

# FLORASCOPE

Occasional News from the Flora of Virginia Project

## Progress

With more people using the Flora of Virginia App, professionals and laypeople alike are finding new plants and occurrences of others. Tracking and monitoring the movement of flora helps scientists understand ecosystem resilience, the effects of climate change, and the conversion of land uses. Read on for a few examples of our work.



## Discovery

During a field session at the Virginia Master Naturalist conference, several Master Naturalist volunteers spotted an interesting plant in the Great Dismal Swamp and uploaded a photo of it to iNaturalist. Zach Bradford, Chesapeake Bay Region Steward with the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, saw the post and identified it as *Habenaria repens*, Water-spider Bog Orchid (above)—the first verified Virginia occurrence. Zach, a former member of the Flora Project Board, reports that the small population shows clear evidence of reproduction. The species is now listed in the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora and will be included in the next update to the Flora of Virginia App. (Photo: Zach Bradford)



## Rediscovery

After reading about Ozark Milkvetch (above) on the Flora App, a team of botanists, led by George Mason professor and Flora Board member Andrea Weeks, found a population of the extremely rare *Astragalus distortus* var. *distortus* on a shale barren in Shenandoah County. The discovery of hundreds of individuals allowed the species' rank to be upgraded from state historical (SH) to State Critically Imperiled (S1). (Photo: John F. Townsend)



## Cycles & Diversity

Land managers have long recognized the value of fire to species diversity. While fire cycles are not common in Virginia, tracts exposed to routine burning support fascinating species. Such is the case at Fort A.P. Hill, where Natural Heritage staff encountered *Lilium pyrophilum*, the fire-loving Sandhill Lily (above). This extremely rare species is found only in the sandhill grasslands of Southeast Virginia and the Carolinas and is considered critically imperiled in Virginia, as well as globally imperiled (G2). (Photo: John F. Townsend)



## Definitions & Codes

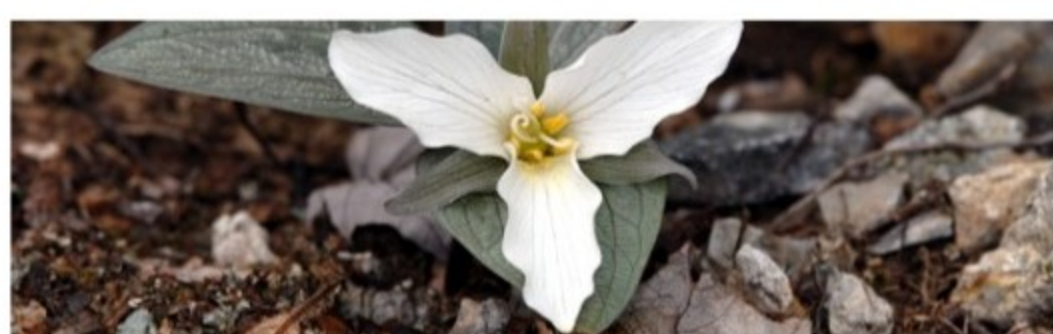
Work is under way to make the Flora App even more convenient and useful. The next update will debut a hover-over glossary that displays definitions of unfamiliar terms and, in plant descriptions, wetland status codes. Even more information and images are coming too, including a section on Virginia's ecological community groups. Wetland ratings are used to evaluate projects for development, minimize land disturbance, direct restoration and enhancement plantings, and monitor ecosystems. (Photo: Ann Regn, *Diospyros americana*, Common Persimmon)



## Grateful

The collaboration shown by all our partners and contributors this year is deeply appreciated. We hope you are as excited as we are and will support our work to keep current with botanical science. Recognized for its authoritative references for the commonwealth, the Flora Project is helping biologists, planners, environmental consultants, and land managers conserve, protect, and manage Virginia's lands and open space.

You can join in this collaboration with a year-end gift to the Project. Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by tax laws and essential to the work that we do. The Flora Project is not funded by any state program or university but depends on donations from individuals, organizations, and businesses, and, when possible, foundation grants. Please help us out. (Photo: Conley McMullen, *Trillium nivale*, Snow Trillium)



## Your Gift

Please visit our [website](#) to donate. Depending on your level of giving, you may qualify for a premium that we will send you to show our further appreciation for your support.

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One license for the Flora of Virginia Mobile App. Please specify Android or iOS.

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Either a) 1 copy of the Flora of Virginia book or b) 1 pair of reproductions of Flora illustrations completed in watercolor by chief illustrator Lara Call Gastinger.

And thank you so much!

