



WinterCreek
Bend, Oregon

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: HB 3173; Oregon Flora at Oregon State University

February 3, 2025

Dear House Committee Members

I'm writing in strong support of HB 3173, establishing the OregonFlora at Oregon State University. As an owner of the largest native plant nursery in central Oregon, a grower of native plants for the past 32 years, an educator in native plant ecology and the use of native species in urban landscapes, and a recovering landscape contractor working exclusively with native plants and ecology-based design for over 25 years, I have a deep appreciation for the importance of the OregonFlora. The Flora provides the definitive reference to the state's native vegetation for our business and our customers.

But the Flora is not only a reference of plant material. The continued work by Linda Hardison and her staff ensure accurate descriptions, geographic range, and a wealth of additional information about the native flora of the state and its role in helping municipalities reduce resource dependency and reach conservation targets. Without the Flora, gathering this information for use in planning and project management would be nearly impossible – especially in the expansive landscapes east of the Cascades.

The interest in native plants and our natural systems is increasing exponentially. There has been a significant growth in the understanding of and appreciation for native plants by the public, students, and researchers. This growth is reflected in the numerous peer-reviewed and popular articles expounding the value of native plants for biodiversity and pollinator habitat across the country. Locally, our business – focusing completely on native plants of central and eastern Oregon – has experienced a consistent 20%+ annual growth in sales since 2009. We depend on data and descriptions provided by the OregonFlora for the educational component of our business, and to ensure we're putting out accurate and up-to-date information. Our catalogue and website provide direct links to the OregonFlora as a valuable reference for our customers and supporters. The OregonFlora is unique as the primary source of information that keeps the rapidly growing native plant industry informed. I believe the Flora fills an essential role in the growth and sustainability of Oregon's vibrant landscape and nursery industries. Without it, the "Green Industry" would struggle to meet the needs and desires of the public for increased accessibility to accurate information on native species and the essential role of native plants in our future.

I strongly urge you to pass House Bill 3173 and establish the OregonFlora as an indispensable resource for the state of Oregon. Thank you.

s/ Richard Martinson, Ph.D.