



FLORASCOPE

Occasional News from the Flora of Virginia Project

A VERY Busy Spring

We've been hard at work since our last update:

- **Re-engaging** online with a new website and a new Facebook page
- **Celebrating** the accomplishments and dedication of Chris Ludwig as he retires from the board after more than 20 years of service
- **Attending** an extra special June board meeting, including a lunch and tour for board members and contributors past and present, hosted by Oak Spring Garden Foundation
- **Incorporating** Natural Communities data into the app
- **Congratulating** our friends at the Flora of the Southeast U.S. on the release of the first FloraQuest region

[Donate](#)

New website and Facebook page



Virginia is for flora.

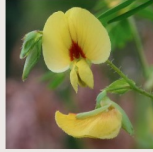
The Flora of Virginia Project inspires conservation of Virginia's native flora through education, outreach, and production of the Flora of Virginia in electronic and print formats. This resource is critical to protecting the rich biodiversity in the Commonwealth, and requires ongoing commitment to keep the data up-to-date and accurate for the benefit of ecology professionals and enthusiasts alike.



Download the App



Buy the Book



Donate to the Project

- Our original website needed a refresher. The new design is easier to navigate and we have big plans to build out the content and keep it fresh - [Check it out.](#)
- Similarly, our Facebook page had suffered from lack of activity. Unfortunately, despite a lot of effort, Facebook will not allow us to integrate with Instagram. [We have created a new page, please visit and follow us!](#)

Celebrating Chris

[You can still send a note to Chris on his Kudoboard](#)

Founding and longest serving board member Chris Ludwig retired from the Project board this month. A group of contributors and supporters gathered at Powhatan State Park to thank him for his decades of commitment on Sunday, May 14. Delegate Lee Ware joined our gathering to present [HR 346:](#)

[Commending J. Christopher Ludwig.](#) Former Virginia Natural Heritage Program Director Tom Smith spoke about the daunting task of creating the Flora, which had been attempted, and failed, a number of times in the recent past. You can visit the oak tree planted in Chris's honor along Powhatan State Park Road, beyond the picnic area.



Thank You to the Oak Spring Garden Foundation



Our June board meeting was far from business as usual. Given that it was Chris Ludwig's last meeting, we took the opportunity to invite all past board members, authors, illustrators and staff to join us for lunch and a tour of Oak Spring, the former Mellon estate.

“The primary focus of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation is that Mrs. Mellon's home, garden and estate be used for public benefit in supporting programs related to plants, gardens and landscapes, and especially for programs centered around the Library and its collections.”

While public access is currently limited, [the Short Courses offered by the Foundation](#) are inspirational and accessible. We highly recommend taking advantage of programming and other opportunities to visit.

Natural Communities of Virginia

We are currently integrating into the Flora App the extensive work done by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage classifying the Natural Communities of Virginia. Future issues of Florascope will mine the incredible depth of information to provide descriptions of each System and their Classes; provide examples of where these communities can be found; and discuss opportunities and challenges of preserving and restoring these amazing Virginia habitats.

Natural Communities 1

A classification of Natural Communities attempts to organize the complex relationships of living things with their non-living environment into discrete classes, providing consistency for all engaged in research, restoration and conservation efforts. Adding this layer to the Flora App is important for providing context to the environment in which Virginia's native plants thrive.

Contemporary Natural Communities have been greatly impacted by humans after centuries of land clearing for farming, logging and mining, and more recent urban development and infrastructure. Pre-settlement, it is estimated that Virginia was 96% forested with more than 2 million acres of wetlands, versus approximately 63% forested with 1.4 million acres of wetlands today. Notably, less than 4% of land has been set aside specifically for protection of biodiversity.

You can access of the Natural Communities data on the Natural Heritage website:

[The Natural Communities of Virginia](#)
[Classification of Ecological Groups and Community Types](#)
[Third Approximation \(Version 3.3\)](#)
[Current as of March 2021](#)

Announcing FloraQuest: Northern Tier

On Monday, May 1 the Flora of the Southeast U.S. released [FloraQuest: Northern Tier](#). The first region to be released – four more to follow – covers the 5,800 taxa found from Long Island, NY south and east through New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, as well as the southern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

The Flora of Virginia has partnered with the Flora of the Southeast since its inception, so you will recognize many features from the Flora of Virginia App. While they do overlap, the apps



complement one another through data sharing, unique information and a regional perspective.

Well done, Alan Weakley and team!

Your Support

The Flora of Virginia is evergreen, requiring ongoing attention to keep data up-to-date and to add new features and functionality. We rely on the generosity of our users and supporters to get our work done and welcome any donation.

Donate

1 Fleming, G.P., K.D. Patterson, and K. Taverna. 2021. The Natural Communities of Virginia: a Classification of Ecological Community Groups and Community Types. Third approximation. Version 3.3. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage, Richmond, VA.

www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/ [Accessed: 15 March 2023]

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