The University of Melbourne Herbarium

Student/Volunteer Position Guide

Position Title: Collections Management – Conservation Re-housing Project
Breidahl Moss Collection c.1880 - 1900

Supervisor: Dr Gillian Brown, Herbarium Curator, University of Melbourne Herbarium
Helen Arnoldi, Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator

Position Goal: The student/volunteer will undertake basic conservation re-housing work on the Breidahl Moss Collection c.1880-1900 which is part of the Herbarium collections in the School of Botany. The conservation re-housing and inventory of the collection will ensure that catalogue information on the collection is expanded and current, and that the moss specimens are stored to meet conservation standards.

Background: The Breidahl Moss Collection was donated to the University of Melbourne Herbarium in 1948. It comprises of approximately 400-500 historic moss specimens which are still used today by local and international researchers. Very little is known about the donor of this important collection or its history.

Responsibilities: The student/volunteer will complete an inventory and re-house specimens from the Breidahl Collection while separating the species into Australian and international moss collections. It is estimated that there is somewhere between 400-500 specimens in the collection. As part of the inventory process, information currently on specimen packets will need to be transcribed onto the database. Specimen names will need to be checked to ensure they are current, by comparing them with species lists and completing internet searches. The student will also be required to re-house the specimens into zip lock polyethylene bags and to print out new envelopes from the database, re-packet specimens in these, maintaining provenance by keeping for future reference all other labels, annotation slips, etc. Due to the size of the collection (c. 500 specimen) this project will be broken up into smaller, more manageable sections on which to focus.

Qualifications: Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of museum objects is desirable as this position requires the close inspection of the botanical specimens.

Ideally the student/volunteer will have a basic understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of objects (progress towards the completion of a degree in Museum Studies/Conservation or similar would be suitable).
A methodical, prudent approach and a keen eye for detail. Experience with databases would be desirable.

While no prior knowledge of mosses and plants is necessary, an interest in botany and/or historical botanical collections would be ideal.

**Training and Supervision:**

On-the-job training specific to the task will be provided.

Occasional meetings with the Cultural Collections Projects Coordinator to review how the project is progressing and discuss any ideas or problems encountered.

**Benefits:**

Opportunity to work at close hand with one of the University of Melbourne’s extensive cultural collections.

The opportunity for professional development through experience gained in collection management procedures and practice.

Satisfaction in focusing a specific collection and seeing it documented and rehoused to meet the highest museum and conservation standards. Through the project you will help make the Herbarium’s collections more accessible and contribute to the collection’s preservation, thus increasing our long term understanding, management and appreciation of this collection.

For more information on this position please contact:
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