

Section 4. Miscellaneous

The form is titled "Misc" and contains the following fields and options:

- Habitat: Text input field
- Substrate: Text input field
- Associated Taxa: Text input field with a list icon on the right
- Description: Text input field
- Notes: Text input field with a list icon on the right
- Life Stage: Dropdown menu with "IGNORE" selected
- Sex: Dropdown menu with "IGNORE" selected
- Individual Count: Dropdown menu with "IGNORE" selected
- Sampling Protocol: Dropdown menu with "IGNORE" selected
- Preparations: Dropdown menu with "IGNORE" selected
- Phenology: Text input field
- Establishment Means: Text input field
- Cultivated: Checkbox

Fig. 4.1. Basic Data Entry Form, Section 4

This box is basically for ecological information.

Habitat: There are no rules for what should go in here. It is good to start with the physical habitat and then go to the biological aspects. For example, “Flat sandy desert with lots of exposed soil and occasional trees”; “Steep (10 degree) northwest facing slope; plants growing in rock cracks”. “Landscaped grounds of hotel”; “Area between road and open, disturbed space used for playing soccer”.

Substrate: Substrate is very important when collecting lichens, fungi, and bryophytes which is why there is a separate field for the information but it is often left blank when collecting vascular plants. It overlaps with habitat. For instance, for the habitat “Sandy desert”, sand could be placed in the substrate field but do not add it for existing labels; because the plant might have been found in an exceptional area within a sandy desert habitat. If you have collected a parasitic plant, you could name the plant that was being parasitized as the substrate: “Parasitic on *Acacia somalensis*”.

Associated taxa: The *scientific names* of the taxa the plant was growing with. Clicking on the icon on the right of the field, brings up a pick list of names. It will help you spell the names correctly. If you do not know the scientific names but do know the vernacular names, list the vernacular names in the habitat field.

Description: Comments about the plant that YOU collected. It is particularly important to include information that will not be evident from your specimen. For instance, was it woody and if so was it woody just at the base or was it a tree or shrub. How tall was it? Had it been severely grazed or eaten by insects? Did it exude a milky juice or colored sap when you collected it. What color were the flowers (flower color often does not preserve well). If the plants are unisexual, this would be the place to state whether the plant was male or female.

Notes: This is very open ended. It is the place to state how common the species was at the location: “Very common”, “sparse”, “growing only where protected by a shrub or among rocks”. In addition, if you have a collecting permit, enter the number here. If you were collecting in connection with a particular project, name the project here.

The next line of five fields was designed to meet the needs of arthropod collectors but some fields may be

applicable to algae, fungi, and plants.

Life Stage: Appropriate terms include “Vegetative”, “Reproductive”, “Seed”.

Sex: Can be used for plants in taxa with distinctive distribution of sexual plants. For example, if a taxon is known to be androdioecious, one could specify whether the collection is of staminate or bisexual plants.

Individual Count: For arthropods. They are often caught in traps. The number caught goes here.

Sampling Protocol: Again, for insects.

Preparations: This would be the place to note that, in addition to the specimen, material was preserved for DNA or cytological study or a seed collection was made.

The next three fields were included for vascular plants

Phenology: This means what phase was the plant at. Examples are “Vegetative”, “Budding”, “Flowering”, “Fruiting”, “Seed dispersal”, “Post seed dispersal”. You can include two phases. For ferns and gymnosperms, do not use “Flowering” or “Fruiting”. For ferns, “With spores” would indicate that there were spores present. Or you could simply state “Reproductive”. For gymnosperms, state whether there were mature cones present or not. Note that junipers may be unisexual.

Establishment Means: This is left blank unless you know the plant was deliberately placed there by humans. There are a few options here. “Seeded”, “Planted”, or “Cultivated”. *Cultivated* means there is ongoing care being given, for example, watering, removal of competing weeds. “Seeded” and “planted” means that humans were responsible for there being introduced to the site but the plants were then left to grow on their own.

Cultivated: Check this box for plants that are being cultivated. It is repetitive if you have also entered “Cultivated” in “Establishment Means” but using the checkbox makes it easier to exclude such specimens when calculating the ecological niche of a taxon.