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News from the Australian Seed Bank Partnership

The Australian Virtual Seed Bank: A growing resource for plant conservation

BRADLEY DESMOND*

Australian Seed Bank Partnership

*Corresponding author: coordinator@seedpartnership.org.au

The Australian Virtual Seed Bank (AVSB) is an open-access portal that centralises seed collection and germination trial data from conservation seed banks across Australia. Managed by the Australian Seed Bank Partnership (ASBP) and developed in collaboration with the Atlas of Living Australia, the AVSB integrates seed information with broader biodiversity knowledge systems, ensuring seamless access to essential plant information for conservation.

The AVSB is a key initiative of the ASBP, a national alliance of conservation seed banks, herbaria, botanic gardens and research institutions. Our members work together to ensure that Australia's native plant diversity is safeguarded for future generations. Eleven seed banks across the ASBP provide both seed collection and seed germination data for the portal, ensuring that

conservation efforts are backed by scientifically rigorous information. The portal currently boasts over 58,000 seed collection records from over 13,000 Australian plants, including 942 nationally listed species.

The role of the portal

The portal plays a vital role in sharing the wealth of knowledge and expertise brought together by the Partnership. The portal supports researchers, land managers, policymakers and conservation practitioners in their efforts to protect Australia's unique and often threatened flora. It enables:

- Seed sourcing for restoration projects, as land managers can identify available seed collections for use in habitat restoration and species recovery programs.

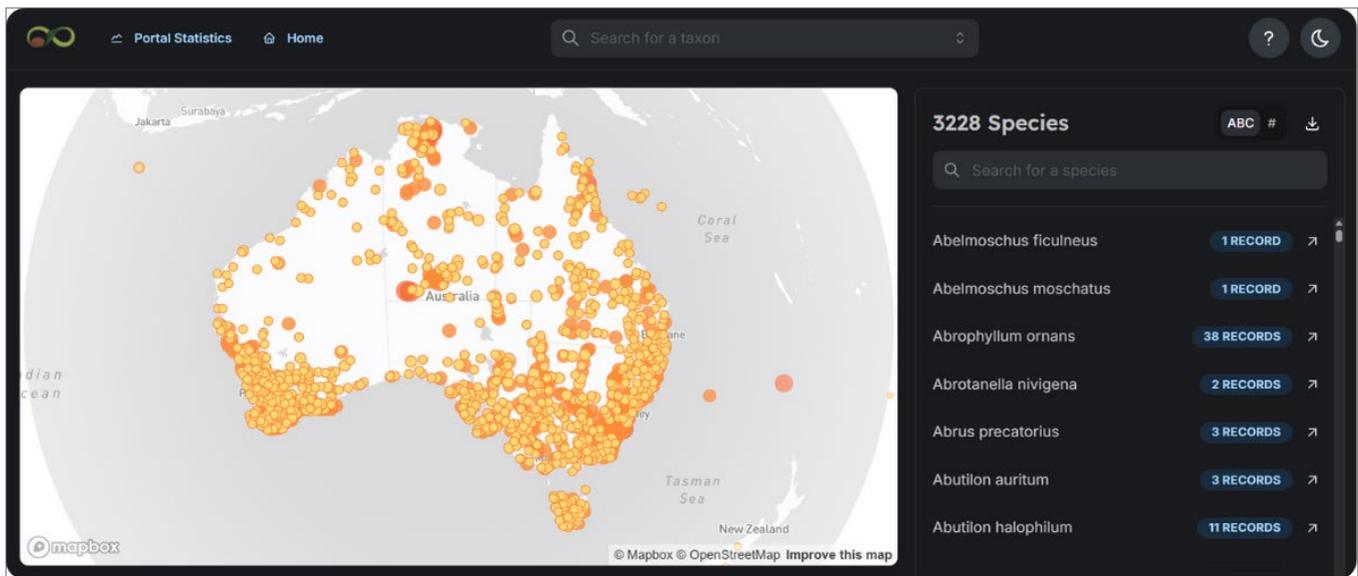


Figure 1. AVSB Portal showing the seed collection records from the National Seed Bank. Photo: ASBP.

- Access to germination trial data so scientists and horticulturalists can refine propagation techniques for difficult-to-grow species.
- Conservationists and policymakers to monitor which species are safeguarded in seed banks and where gaps remain.
- Contribution of information to national and international plant conservation commitments, such as the Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
- Public access to information about Australia's natural heritage.

A growing database

Each year, we update the AVSB to integrate new seed collections, germination trial results, and associated metadata – reflecting the latest fieldwork and research efforts. These updates ensure that the data shared through the AVSB is comprehensive, up to date and relevant to conservation efforts across the country. The portal remains an evolving tool that will be enhanced every year to continue to support real-world efforts to protect native flora.

We have recently launched a new statistics page within the AVSB, enabling users to extract key insights into Australia's seed bank holdings, including the representation of threatened species. This feature provides access to metrics that help measure progress against national and international conservation targets. Such insights are invaluable for tracking conservation progress and prioritising future seed collection efforts.

Explore and share

The portal is freely accessible online, providing a wealth of information that can help drive better conservation outcomes for Australia's unique plant species. With its growing dataset, new analytical tools, and ongoing contributions from the conservation community, the AVSB remains a cornerstone resource for safeguarding Australia's native flora. Whether you're a scientist, policymaker, or simply passionate about protecting Australia's plants, we invite you to explore, use and share the AVSB to help advance conservation efforts.

Visit the Australian Virtual Seed Bank at: <https://seedbank.ala.org.au/>

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt thanks to members of the Partnership for providing their data, and to the Director of National Parks and the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens for their support in updating this critical resource. The Australian Virtual Seed Bank is not just a portal; it's a testament to the power of collaboration, data transparency and a shared commitment to the future of plant conservation.