

Report on Pest Management methods used in Polish herbaria and other Polish institutions owning herbaria items- halfway through

The survey on Pest Management systems used in Polish institutions maintaining herbaria collections (including both herbaria institutes and other institutions having herbaria within their collection) was developed to gather scattered information about the methods of pest control used now and in the past.

The main goals of the survey were: to identify the most popular methods of pest control, to check how many institutions developed their IPM system (if there is any), to assess the awareness and state of knowledge about IPM. The other, but not least point of interest was checking self-assessment and efficacy of the methods used, gauging the details of how the institutions work their methods out. Another goal was to collect information about past practices – putting emphasis on if there's any documentation or information and what methods were used. The respondents had also to evaluate the efficiency of the systems they currently use and state if they feel safe about their health with the system used in their collection. Author's intent, as a conservator, was to gather as much information as possible and compare different approaches to the care of herbaria among curators with different background.

The introductory preparation works revealed that the Polish Herbaria database, created in 1997 (the last update was in 1998) needs a general revision. There have happened numerous administrative changes, concerning changes of the names of some of the high schools and fusions between institutions as well as disappearance of others and migration of the collections.

There have been collected 31 of expected 56 responses (giving 55% of total score), which show there's no common policy for pest management and every institution creates its own way to protect their items according to the needs, budget and special features of the collection. Among most distinctive results gathered up to now are: using freezing as the most popular method of managing pests, though the conditions of this process may vary essentially within respondents; poor usage of pheromone traps, despite wishing to use them in everyday practice; high self-esteem of respondents despite not very high self-efficacy evaluation; positive health and safety assessment what may seem arguable according to the information concerning current and past methods used; very poor documentation of past practices and what emerges from the oral sources as for past practices- application of quite complete set of dangerous biocides used to kill or prevent pest invasion. The results collected hitherto indicate that within the institutions that responded, there is actually no system that could be acknowledged as active Integrated Pest Management, which implies using simultaneously a few different methods of control and monitoring the collection environment, documentation and training specialised staff to operate the IPM system.

This is the first time such information was gathered in Poland and the participants expressed strong interest to collect and share data about effectiveness of implemented methods.

Keywords: herbaria, IPM, pests, freezing, biocides, paradichlorobenzene

Author's CV:



Magdalena Grenda is paper conservator-restorer, MA graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland (2010), at the Department of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art of AFA. Currently employed in Warsaw Rising Museum. She has published and presented papers concerning image reintegration and conservation of herbaria, which are her main interests.