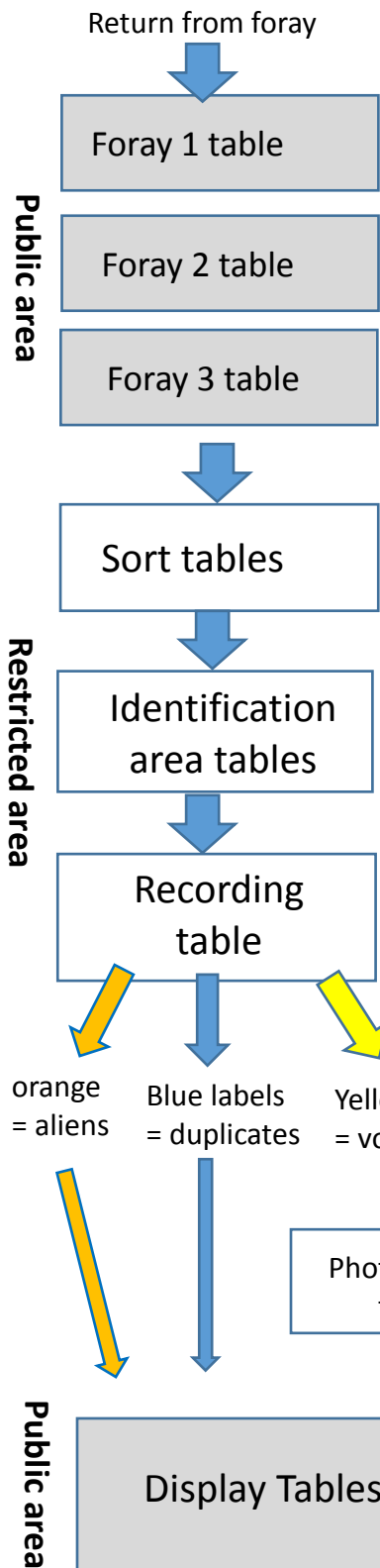


NAMA Voucher Program, collection processing

Assembly Line



How you can help

1. Fill out **FIELD FORMS** with foray location, your name, date, and other information for each of your collections.
2. Put each collection on a plate or tray with the label. Do not mix different specimens. Put on appropriate **FORAY TABLE**. Tables will be numbered by foray—find the correct table.

There will be designated tables for edible mushrooms and mushrooms for dying. Make sure there is a voucher of each.

3. **Do not** put mushrooms on the *Display Tables*. They need to go through the identification and recording process first.
4. **Please volunteer** to help with the sorting, voucher, and display process. Ask voucher staff on how you can help. We need volunteers all mornings, afternoons, evenings.

SORT TABLE. Mushrooms are taken from the Foray Tables, and sorted by morphological group. All must have completed forms.

The **IDENTIFICATION AREA** is reserved for **mycologists**, microscopes, books, etc. It may be a separate room.

Identified specimens go to the **FORAY RECORDER** who checks names and mark labels. Collection data goes in a database.

YELLOW for new vouchers. These are entered in the database and photographed.

BLUE for Duplicates. They go on display tables.

ORANGE for aliens (outside foray area). Vouchering is optional. They go to the same or separate display tables.

Selected specimens will have a small piece taken for later DNA analysis.

Identified and recorded mushrooms go to the **DISPLAY TABLES** for viewing. Do not remove any specimens.

Later, vouchers are thoroughly dried and bagged for shipping.

What is the Voucher Collection Program?

See: www.mycoguide.com/nama
www.namyco.org/voucher_collection_project.php

Since its start in 1997, the goal of the voucher program has been to document and preserve a representative specimen, or voucher, of each of the species identified at the annual NAMA Forays. The dried specimens, with photographs and collection information (location, collector's name, etc.), are housed in the herbarium of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. Every year, 25 to 50 species are added to the list that are previously undocumented by NAMA. The data and photos are provided on the Field Museum collections portal on their website.

Why is the Voucher Program Important?

The North American Mycological Association is uniquely positioned to make a lasting contribution to mycology and the North American Mycoflora Project (mycoflora.org, www.northamericanmycoflora.org). As an organization spanning an entire continent, NAMA can offer the scientific community thousands of specimens of a wide range of fungi collected — from the forests of the Appalachians, Rocky Mountains, and Pacific Coast, to the boreal forests of Canada, the Midwest oak woodlands, and the coastal plain of the Gulf. This program plays an important role in fulfilling NAMA's mission to "further the scientific study of fungi." These specimens serve as reference collections for the species identified and are no longer just unverifiable names on a list. NAMA Vouchers are used by researchers for systematic studies that rely on morphology (physical features) and molecular data (DNA). Examples include studies and new species of *Agaricus*, *Amanita*, *Cantharellus*, *Cortinarius*, *Hebeloma*, *Helvella*, *Ramaria*, and *Russula*.

How are Vouchers Processed?

See diagram on Page 1 for the 'Assembly Line' for processing voucher specimens.



Amanita muscaria var. *alba* voucher photo

Specimens are identified, recorded, and photographed, and dried. At end of foray they are sent to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

There they are boxed, labeled and accessioned into the herbarium.



Finer Points of the Voucher Process

One of the most important steps in the process is for the collector to fill out a legible field label (collection slip) for each mushroom collection, including the foray number or detailed location, habitat, substrate, collector's name, and date.

Collectors maintain ownership of their collections until the collector indicates otherwise. The collector may choose to keep a specimen or donate to another person, such as a mycologist working with a particular genus. To indicate a donation to NAMA and possible inclusion in the Voucher Program, participants place the specimen, with the collection slip, on the appropriate foray table, numbered for their foray. Many of the collectors' finds will be accurately identified by mycologists and appear on the display tables during the foray. Usually, unidentified specimens are not displayed, though a few may be vouchered.

The specific goal of this program is to document each species name on the foray species list with a single voucher specimen (which, of course, may include several fruiting bodies). Specimens are selected as vouchers based on the condition of the specimen, completeness of label information, and whether it is new to the current Foray. After being identified or verified by a mycologist, the data for the collection is entered into the foray database, a digital photo is taken, and then the specimen is usually placed on the display table. Later, these voucher specimens are dried and bagged for shipping to the Field Museum.

Voucher specimens have labels with yellow highlighting that indicate the voucher number. Non-vouchers or "duplicate" specimens have labels marked with blue. Collections from outside the Foray region are termed "aliens" and marked with orange. Every effort will be made to display collections of rare specimens prior to their preservation as vouchers. Mycologists with special interest in particular collections that they did not collect should make a request to the Voucher Program staff. Usually provision can be made to split specimens for sharing with interested parties. You may take photos, but please don't remove specimens from the display area without checking with the voucher staff.

Edible mushrooms for the mycophagy session should be brought to a separate designated table, where they will be picked up by the Mycophagy Committee. Voucher specimens cannot be removed from the display tables for mycophagy or fiber dyeing. Even though fresh material is used to replace specimens, all incoming mushrooms must be placed by designated display table workers and not combined with material already on display. This ensures that all specimens on display are labeled accurately and similar species are not mixed together. It is especially important that voucher specimens are never combined with any other specimens (including separately vouchered specimens of the same species).

Questions?

If you have any questions, feel free to contact a member of the Voucher Committee at the foray, or email Andy Wilson, andrew.wilson@botanicgardens.org, or Patrick Leacock, mycoguide@gmail.com. We are indebted to all the NAMA foray participants, volunteers, mycologists, and students who contribute their time and talent—and fungal finds—toward making the Voucher Collection Program a success. Thank you for participating in this valuable program. Species reports are published in the NAMA journal *McIlvainea* or the *Mycophile* newsletter.