



# Press release

The Flora of Virginia Project

**Contact:**

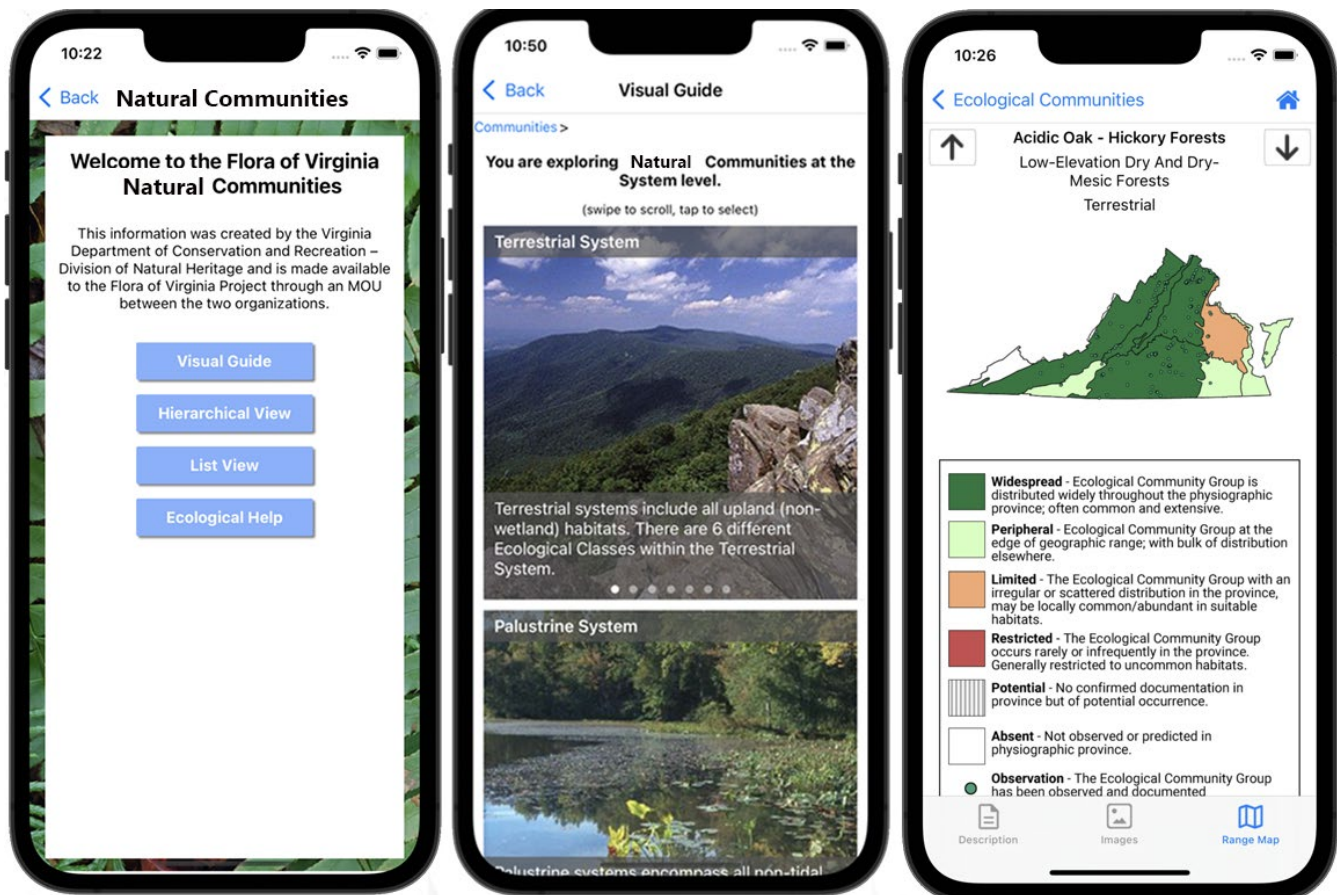
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## EXPLORE VIRGINIA'S NATURAL COMMUNITIES USING THE FLORA OF VIRGINIA APP

*The classification system provides information critical to conservation and land protection work.*



**September 1, 2023 – Richmond, Va.** – The Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project (the Flora) announced today the launch of a new guide to the Natural Communities of Virginia in the Flora of the Virginia smart-phone App. The classification system developed by Vegetation Ecologists with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Natural Heritage Program (Natural Heritage) provides a framework to describe natural communities. It gives context to the importance of protecting certain habitats and species and will guide efforts to restore landscapes to functioning ecosystems that support native flora and fauna.

“The integration of Natural Communities into the App was the Flora’s primary objective for 2023,” says Flora of Virginia Project Foundation board president Caitie Cyrus. “Board members Andrea Weeks (George Mason University) and Joey Thompson (Natural Heritage) worked diligently to drive the project, and we could not have completed the work without the guidance of Natural Heritage, our longtime partners and collaborators.”

The new guide:

- Describes in detail the 80 Natural Community groups;
- Includes over 1,000 new captioned photos;
- Illustrates the diverse and unique habitats where our native flora grow and why certain species are always found together;
- Provides range maps detailing where these groups are most likely found; and,
- Includes abbreviated lists of species frequently found in each community group.

You can purchase the Flora App for iOS and Android at our website, <https://floraofvirginia.org/flora-app/>. Learn more about Natural Heritage’s Natural Communities classification system at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/>.

### **About The Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project**

The Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project is a nonprofit organization that inspires conservation of Virginia’s native flora through education, outreach, and production of the Flora of Virginia, in print and electronic formats. To learn more and to donate, please visit our website [floraofvirginia.org](https://floraofvirginia.org).

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