

the database of aquatic, wetland and invasive plants

UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants with continuing support from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission / Invasive Plant Management Section

<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/APIRS>

After more than 25 years of assiduous work, the APIRS database contains approximately 80,000 annotated citations for scientific articles and reports about aquatic, wetland and invasive plants. Beginning as a mainframe, punch-card database with a few hundred references about water hyacinths, the APIRS database has grown to be the largest free bibliographic database of its kind in the world. It is used by academic and corporate researchers, government agency personnel, natural resource managers, teachers, students, private groups and individuals.

APIRS originally was developed as a source of information for "aquatic weed" workers in developing countries, and was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). It quickly became a source of information for workers in Florida as well, gaining the support of the Invasive Plant Management Section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

The Value of APIRS — (It's FREE!)

Essentially, APIRS is a free bibliographic database devoted to the research of aquatic, wetland and invasive plants. Databases abound, but none of them are entirely devoted to these specific subjects, and few are free. An individual or an institution can subscribe to peer-reviewed journals but these are very expensive, ranging in price from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars each per year. In addition, journals are focused on a specific subject, which is clear by their titles: *Aquatic Botany*, *Plant Physiology*, *Journal of Ecology*, etc. But subjects in aquatic and invasive plant research often cross disciplinary boundaries; this information is published in journals on ecology, weed science, crop science, natural areas, wildlife management, ecological restoration, biogeography, and more.

Most scientific journals are indexed, and sometimes abstracted, in commercial databases such as Biological Abstracts, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, Web of Science and others. However, unless you subscribe to these databases, or belong to an institution that does, you do not have access to them without paying a fee. These databases often are as expensive as individual journals.

In the book, *Life Out of Bounds — Bioinvasion in a Borderless World*, Chris Bright comments that "Information on exotics is badly fragmented — it is scattered about in hundreds of technical newsletters and publications . . ." Peter Pysek, in a chapter titled "Recent trends in studies on plant invasions" from *Plant Invasions — General Aspects and Special Problems*, states that "the available information on plant invasions is scattered . . . in at least 189 journals," and that journal literature comprises 80% of the total published information. Pysek names the top 13 journals and goes on to explain that in his sample, which covers the literature on the ecology of non-native species, nine journals covered 28% of the published studies, and 20 journals covered almost 50% of the published studies. He went on to say that approximately 15% of the literature on invasive plants is published in books or proceedings, and 4% is published in internal reports or theses. *All of these types of publications have been cataloged and entered into the APIRS database since its inception.*

Contact Karen Brown for help in creating a search strategy:
kpbrown@ufl.edu

APIRS collects and catalogs journal articles, books, book chapters, theses, conference proceedings, agency reports and other published scientific literature. To build the APIRS collection, we write to authors for articles, reports and books to be cataloged and entered into the database. Authors usually are eager to contribute their published research to the database, thus making it widely known to others in their field. Many regional research centers around the world also contribute relevant publications. We rely on these contributions to maintain a comprehensive collection. In exchange, researchers have access to a free bibliographic database of references specific to their field.

To contribute publications to APIRS, please send reprints or PDF files. They will be read and an annotated citation will be entered into the database. Copyright law prohibits entering the full text or full abstract of publications into the database without formal permission and usage fees. For this reason, all publications received for inclusion in APIRS are read, cataloged, and entered into the database as an annotated citation. Cataloging serves much the same purpose as an abstract, providing keywords, plant names, and subject categories.

Searching APIRS

To search APIRS, go to <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>, and click on **APIRS Database**.

Please log in if you would like to tag records and email them, but it is not necessary to log in simply to search the database. Due to the large size and complex nature of the APIRS database, users are encouraged to contact Karen Brown (kpbrown@ufl.edu) for help in creating a search strategy that will optimize their results. A search string will be devised for you and sent via e-mail. The literature search can then be completed by the requestor. For search instructions and examples for those who wish to try their own hand at the database, click on **Search Strategies** at the top of the APIRS Database page. A list of commonly used keywords also is listed in this section.

Finding Full Text

For those with access to an academic library, many of the books and journals cited in APIRS will be available there. Also, most academic libraries participate in "interlibrary loan" (ILL) agreements, enabling them to borrow items from other libraries for their patrons. Many items are now readily available on the Internet. In addition, document delivery services are available that charge a fee for documents but comply with copyright law.

For items that cannot be found using these methods, contact Karen Brown for assistance at 352.373.3667 or kpbrown@ufl.edu.

APIRS was conceived of and developed by the late Vic Ramey; Karen Brown manages the APIRS database; Ms. Mary Langeland catalogs all materials placed in the database; Ms. Anne Taylor and CAIP staff add newly cataloged entries.

AQUAPHYTE — the APIRS Newsletter

AQUAPHYTE is the newsletter for the UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, and for the APIRS Online Database. In each 16-page issue, at least four pages are devoted to newly published research in the field of aquatic and wetland plants (world-wide), and invasive plants (in Florida). Recently published books and reports are described. Newly developed educational tools and other products of the Information Office also are highlighted, as well as research activities at the Center and elsewhere. AQUAPHYTE is free upon request and is currently sent to subscribers in more than 71 countries.



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