

New tool for visualizing the distribution of vascular plants in Belgium

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This is a peek at the Florabank website. Credit: Florabank

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform has just released a new [website](#) "IFBL Data Portal, Explore Flora Checklists of Belgium". It aggregates about 23,000 checklists of vascular plants in Belgium, compiled since 1939. Users can search a database of over 2.5 million observations of over 2,800 different species. The website will be updated on a monthly basis, in cooperation with the Florabank database.

This website is a result of the cooperation between the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, Flo.Wer, the National Botanic Garden of Belgium and the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO). The data originates from two digitization projects funded by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (IFBL1 and IFBL2), aiming to digitize data used for the production of the "[Atlas](#) of the Belgian and Luxembourg [flora](#)",

and from Florabank1, the database that deals with the distribution data of the wild flora ([indigenous species](#), archeophytes and naturalised aliens) of Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region.

The website is also helpful for analysis, comparing floral data over successive periods and could be used for the production of Belgian flora atlases.

The database "Florabank1" has been described in a [data paper](#), published in the open access journal *PhytoKeys* in a collaboration with [GBIF](#). A 'data paper' allows data creators to be credited for their work, and also communicates to other scientists that such a [dataset](#) has been released and is available freely for re-use in future studies. Such a paper invites others to use the data for any number of purposes immediately, and to provide feedback on any inconsistencies they find. Pensoft Publishers have detailed their "[Data Publishing Policies and Guidelines for Biodiversity Data](#)", with the goal to introduce this concept to authors and to help them to start using it effectively.

The data paper combines the static, unchangeable character of a published scientific paper with the dynamic nature of a continuously updated [database](#).

More information: Van Landuyt W, Vanhecke L, Brosens D (2012) Florabank1: a grid-based database on vascular plant distribution in the northern part of Belgium (Flanders and the Brussels Capital region). *PhytoKeys* 12: 59-67. [doi: 10.3897/phytokeys.12.2849](https://doi.org/10.3897/phytokeys.12.2849)

Provided by Pensoft Publishers

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