Royal BC Museum
675 Belleville Street
Victoria, BC V8W 9W2

Botany Provocation Pack

What does "Botany" mean?
Botany is the science or study of plants. The name comes from the Latin *botanicus* and the Greek *botane* meaning "plant" or "herb."

When did the Royal BC Museum start collecting plants?
In 1886, the museum herbarium was established. This is the place where the plant collection is stored. Because we have collections that go back more than 100 years, it's like having a time machine! We can go into the collection and determine whether a particular plant has been collected before and from what part of the province it was collected.

What do the botanists collect?
The botanists at the museum try to collect a specimen of every single species they encounter – everything! Recently, they have been working on collecting from northern BC's alpine flora. Because it is remote and hard to reach, we have very few collections from that part of the province.

How big is the botany collection?
The Royal BC Museum herbarium has approximately 205,000 specimens from all over BC. They fill more than 250 cupboards!

Who works in botany collections?
All museum collections have a variety of people who work in them. Typically, there is at least one curator and one collection manager. A curator's job is to decide what is important to keep in the collection and what specimens to accept into the collection. Every museum collection has a goal: at the Royal BC Museum, our goal is to tell the story of plants in British Columbia throughout space and time. A collection manager's job is to take care of the collection by keeping each specimen well preserved and facilitating how specimens come in and out of the collection. Many other people visit the collection such as scientists, researchers, volunteers and community members.