

IX THE BOTANICAL DATA BANK OF THE HERBARIUM OF THE ORSTOM CENTER IN  
CAYENNE (CAY)

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INTRODUCTION

The botanical data bank of the ORSTOM center in Cayenne has as its objective to gather and make available by computerization the observational data relevant for the botanical systematics and geography of French Guiana.

The observational data for botanical systematics are mainly:

- descriptions of plant morphology;
- herbarium specimens;
- vernacular names.

Those for botanical geography are:

- local floristic lists;
- phytosociological lists;
- phytoecological lists.

In order to gather this information consistently and to allow synthesis of a large number of data, the databank contains 3 groups of files: the catalogue files, the observation files and the "result" files.

The catalogue files are lists of information numbered and are sometimes hierarchic. The objective here is to give the computer user unique numbers to code his data. The main files are the follo-

wing:

- the file for the latin plant names;
- the file for the locality names;
- the file for the names of the botanists;
- the file for the habitats and environments;
- the file for the references;
- etc.

The observation files provide the correspondence between the information collected in the field and the coded data from the catalogue files. These are mainly:

- the files for the herbarium specimens;
- the files for the floristic lists and phytosociological records;
- the files for phytoecological records;
- the files for vernacular names;
- the files for plant description;
- etc.

The "result" files are files combining catalogue files and observation files to answer a question or a hypothesis. For example, to have a list of the taxa of a region, you can gather, for all the localities of this region, the plant names from the herbarium specimens and the floristic or phytosociological lists. You may also wish to have a list of the species which have the same distribution pattern or a list of the species growing in a similar environment. The "result" files are the more numerous. They answer, by selection and by data base managing programs, or by numerical analysis, the questions of the botanists.

STATE OF THE DATA BANK IN CAYENNE

At the moment, the data bank in Cayenne includes catalogue files and observation files captures with the Dbase II program with a IBM PC-XT. The catalogue files are:

- a floristic hierarchic file containing 5589 phanerogam taxa (172 fam., 1207 gen., 3881 spec. and 329 infraspecifics taxa);
- a floristic hierarchic file containing 2016 pteridophyte taxa (23 fam., 142 gen., 353 spec., 52 infraspecifics taxa and 1441 synonymes);
- a file of 450 localities with their geographic coordinates and a map of French Guiana;
- a file of 900 botanists who have worked in the Guianas (collectors, taxonomists, ecologists, etc.);
- a hierarchic file of about 100 habitats and environmental types;
- a file of references about the Guianas with 3 or 4 hundred titles.

The computerization of the observation files started with the capture of data from 500 herbarium specimens and the data from 35 papers with about 450 floristic lists or phytosociological records, in all some 10.000 items of data (each datum gives the information about a plant in its locality).

The result files are generated when needed or requested.

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FLORA OF THE GUIANAS  
NEWSLETTER NO. 3  
SPECIAL WORKSHOP ISSUE

Compiled by A.R.A. Görts-van Rijn, Institute of Systematic Botany,  
Utrecht, The Netherlands, November 1986.

This newsletter gives a compilation of the abstracts of papers presented during the recent Workshop on the "Flora of the Guianas". The idea to organize a workshop came up during the preparation of the Symposium "Tropical Botany: Practice and Principles", because many contributors to the Flora were expected to attend. A grant was provided by ZWO (BWs 85-204) because this workshop fitted within the series of scientific meetings organized on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Utrecht University.

About 35 participants attended the Workshop, which took place preceding the Symposium, on September 26 and 27 at the KNVB Sportscenter in Zeist. The annual meeting of the Advisory Board of the "Flora of the Guianas" was held there, too.

There was ample opportunity to discuss taxonomic and phytogeographic problems, to inform on progress of activities in various groups of phanerogams and cryptogams, and to report on field work. Most of the lectures were illustrated with slides and one of them included a video-presentation showing a new approach of epiphyte research.

During these stimulating and informative meetings many contacts were made and at least one other Workshop was proposed: on Phytogeography in Paris 1990.

The Workshop meetings were closed with a great surprise when the final participant, Adrian Thompson, "our man in Guyana", arrived.

Thanks to the organizers of the Symposium who had been successful in convincing him to come to Zeist and meet all those interested in tropical Botany, and in the Guianas specially.

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