

Visual Plants – a database solution as a helping tool for the determination of tropical plants

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This database serves as a helping tool for the determination of tropical plants by showing slides, scans and herbarium scans of plants. The problem of all researchers who start working in a new research place is the meticulous determination of plants. In most cases there is help from local experts, but it may be also helpful to have a tool, which allows the rapid classification into a family or genera. Most common tools are of course books which show some examples of plants, but not all plants can be presented.

This was the reason to develop a tool which allows, beneath the classical way via preparation of herbarium material, the presentation of collected material in a database. Collected plants could be scanned by a low cost scanner, filed as JPG (a common graphic format) and included into the database. After typing all necessary information the picture of the plant is available for the next researcher, student or expert. This needs only minutes.

The advantages of **Visual Plants** are the presenting of the plants in colour, the possibility to search for plants with vegetative distinctive marks, comparison between plants within the same genera, and the possibility to have access to the records in the field.

The concept of the presented database is:

- must be running on Windows and Macintosh computers
- should work with a high number of records (scalability)
- allows presentation of slides, scans and herbarium material
- searching for distinctive marks
- gives access to family characteristics

This tool was tested in different field trips in Costa Rica and Ecuador and is now available as a single program (the database engine is included in the program).

The program language is english.

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Poster-ABSTRACT