

**REPORT ON HERBARIUM UTEP  
TO  
THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO**

**By  
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In 1970 the herbarium at UTEP consisted of about seven cases filled with predominately student collections. Growth of the collection started shortly after that with the hiring of a curator and data entry person, Barbara Shipes. Barbara made significant contributions to creating a professional collection but was not with us very long. She moved on to do graduate work in botany at a California institution.

Dr. Bill Reid followed as curator and received data entry assistance from Dr. Carl Lieb. Bill was not a true curator but did have a group of graduate students that amassed a splendid collection of the flora of White Sands National Monument. That collection was integrated into the herbarium after Bill had moved on with duplicates dispersed back to the monument.

It was about 1980 that Dr. Richard Worthington started curating specimens into the herbarium. He became interested in botany and floras from doing descriptions of his lizard study plots. In 1986 he went to Malaysia and amassed a collection of about 1000 species with lots of trade duplicates. He established exchange programs with a number of institutions around the world and within the United States. Many of these programs exist today and new programs have been added. In the 1980's he established Floristic Inventories of the Southwest Program to document plant diversity on "island" mountain masses. He has worked extensively on about 20 mountain masses of different sizes. Some of the inventories have been privately published (Franklin, Little Hatchet and Florida Mts.) while others exist as files (Guadalupe, Peloncillo, Organ, et al.). Advance copies have been produced and distributed to agencies that manage those lands. The inventories program has enabled Herbarium UTEP to show balanced growth for southern New Mexico and far western Texas.

Herbarium UTEP was among the first to use computer databasing of its collections. In the early years it started with a SELGEM program. That was transformed to a Lotus system. Presently the collection is in Filemaster. The collection can be searched from anywhere in the world but the server for it is on during working hours. A feature in our databasing is a category for mountain range. That makes it easy to do the compilations of inventories.

A feature of Herbarium UTEP is its collections of lichens, mosses and hepatics. These groups were included in the inventory surveys from the onset. Most of these collections were identified by Dr. William Weber at COLO. Exchange programs through the American Bryological and Lichenological Society have added great worldly depth to the

collections. In rough terms UTEP has 3000 mosses, 3000 lichens and 500 hepatics. Liverworts were almost completely absent from New Mexico herbaria and only NMCR has seriously taken on the bryophyte diversity of New Mexico.

The present collection now stands at 82,000 specimens. It is a bit different from other area herbaria in that it is mostly an environmental collection. Because it is a young collection the percentage of plants with latitude and longitude or GPS readings is quite high making it relatively easy to go back to sites to see if the species persists. Plants with vague data cannot be field verified in the future although they are still useful for systematic work.

Support for the herbarium has come from M&O funds at UTEP. Paid curatorial help has generally not been available. Outside support has also been minimal with the exception of the donations from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. Early donations were spent on mounting paper. The last three donations reside the account for the Laboratory for Environmental Biology to be spent on the case shortage problem that is developing. Twice in the past the present curator has donated \$1000 for used herbarium cases coming from institutions that were getting compactor systems. The herbarium is again packed and needing cases. A museum grant package is being developed to get a compactor system. We also are seeking to hire a Collections Manager.

UTEP was recently awarded the Ph.D. degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. We have just hired a botanist who works mostly on the genetics of invasive plants but who also has traditional skills. Dr. Michael Moody has been in the southwest previously but is coming to us from western Australia. We have been promised another botanist that we will likely get as Worthington will retire 31 August 2012. Worthington will seek emeritus status so he can continue to work at UTEP curating.