

In conclusion it can be seen from both the tables that there is still a strong need to collect in Swaziland and secondly that there is a need to update the *Flora of Swaziland*.

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REVISION OF THE COMPUTERIZED NUMBERING SYSTEM FOR AFRICAN PLANTS

Three articles in this issue of *Bothalia*, namely Smith & Steyn (1997: 135), Smith *et al.* (1997: 139), and Germishuizen (1997: 144) adopt a revised numbering system. Consequently, to avoid confusion until the next edition of PRECIS (National Herbarium, **PRE**toria **COM**puterized **IN**formation **S**ystem) is published, this explanation is included here. However, there still exists a computer link between the 'old' numbers and the revised numbers for those herbaria making use of the numbering system used in Arnold & De Wet (1993).

The first comprehensive list of southern African plants to be published from PRECIS was the *List of species of southern African plants* (Gibbs Russell *et al.* 1984), comprising a basic inventory of names in current use by PRE. This was followed by a second edition which appeared in two parts and included synonyms and references to recent literature. Part 1 (Gibbs Russell *et al.* 1985) covered the bryophytes, pteridophytes, gymnosperms and monocotyledons. Part 2 (Gibbs Russell *et al.* 1987) covered the dicotyledons. The third publication of this nature, *Plants of southern Africa: names and distribution*, edited by Arnold & De Wet (1993), provided additional regional distribution data based only on the collections in the National Herbarium (PRE).

In all three above-mentioned works the spermatophytes appear in the same sequence as in Dyer (1975, 1976), which in turn follow the numbering of genera by De Dalla Torre & Harms (1958), in accordance with the Engler system. The numbers for the genera are combined with zeros to make up a seven-digit number for sorting by computer. In genera traditionally indicated by letters after the number (e.g. *Senna*, 3536**b**) the letter is replaced by the equivalent number (e.g. *Senna*, 3536**020**). Following the genus name, the species and infraspecific taxa are listed alphabetically, numbered and combined with zeros **before**—omitted in Arnold & De Wet 1993—and **after** the species number to make up a five-digit number; a gap of 100 empty spaces was left between species (Table 3) to allow for new names in their alphabetical position. This space became inadequate in many cases as new species and infraspecific names were added to the list.

These inadequacies, together with the incorporation of the list of tropical African plant names compiled by Lebrun & Stork (1991, 1992) into PRECIS at the begin-

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TABLE 3.—Example of a section of the inventory in Arnold & De Wet (1993) and its equivalent in the new numbering system of Arnold & De Wet (1997)

Old numbering system	Revised numbering system
3536020 SENNA Mill.	3536020 SENNA Mill.
200 <i>corymbosa</i> (Lam.) Irwin & Barneby	2 <i>corymbosa</i> (Lam.) Irwin & Barneby
300 <i>didymobotrya</i> (Fresen.) Irwin & Barneby	3 <i>didymobotrya</i> (Fresen.) Irwin & Barneby
400 <i>hirsuta</i> (L.) Irwin & Barneby	4 <i>hirsuta</i> (L.) Irwin & Barneby

ning of 1997, have led to the revision of the existing numbering system for African plants.

In the revised system, the genus numbers remain the same, but all the specific and infraspecific taxon numbers change. The species numbers range from 1 to 999 (e.g. *Senna didymobotrya* (Fresen.) Irwin & Barneby is represented by 3536020-3). Species names newly included automatically receive the next available number and are not in their alphabetical position. In the full species number the genus number is separated from the species part of the number by a hyphen (e.g. the number of *Senna corymbosa* is 3536020-2).

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