



# HB 3173 - A Bill to Establish OregonFlora in Statute

**OregonFlora** provides comprehensive information about the ~4,700 vascular plants of Oregon, making this knowledge accessible and relevant to public, state and federal agencies, educational institutions, businesses, scientists and others through *Flora of Oregon* publications, a website, distribution maps, field photos, and identification tools. <https://oregonflora.org/>

**OregonFlora** is the only program in Oregon that curates and freely shares data about all plants that grow here without cultivation. It is vital that this information is maintained and kept current so we can support and promote systems at the core of Oregon's identity:

- Healthy, resilient, and sustainable forests
- Invasive weed control in rangeland and agricultural fields
- Expansion of the horticultural native plant industry
- Habitats that support wildlife, game, and fisheries
- Recreation, residency, and stewardship in diverse ecosystem

The upcoming Volume 3 of *Flora of Oregon* includes a new chapter, "Native Lands: The Connections Between Native People and Plants," which describes the deep ties between native people and the landscape of their homelands, and how cultural practices have shaped plant communities now defined as 'native flora.' It highlights how generations of traditional ecological knowledge of plant uses, distributions, and characteristics define a plant classification system rivaling the binomial naming system used in Western science.

- By describing plants with both their Latin scientific name and Indigenous names from multiple Tribes, OregonFlora will highlight and normalize Indigenous contributions to our knowledge of the state's natural resources.
- Because OregonFlora identifies and maps where plant species can be found, it supports Indigenous efforts to connect with culturally relevant plants for propagation and restoration purposes, and for dietary and cultural uses.

## ISSUE

**OregonFlora** maintains an enormous database and website about plant diversity on behalf of Oregon. Since 1994, the resource has expanded to serve diverse users seeking plant knowledge. The program has relied upon grants and donations to fund 100 percent of salaries, employee benefits, and direct operating expenses for the past 30 years. Given the program's significant growth, benefits to statewide agencies and institutions, and its value to Oregon's natural resource-based economy, this funding approach is no longer sustainable.

## SOLUTION

Long-term and sustainable funding is needed to ensure that **OregonFlora** can continue to provide this service. House Bill 3173 will establish OregonFlora in statute and create an initial appropriation of \$400,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to Oregon State University for OregonFlora.

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