

# florascope

NEWS FROM THE FLORA OF VIRGINIA PROJECT

## Flora Update

### AND WHAT ABOUT THE BOOK?



**MEET MARION LOBSTEIN'S FLORAS**, the pristine shelf copy, left, and her work copy, used at home, in the lab, and (thanks to a tote bag that fits it like a glove) the field—tabbed, smeared, annotated, flayed, and shored up with electrician's tape. In her presentations, Marion—VP of the Flora board—often talks of the upheavals in familiar plant names and relationships in the wake of DNA sequencing, a taxonomic tool that came of age only a couple of decades ago.

The Flora's coverage of these new plant relationships ceases at 2011. But many species listed in the Flora as waifs now need the full treatment, as they have spread to or been found in more spots in the state. Botanists have discovered species new to science or to Virginia. And the DNA folks continue to rejigger names and relationships. We'll need a second edition before too much longer to keep the science current.

### KEEP THE SCIENCE & KEEP IT CURRENT



**YOU'VE SEEN THE ERRATA SHEETS ON OUR WEBSITE**, correcting typos and other errors in the Flora that you've brought to our attention. Add to that plants new to science, species new to Virginia, nonnatives encroaching faster than expected, and old favorites getting assigned to different genera or families. The App has dibs on this new info, and its database will spawn the textual content for the next edition of the Flora book—the opposite of how the data got into the App in the first place!

We see new botanists coming into the fold and nonbotanists getting into the science as well as the plants. We're charged with providing that science—and with keeping it current.

Science will do more than help us identify plants. It will let us follow their changing role in ecological communities, document changes in species composition of a site, track shifts that accompany climate change, and help us think ecologically as we plant natives in our yards and gardens (or provide those plants).

### HELP GREEN US UP FOR OUR WORK.



**YOU WON'T SEE A BROCHURE FROM US THIS SEASON.** We're focused on the voluminous work needed to produce the Flora Mobile App by fall, and we're talking with developers about building our Office App for Windows and Macintosh desktops and laptops.

But this is not to say we don't need your help now. We do! We're about to embark on a blitz to Keep the Science Current, which includes 1) creation of the Office App, 2) production of seven teaching and learning modules on the Flora and the App, and 3) selecting species for addition to the Flora (and introducing the reclassified ones under their new identities), writing their descriptions, illustrating many and acquiring photographs, and incorporating them into the dichotomous keys. While refining the Mobile App.

Please support our efforts by sending a check to the Flora of Virginia Project or by donating online. Our address is P.O. Box 512, Richmond, Va. 23218. And you can give from our [home page](#).

### AROUND THE CORNER: THE MOBILE APP



**OCTOBER.** That's the due date for the Flora of Virginia Mobile App at the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store.

For several months, volunteers have been testing prototypes for Android and iOS devices. With only 150 of our 3,164 species in the prototype, we've been scrutinizing programming, flow, errors, clunkiness, likes, and dislikes. We hadn't expected to be testing dichotomous keys yet, but Cliff Gay and developer-guru Katie are moving that along, and some people have been able to study these on iOS devices.

Below, check out some screens grabbed from the prototype and see what you think. Details coming soon on pricing and ordering.

Do stay in touch, and thank you.  
Bland Crowder  
Executive Director

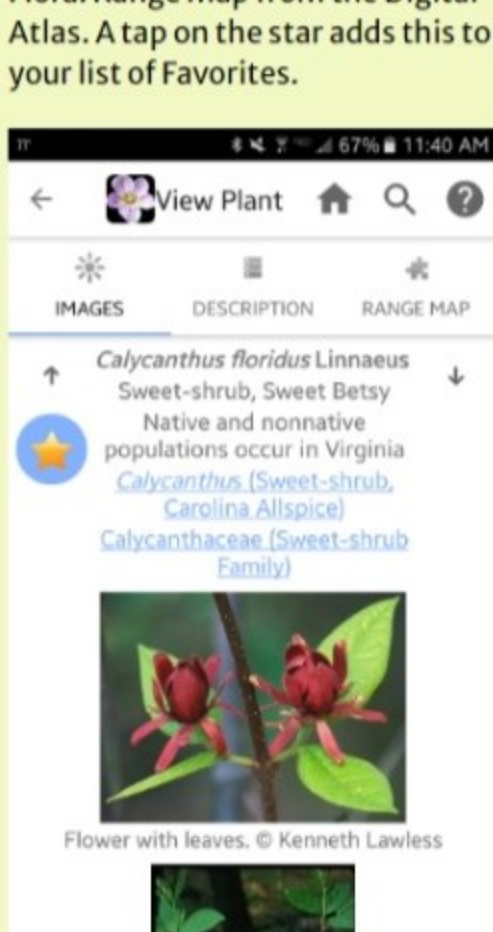
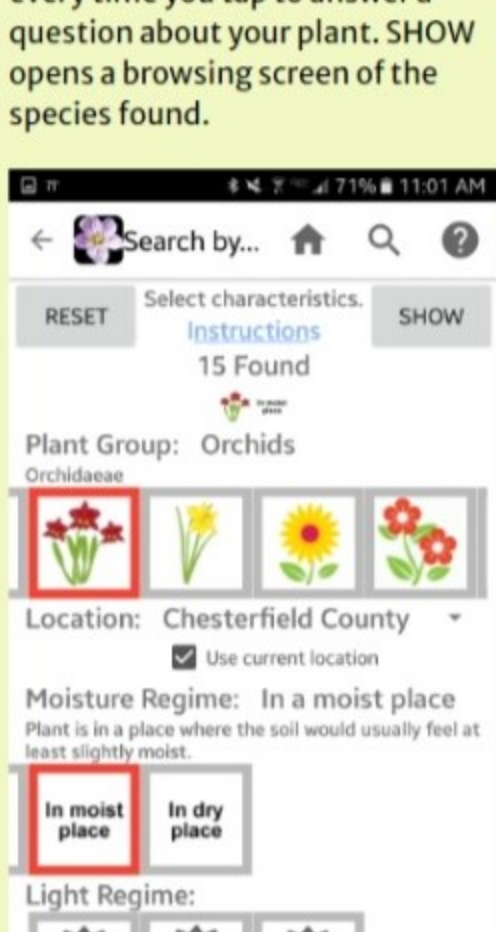
**HOME SCREEN.** This is a shot of the App's home screen. You're just a tap away from the various sections. It's got everything (everything!) in the print Flora, with some distinct pluses you'll soon see. Most exciting may be the Graphic Key. And photos make the App a thing of beauty.

**BROWSING PLANTS.** A browsing screen comes into play in a number of places in your Flora App experience. It shows a list of species, ordered as you choose (by family, genus, or species, common or scientific name). A scroll fast. A tap takes you to the species treatment.



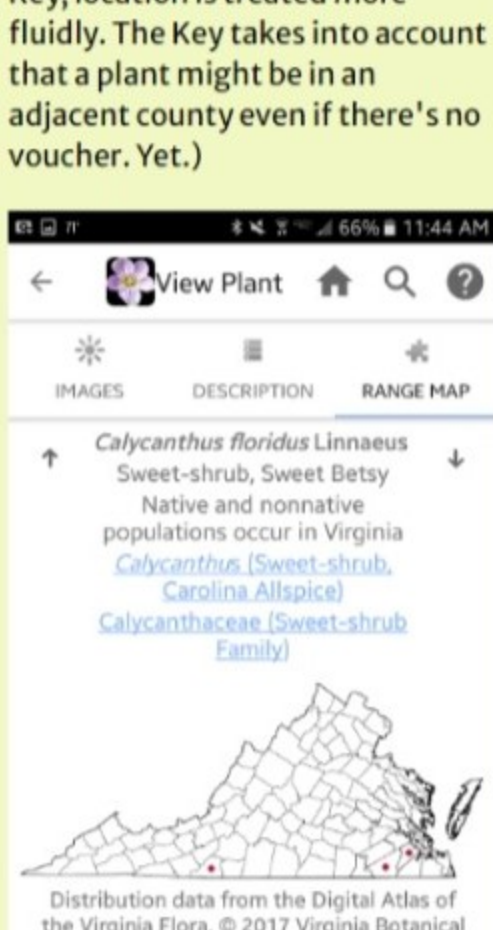
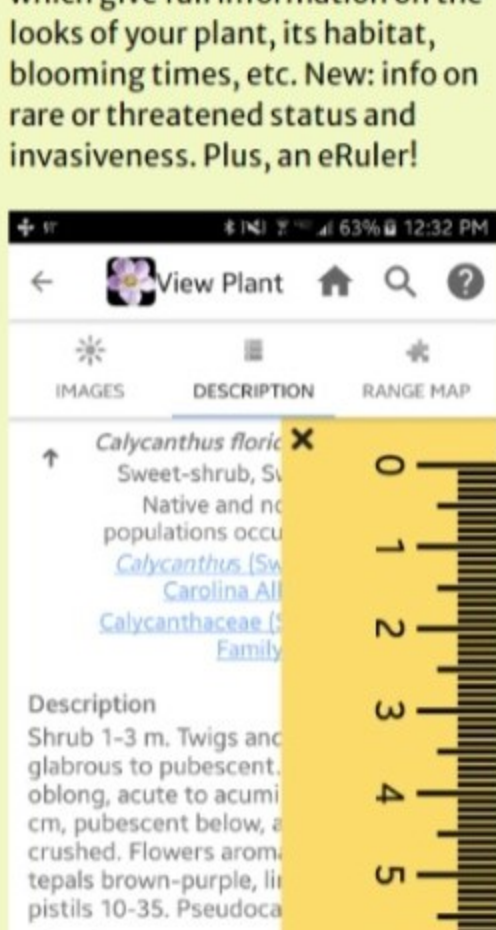
**GRAPHIC KEY.** You've got an orchid you don't know. You're in Chesterfield County. (The GPS knows!) The place is wet. Just that much info, and the App finds 15 species. That number drops every time you tap to answer a question about your plant. SHOW opens a browsing screen of the species found.

**SPECIES TREATMENT.** Color photos! (For most species.) Links to family and genus treatments. Common names, nativity information. Icons denote three tabs. Description straight from the Flora. Range map from the Digital Atlas. A tap on the star adds this to your list of Favorites.



**DESCRIPTION TAB.** For trickier IDs you can look at photos and, in many cases, an illustration in the first tab, and these descriptions in the second, directly from the Flora, which give full information on the look of your plant, its habitat, blooming times, etc. New: info on rare or threatened status and invasiveness. Plus, an eRuler!

**RANGE MAP.** The Virginia Botanical Associates have provided their Digital Atlas's species maps. These show counties for which a voucher specimen exists. (In the Graphic Key, location is treated more fluidly. The Key takes into account that a plant might be in an adjacent county even if there's no voucher. Yet.)



**DICHOTOMOUS KEYS.** You'll like how the dichotomous keys will work in the App. You'll see the couplet you're working on, but also the most recent answers. And the key parts won't indent all across the page, because your two leads will always be right there together, without intervening couplets. Back out to see other earlier couplets. The dichotomous keys will also help Graphic Key users who wind up with a superchallenging batch of Found species.

