

NBI POLICY DOCUMENT

DIVISION: Biosystematics Research and Biodiversity Collections	POLICY NUMBER: D1
EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 February 2015	LAST AMENDED: 15 January 2015

MOUNTING PLANT SPECIMENS

Background

The two main aims of mounting plant specimens are to display the specimen and data to allow maximum observation and to preserve the specimen by securely attaching it to a mounting board. Well cared for and properly mounted specimens will last indefinitely. Through SANBI and stakeholder projects, a number of specimens are lodged with the SANBI herbaria for identification and preservation, and this involves mounting of over 5 000 specimens each year.

Aims of the policy

To provide guidelines for mounting plant specimens for incorporation into SANBI herbaria.

Policy

- Specimens for mounting should always be handled with great care. They are dry and brittle and damage easily.
- Ferns, gymnosperms and flowering plants are mounted on cardboard.
- Bryophytes should not be mounted on cardboard as exposure will cause damage to the specimen. They are stored in envelopes.
- Use special techniques for mounting aquatic plants.

Process

Consult the following references for mounting procedures:

Fish, L. 1999. Preparing herbarium specimens. *Strelitzia* 7: 4–44.

Victor, J., Koekemoer, M., Fish, L., Smithies, S. & Mössmer, M. 2004. *Herbarium Essentials: the southern African herbarium user manual*. [SABONET Report No. 25](#). SABONET, Pretoria.

Forman, L. & Bridson, D. (Eds). 1989. *The herbarium handbook*. Royal Botanic Garden, Kew.

It can also be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35qgfShomYY> prepared by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

A checklist for quality control of mounted specimens is provided in Addendum 1.

ADDENDUM 1

STANDARDS CHECKLIST FOR MOUNTED SPECIMENS

1. If the specimen is sewn onto the mounting board, check that the knots of the thread at the back of the mounting board are covered with gummed paper.
2. Make sure that woody specimens are stitched along the main stem, if it is not sewn onto the mounting board.
3. Observe any plant parts that may be loose by gently placing one finger on the parts that are not affixed. If necessary, secure the plant with additional gummed paper strips.
4. Ensure that the gummed paper strips are tucked in next to the specimen on both sides to prevent the specimen from moving.
5. Trim the specimen that exceeds the dimensions of the mounting board without damaging the plant. Seek the guidance of an experienced staff member for this step.
6. Ensure that a poorly pressed specimen is pruned to improve the specimen before mounting. Seek the guidance of an experienced staff member for pruning.
7. Make sure the herbarium label bears the same collector number as that on the field label and jewellery tag (if available).
8. Make sure the envelope/capsule reflect the collector and collector's number.
9. In case of a mixed collection, remove parts of the sample that do not match the label information.