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West African Plant Database: A Photo Guide and Identification Tool

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Abstract

The West African Plant Database, a new website currently including > 5000 photographs of > 1000 West African plants is presented. It shall serve as an internet photo-database as well as an identification help. The photographs can be accessed via browsing a hierarchical list of taxa and / or searching for specific morphological characters. For this identification aid a total of 18 characters regarding flower, fruit, habit, and leaf are encoded. You will then receive a result page with species names and up to three thumbnail images chosen to best represent the taxon. By clicking on either of them you get to the species page with all available images and further information plus links to internet databases. These are chosen to enable the user to retrieve further information on taxonomy, biogeography, use and its existence in preserved botanical collections (herbaria). The photographs are presented with taxon, locality information, time and photographer and an email-link for feedback and requests. The digital photographic documentations are a result of extensive field studies in the course of the BIOTA-West Africa and the SUN project. The photographed taxa are identified by experienced scientists. This website will be accessible for anyone interested in the plant diversity of West Africa. Currently the focus is on the the drier parts of West Africa (Sahelian and Sudanian zones) comprising the countries Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal etc. An offline version is available for fieldwork and researchers in the partner countries with insufficient internet connection. Please visit www.westafricanplants.senckenberg.de for more information.

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