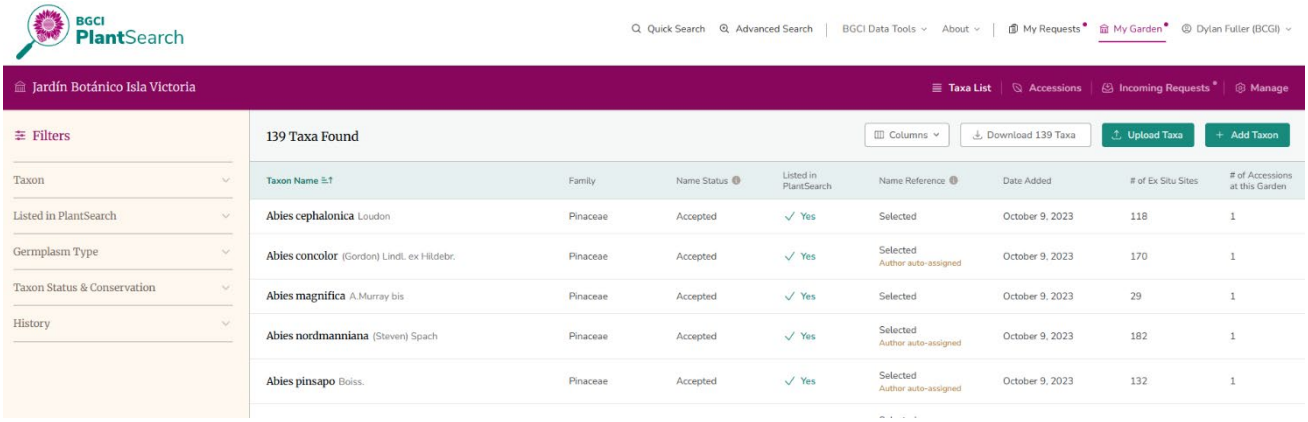
PlantSearch Accession Module

30-June-2026 Release Notes

What's New in BGCI PlantSearch: Accessions Module

We've rebuilt how your garden's individual plant records work. Instead of separate "taxa" and "specimens" areas, every taxon in your collection is now automatically backed by an accession, and every accession is automatically backed by a specimen. This release adds a full set of tools for managing that data — from bulk uploads to day-to-day status updates.

Please note: the Accession Module replaces the module that was previously called Pedigree



Here's a summary of what's changed:

1. Every taxon now has an accession — automatically

You'll still see your familiar Taxa list, and there's now an Accessions list alongside it. These are two views of the same underlying data.

- If your garden already had accession records in PlantSearch (for example, from a prior manual upload), those are preserved as-is.

- For any taxon that doesn't already have one, PlantSearch automatically generates a basic accession and specimen for it, with a default status of "Alive" and no other details filled in.

- You can tell the two apart using the Provenance Type filter on the accessions list — auto-generated records won't have a provenance type set, since no real data has been entered for them yet.

You don't need to do anything to get this — it happens automatically for both existing and new taxa.

2. Upload a taxa list or an accessions list — either one fills in the other

- Upload a taxa list (just names, no accession data) and PlantSearch will automatically generate a matching accession and specimen for each new taxon.

- Upload an accessions list instead, and if the taxa referenced don't already exist in your garden, PlantSearch will automatically create them too.

Either way, your taxa list and accessions list stay in sync — you don't have to enter the same plant twice.

3. Deleting a taxon or accession keeps everything in sync

Because taxa and accessions are now linked, deleting one affects the other — and PlantSearch handles this differently depending on whether there's real data involved:

- If an accession is still just the auto-generated placeholder (nothing entered into it yet), deleting its taxon is straightforward — the taxon and its blank accession are removed together, no extra questions asked.

- If you've actually entered information into an accession (manually or via upload), deleting the taxon will ask you to choose:

  - Delete all accession records and the taxon (this is the default), or

  - Keep all accession records, but hide the taxon from your taxa list. Your accession data isn't lost — it's just hidden from the public-facing taxa list. You can still find it by browsing your accessions, and the taxon's detail page will show a Visibility notice explaining it's been hidden, with an option to make it visible again at any time.

- Deleting an accession that's the *last* one linked to a taxon works similarly — you'll get a warning that removing it will also remove that taxon from your garden's list, since a taxon with zero accessions isn't shown.

4. Recording accession details

Each accession has a few sections, shown as tabs you can jump between (and collapse if you want a simpler view — collapsed sections still show a quick summary):

- Overview – accession number, accession date, germplasm type, IPEN number

- Origin – provenance type. If you select Wild or Wild-derived, an extra Wild Collected Origin panel appears automatically with fields like collector, locality, and coordinates — these fields only show up when they're actually relevant.

- Restrictions – information-sharing options (for example, restricting how much detail is shared). Note: these settings exist in the interface but don't yet change what's publicly visible in PlantSearch — that part (including options like obfuscating coordinates) is still being finalized.

5. Managing specimens within an accession

An accession can have one or more specimens, labeled with qualifiers (A, B, C, D, and so on). Adding a new specimen automatically assigns it the next letter in sequence. Every accession must have at least one specimen, so the Delete Specimen option is only available when there's more than one.

6. Tracking specimen status over time

Each specimen has a Current Status showing its last check date, condition, and (where relevant) its garden location. Whenever a plant's condition changes, add a new status check rather than overwriting the old one — PlantSearch keeps a full history you can review, and individual entries can be edited or deleted if needed.

The fields shown adjust to fit the condition you select:

- Alive or Dormant — you'll be asked for a garden location.

- Dead — you'll be asked for a cause of death instead of a location.

- Stolen or Deaccessioned — no location field, since the plant is no longer in your collection.

7. Smarter status roll-ups for accessions and taxa

With multiple specimens per accession, PlantSearch now automatically summarizes their combined status:

- If any specimen is alive, the accession shows as Alive (or Alive, Mixed if the specimens don't all share the same status).

- If none are alive but they all share the same status (for example, all stolen), the accession shows that status directly (e.g., Stolen).

- If none are alive and their statuses differ, the accession shows as Mixed.

This rolls up to the taxon level too: if every accession for a taxon has no living specimens left (all dead, stolen, or deaccessioned), that taxon is automatically hidden from your public taxa list, with a visibility notice on its detail page explaining why. As soon as any specimen for that taxon is marked alive again, the taxon automatically reappears — no manual re-enabling needed (this is separate from the manual "hide on delete" option described in section 3).

8. Uploads can mix taxon, accession, and specimen data in one file

When uploading a file to update existing records, you can combine taxon-level, accession-level, and specimen-level data together — PlantSearch figures out what applies where. If a row's specimen identifier matches an existing specimen, that specimen is updated; if it's a new identifier, a new specimen is created. Auto-generated placeholder specimens are automatically replaced once real data comes in for that accession.

Future planned enhancements: easier handling of data imports

We know real-world garden data doesn't always come in the exact format PlantSearch expects (encoded status codes, non-standard date formats, combined ID fields, and so on). We're working on an "Adjust Data" step for the upload process — after you assign your spreadsheet columns to PlantSearch fields, you'll be able to transform the data to fit (for example, mapping a code like "A" to "Alive," or reformatting dates) without

editing your original file. Garden-specific mapping choices will also be saved, so future uploads can reuse them automatically. This isn't available yet, but it's actively in progress.