

February 3, 2025

Dear Legislators:

Please support Oregon House Bill 3173, to preserve the online resource of OregonFlora.com. I'm a relative recent newcomer to Oregon – I've lived here about 7 years now. I came from California, where I lived in a home surrounded by non-native plants. The grass used water we didn't have. The palm and eucalyptus trees weren't native – and we've all seen the disastrous effect of palms and eucalyptus spreading fires even further in California last month.

I have been using OregonFlora as a way to educate myself as I transform my yard into a fire-safe habitat using native plants. Our small neighborhood of 8 homes received its FireWise certification this year after a FireWise walkthrough and work we did with the Oregon FireWise resources. Instead of grass, I have added plants like thimbleberry, vine maple, red and golden currant, douglas spirea, and more. Native white oaks shed their leaves, and those leaves – kept well away from the house, provide habitat over the winter for small animal and food for native birds.

By using native plants, not only is the fire risk reduced, but the use of excessive water to keep non-native plants is reduced as well. Without the easily-accessible OregonFLora resource, getting this information would be much more difficult. It's a resource that is funded by all of us who pay taxes, but it benefits anyone who needs information about native plant across the state. Other neighbors also use the resource as we work together to minimize fire risks and promote healthy native habitat.

Please continue to fund this important resource for all Oregonians.

Thank you,

Tracey Tomashpol
Hood River