

Growing OrchidMap: citizen science generating contemporary orchid distribution data

**C.I. Peter, Rhodes University
FBIS150603118681**

The Orchidaceae is hyper-diverse and, with an estimated 25 000 species globally, is one of the two largest families of Angiosperms. The 473 known species in South Africa are well-known taxonomically. Currently there are ca 22 000 digitised herbarium specimens for orchids in South Africa. These records show that specimen collection rates have halved from a peak of 2192 per decade in the 1980s to just 1079 in the 2000s. These records also reveal relatively patchy and inconsistent collection intensity in the Eastern Cape compared to KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. OrchidMap was started as a citizen science project in the face of these declining collection rates of conventional herbarium specimens. In nine months this project has collected 731 photographic records of orchids in South Africa in comparison to the 1079 herbarium specimens collected in the decade from 2000 to 2009. This application seeks funding to engage the orchid enthusiast community in South Africa towards further increasing record submission to OrchidMap. In the second year of OrchidMap we aim to increase the number of contributors from the current 63 individuals to over 100 as well as double the total number of OrchidMap records to over 4000 records. To compliment this we aim to digitise the estimated ca 3000 orchid specimens in the Selmar Schonland Herbarium, Grahamstown, which we believe to be the largest undigitised collection of orchid specimens in South Africa. This will increase the number of digital herbarium records for South African orchid species by approximately 10%. Digitisation of specimen will be to Darwin core standard.