

MPNS User Group

Our User Group is fundamental to establishing services which are effective. They help us scope, design and prioritise these services. It has been meeting during the 3 – 4 year development phase, and both guides MPNS and advises on the future sustainability of the services.

MPNS as part of a global information network

There already exists a rich diversity of information about the chemistry, use, legislation, and conservation of medicinal plants, including photographs. These resources range from research material or legislation to popular guides and compilations. MPNS does not aim to replace these existing resources or duplicate their efforts. It would not be sustainable to do so. Rather we seek partnerships with other information providers to the benefit of end-users.

By linking our names resource to these other information sources we can help their users locate all records for a given plant regardless of the name used. By validating the names they use we can resolve ambiguities within these partner resources and help those publishing information to use plant names effectively. Rather than impose a “standard” set of names MPNS will thus allow users to map or link lists and information in one resource to information held in others.

For further information

Please contact us if you would like to find out more, or are interested in using our services or collaborating as a partner. Sign up to our newsletter for regular updates about our work: eepurl.com/bs7Pbj

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MPNS
Portal

mpns.kew.org/mpns-portal/

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www.kew.org/MPNS



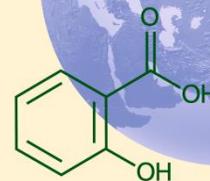
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Medicinal Plant Names Services



Kew
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Medicinal Plant Names Services (MPNS)

Medicinal Plant Names Services (MPNS) works to enable effective communication about plants in health, regulation and research. As part of the science department at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew we are able to build on Kew’s extensive collections, databases, scientific expertise and global partnerships. MPNS has built the first global resource for the names of medicinal plants that links both scientific and non-scientific names as published in the research literature to up to date taxonomy and nomenclature. We use this resource to provide a range of services to professionals and organisations to improve access to information about medicinal plants and plant products.

Why is MPNS needed?

Medicinal plants are used globally and are known by different names in different communities, traditions and languages: the same common name may even be used to refer to more than one plant. Communicating unambiguously about plants requires using scientific names.

There are real practical obstacles to using scientific names appropriately: one medicinal plant may have many different scientific names (*synonyms*), that have been published for it over time; one scientific name may be published by different authors and so can refer to different plants (*homonyms*); scientific names are constantly changing (10,000 changes being published each year) as new plants are discovered and the relationships between plants are re-evaluated.

Non-botanists are frequently unaware of these problems, which can result in significant health and economic impacts. To address these needs, MPNS has developed a central reference which can be used to establish what plant is being referred to, which scientific name to use, or which alternative names have been used for a given plant.

Medicinal Plant Names Services



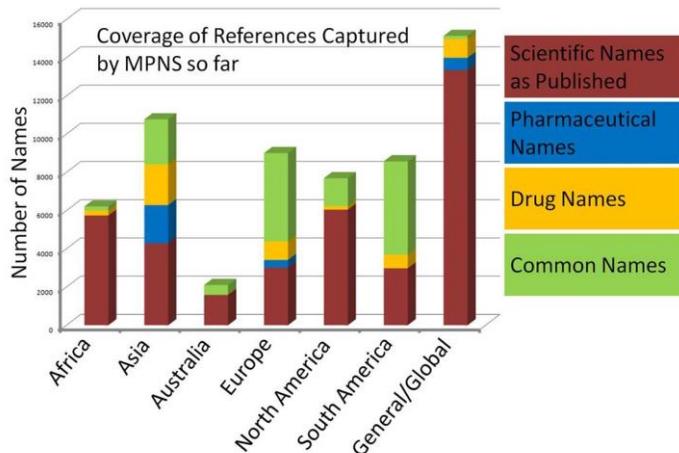
MPNS: the solution

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has developed an **authoritative reference resource** for medicinal plant names.

A number of global plant name resources are already housed at Kew, including The Plant List (www.theplantlist.org). These were largely designed by botanists for other botanists and for a variety of reasons they do not meet the needs of health, pharmaceutical and functional food professionals.

Support from the Wellcome Trust has enabled MPNS to build upon Kew's existing resources to create an authoritative database of medicinal plants and their names. Up-to-date taxonomy is linked to scientific, pharmaceutical, drug and common names as they are used in the relevant literature and legislation.

The MPNS resource currently covers approximately 13,500 species, corresponding to 20,600 scientific names used in the literature. It links these to 46,000 non-scientific names from the same literature, and to over 205,000 scientific names (synonyms) in Kew's taxonomic databases. The inclusion of non-scientific names (trade, pharmaceutical and common names in many languages) makes Kew's taxonomic information more accessible and relevant to a wider audience.



Novel services from MPNS

The MPNS resource is being used to deliver a suite of novel information services addressing different needs:

Online portal (available at www.kew.org/mpns)

You can search the MPNS resource using any scientific, pharmaceutical, common or trade name to find all the plants that the name may refer to, their current taxonomy and all other names by which those plants are known in the literature.

Validation

Checking and enriching your existing lists of plant names: We can correct spellings, propose updates to taxonomy, and enrich your datasets with all known synonyms for each plant.

Web services

Connecting your IT systems to MPNS electronically, enabling you to validate names as they are entered, refresh your databases as plant names change, build comprehensive names indexes and undertake intelligent data mining.

Vocabularies

Providing you with authoritative reference lists, ontologies, terminological controls and data subsets for use in enhancing your own information systems.

Harmonisation

Enabling you to map your plant lists on to those plants cited in legislation, or by other organisations or publications so as to understand overlaps, detect gaps and enhance communication.

Consultancies and Training

Providing guidance on appropriate use of medicinal plant names or the design of IT systems containing such names.

The web portal is freely available online. More sophisticated services, tailored to the particular requirements of an institution or organisation, will be provided under licence. Licence fees will be charged where appropriate as a means of sustaining these services over the longer term.