

# Demonstrating the value of herbaria to decision-makers

Botany2016 post-conference symposium  
Savannah, Georgia  
August 4, 2016



The American Society  
of Plant Taxonomists

Organized in 1935 to foster, encourage, and promote education and research in the field of plant taxonomy, to include those areas and fields of study that contribute to and bear upon taxonomy and herbaria

Good morning, I want to welcome everyone to today's symposium. My name is Andrea Weeks, I am the outgoing president of the Society of Herbarium Curators and I will be moderating this morning's line-up of talks.

We've had a great turnout today – thank you to all who've extended their stay in Savannah or in some cases arrived just today to attend. Registration for this symposium filled quickly, which I think demonstrates the high level of interest by our community in learning best-practices in herbarium management.

The symposium committee has worked hard to assemble a panel of speakers who represent a diversity of perspectives and institution sizes and who will share practical ways to demonstrate the value of herbaria to decision-makers. Whether you are an aspiring curator or a veteran collection's manager, I am confident that you will take home new ideas this afternoon. I am really looking forward to them.

The focus of today's symposium was chosen via a poll of the herbarium community at large. In the Fall 2015, the symposium committee proposed a range of topics on the Herbarium List-Serve and this topic was highest ranked by more than 70 respondents. Without a doubt, this topic is perennially relevant. However, it should be mentioned

that this past year saw the hiatus of the NSF CSBR program – as well as its return – an important reminder that support for natural history collections can never be taken for granted.

That said, both SHC and American Society of Plant Taxonomists are sponsoring today's symposium with considerable logistical support from the Botany2016 conference organizers. I also want to acknowledge the other members of the symposium committee: Gil Nelson and Austin Mast from Florida State University as well as Rob Naczi from New York Botanical Garden (ask them before hand to stand-up to ID themselves to crowd). Let's give these folks and organizations a hand.

Annual meeting on **collections management**;  
held onsite preceding major research conference.



A little bit of history about this symposium:

The original inspiration for this symposium came from Gil, who saw a potentially useful educational model in the Entomological Collections Network.

In case you are unfamiliar with this group, one of the missions of the ECN is to sponsor an annual meeting about the management of entomological collections. Part of the popular appeal of the ECN is that it is held onsite where ever the Entomological Society of America research meeting is located. Since they began this effort in 1990's it has grown into 2 day meeting, with a 30+ page scientific program and over 150 attendees. This July they had their first ever 2-day collections management workshop at the Smithsonian to train the next generation of entomological collections managers. The herbarium community doesn't have anything as structured or regularly occurring as the ECN – but it could.

On the backside of the printed agendas, you will find a brief feedback survey for today's symposium. This will help SHC and ASPT plan future events. We would appreciate it if you'd fill this out this survey and turn it in before your depart today.

## Agenda

**8:00:** Welcome remarks

**8:15: Barbara Thiers**, "Preserving for perpetuity in a changing world."

**8:40: Brent Mishler**, "The Consortium of California Herbaria: Integrating curation, information, and research."

**9:05: John B. Nelson**, "How the A. C. Moore Herbarium was brought from the unknown and unimportant to a place of high respect by the university and society."

**9:30: Lena Struwe**, "The Herbarium Army at Rutgers - creating opportunities in research, education, and outreach at a university herbarium."

9:55: Coffee break (20 min)

Some nuts and bolts before we begin. I've asked each speaker to limit his or her talk to 20 minutes each, and we'll have a 5 min question period following each talk. For the speakers, I will raise my hand at 3 minutes remaining and stand up at 1 min.

Restrooms and water fountains are located ....

The all important coffee break occurs a little before 10 this morning. Please introduce yourself to someone you don't recognize. I think we may have a number of newcomers here this morning, which is a very good thing.

### **Agenda cont'd**

**10:15: Neil Snow**, "Reference collections in herbaria: A versatile but underutilized tool to enhance teaching, outreach and research."

**10:40: Anna Monfils**, "Lessons learned in building educational networks that incorporate natural history collections."

**11:05: Wendy B. Zomlefer**, "Best-practices for hosting regional herbarium curator workshops."

**11:30: Austin Mast**, "The Worldwide Engagement for Digitizing Biocollections (WeDigBio) event—a global stage for your herbarium."

11:55: Closing remarks - adjourn for lunch

After the coffee break, we'll have another panel of 4 talks followed by brief closing remarks.

Box-lunches will be delivered around noon and we have the room until 1:30 so please do not feel rushed.

Later this week, all the presentations will be posted on the SHC website.

Are there any questions?

Without further ado, I am pleased to introduce our first speaker, Dr. Barbara Thiers who is Director of the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium and Vice President for Science Administration at the New York Botanical Garden. She will be speaking to us today about "Preserving for perpetuity in a changing world".