

Sharing Vetiver Projects on iNaturalist

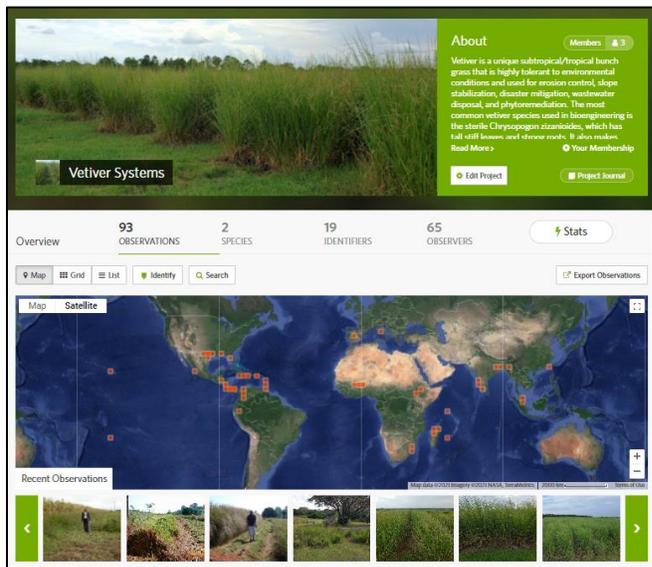
Goals of The Vetiver Network International (TVNI) include creating a worldwide community of vetiver enthusiasts, raising awareness about the many benefits, and tracking vetiver projects. Our facebook group has become a wonderful resource for many of you and we are proud of the community it has created. We had concerns about the preservation of the facebook posts and important discussions, so we also created the vetiver forum (<https://www.vetiver.org/flux/>). However, neither of those help us track and map vetiver plantings.

To provide a tracking method, we started using the iVGT website created in Thailand to add as many vetiver sites as possible, but it has had some technical difficulties and participation hasn't been as high as we had hoped. We recently realized there may be a better and much more user-friendly website that we can all use.

iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/>) is a website and smartphone app for people to share pictures of animals and plants and to help identify species. It is used as a social network to build community, learn about nature, and provide open access data for researchers. It is very user-friendly, and you can easily search by species or location and view results as a list or within a map. The desktop website is the main hub with a lot of great functions while the smartphone app is a simpler set-up that helps ID and locate in the field.

Although its core focus is on wild species in their natural habitats, iNaturalist offers the ability to share “captive” or “cultivated” plants and animals that were placed at a certain location by humans. This includes a range of observations, from animals at a zoo to a flower planted in a garden. This is where most of our vetiver fits in.

The iNaturalist provides the ability to create a “Project” to track certain species or in specific areas, as well as build community and participation, so TVNI recently created a project page called “Vetiver Systems”. We hope you all join iNaturalist and start sharing your vetiver projects!



Getting Started

First, create a profile at <https://www.inaturalist.org/>. Once you are set up, you can change your language within the website by clicking on your account profile circle in the top right corner and then clicking on Account Settings, then Account. They have a large list of languages available, so this should work out well for our global community.

Adding a Vetiver Project

A picture of a plant/animal is called an “observation”. For general guidance on how to add observations, visit: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started>.

1. To add a picture of vetiver, click “Upload” and select ONE photo from your file (You’ll have a chance to add more photos of that site later). Complete the requested information, including species, date of the picture, and location. For the Notes, add a brief summary of the vetiver project (i.e. purpose, size, details, results). Please avoid commercial advertising or spam-like content because it will get you banned from the website.
2. Next, check the Captive/Cultivated box. Most of the vetiver plants used in Vetiver Systems are sterile and cultivated, so it is important to list it as such in iNaturalist.

The website's main focus is on wild plants and animals and it uses a multi-step process for identifications, which helps researchers with their studies as well as assist the program with recognizing patterns for automated suggestions. To accomplish this, the website initially labels non-cultivated or non-captive observations "Needs ID", then as the community agrees on an identification, it becomes "Research Grade." If an observation is checked off as captive or cultivated, it does not undergo those labeling steps and instead simply marked as "Casual." This is okay for our purpose! To learn more, visit: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/help>.

3. After that, "Tags" are key words about your vetiver project. This will help people search and track vetiver sites based on type. Here are some examples of tags that you can use:

- Erosion control
- Slope stabilization
- Nursery/propagation
- Grazing/forage
- Wastewater
- Essential oil
- Phytoremediation
- Landscaping
- Handicrafts
- Roof thatch

4. The next step allows you to add "Observations Fields" to help provide detail. We set up 5 observation fields that we encourage you to use. Start typing vetiver in the space and the options will appear:

- # of plants
- Area in hectares
- Soil pH
- Soil type
- Annual rainfall in mm

5. Click "Submit 1 Observation" to finalize. Once you finalize the "observation", you can add more photos of that vetiver planting, add or change the tags, or edit any other information as needed.

Please note it is important to add only specific sites where vetiver has been observed. Also, if you have been working with vetiver in the past and have photos of vetiver applications at known locations and dates, you are welcome and encouraged to add them as observations.

The Vetiver Systems Project Page

Your vetiver "observation" will automatically be added to our Vetiver Systems Project page, but you need to "JOIN" the project for it to show up on your vetiver observation. You can find our Project by typing "Vetiver Systems" in the general Search at the top of the page. Once you are on our page, you can see all the pictures, either as a list or on a map. You can click on each one to see the details or add comments. There are already some earlier vetiver observations from other iNaturalist users.

We welcome you to check out other observations in our project so far and tell others about our page. You can leave a comment on any observation or vetiver system, but be aware, COMMERCIAL ADVERTIZING is not allowed and we will ban you from the group.

Another great feature of the Vetiver Systems Project page is our ability to post news or journal entries. Our administrators will occasionally post on this page to help grow the community and keep you informed. Note, you need to "JOIN" the project to get the community updates.

We will also be inviting key members from specific countries or regions to help promote this Vetiver Systems project and to keep an eye on the "quality" of input. As the project expands, regional/country leaders can start creating their own project pages and then our global Vetiver Systems page will become an "umbrella" project.

Let us know if you have any questions by leaving a message for one of the project administrators. Enjoy!