

Press Information

The Long and Short of it – The Plant List

The Plant List includes 1.25 million scientific plant names of which 1.04 million are names of species rank. Of the species names included in *The Plant List*, about 300,000 (29%) are accepted names for species and about 480,000 (46%) are recorded as Synonyms of those species. The status of the remaining 260,000 names (25%) is "Unresolved" since the contributing data sets do not contain sufficient evidence to decide whether they should be Accepted names or Synonyms. *The Plant List* includes a further 204,000 scientific plant names of infraspecific taxonomic rank linked to those species names. These numbers will change in the future as data quality improves.

- The longest species name (binomial) we have is, *Ornithogalum adseptentrionesvergentulum*, published by U.Müll.-Doblies & D.Müll.-Doblies. This is a member of the genus that includes 'star of bethlehem' plant
- The shortest names that appear on the plant list are
 - *Poa fax*, published J.H.Willis & Court
 - *Poa tef*, published by Zuccagni
 - *Poa uda*, published by Honda
- The Plant List includes records for 620 plant families and 16,167 plant genera, but more than 50% of all plant species actually belong in the 15 biggest plant families.
- The three biggest families are Compositae (daisy family) 9% Orchidaceae (orchid family) 8% and Leguminosae (Pea and Bean family) 6%. These three families also had the highest number of plant names.
- 67 different plant families have only one species recorded in each including the Ginkgoaceae with the Ginkgo tree as its only species.
- The family with the greatest number of Synonyms per Accepted name is the Poaceae (grass family), followed by the Cabbage family (Brassicaceae) and the Sedge family (Cyperaceae)
- Among larger families (including at least 2,000 species) those with the highest proportion of Unresolved names include the Apiaceae (the umbellifer family such as carrot and celery), the Cactus family and the Solanaceae (the family of the potato and the tomato).
- The genus with the highest number of species is *Astragalus*, sometimes called milk vetch which has 2,481 accepted species in Version 1 of The Plant List
- The genus with the highest number of names is "Hieracium" (Hawkweeds) with 17,844 different names in The Plant List of which 1,411 are accepted species names. This genus also has the highest number of unresolved names needing work by botanists - 8,325!!

Ends

For more information please contact the Kew Gardens Press Office on 020 8332 5607 or email pr@kew.org. For more information on The Plant List see www.theplantlist.org