

Legal status extended to related taxa on

PLANTS INTERNET DATABASE

Mark W Skinner
Rebecca Noricks

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's National Plant Data Center is the first organization to provide Internet access to the comprehensive legal status (threatened and endangered, noxious, or wetland indicator) listings for plants found in the US. Visitors to the website (<http://plants.usda.gov>) can search for a particular plant by entering a scientific name, common name, or plant symbol. Once found, visitors can check that species' Plant Profile page and immediately grasp its current legal status.

The legal status applied to a plant at a single taxonomic level of classification often automatically applies to another level, such as related plant species, varieties, or subspecies. For example, *Chorizanthe robusta* Parry (Polygonaceae) is listed as federally endangered. Previous listings would have stopped there, but now PLANTS also displays the endangered status of its 2 varieties, *robusta* and *hartwegii* (Benth.) Reveal & R. Morgan. Similarly, California lists the genus *Cynodon* L.C. Rich. (Poaceae) as a noxious weed, meaning that all Bermudagrass species in the state have this status. Because of this legal status, every *Cynodon* in the PLANTS database (for example, *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. and *Cynodon bradleyi* Stent) has this delineation (noxious in California) on its Plant Profile page.

This new service was developed in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Information Technology Center. For more information contact Rebecca Noricks.

REFERENCE

[USDA NRCS] USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2004. The PLANTS database, version 3.5. URL: <http://plants.usda.gov> (accessed 12 Nov 2004). Baton Rouge (LA): National Plant Data Center.

ABSTRACT

The PLANTS database now enables professionals to quickly see the comprehensive legal status for native and invasive plants across taxonomic levels. This may be the first of its kind, either in print or online, and should prove to be a useful tool for restorationists.

KEY WORDS

endangered species, invasive plants

NOMENCLATURE

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AUTHOR INFORMATION

Mark W Skinner

National Botanist
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
National Plant Data Center
PO Box 74490
Baton Rouge, LA 70874
mark.skinner@la.usda.gov

Rebecca Noricks

Plant Information Coordinator
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
National Plant Data Center
Telephone: 225.775.6280
rebecca.noricks@la.usda.gov