



Australian Government
Australian National Botanic Gardens



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Explore 200 years of Australia's natural history - at the click of a mouse

Want to know more about Australia's fascinating plants and animals? Find out today thanks to new and updated versions of the *Australia's Virtual Herbarium* and the *Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums*.

The two websites let everyone from enthusiastic amateurs to research scientists and government agencies access information from 7.2 million records of plants, animals and fungi from around Australia.

Launched at the Australian National Botanic Gardens on Wednesday 14 November, researchers have updated these two key online tools to include the latest information available.

Chair of the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria Kevin Thiele said Australia's museums and herbaria house many millions of plant and animal specimens, collected over the past 200 years from throughout Australia and around the world.

"*Australia's Virtual Herbarium* and *Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums* are interactive websites that provide access to these permanent, authoritative records of our country's plants and animals - past and present," he said.

"Developed separately, the websites have been given similar functions, tools and look and feel, making them easier for people to use.

"Importantly, both are now powered by the *Atlas of Living Australia*, a major infrastructure initiative of the Commonwealth Government which has made it easier to connect information held in herbaria and museums with the public and researchers.

"The great advantage of these websites is that people can draw information from different databases in different museums and herbaria at the same time, effectively joining them all together into a single, giant, virtual collection. It provides in depth tools such as the ability to explore by biographical region or location, and gives users the opportunity to create maps and other datasets for their research.

"Users are also able to respond directly to the people who look after the data with their queries, corrections or suggestions – meaning the public can help enhance and maintain quality in our online collection."

Australia's Virtual Herbarium and *Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums* are collaborative projects of all major Australian herbaria and museums, co-ordinated by the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria and the Council of Heads of Australian Faunal Collections.

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