

A MOULDING METHOD TO PRESERVE TREE FERN TRUNK SURFACES INCLUDING REMARKS ON THE COMPOSITION OF TREE FERN HERBARIUM SPECIMENS

T. JANSSEN^{1,2}

¹ Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Dépt. Systématique et Evolution, UMR-CNRS 5202 / USM 602, CP39, 57 rue Cuvier, F-75231 Paris cedex 05, France

² Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, A.-v.-Haller-Institut für Pflanzenwissenschaften, Abt. Spezielle Botanik, Untere Karspüle 2, 37073 Göttingen, Germany; (Email: thomas.janssen@bio.uni-goettingen.de)

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ABSTRACT

Ferns with a tree habit are mainly found in the families Cyatheaceae and Dicksoniaceae. Together, they constitute a diverse pantropical group of common to locally dominant elements of tropical floras, especially in montane forests. Many species have very restricted distribution ranges and some are highly threatened. Taxonomic understanding of these ferns, a prerequisite to successful establishment of conservation strategies, is hampered by the disparate and often insufficient quality of available herbarium material. During recent fieldwork, a time-efficient scheme has been developed permitting to maximize the information content of tree fern collections. A simple non-destructive silicone moulding method to preserve important characters of the trunk surface is introduced. A standardized annotation sheet as a field book supplement is provided along with a summary sheet of the presented collecting approach for quick reference in the field. Standardized annotations and associated collections such as stem moulds greatly augment the value of the specimen.