



Press release

The Flora of Virginia Project

Contact:
Bland Crowder
804-371-5561

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FLORA OF VIRGINIA PROJECT UNVEILS REVAMPED WEBSITE

RICHMOND, February 13, 2009—The Flora of Virginia Project has just refreshed its website. Check it out at floraofvirginia.org.

“We redid the site top to bottom,” said Chris Ludwig, director of the Flora Project and a co-author of the *Flora of Virginia*. “We wanted to make it more user-friendly and also begin making it more of a resource for the public and eventual *Flora* users.”

The *Flora of Virginia*, to be published in 2012, will be a reference book describing Virginia plants, native and naturalized, and will include plant-identification keys and illustrations.

“This will be the first flora for the commonwealth since *Flora Virginica*, which was published in the mid-1700s,” Ludwig said. *Flora Virginica*, produced in the Netherlands, was based on the collections and writings of John Clayton, a naturalist in Colonial Gloucester County. Half of Virginia had not yet been explored when it was published.

“Without our own flora, botanists in Virginia have had to resort to floras written for other states or larger regions,” Ludwig said. “Considering the diversity of habitats we have here, and situated as we are at the southernmost limit of many northern plants and the northernmost limit of many southern ones, it’s not unusual that we sometimes have to use five or more floras to do our job. A lot of people are waiting for this flora.”

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The book will be a key reference for botanists, university students, naturalists, educators, and natural resource professionals and will be the basis of learning modules for public school curricula and community and adult education.

The website describes how the *Flora* is being created and provides a sneak peek at a draft section on the Ranunculaceae, the plant family that includes the familiar buttercups, columbine, bloodroot and clematis. The site previews its eventual value as a resource for *Flora* users, presenting a selection of illustrations that will appear in the book, a mini-gallery of photographs of Virginia plants, and spectacular *Flora of Virginia* wallpapers. Included are links of interest and books recommended by people involved in the Flora Project.

By the time the *Flora* is published, the website will offer forums in which users can report errors, be informed of corrections and learn of changes in plant classification and names. Teachers and students will use other forums to communicate as they perform science activities based on the *Flora*.

In addition to his role with the Flora Project, Ludwig is chief biologist with the Division of Natural Heritage within the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The other co-authors are Alan S. Weakley, curator of the University of North Carolina Herbarium, and John F. Townsend, staff botanist with the Division of Natural Heritage. Visitors to the site will meet the co-authors and the many others at work on the *Flora of Virginia*: illustrators, other writers, the dedicated members of the board of directors, and many other supporters.