

The World Flora Online Taxonomic Backbone, the global controlled vocabulary for plant names.

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The World Flora Online (WFO) is the collaborative, international initiative to build an online flora of all known plants to meet Target 1 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The WFO is addressing this goal by creating an open-access, online compendium of existing resources such as published floras, checklists and revisions.

In order to join together thousands of resources from many different sources it is necessary to have a common vocabulary - a single lookup table for plant names.

This lookup table is referred to as the WFO Taxonomic Backbone. It consists of two parts: A list of names governed by the “International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants” and a consensus classification of plant species.

The backbone is curated by Taxonomic Expert Groups (TENs). There are currently 37 TENs consisting of over 280 specialists. Their work is coordinated by the WFO Taxonomic Working Group and the TENs manager.

2022 has seen a change in technical arrangements for how the backbone data is managed and this poster presents some of the exciting opportunities this is opening up. Previously Missouri Botanic Garden have been providing technical support for all the WFO data but the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) is now able to dedicate significant resources to the project and has taken on responsibility for the backbone, freeing Missouri to extend their work on the descriptive content.

RBGE have created a new management system call Rhakhis (Greek for spine and root of the “rachis” used in botany) and this is presented in the poster.

Details are shown of how developers and curators can use the standardised lists and IDs produced by WFO in their projects for greater global data integration. There will be opportunities to discuss with curators and experts how they can contribute data.

