**“S” Numbers, Vouchers & Herbarium**

At the start of a restoration research program, not all the scientific names of the tree species to be grown will be known, so it is useful to assign a species number to every tree species, from which seeds are collected. So, the first species to provide seeds becomes S001 and the second S002 and so on. Subsequent seed batches, collected from the same species, are labeled with the same “S” number, but are assigned their own batch number. So “S001b1” would be the first batch of seeds collected from species no. 1 and S001b2 would be the second batch of seeds collected from species no. 1, either from the same tree on a different date or from a different tree of the same species. Nursery staff often remember species numbers more easily than scientific names and, with a little experience; the numbers will be used more consistently than local names. List all species and their “S” numbers on a board in the nursery and keep it up-to-date. Then label every seed germination tray and block of containerized seedlings with their “S” and “b” numbers.

All species numbers must be matched with scientific names. Local, vernacular, names may be noted, but they cannot be relied upon, because local people often group similar species under a single name or use different names to refer to the same tree species. Collect voucher specimens of all trees, from which seeds are collected. If there are any subsequent doubts about the tree species in the nursery or planted in field trials, the voucher specimen of the seed tree can be re-examined to confirm or change the species name. Botanical taxonomists frequently revise plant classification and change species names. So, having a voucher specimen, with a species number attached, can reduce confusion.

Use a cutter mounted on a pole to obtain a sample of foliage and fruits and/or flowers. Trim the specimen, without losing essential features (e.g., leaf arrangement, infructescence branching etc.), until it fits well in a standard-sized plant press. In the nursery, construct a simple drying box with light bulbs to provide gentle heat, to dry the specimens. Write a label for every specimen, which includes “S” and “b” numbers, local name, as well as details of the tree’s location and descriptions of the bark and any features that may change with drying, particularly colours.

Mount specimens on robust paper, using standard herbarium techniques. If there is space and appropriate staff and facilities, start your own herbarium. Store mounted specimens in suitable cabinets and enter information from the specimen labels into a database. Take precautions against insects or fungi attacking the specimens. For additional security, make several herbarium sheets of each specimen and lodge duplicates in other recognized herbaria. Have the specimens examined and identified by a professional botanical taxonomist. For more detailed information on herbarium techniques see ‘The Herbarium Handbook’ published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, U.K. ([www.kewbooks.com](http://www.kewbooks.com)).