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MEDIA RELEASE



## FROM SEED TO CYBER SPACE – RBG WINS AWARD FOR ONLINE PLANT CENSUS PROJECT

An ambitious project that has digitised records on over 50,000 individual plants representing 10,000 species held in 19 collections in RBG Melbourne's living collection has won a major Victorian award.

The Online Plant Census has taken out the Sir Rupert Hamer Records Management Awards 2007 for Innovation and Excellence in Records Management in the Outer Budget Agency category.

Dr Philip Moors, Director of RBG, said: "Yet again the Royal Botanic Gardens is setting the pace: no other botanic garden in Australia has a similar online tool to locate plants in their collections."

Dr Moors said that over the past ten years, the public's desire for information about plants has increased enormously.

"The Online Plant Census will support this continuing interest in the plants – many of them irreplaceable, some even endangered or extinct in the wild – held in the living collections at RBG Melbourne."

"We are literally taking the public's search for seed and plant information into cyber space so anyone around the world will be able to explore our historic and extensive collections."

The online census allows the public and virtual visitors to search against Scientific or Common names, Genus or Family names only or specific beds or locations to identify plants found across the 38-hectare site.

Dr Moors said the online census was live and updated daily, with links into other sites such as the International and Australian Plant Name Indices (IPNI and APNI) and the Google image link to get to image information.

Included in the census are many commemorative and therefore historically significant trees, such as the Separation tree under which the founding of Victoria was declared in 1850.

There are also plants that no longer exist in the wild and only survive in Botanic Gardens, for example, the *Sophora toromiro*, which is now extinct on Easter Island, but has survived in a handful of Botanic Gardens around the world.

The delivery of well-documented and accurate plant information in research and reference collections is one of the core roles of a public botanic garden that distinguishes it from that of a public park.

Dr Moors paid tribute to the Gardens staff who have been painstakingly mapping the Gardens over the past thirty years.

“Without their endeavours, the online census would just not have happened,” he said.

[www.rbg.vic.gov.au/dbpages/rbgcensus/index.php](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/dbpages/rbgcensus/index.php) ,

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