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MELLON GRANTS BENEFIT ACADEMY SPECIMEN COLLECTION

PHILADELPHIA—The Academy of Natural Sciences today announced the receipt of two grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in connection with the museum's world-renowned specimen collection.

A \$99,000 grant will fund the digitization of about 9,000 sheets of mostly Latin American and African type specimens of plants, some dating to before 1850. Online availability of specimen data and images will help researchers who lack access to a large research herbarium and to research-quality libraries.

Since its founding in 1812, the Academy, the oldest natural science research museum in the Americas, has been collecting plants from around the world and using them for research purposes. Because of the historical depth and breadth of the collection, the type collection is large and diverse. The Latin American and African plants comprise only about 25 percent of the Academy's herbarium of some 1.5 million specimens.

Besides plants, the Academy cares for another 15.5 million specimens of birds, mollusks, insects, fossils, and other animals, which form a vast reference library of life—both past and present. However, the variety of collections-care activities at the Academy and at similar museums are not enough to fully cover the expense of acquiring, organizing and caring for the specimens. The second Mellon grant, for \$22,500, will fund a workshop involving some of the world's top natural history institutions to discuss new ways to support collections.

"Museums like the Academy give much to society, and we need to make sure that society gives back full value," said Academy President William Y. Brown, who is organizing the summit next year at the Academy. "Together we'll share ideas for finding and connecting to new markets to support these highly important collections."

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Founded in 1812, The Academy of Natural Sciences is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas. Our mission is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.

The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and until 5 p.m. on weekends. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3-12, seniors, college students and military personnel, and free for children under 3 and members. There is a \$2 fee for "Butterflies!"

SCI-FACT

A type specimen is a single plant or animal specimen selected to represent a newly discovered species.