



Meise Botanic Garden

Welcome to our project!

Data transcription: Herbarium specimens

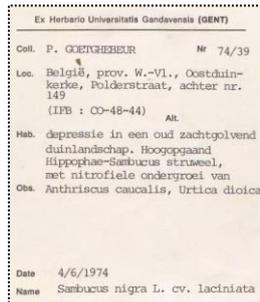
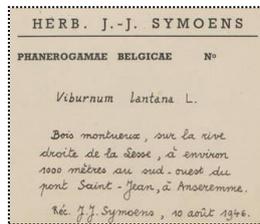
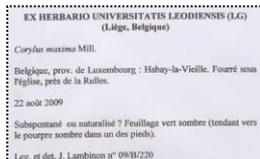
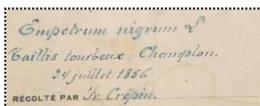
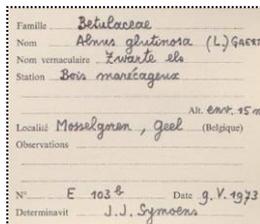
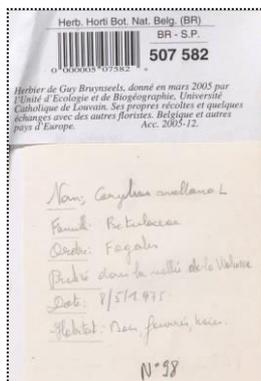
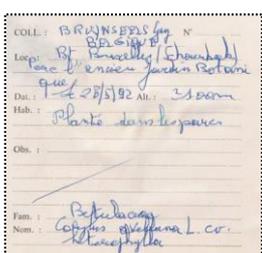
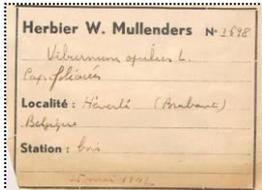
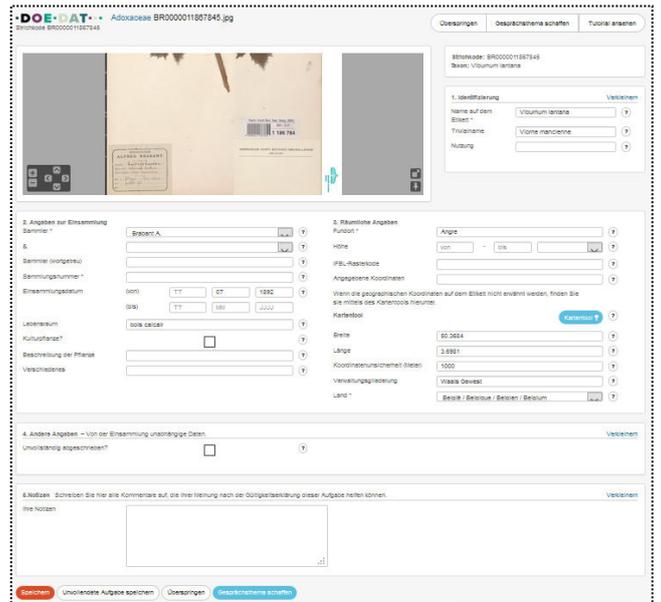
We thank you for your decision to join us in our mission of unlocking the information of the collections held at the Botanic Garden Meise!

If you would like to get better acquainted with the plants of Belgium and Luxembourg and help science with a more thorough contribution, then the transcription of data is something for you!

DoeDat aims to be a positive experience for everyone and we thus hope you will have some fun in the process. Still, our ultimate objective is to make information digitally available for scientists and the general public around the world. Good science is only achieved when based on solid data, therefore their correctness and some standardization is of great importance and we gently ask you to read the following guidelines before starting to transcribe information or to print this tutorial and explore it more in depth as you progress with the transcriptions: it takes only a few minutes and it is much more intuitive to get acquainted with the fields once you are already busy with a real task. Besides, you will then be able to progress with much more confidence!

Each project is accompanied by a short text about the herbarium specimens you will be working with. Click on [Get started](#) to proceed.

As soon as you once again click on [Get started](#), the page will refresh to show you an image – a virtual herbarium specimen! – and a form consisting of several fields next to and under it. On the image you will notice a dried plant, a barcode, and one or more labels with all sorts of information. Your task is to transcribe all information present on the **specimen's original label**, i.e. the very first label containing information about the specimen, usually written by the collector. You find some examples hereunder (here reduced).

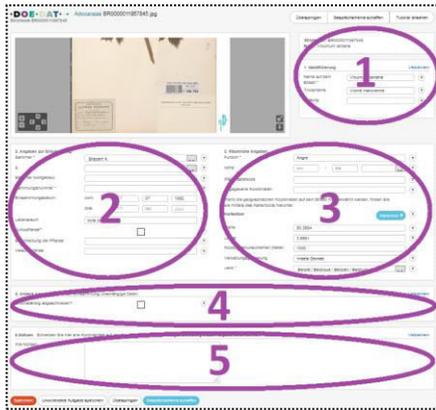


In practice, this means you must find the correct field in the form most suitable for each piece of information on the label and enter it there. Each field on the form is meant for a **particular kind of information** and we ask you to respect this as much as possible. You can find a description of each field's purpose and label examples hereunder. Furthermore, a shorter explanation is always available on the form itself if you click on the help button: the question mark next to each field, .

You will soon need to jump around from field to field. Given the form's length and most computers' screen size, you will eventually get the specimen out of sight. To avoid going up and down all the time, you may want to first click on one of the symbols on the image, right under:

- 
- By clicking on the **first symbol**, a second window will open with only the specimen. By adapting both windows' sizes, you can arrange them so that the specimen is always in place on one and you may move around the form freely on the other.
 - By clicking on the **second symbol**, you fix the image at its place and may then move around freely on the form.

Fields on the form are grouped under different categories:



1. Identification deals with how the plant is referred to and used by scientists and the general society alike.

2. Collection data concern the ecological context in which the plant lived as well as most aspects of the collection event: who collected the plant, when, additional remarks, and how was it catalogued on the field.

3. Spatial data are also linked to the collection event but address specifically the question "where?"

4. Other data have nothing to do with the collection event.

5. Notes is your space! No information from the specimen should be written here. Instead, you are free to add any doubt or remark linked specifically to this particular specimen which might help us validating the data later on.

Form fields may also be categorised according to their technical properties:

Free-text fields allow you to type the information just like you read it on the specimen (e.g. descriptions).

Others equally demand data to be typed but only accept specific values or formats (e.g. dates).

Picklists demand you to choose an item amongst the given possibilities (e.g. collector).

Checkboxes demand you to tick if a given aspect or condition applies to the specimen (e.g. cultivated).

Automatic fields (only mapping tool) are filled in once you order the system to do so.

Some fields are **mandatory** and you always need to fill something in before being able to save the task (marked with * on the form). The help buttons () of these fields tell you what to enter when no information is available on the label.

Some general conventions

Whenever the label is written in a language you do not understand **at all**, **skip the task**. If, however, you can tell which information goes where, **proceed** the transcription.

Pay attention: In no circumstance should you translate the information on the specimen label: enter it exactly as written on the label!

Also pertaining to language, we advise you **not to change between languages** once you have started a task, because otherwise all the information you have already entered will be lost.

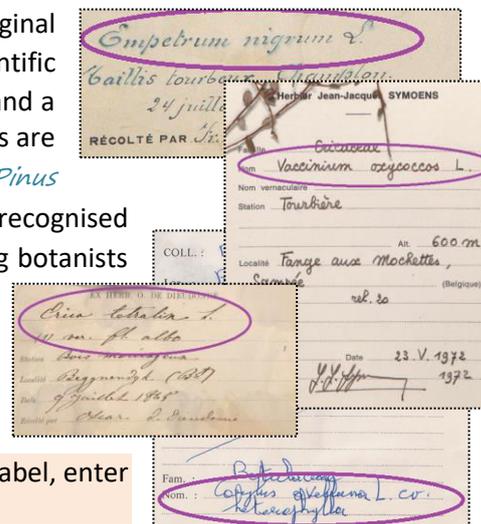
Always capitalize the first word in the beginning of a sentence and end it with a full stop, independently of how it shows on the label. Full stops apply only to entire sentences (e.g. uses, habitat, description, locality), not sentence fragments or loose keywords (e.g. vernacular name, collector, collection number, country). If different paragraphs on the label belong to the same field on the form, separate them with full stops and follow the guidelines above (e.g. read "*surroundings of the farm | near the old house*", write "Surroundings of the farm. Near the old house.").

Whenever you are not sure of the information you are transcribing, may it be because the handwriting is hard to read, the ink has almost disappeared, the information is covered by a leaf, etc., take your best shot and write your interpretation between square brackets “[]” (e.g. write “500 m from the [coast]” or “between [Hasselt] and [Genk]” when certain words or parts thereof are not clearly written). If despite any efforts, you really have no idea whatsoever of what’s written, enter simply “[]”. To enter square brackets is only possible for free-text fields; for all others, write your interpretation under **Miscellaneous** and leave the corresponding field empty.

1 Identification

Scientific name as given *

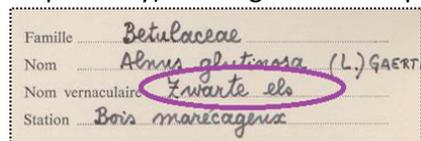
Enter here the scientific name given by the collector which you find on the original label (e.g. “*Betula pendula* Roth”). Ignore any later determinations. A scientific species name consists of two parts: a genus (first letter written in upper case) and a specific epithet (first letter written in lower case). Taxa under the level of species are a bit longer (e.g. “*Circaea lutetiana* L. ssp. *canadensis* (L.) Asch. & Magnus”, “*Pinus sylvestris* L. var. *mongolica* Litv.”). The scientific name of a species may be recognised across any language or cultural barriers around the world (e.g. English-speaking botanists may not recognize *padi*, *mchele*, or *arroz*, but *Oryza* surely rings a bell: rice!). An identification on the specimen may sometimes be different from the one found under **Taxon** at the top of the page, but do not worry: enter here the name you find on the label.



This field is mandatory: In case no scientific name is mentioned on the original label, enter “**unknown**” (without the quotation marks).

Vernacular name

Plants can have several equally valid vernacular (a.k.a. common) names at a time depending on the plant’s life stage, the language, and/or geographical area (e.g. rice is known as *padi* in Indonesian, *arroz* in Portuguese, and *mpunga*, *mchele*, and *wali* in Kiswahili depending on if you mean the plant as a whole, once it was cut, or already cooked and ready to eat, respectively). Amongst the local people, a plant will more likely be recognised by its vernacular name than its scientific name.



Enter here the vernacular name(s) of the plant as well as the language(s) as indicated on the label. If the language is not explicitly mentioned on the label but you recognise it, add it in square brackets after the vernacular name (e.g. read “*rice*”, write “*rice* [English]”).

Uses

People have been using plants for thousands of years, as food, medicine, construction material, etc.! Some labels mention the uses local people give to a particular plant. If such information is available on the label, enter it here.

2 Collection data

Collector(s) as given *

The collector is the person who collected the plant. His/Her name generally appears conspicuously on the label, often after *herbarium of* or the abbreviation *leg.* (from *legit*, Latin for “(s)he collected”). Start with entering here the collector name(s) exactly spelled and in the same order as they appear on the label (e.g. read “*Jean-Jacques Symoens*”, write “*Jean-Jacques Symoens*”). If you read one name on top of the label (e.g. after *herbarium of*) and yet another in the label text (e.g. after *leg.*), enter both in the format “[Name on the label] in [Name after herbarium of]”.

Pay attention: Never choose the name after *det.* (from *determinavit*, Latin for “(s)he has determined”)!

This field is mandatory: If no collector is indicated on the label, enter “*S.C.*” (notice the capitals and full stops; “*sine collectore*” is Latin for “without collector”).

Collector (standard) *

Now, choose from the list the collector name which matches with the one appearing on the label in the format “[Last name], [first name or initials]” (e.g. read “*Jean-Jacques Symoens*”, search and choose “*Symoens, J.J.*”).

This field is mandatory: If no collector is indicated on the label, choose “*S.C.*” If there is no correspondence and in all other remaining cases, choose “*(alia)*” (Latin for “others”).

Collection number *

The collection number renders the order (usually temporal) in which specimens were collected by a same collector. It most often appears conspicuously on the label next to the collector's name or in a corner.

This field is mandatory: If the collection number is missing, enter “*S.N.*” (notice the capitals and full stops; “*sine numero*” is Latin for “without number”).

Collection date *

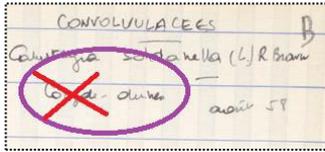
Enter here the date when the plant was collected. All dates must be entered in a standardized form across three fields: day (**DD**), month (**MM**), and year (**YYYY**). If there is a precise date on the label, complete only the form-line (e.g. read “*15/9bre 1908*”, write “*15/11/1908*”). If the date corresponds to a time interval, fill in the earliest possible date in the first line and the latest possible date in the second line (e.g. read “*May-June 1937*”, write from “*05/1937*” to “*06/1937*”).

This field is mandatory: If the year is missing although day and/or month are mentioned, enter “*3000*” for the year. Similarly, if the collection date is missing altogether, just enter “*3000*” for the year.

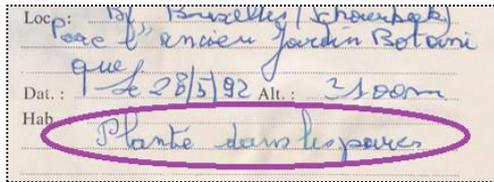
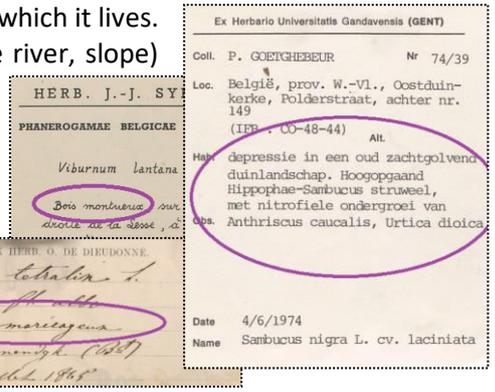
Habitat

A plant, animal, or other life form's habitat is the type of natural community in which it lives. Habitat is always a relatively general description (e.g. forest, prairie, near the river, slope) and may sometimes mention other species present in the area. On the label, habitat is sometimes mentioned after *station* or *formation*.

Pay attention: Proper names referring to localities should be entered under



Locality as given instead (e.g. read "near river in the Ardennes", write "Near river." under **Habitat** and "In the Ardennes." under **Locality as given**).



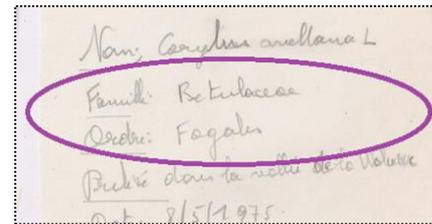
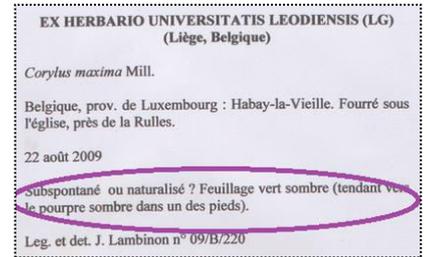
Cultivated?

Check this box if the plant was cultivated. Normally, there is no indication about this when the plant was collected in the wild. In case of cultivated plants, however, there is usually a note somewhere reading *cult.* or *cultivated*.

Plant description

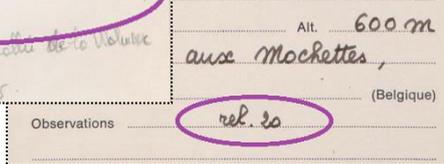
When present, a description often includes the plant's habitus (tree, bush, vine, herb), height, shape and arrangement of leaves or other organs, colour of flowers, etc. Ideally, the description refers solely to the plant collected but sometimes collectors refer to the entire species.

Pay attention: References to the whole natural community should be entered under **Habitat** instead.



Miscellaneous

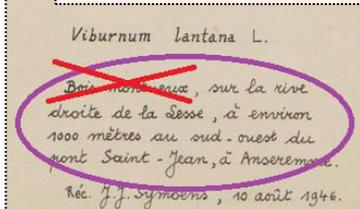
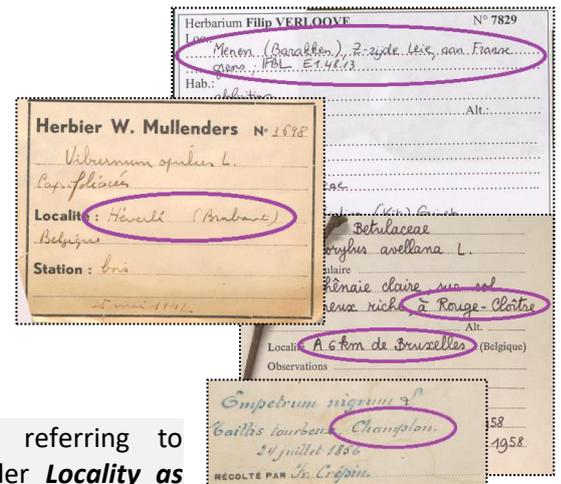
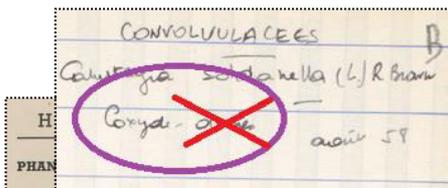
Enter here any other information mentioned on the label for which no specific field exists elsewhere. Please check the remaining fields on the form (above and below) before using this field.



3 Spatial data

Locality as given *

Enter here all descriptive data concerning the place where the plant was collected, including any administrative level below country (e.g. state, province, municipality; but not the country itself). Follow the guidelines mentioned in the tutorial, but further transcribe everything verbatim, i.e. just like it is indicated on the label (i.e. do not translate or substitute historical by present names).



Pay attention: Proper names referring to localities should be entered under **Locality as given** instead (e.g. read "near river in the Ardennes", write "Near river." under **Habitat** and "In the Ardennes." under **Locality as given**).

This field is mandatory: If there is no locality whatsoever on the label, enter "S.L." instead (notice the capitals and full stops; "sine loco" is Latin for "without place").

Altitude

Altitude is the vertical distance to the average sea level. If a single value is given on the label, enter it on the first cell; if a range is given, enter the lowest value on the first cell, the highest value on the second. Always choose the unity on the third cell. If the altitude is given as “sea level”, enter “0” on the first cell and choose “meters” on the third. If the altitude as given on the label cannot be correctly rendered here, leave these fields empty and write it under **Miscellaneous** instead (you may nonetheless ignore indications such as *approximately* and *ca.*).

COLL.: BRUNNSBEEK by N°
Loc.: Rt. Brunnsbeek (Houbaek)
Herbarium Jardin Botanique
Famille: Betulaceae
Nom: Alnus glutinosa (L.) GAERTN.
Nom vernaculaire: Zwarte els
Station: Bois marécageux
Localité: Mosselgoren, Geel
Alt.: 3100m
Alt. env. 15 m

Herbarium Filip VERLOOVE N° 7829
Loc.: Menen (Soubin) 2-rijde les, van Franca
Hab.: IFBL E.146/13
Date: 25.09.1909
Family: Convolvulaceae
Name: Calyptra sp. ovata
Ex Herbario Universitatis Gandavensis (GENT)
Coll. P. GOETGHEBEUR Nr 74/39
Loc. België, prov. W.-Vl., Oostduinkerke, Polderstraat, achter nr. 149
(IFB : CO-48-44) Alt.
Hab. depressie in een oud zachtgolvend

IFBL grid cell

Before GPS was widely used or even available at all, Belgian ecologists used the grid system of the Belgian-Luxembourgish Floristic Institute (*Institut Floristique Belgo-Luxembourgeois*) to divide the territory into several squares (e.g. “H6.35.14” for a 1 km x 1 km square, “H6.32” for a 4 km x 4 km square). Enter here the grid cell number if mentioned on the sheet (on the label or elsewhere).

Coordinates as given

Enter here the geographical coordinates as given on the label (e.g. “54°32'10"N, 012°34'56"E”); these are a numerical code for identifying a point on the Earth’s surface.

Mapping tool

By clicking on the mapping tool, the system will automatically try to match the data you entered under **Locality as given** with known and named places on Google Maps. Follow the instructions on the appearing window as to how to use the mapping tool correctly. You may also drag the marking in order to more accurately.

Pay attention: Be critical when using the mapping tool, because it does not always work (e.g. in case of ambiguous localities, wrong spellings); it does nonetheless render quite useful data when it works properly.

Mapping tool
Map Satellite
Dendermonde
Lebbeke
Londerzeel
Bunbeiden
Haacht
Rosels
Aalst
Grimbergen
Zaventem
Leuven
Denderleeuw
Aalst
Ninove
Hemelt
DudHeverlee
Hemelt
Halle
Wiercois
Wavre
Groot-Dosselt
Braine le Chateau
Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve
Map data ©2017 Google, S 1 km
Terms of Use | Report a problem
You can also drag and drop the marker icon to set the location.
Close & cancel Copy values to main form

Latitude

Line on the Earth’s surface in reference to the Equator.
This field is automatically filled in once you have used the mapping tool.

Longitude

Line on the Earth’s surface in reference to the arbitrarily defined international reference meridian.
This field is automatically filled in once you have used the mapping tool.

Coordinate uncertainty (metres)

Expressed as a radius around the location, this measure reflects the area within which one may reasonably assume the plant was collected. Choose the radius which best covers the area one may reasonably assume given the locality description (e.g. Brussels and Herstappe have very different geographical extents; Antwerp might be the city or the province; 8 km from Namur clearly indicates the distance to the nearest known reference...). Leave empty if the reasonable radius exceeds 10 km.

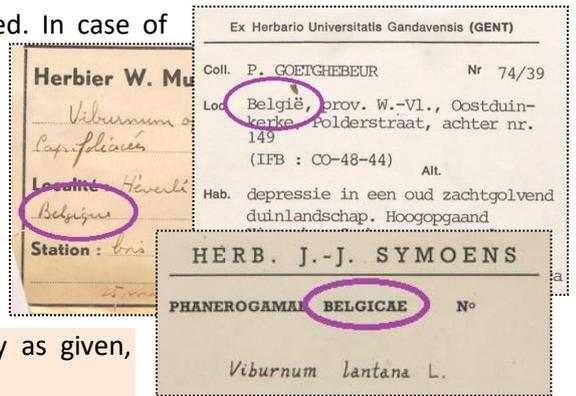
Administrative division

National subdivision of the territory to which the chosen locality belongs.
This field is automatically filled in once you have used the mapping tool.

Country *

Choose from the list the country in which this specimen was collected. In case of ambiguity or doubt, use the field **Miscellaneous** to enter the data as given on the label and leave this field empty despite the error message. Most specimens of the Belgian Herbarium should have been collected either in Belgium or in Luxembourg, but it can happen that some plants (mainly collected in one of the neighbouring countries) are wrongly deposited in our herbarium.

This field is mandatory: In the rare cases the country is ambiguous, unclear, not mentioned on the label nor deductible from the locality as given, choose "(ZZ)".



4 Other data

No label?

Though only rarely, some specimens have no label whatsoever. Check this box if that is the case.

Several specimens?

Though only rarely, some specimens have been mounted together on the same sheet. Several plants does not mandatorily mean there are several specimens. Sometimes, one single plant has several labels, or one single label concerns several plants collected at the same time and place. You recognise several specimens on the fact there will be several plants with several labels often with different information (e.g. different numbers, dates, localities...). If there are indeed several specimens, check this box if that is the case. Transcribe the data of only one single specimen, ignore the other or transcribe their information under **Your notes**.

Incomplete transcription?

Check this box if you were not able to transcribe all information present on the original label into the online form (identification labels and pieces of information posterior to the collection event are not concerned). This should be exceptional but it may apply to labels written in foreign scripts, when handwriting is very hard to decipher, or when information is given in a format which cannot be rendered by simple typing (e.g. drawings, schemes).

Pay attention: Since most specimens do not mention all types of information, it is perfectly normal that some fields on the form remain empty. However, all information indeed available should find its way to one of the fields on the form (in case no specific field is available, enter information under **Miscellaneous**). If this could not be achieved, please check this box.

5 Notes

Your notes

This is your space! Enter here any pertinent information you think might be helpful when validating this task.

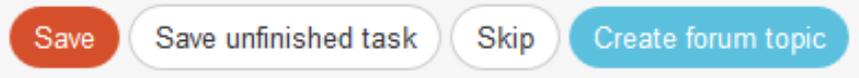
Pay attention: Data appearing on the label for which you do not find an appropriated field must be entered in the field **Miscellaneous** instead. The present field is solely for your personal input, not information on the herbarium sheet.

Save task

All the information available on the herbarium specimen label must find its way to one of the fields in the form. Once you have done that, you have finished this task!

Pay attention: The several fields available correspond to the information one most often finds on herbarium specimen labels, but not every specimen will have **all the information all the time**, quite on the opposite. You thus need not to worry when you finish a task and most fields remain empty: that's **completely normal!**

If you have entered all the information, you may then click on **Save** at the bottom of the page. Here, you may also want to save an



Thank you! Your transcription was saved

- [Transcribe another task](#)
- [Return to the saved task](#)
- [Go to project front page](#)
- [View all my contributions \(including all saved tasks\)](#)

unfinished task to get back to it later (up to 2 hours), skip the task, or post a question on the **Forum** about this specimen.

In the next window, you can then choose your next action (see image at the left).

And that was it!

In case of doubts or questions, it may be useful to visit our **Forum** and either search for existing answers or even create a topic yourself.

If the available help buttons (?) and the forum entries do not suffice, we can always be reached by e-mail (see the contacts listed under **Contact** on the main page). We will try to answer as soon and clearly as possible.

Finally, we remind you that every contribution, big or small, regular or sporadic, is greatly appreciated!

Do your best while keeping in mind the guidelines above and the instructions of the help buttons (?), but never take a DoeDat-project as a chore or worry too much! Everyone makes mistakes and all data will be validated.

Make sure to progress at your own pace while enjoying a nice cup of tea or background music and, of course, the history and beauty of our thousands of plants!

Thank you for joining us in our mission!
