

## **Acquisition Policy of the New England Botanical Society – Vascular Plant and Cryptogamic Herbaria**

This statement of policy provides information about the NEBS Vascular Plant and Cryptogamic (algae, bryophytes, and lichenized fungi) Herbaria (official abbreviation NEBC), to guide curators in evaluating specimens, and defines the ways that collectors can improve representation of the diversity and distribution of the spontaneous flora of New England.

**The mission of the New England Botanical Society's Herbaria is to maintain and grow the herbarium collection, to document the past and present flora of New England, and to make that information available to the botanical community, researchers, and educational community through direct access to specimens and through virtual (digitized) herbaria.**

The major objectives of the herbaria are to:

- represent the diversity of taxa occurring spontaneously in New England, and
- to accurately represent the historic and current distribution of those taxa.
- serve as a repository for voucher specimens documenting published systematic and ecological studies, including floristic surveys, studies of invasive taxa, and species of conservation concern.

Herbarium specimens provide information about species diversity and geographical distribution, and provide phenological, ecological and taxonomic data. The NEBS collections, although large, were primarily collected prior to 1950 and often lack detailed locality and habitat data or field observations of characters not readily apparent from the dried specimen (size, growth habit, odor, flower color).

Priorities for adding to the Herbaria include:

- Under-represented parts (counties) of New England (as defined by the curators)
- New records at the regional, state or county level;
- Under-represented taxa (taxa<sup>1</sup> with few or no records in a particular county or time period);
- Adventive and invasive species;
- Species of conservation concern (federally-listed, state-listed, watch-listed), when collected under appropriate state or federal scientific collection permits;
- Type specimens;
- Voucher specimens for published scientific studies<sup>2</sup>.

### **General Policies**

The Herbaria are eager to accept type specimens, new state or county records, invasive species, species of conservation concern, and specimens specifically cited in scientific publications, as well as specimens that contribute to our current understanding of plant diversity and distribution in New England.

Material added to the collection should be adequate for defining geographic distribution and should provide high quality research material.

The Curatorial staff and committees will review donated specimens (both from the past and current collections) to determine if they:

- Meet the minimum standards for a specimen and documentation; and
- Contribute to the current knowledge of the distribution and diversity of the taxon in New England.

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<sup>1</sup> Taxa include genera, species, subspecies, varieties and forms.

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: Publications should state that vouchers have been deposited in the New England Botanical Club Herbarium at Harvard University (NEBC). Authors should contact the Curator prior to publication.

Because herbarium storage space at HUH is finite, it is not possible to provide complete coverage of a species within New England. Our goal is to have a minimum number of collections of each species and infraspecific taxa, where appropriate, from each county (at least 3), during each time period (pre-1900, 1900-1925, 1925-1950, 1950-1975, 1975-2000, 2000-present).

Specimens that do not meet the minimum standards or do not contribute to the scientific mission of the Herbaria will be returned to the donor or offered to other herbaria to support their collections of the New England flora.

Specimens may be de-accessioned, at the discretion of the curators, when

- They no longer fulfill the herbarium's mission and goals
- They are damaged beyond reasonable repair
- They are missing (lost, stolen, or destroyed)
- They are unnecessary duplicates.

### **Standards**

All specimens must meet these requirements before they are considered for addition to the NEBS Herbaria. It is not necessary for specimens to be mounted on archival paper, but archival labels must be provided. Optional standards are presented in italics.

- Specimens must have been collected in New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island or Connecticut).
- Specimens must represent spontaneous occurrences (not planted in gardens or in cultivation).
- Specimens of vascular plants must contain sufficient information to identify the species, generally flowering or fruiting material and vegetative material. In some instances, vegetative material alone is sufficient for identification. *Herbaceous plants should include roots or rhizomes, particularly in groups where growth form is an important diagnostic feature.*
- Specimens of species of conservation concern may consist of good-quality color photographs, printed on archival paper using archival-quality ink (ink-jet).
- Specimens of cryptogams must contain sufficient vegetative material and reproductive structures (if produced by the species) for microscopic and chemical tests.
- Specimens must be properly pressed and dried, and insect-free (see Guidelines for Collectors)
- Labels must be typed (printed) on heavy acid-free paper in the appropriate format for either vascular plants or cryptogams (see Guidelines for Collectors).