



Among US Herbaria, RM is Outstanding

RM has many numbers to brag about. First, it has 1.3 million specimens! That makes RM the 9th largest herbarium in the US, and the 3rd largest at a publicly funded university. Another stat: RM is the largest herbarium between the Missouri Botanic Garden in St. Louis and the University Herbarium in Berkeley. But even better, RM has been far and away the most active—collecting-wise—of any US herbarium for the last several decades.

In the first (and still the only) accounting of US herbaria, Prather et al. (2004) found that growth in the number of specimens reached its peak during the 1930's, and that nearly all of the 71 sampled herbaria showed a decline in the rate of growth during the last decades of the 20th century. Yet, there was no decline when all herbaria were added together. How could that be?? They found it was due to the rigorous collecting efforts at a single herbarium, one that was accumulating specimens at a rate sufficient to compensate for the decline in 70 other herbaria. That would be the Rocky Mountain Herbarium, of course! During the 1990's, new collections at the RM increased at a rate 40X greater than the average for the other 70 herbaria! This trend has continued into the current century—since 1999 approximately 345,000 specimens have been added to the RM.

The collection frenzy at RM is due to a very active graduate program in floristics (50 students since 1977) overseen by Ron Hartman, Curator. In addition, Ron and RM Collections Manager Ernie Nelson have added 93,300 and 85,000 specimens respectively. ...It's no wonder there's so much activity at RM!

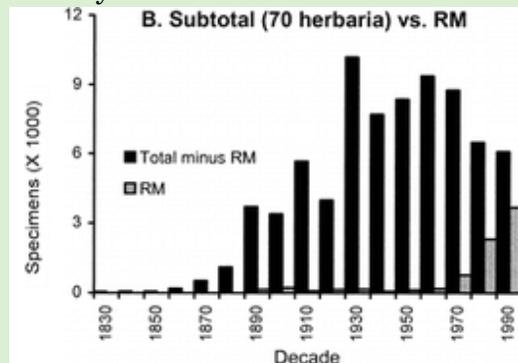


Figure from Prather et al (2004) showing total accumulation of sampled specimens by decade with specimens from RM plotted against the subtotal of the remaining 70 herbaria.

Prather, L.A., O. Alvarez-Fuentes, M.H. Mayfield, and D.J. Ferguson. 2004. *Systematic Botany* 29(1):15-28.

Retirement Party for Ron March 24, 4-5:30 pm at the Herbarium

You are invited to celebrate Dr. Ronald Hartman's long and phenomenal career at the Rocky Mountain Herbarium. Join Ron, colleagues and friends for conversation, coffee and refreshments, and wish him well in his new role as Curator Emeritus.

Friends of the RM Herbarium Fun Nights Feb. 25, March 24 and April 21, 5:30-7 pm

Star volunteers Barry and Jay have finished sorting the Grand Teton National Park specimens to family, and will get us started sorting to genus. There will also be opportunities to mount specimens, and observe the digitizing process. Thanks to Barry, Jay, Jerry and other Friends, more than 400 hours of assistance were donated to RM in December and January!

Volunteer Spotlight

Jerry Pieper has earned the first spotlight by being the first volunteer—he began before the volunteer program was begun! He first came to the RM looking for help with the processing of his own collections, and can now be found at the gluing table, with some of the many pressed plant specimens awaiting mounting onto archival herbarium paper.



Jerry has had a life-long interest in plants. As an undergrad at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, he majored in waterfowl management. That meant summers spent at wildlife refuges in Nebraska and North Dakota, where he began collecting plants, and off-seasons in the Neil A. Harriman Herbarium learning to identify them.

Jerry served at FE Warren AFB for 16 years, then worked for the WY Dept. of Corrections. After retirement, he and his wife, Nancy, moved to Centennial, Wyoming. With time, finally, to process his plant collection, Jerry showed up at the RM and was welcomed by Ernie. Now Jerry has a permanent place in his second new home, the RM, and we all are thankful for his generosity!