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USING VARIETY DESCRIPTIONS and LENGTH OF TESTING

A New Zealand perspective

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Examples of usage

- DUS testing and examination tool
  - Grouping and identification of similar varieties
  - Supplementary testing option
- Variety identification and verification
  - Infringements

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Important to remember

All descriptions are drafted in a particular environment and

in relation to the varieties and character expression known

at the time of the grant

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Challenges in the effective use of descriptions

- The consideration and understanding of environmental effects on individual characteristics

  Can a difference in character expression between an observed character and the recorded description be explained by the growing environment?

- Interpretation of older descriptions with respect to:
  i. Genus experience and knowledge
  ii. Former test guidelines
  iii. Changes in testing practice

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Available plants and the Description

A description drafted using a former test protocol can differ from observed character expressions on the available plant.

Can differences be accounted for by:

- growing technique?
- propagation method?
- recalibration of or different scales for states of expression?
- reference varieties?
- the maintenance of the variety itself?

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Effective use of descriptions requires an understanding of:

- Genus or species morphology
- The testing protocol used for the description
- Environmental effects on characters

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The Description Defines the Variety

The ideal situation	The typical situation
For every protected variety there is a living reference specimen or seed sample in a variety collection This is supplemented by the variety description	The variety description is the primary tool in identifying and defining the variety Many authorities only have resources or facilities to hold living reference plants or seed for relatively few genera.

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Minimum number of growing cycles

- The default position in many TGs is frequently two, however this should be considered more rigorously by the drafters.
- For vegetatively propagated ornamental varieties, one growing cycle is more common
- Consideration should given to a TG default minimum of one cycle , with the possibility of additional cycles for a specific genus or species as determined and agreed by the TWP crop sub group.

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