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Note

The IRRI blue-green algae collection and computerized information on the strains available for distribution

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The IRRI collection of N₂-fixing blue-green algae (BGA) was initiated in 1979 as part of a collaborative research program of ORSTOM (France) and IRRI to study the ecology of BGA and their possible use as biofertilizer in wetland rice culture. In 1991 the collection comprises 204 unialgal strains originating from 21 countries (Table 1). We have adopted a classification that is limited to the genus level and uses morphological criteria directly observed on material growing on petri dishes, as recommended by Rippka *et al.* in 1979. Strains are maintained by subculturing in liquid medium and on agar slants.

Strains were described using a program designed by the authors with Hypercard[®] software. Information on the strains is compiled in six interconnected Hypercard stacks:

- Cards of the main stack 'Collection' (486 kbyte) provide following information on the strains:
 - genus, IRRI's code, other code when applicable;
 - country and location of origin, and environment the strain was isolated from;
 - year of isolation, year of acquisition in IRRI's collection, and information on strain conservation;
 - information on soil properties of the environment the strain was isolated from;
 - standardized description of the visual appearance of the culture in liquid and on solid medium;
 - standardized microscopic description of the strain; and

Table 1. Number of strains and origin of the BGA collection (1991).

Genèra	Africa		Asia		Europe	Other regions	Total
	Senegal	Other	Philippines	Other			
<i>Anabaena</i>	13	5	7	15	5	5	50
<i>Calothrix</i>	23	2	11	7	1	1	45
<i>Fischerella</i>	4	2	4	3	1	0	14
<i>Gloeotrichia</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
<i>Nodularia</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Nostoc</i>	28	9	12	17	4	1	71
<i>Scytonema</i>	1	3	1	4	0	0	9
<i>Tolypothrix</i>	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Non-fixing	8	0	0	0	1	0	9
Total	77	21	37	49	13	7	204

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- additional notes including bibliographic references on the strain or its environment.
- The stack 'Describe' (311 kbyte) is an on-screen tool to describe (1) cultures of strain growing on solid and liquid media (aspect and color), and (2) their morphological features under the microscope. Terminology used for the descriptor is connected to definitions in

- The stack 'Sites' (25 kbyte) provides information on the environments from which the strains originate.

The descriptions of the strains and the methods for isolation, culture, and conservation are also presented in a booklet entitled 'The Blue-green Algae Culture Collection at IRR'.
Upon request, strains of the collection are