Data Papers

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A plant growth form dataset for the New World

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Abstract. This dataset provides growth form classifications for 67,413 vascular plant species from North, Central, and South America. The data used to determine growth form were compiled from five major integrated sources and two original publications: the Botanical Information and Ecology Network (BIEN), the Plant Trait Database (TRY), the SALVIAS database, the USDA PLANTS database, Missouri Botanical Garden's Tropicos database, Wright (2010), and Boyle (1996). We defined nine plant growth forms based on woodiness (woody or non-woody), shoot structure (self-supporting or not self-supporting), and root traits (rooted in soil, not rooted in soil, parasitic or aquatic): Epiphyte, Liana, Vine, Herb, Shrub, Tree, Parasite, or Aquatic. Species with multiple growth form classifications were assigned the growth form classification agreed upon by the majority (>2/3) of sources. Species with ambiguous or otherwise not interpretable growth form assignments were excluded from the final dataset but are made available with the original data. Comparisons with independent estimates of species richness for the Western hemisphere suggest that our final dataset includes the majority of New World vascular plant species. Coverage is likely more complete for temperate than for tropical species. In addition, aquatic species are likely under-represented. Nonetheless, this dataset represents the largest compilation of plant growth forms published to date, and should contribute to new insights across a broad range of research in systematics, ecology, biogeography, conservation, and global change science.

Key words: *botanical collections; habit; life form; plant functional groups; plant traits; vascular plants.*

The complete data sets corresponding to abstracts published in the Data Papers section of the journal are published electronically as Supporting Information in the online version of this article at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecy.1569/suppinfo.

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