

User's Guide  
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# Author Guidelines for Submission of Scientific Taxon Descriptions to FloraBase

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## INTRODUCTION

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Scientific taxon descriptions include taxonomic and diagnostic features and are complementary to the present brief taxon descriptions appearing on the taxon profile pages in FloraBase. Scientific descriptions differ from brief descriptions in that they are more detailed, textual descriptions written and maintained by the author. Brief descriptions exist for the whole flora and are maintained by staff in the Western Australian Herbarium.

These guidelines aim to simplify the task of getting taxon descriptions into FloraBase and to expedite the process of maintaining those descriptions should they need to be changed. This is done using HTML as the basic format because software is readily available to create HTML, and the end point is a web site. The author must simply present information in a standard way so that it can be quickly moved into the web site, in most cases overnight. Authors should aim to check that the descriptions they submit are up-to-date regularly, and submit updated files where necessary.

Editors of the scientific descriptions (members of the Bioinformatics and Publications Group) will not concern themselves with the content of the description – only the formatting and style. Descriptions will carry the authors' names but will not be individually refereed.

## COMPONENTS OF A DESCRIPTION

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A static description file comprises the following (in order):

- Title
- Compiler
- Description
- Citation

Each of these components is to be provided in a **single file** in HTML format; images and other content in linked files cannot be included. The file name for each description is to be in the format of NameID.html, e.g. 13791.html

The NameID is the unique number assigned to that taxon by the Western Australian Herbarium.

### Title

The title of the description (whether it is a species-, genus-, or family-level description) should be presented in the following manner in HTML:

```
<h1>*<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L. var. <i>halicacabum</i></h1>
```

Note: Here the asterisk indicates an alien taxon. If the taxon described is native there is no asterisk.

The *title's value is optional* because the text is not used when displaying the file in FloraBase. The full name of the taxon—retrieved from WACensus by its NameID—is used instead. Despite this, it is advisable to supply the HTML-formatted full name of the taxon in the H1 tag anyway, as this will make it easy to re-purpose the files for other projects.

## Compiler

The full name of the contributing author is to be added after the title, in the following format, e.g.:

```
<h2>Amanda Spooner</h2>
```

Be aware that size for the compiler field is 80 characters. If you require more please contact the Bioinformatics and Publications Group (see Contact details). The date of description will be determined from the date of last modification of the file as submitted to the Bioinformatics and Publications Group.

## Description

There is no limit to description length. Formatting follows that of the WA Herbarium's scientific journal, *Nuytsia*. See <http://www.naturebase.net/content/view/951/482/1/3/> for full guidelines.

HTML descriptions should not contain style information, as these will be replaced by the styles already in use in FloraBase.

Briefly:

- use of hyphens should be restricted to word combinations such as 2-flowered and south-west. An En dash should be used for ranges such as 3–6. In Microsoft Word this can be obtained by holding down the Ctrl key and pressing the minus sign on the numeric keypad.
- use of the grave accent ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grave\\_accent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grave_accent)) should be avoided when quoting text. Modern fonts do not handle `single backquoted' or ``double backquoted'' material properly, e.g.
  - `single backquoted'
  - ``double backquoted''
  - 'single quoted'
  - "double quoted"
- paragraph headings should be in bold font followed by a full stop.
- the first mention of a feature within a paragraph should be italicised, with no following full stop.

## Citation

Sources used to generate descriptions, both literature and software, should be acknowledged. Add this information after the taxon description in the following format, e.g.:

```
<p class="cite">Descriptions were generated using DELTA data format and DELTA software: Dallwitz (1980) and Dallwitz, Paine and Zurcher (1993 onwards, 1995 onwards, 1998).</p>
```

Use as many of these paragraphs as required to document the citation.

## SOFTWARE AND FILE FORMAT

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### Format and File Names

The file format for displaying in FloraBase is HTML. A number of software titles in common use make it relatively easy to convert or export codified data into HTML format (see Software, below).

An example of the proposed format is shown in Appendix 1, with the corresponding FloraBase output shown in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 lists directives needed to create the html format when using the DELTA system software.

### Software

A number of software titles can be used to create these descriptions, however the most common will be DELTA System and Lucid's Fact Sheet Fusion. In any case, we are interested only in the individual taxon description files, not the index, glossary and other files generated by these tools. Please consult the documentation provided with the software you are using for ways to export to HTML.

## FILE DELIVERY AND CONTACT DETAILS

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Files are to be submitted on CD or by email to Amanda Spooner, Bioinformatics and Publications Group, Western Australian Herbarium.

Mailing address:           Amanda Spooner  
                                  Bioinformatics and Publications Group,  
                                  WA Herbarium, Locked Bag 104  
                                  Bentley Delivery Centre  
                                  Western Australia 6983

Email:                       [amanda.spooner@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:amanda.spooner@dec.wa.gov.au)

Phone/fax:                 +61 8 9334 0513/0515

## APPENDICES

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### Appendix 1. Example of HTML format

```
html>
<head>
  <title>HTML Title</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>*<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L. var. <i>halicacabum</i></h1>
<h2>Weed Information Network Team</h2>
<p><strong>Common name(s). </strong> Balloon Vine.</p>
<p><strong>Habit.</strong> Perennial, broad-leaved, herbaceous climbers (creeping or climbing by tendrils), up to 8 m high.</p>
<p><strong>Leaves.</strong> Alternate, spiral, compound, bipinnate or multiply compound (biternate), petiolate, petiole 10–57 mm long. <i>Leaflet blade</i> 28–62 mm long, 10–43 mm wide, elliptic or oblong or ovate or triangular, base tapering (attenuate and decurrent), margins serrate or dentate (or deeply incised), apex acuminate or acute. Blade with indumentum. Indumentum hairy (puberulent veins, ciliate margins), hairs simple.</p>
<p><strong>Flowers.</strong> Arranged in inflorescences, in racemes (complex, cymose, bracteate), predominantly white, very irregular, the floral asymmetry involving the perianth or the androecium, pedicellate, pedicel 1–4 mm long, perianth 2-whorled. <i>Calyx</i> 0.8–4 mm long, 4 sepals, all sepals free. <i>Corolla</i> 1.5–5 mm long, 4 petals, all petals free. <i>Stamens</i> 8, free of the perianth, both opposite and alternating with the corolla parts, free of each other. Anthers more or less versatile, dehiscing via longitudinal slits. <i>Ovary</i> syncarpous, superior, 3-celled. Ovules 1 per cell. <i>Styles</i> 1, simple (with 3-lobed stigmas).</p>
<p><strong>Fruit.</strong> Dehiscent, a capsule, non-fleshy, 12–41 mm long (inflated, subglobose), 15–44 mm wide.</p>
<p><strong>Distribution.</strong> Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales. Alien to Australia, alien to Western Australia, naturalised.</p>
<p><strong>Native distribution.</strong> Common as a weed in warm countries.</p>
<p><strong>Habitat.</strong> In sand, loam, wet soil (silt); occupying river beds and banks, floodplains; growing in disturbed natural vegetation (roadside weed).</p>
<p><strong>Flowering period.</strong> January, February, March, April, May, July, December.</p>
<p class="cite">The descriptions are sourced from the <a href="/weed">Weed Information Network</a> project. <a href="http://florabase.dec.wa.gov.au/>Western Australian Herbarium</a></p>
<p class="cite">Descriptions were generated using DELTA data format and DELTA software: Dallwitz (1980) and Dallwitz, Paine and Zurcher (1993 onwards, 1995 onwards, 1998).</p>
</body>
</html>
```

## Appendix 2. Descriptive output from above HTML

### \**Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. var. *halicacabum*

#### Weed Information Network Team

**Common name(s).** Balloon Vine.

**Habit.** Perennial, broad-leaved, herbaceous climbers (creeping or climbing by tendrils), up to 8 m high.

**Leaves.** Alternate, spiral, compound, bipinnate or multiply compound (biternate), petiolate, petiole 10–57 mm long. *Leaflet blade* 28–62 mm long, 10–43 mm wide, elliptic or oblong or ovate or triangular, base tapering (attenuate and decurrent), margins serrate or dentate (or deeply incised), apex acuminate or acute. Blade with indumentum. Indumentum hairy (puberulent veins, ciliate margins), hairs simple.

**Flowers.** Arranged in inflorescences, in racemes (complex, cymose, bracteate), predominantly white, very irregular, the floral asymmetry involving the perianth or the androecium, pedicellate, pedicel 1–4 mm long, perianth 2 -whorled. *Calyx* 0.8–4 mm long, 4 sepals, all sepals free. *Corolla* 1.5–5 mm long, 4 petals, all petals free. *Stamens* 8, free of the perianth, both opposite and alternating with the corolla parts, free of each other. Anthers more or less versatile, dehiscing via longitudinal slits. *Ovary* syncarpous, superior, 3 -celled. Ovules 1 per cell. *Styles* 1, simple (with 3-lobed stigmas).

**Fruit.** Dehiscent, a capsule, non-fleshy, 12–41 mm long (inflated, subglobose), 15–44 mm wide.

**Distribution.** Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales. Alien to Australia, alien to Western Australia, naturalised.

**Native distribution.** Common as a weed in warm countries.

**Habitat.** In sand, loam, wet soil (silt); occupying river beds and banks, floodplains; growing in disturbed natural vegetation (roadside weed).

**Flowering period.** January, February, March, April, May, July, December.

The descriptions are sourced from the [Weed Information Network](#) project. [Western](#) Australian Herbarium.

Descriptions were generated using DELTA data format and DELTA software: Dallwitz (1980) and Dallwitz, Paine and Zurcher (1993 onwards, 1995 onwards, 1998).

## Appendix 3. Using the DELTA system to create HTML format

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### 1. Example of DELTA LAYOUT File Directives

#### NEW PARAGRAPHS AT CHARACTERS

(This should include the character numbers that start the subheadings, e.g.)

```
*NEW PARAGRAPHS AT CHARACTERS 4-5 14 45 77 83 96-97 102
```

#### ITEM SUBHEADINGS

The text under this directive should be in the following format:

```
*ITEM SUBHEADINGS
```

```
#char number \b{}Common names\b0.
```

Example:

```
*ITEM SUBHEADINGS
```

```
#4. \b{}Common names\b0.
```

```
#5. \b{}Habit\b0.
```

```
#14. \b{}Leaves\b0.
```

```
#45. \b{}Flowers\b0.
```

```
#77. \b{}Fruit\b0.
```

```
#83. \b{}Distribution\b0.
```

```
#96. \b{}Native distribution\b0.
```

```
#97. \b{}Habitat\b0.
```

```
#102. \b{}Flowering period\b0.
```

### 2. DELTA MARKHTML File Directives

The DELTA System by default uses a number of characters that are illegal in the web world. We must change these for compatibility:

#### RULE #1, THE RANGE SYMBOL

The DELTA System allows the range symbol to be redefined, so we change it from its current value to the HTML entity value for the En dash as follows:

```
#1 <range symbol> &#8211;
```

#### RULE #14, BEFORE EACH DELTA ITEM NAME

To create the Heading 1 (H1) tag in the description we must fill out two MARKHTML rules. We open the Heading 1 tag in this rule, and close it in RULE #15.

```
#14. <NATURAL LANGUAGE: before item name> !<h1>!
```

#### RULE #15, AFTER EACH DELTA ITEM NAME

Close the Heading 1 (H1) tag in this rule:

```
#15. <NATURAL LANGUAGE: after item name> !</h1>!
```

### 3. Taxon Names

The taxon name should be presented in the following manner (but note that this content is optional for FloraBase, as noted earlier):

*\*Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. var. *halicacabum*

The recommended method to capture this style is to create the name format in a text character (and using the command \*CHARACTER FOR TAXON NAME so that the species name is sourced from the relevant character when the descriptions are generated) in DELTA Editor as follows (note the manual definition of italics on those parts of the name that warrant it, and the use of angle brackets around those that should not be italicised):

*\*Sida acuta* <subsp.> *carpinifolia* <(L.f.) Borss.Waalk.>