

The FLORA OF VIRGINIA PROJECT inspires conservation of Virginia's plants through education, outreach, and production of the Flora of Virginia, in print and electronic versions.



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Press Release

With a new, free video series, the Flora of Virginia Project brings the state's plants up close and personal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHMOND, Oct. 22, 2021—The Flora of Virginia Project is getting you even closer to Virginia's beautiful—if sometimes daunting—array of plant species with seven new online video modules that make the Flora of Virginia easier to follow and understand. The Flora is now available as an app, which describes 3,360 plant species native to or naturalized in Virginia, providing current classifications and scientific names, habitat and status data, distribution maps, photographs, botanical illustrations, and keys for identification.

The modules, served from the Vimeo video platform, are suitable for a range of audiences wanting to learn more about the state's plant life. The modules were created by the Flora Project's education committee, and they're free.

“These modules are a convenient way to provide information on using and enjoying the Flora of Virginia—to a much broader audience than we can reach at only in-person presentations,” said Marion Lobstein, who co-chaired the committee behind the videos.

Designed to demystify the Flora—which can be imposing even in app form—the modules cover the following topics, each title linked to its online video presentation:

1. [A Tour of the Flora](#)
2. [Using the Flora App](#)
3. [Basic Botany](#)
4. [Taxonomy](#) (plant classification and nomenclature)
5. [Keying](#) (systematic ways of identifying plants)
6. [Plant Families](#)
7. [Habitats](#)

For Lobstein, a professor emeritus of biology at Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas, reaching such a broad audience via these videos is a dream come true. “The modules can be used by educators, Virginia Native Plant Society members, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners—really anyone who’s interested in identifying and appreciating the beautiful and diverse plants of Virginia,” she said.

Committee co-chair Ann Regn, with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and a well-known environmental educator in the state, worked to ensure alignment with the Virginia Standards of Learning and herself created the module on habitats.

“Each video stands alone,” Regn said, “but together they provide a comprehensive approach to understanding and using the Flora. Each one lasts about an hour and is divided into three or more sections. Time stamps and descriptions let viewers navigate to a specific topic or area of interest.” Each module also links to resource materials for deeper investigations.

The modules’ creators are also their presenters: Lobstein; Regn; Sally Anderson, Flora secretary and past president of the Virginia Native Plant Society; Michelle Prysby, adviser, former Flora board member, and director of the Virginia Master Naturalist program; and flora assistant and former recording secretary Jan Hodges, a biologist and marine educator. Instrumental was guest participant Linda Wilcox, Virginia native-plant enthusiast (and Lobstein’s former student), now living in Indiana. Volunteer Mark Murphy edited the videos for online presentation, including the use of closed captions, which will allow broader accessibility, and the addition of introductory and closing music.

The Flora of Virginia Project was formed in 2001 to produce the first plant manual for the state since 1762’s *Flora Virginica*—published in the Netherlands and in Latin. The Project

published *Flora of Virginia* in 2012; it sold out in 10 months and was reprinted in 2013. In 2017, the Flora of Virginia Mobile App was launched for Android and iOS devices. A major update was released last December.

–30–

Links to selected images, with presenters' names and suggested captions:

Using the Flora App

In "Using the Flora App," Sally Anderson introduces the Flora's key to the plant families, into which related plants are grouped, such as the mints (Lamiaceae) and the orchids (Orchidaceae).

Basic Botany

In "Basic Botany," Jan Hodges uses a maple branch to discuss leaf arrangement, often an important character in plant identification.

A Tour of the Flora

In "A Tour of the Flora," Marion Lobstein points out Flora Virginica (1762 edition), Virginia's first flora; Flora of Virginia (2012); and the Flora of Virginia Mobile App (2017, updated in 2020), which offers the print Flora's full contents and much more.

Keying

In "Keying," Michelle Prysby uses the familiar dandelion to illustrate the use of keys in plant identification.

Habitats

In "Habitats," Ann Regn illustrates habitats' role in plant distribution, ecology, and conservation.

All modules can always be reached on the Flora Project's site [here](#).