Nevada. This survey was designed based on a user survey for libraries. Much like libraries, it is also important for curators to know the preferences of current and potential users of Nevada's botanical resources housed at herbaria.

Thank you for taking the time to help us gather this valuable data,

Dr. Jason Andrew Alexander
Nevada Herbarium Task Force Chair
and
Curator, Utah Valley University
Herbarium Orem, Utah

Part 1: Current User Information

1. Which herbaria have you used in the past year?

- NSDA Herbarium, Nevada Division of Agriculture, Reno
- NSMC Herbarium, Nevada State Museum, Carson City
- NTS Herbarium, Nevada Operations Office, U.S. Department of Energy, Las Vegas
- RENO Herbarium (including NESH), University of Nevada, Reno
- UNLV, Wesley E. Niles Herbarium, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- WDNE Herbarium, Bureau of Land Management District Office, Winnemucca
- other; Name(s) and location(s) _____

2. How often do you physically visit a herbarium?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Often (i.e. a few times a month)
- Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
- Never

3. What herbarium services did you use in your recent herbarium visit:
- to verify the determinations on specimens
 - to verify my own determination
 - to know more about what the plant looks like when I go into the field or on a hike
 - to obtain label data for personal use
 - to obtain label data for environmental report(s)
 - to obtain label data to determine range of taxon
 - requested a loan
 - to speak with the staff or curator
 - to take photos of plant species I am interested in finding
 - other; Please specify _____

4. On average, how often do you identify plants in your job or hobby activities?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 - Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 - Never

5. What major plant groups do you work with on your botanical projects?
- fungi
 - bryophytes (mosses)
 - lichen
 - vascular plants

6. Are you interested in particular plant parts?
- yes
 - no
- If "yes", what parts and why?
- seeds; For what purpose? _____
 - pollen; For what purpose? _____
 - leaf material; For what purpose? _____
 - bark; For what purpose? _____
 - other; Please specify _____

7. How do you identify unknown plants for your botanical projects?
- ID by photo from an online source or a book
 - use a flora such as the Intermountain Flora or the Jepson Manual
 - send material to a herbarium for ID
 - have a botanist co-worker ID the specimen
 - other; Please specify _____

8. What single category best describes you? (Select one only)
- federal agency employee
 - state agency employee
 - environmental contractor
 - university or college faculty or staff
 - private or public elementary or secondary school teacher
 - student
 - amateur botanist
 - gardener
 - other, Please specify _____

Part II: Service Delivery

How important to you is this factor, or would be if the resource was available?

9. Herbarium staff would be readily available to assist with using the facilities and handling of specimens.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

10. Herbarium staff would be readily available to assist me with identifications.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

11. Herbarium staff can provide answers and identifications which reflect a current knowledge of molecular systematics and floristic taxonomy.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

12. Herbarium staff can respond in a timely manner to e-mails or phone messages.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

13. Herbarium staff can respond in a timely manner to package and send loans for your botanical projects.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

14. New specimens would be processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

15. My donated specimens would be processed rapidly for inclusion in the collection.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

16. Prompt, corrective action is taken regarding misidentifications or incorrect label data.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

17. A library collection with reference books and floras for use by visitors is available.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

18. The online specimen database is updated regularly with new specimens and corrections.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

19. Opening hours meet my needs.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Facilities and Equipment

How important to you is this factor?

20. A relatively complete collection of local and regional floras for use in identification are available for visitors.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

21. Computer workstations are available for accessing online library journals.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

22. A visitor accessible Wi-Fi connection to the Internet is available for use.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

23. Herbarium staff can provide access to printers.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

24. Microscope stations for visitors with adequate table space for study of specimens are available.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

25. Herbarium can be open and staffed on weekends by appointment.

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

Part IV: Potential User Information

26. If they were regularly open to the public with staff to assist with your needs, which herbaria would you consider using in the next year?

NSDA Herbarium, Nevada Division of Agriculture, Reno
 NSMC Herbarium, Nevada State Museum, Carson City
 NTS Herbarium, Nevada Operations Office, U.S. Department of Energy, Las Vegas
 RENO Herbarium (including NESH), University of Nevada, Reno
 UNLV, Wesley E. Niles Herbarium, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
 WDNE Herbarium, Bureau of Land Management District Office, Winnemucca
 other Name(s) and location(s) _____

27. If there was a herbarium in your area, how often would you visit or call the herbarium for botanical information or assistance with your botanical projects?

Daily
 Weekly
 Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 Never

28. Many herbarium libraries have floras and references that are not available digitally. If there was a herbarium in your area, how often would you visit to consult the herbarium library collections for your botanical projects?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 - Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 - Never
29. If UNLV or RENO had an online database with specimen images, how often would you use the website for your botanical projects?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 - Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 - Never
30. How often do you obtain specimens on loan from herbaria outside of Nevada for your botanical projects?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 - Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 - Never
31. How often do you use an online resource such as CalFlora or an online herbarium database for your botanical projects?
- Daily
 - Weekly
 - Often (i.e. a few times a month)
 - Occasionally (i.e. a few times a year)
 - Never
32. What days of the week are the most convenient to physically use the herbarium?
- any weekday
 - Monday
 - Tuesday
 - Wednesday
 - Thursday
 - Friday
 - Saturday or Sunday
33. What time of the day is the most convenient to physically use the herbarium?
- morning (8-11 am)
 - lunch-time (11-1 pm)
 - afternoon (1-5 pm)
 - evening (6-10 pm)

34. If you had access to a local herbarium, would you have a need to examine specimens of fungi and non-vascular plant (mosses, lichens, etc) species?

- yes
 no

35. User donations to a non-profit operating fund for herbarium is one option that has been suggested to aid in the re-staffing of Nevada herbaria. Would you or your organization contribute to your local herbarium if it was mandatory in order to gain access to the collections and staff assistance, much like the entrance fees for a museum?

- yes
 no

36. Would you or your organization contribute to a non-profit operating fund for your local herbarium if it was optional, much like donating to the Nevada Native Plant Society?

- yes
 no

37. In your opinion, how much is a reasonable donation?

- \$5 per use
 \$10 per month
 \$20 per year
 \$100 per year
 other amount: _____

Overall Satisfaction

38. Please give your personal opinion of the overall importance of having staffed herbaria open to the public regularly during the week for your botanical projects?

Not Important	Low	Neutral	Very	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

Comments (including positive and negative):

What service could Nevada herbaria provide that would make the greatest contribution to the successful completion of your botanical projects?