About the Tutorial:
The Online Archaeobotany Tutorial is a product of the European Union funded Integrated Archaeobotanical Research project conducted at the University of Sheffield from 2007 - 2009. It was a Marie Curie Framework 6 Transfer of Knowledge program employing archaeobotanical researchers from across Europe and Australia. Charred seeds and fruits recovered from archaeological sites are traditionally used to reconstruct past diet, subsistence strategies and plant economy. The Integrated Archaeobotanical Research (IAR) project aimed to bring together all aspects of archaeobotanical research to focus on economic interpretations of plant remains and develop complementary research strategies. This tutorial contains sections on Wood Charcoal, Charred Seeds and Fruits, Charred Roots and Tubers, Waterlogged Plant Remains, Phytoliths and Starch with sections on Pollen to be added. Each tutorial provides information on the history of the discipline, how to sample for each material type, recovery strategies, how to recognise the remain type, identification techniques, how to quantify the material, analyse the data and store each type of plant remain.

In addition, sections on interpretive tools for archaeobotany are included. Currently an extensive Ethnobotany section is present covering fieldwork techniques, methodology and clues for archaeobotanists. It is hoped that further sections on Ecological and Experimental techniques for archaeobotanists will be added in the future.

Some sections of the Online Archaeobotanical Tutorial are undergoing their final edit and will be updated shortly.

Navigating the Tutorial:
Each page is fully referenced, illustrated with images that can be enlarged, links to further online information and is printable.

Tips on how to recognise each remain type, identification techniques as well as detailed information on certain species.

Creating the tutorial:
A Wiki template was used to create the tutorial. This was chosen since it is versatile, easy to edit and relatively future proof. Formatting and page layout uses Wiki coding which is generated by the servers of Wiki users across the internet. As a consequence all Wiki pages on the internet could be used as models and their source code copied to help create the tutorial which assisted considerably in webpage design. Long term security of the tutorial is made easier since it is reliant on the widely used Wiki code that should continue to be compatible with the University of Sheffield hosting service.

It can be continue to be edited by members of the IAR project and will hopefully be kept up to date as each archaeobotanical discipline develops in the future.

One limitation of the Wiki format is the size of the video files that can be uploaded which then reduces their image size when played.

How to use the tutorial:
This tutorial was created with several target audiences in mind and as such can be utilised for different purposes by different groups. On one level it has been developed to be part of archaeobotany courses as a teaching aid and for students to gain supplementary information on archaeobotany as part of their archaeology and archaeobotanical studies. This tutorial is not designed however to be used in isolation as a self-taught archaeobotany course. Instead, the tutorial is intended to be used in tandem with a taught course or when under supervision in archaeobotany.

For archaeobotanists the tutorial offers insight into different types of plant remains, provides information on methodologies and interpretive techniques to help design integrated research strategies and is a practical reference tool.

As a general resource the tutorial can be used by archaeologist to discover what information each type of plant remain can provide and how to sample sites appropriately for each type of archaeobotanical analysis.

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http://archaeobotany.dept.shef.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Main_Page