

Submitter: Renee Robinson
On Behalf Of: Echo Valley Natives
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3173

Echo Valley Natives
Retail Native Plant Specialist Nursery
Jan 31, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: HB 3173 (Oregon Flora) - SUPPORT

Dear Committee members:

As a native plant nursery worker, I urge you to pass the HB3173 to support the OregonFlora Project at Oregon State University.

I help run a family-owned retail nursery in Clackamas County that specializes in Pacific NW Native Plants. Our business, Echo Valley Natives, first opened in 2001 when gardening with Indigenous Plants was a much smaller niche. But, over the last 20+ years, the public interest in gardening with natives has increased exponentially, with important reasons like providing backyard habitat for native wildlife and decreasing water/chemical use by installing plants designed for our climate. The OregonFlora Project has become a critical resource for both growers and retailers like ourselves, as well as our customers, who range from everyday citizens to larger scale environmental restoration specialists.

We utilize OregonFlora at our nursery to learn more about the natives we grow and sell, to ensure species accuracy and to learn more about their growth habit and native range with their mapping tools. There is a huge need for a central resource with up-to-date, accurate information about these plants. Selling native plants is much different than selling traditional garden plants, as there is a scientific and environmental ethic to grow true, localized native species. Not only do many of our everyday customers care about purchasing accurate, locally-sourced native species, but many of our plants go out into environmental restoration projects. It is of the utmost importance that these nursery plants as accurate to those that are naturally-occurring so that they do not disrupt the genetics and degrade wild ecosystems. This restoration work is becoming more and more frequent, and OregonFlora will be an important resource going forward to keep these projects as high-quality as possible.

The OregonFlora Project builds upon and showcases research that has been done

for decades on PNW native plants. It makes this library of botanical records easily accessible at the click of a website with beautifully scanned records and accurate taxonomic data. Their published volumes are also a great resources for growers like ourselves to again ensure we are selling accurate species. Before, researching native plants required a piecemeal approach with a variety of sources. But going forward, OregonFlora will streamline this important scientific field.

Our customers, from everyday citizens adding native habitat in their backyards up to non-profit and government agencies doing environmental restoration work, also utilize OregonFlora. Their website provides excellent and concise information on gardening with natives, useful to help beginners get started and for experienced folks looking to learn more. It has been a joy to be able to share the OregonFlora website with our customers when they are looking for a reliable resource to aid their gardening journey, as we know that they are providing top-tier, science-based information.

I urge you to please support House Bill 3173 to ensure the resources of OregonFlora can continue to be maintained and developed for the betterment of local ecology, the native plant nursery trade, and Oregon residents.

Sincerely,

Renee Robinson
Echo Valley Natives
echovalleynatives.com