University of Florida Herbarium (FLAS)

LOANS FROM FLAS: DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING AND PACKING

- **Loans requests must comply with the University of Florida Herbarium loan policies.** It is important that the request be signed by an administrator (director, curator, collection manager) responsible for the herbarium at the requesting institution. Email requests are accepted from herbaria with which we have a working relationship.

- **Select the appropriate material for the loan based on the request.** This is usually done by the FLAS Collection Manager. Some specimens are usually retained for comparative use in plant identification. Consideration is given to ongoing FLAS projects.

- **Handle the specimens with great care.** Do not turn sheets upside down. Refer to the FLAS specimen handling guidelines.

- **Repair specimens before sending them on loan.** Specimens are more likely to be damaged and loose pieces when they are in poor shape.
    - Each sheet should have a fragment packet.
    - Flimsy and non-standard-sized sheets should be mounted onto standard herbarium paper.
    - Loose parts should be secured with strips and glue.
    - Specimens mounted on non-archival papers and falling off the sheets should be remounted.

- **If not done, catalog and image the specimens.** In rare cases, when time is of concern, minimal records (species, basic geography to county, collector, collector number, accession number) may be created.

- **Inventory and count the specimens carefully.** Count and tally the specimens more than once.

- **Prepare a loan invoice.** This is done by the FLAS Collection Manager. Make sure the invoice matches the loan.

- **Cover each specimen with folded, unprinted, acid-free newsprint.**

- **Count the specimens into stacks** that are no more than about 3 to 6" tall. This is usually about 20 or 25 specimens per stack. Make the stack counts even, as much as possible (20's, 25's, not random such as 22, 27, 23).

- **Cushion bulky specimens** and those with protrusions with newspaper, padding or bubble wrap. Sheets of 12" X 16" bubble wrap work very well for specimens with thorns.

- **Bundle the specimens** by one of the two methods below.

    - Preferred method. Secure the specimens between two genus covers. Fold the covers so they square with the stack of specimens. Tape the covers shut with masking tape. Mark the number of specimens in the bundle on the outside of the genus covers. Place one to three of these bundles between cardboards and tie together with ribbon string using the herbarium slipknot and/or wrap the set of specimens in wrapping paper.

    - Alternate method. Stack specimens between 2 cardboards. Wrap cardboards in brown wrapping paper, snuggly. Mark the number of specimens in the bundle on the outside of the wrapping paper. If this method is used, great care must be taken to make sure there are not loose pieces falling off of the sheets.

- **Place a return address label on each bundle.** Place an addresee / return address label on some bundles.

- **Place the specimen bundles in sturdy shipping boxes.** The typical boxes we use are 12 1/4" X 18" and come in 2", 5", 8" and 12" depths. There are also some heavy duty 12" boxes which are better for shipping specimens overseas. Consider weight restrictions for shipping to foreign countries before boxing.

- **Place an addressee / return address shipping label on the top cardboard in each box and a copy of the shipping invoice at the top of each box.**

- **Seal the boxes securely with packing tape and filament tape.**

- **On the outside of each box:**
  Shipping label: bottom center or at bottom to left on top side
  "If Undeliverable Return To" label: top left of box.
  Stamp: Herbarium Specimens - Fragile
  Mark shipment as Library Rate for US shipments except in special cases where types are sent via registered mail.
  Appropriate customs forms must be filled out for foreign shipments.

- **Number the boxes** when there is more than one box in a shipment. E.g., Box 1 of 3, or 1/3.

- **Take the boxes to the mailroom and weigh them.** Put a tag on the upper right of the box with the weight.

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