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# ASIAN WOOD COLLECTION: NEW DATA FROM THE XYLARIUM OF PARIS

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## Résumé

The National Museum of Natural History in Paris houses a wood collection (a xylarium) of more than 15,000 specimens of many kinds, covering 218 botanical families from 78 countries. Almost all families which include woody species are represented. The xylarium was created at the beginning of the 19th century, and is ancillary to the National Herbarium. It includes numerous types.

The recent renovation of the Great Herbarium allowed a national xylarium project to be set up, comprising two other wood collections from university Paris VI and paleobotany: which totalize more than 18,000 specimens. This collection is associated with a technical platform for wood analysis: wood kerf Board, microscope and image capture software.

The close relationship between the xylarium and the Museum’s other collections, including the Herbarium to which it is linked both geographically and historically, results in a rich source of information with potential for novel approaches to answering scientific questions.

The identification of species from their wood is fundamental to xylogical and anthracological studies as applied in archaeology, since identification of an unknown wood sample must be carried out by reference to a known sample.

Wood is studied by researchers from many different disciplines in the Museum. Its cellular structure provides both taxonomic and ecological information used in a wide range of studies.

The wood collections cover a large part of the Asian continent, from South-East Asia (for example in Indochina: Chevalier, Poilane, Henri d’Orléans; in Java: Prince Roland Bonaparte) to China and Japan.

So the xylarium, with more than 18,000 specimens, is a reference collection which may serve as the basis for studies of specific taxonomic groups represented in the Herbarium. Scientists of every discipline may benefit from using this collection, not only taxonomists, but also ecologists, phytochemists, foresters and ethnobotanists.

**Mots-Clés:** Wood, xylarium, Herbarium, type, anatomy, taxonomy, collection

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