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EARLY CRETACEOUS FLORAS FROM NORTHERN GONDWANA AND THEIR TIME EQUIVALENTS FROM LAURASIA

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During the Early Cretaceous Laurasian and northern Gondwana floras were in many respects similar, but exhibit equally marked differences. Northern Gondwana floras have been described from Colombia and Brazil, as well as from northern Africa and the Levante. Among the Laurasian floras those from western Liaoning, and from various European localities, mainly from England and Germany are well known. It seems that floras from Portugal and North America (Potomac Flora) are intermediate in their composition, earlier observed by palynologists. Laurasian floras are clearly dominated by ferns and gymnosperms, including conifers, ginkgophytes, Czekanowskiales and Cycads. Floras from northern Gondwana, in contrast, are less diverse in ferns. Also the gymnosperm component is less prominent, except for gnetophytes that seem to be more diverse. Ginkgophytes and Czekanowskiales seem to be widely missing in the northern Gondwana floras, most likely because of adaptations to a more humid climate. The main difference seems to be the diversity and absolute presence of angiosperms. While in northern Gondwana the angiosperm component is already well developed – in the Brazilian Crato flora of late Aptian to early Albian age about one quarter of all taxa belong to angiosperms, including several species of basal eudicots – the more northerly Wealden-type and also Chinese floras, though somewhat older, contain only few angiosperms that make up not more than 3 – 5 % of their total diversity.