

Written Testimony in Support of HB 3173 - Oregon Flora

February 4, 2025

Dear Committee,

I write in **strong support of HB 3173**, Oregon Flora.

My Connection to Oregon Natural Resources

I am a rural Oregonian, born and raised, a vegetable gardener, and I'm a volunteer with our local chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon that works to increase appreciation, use, and study of south coast trees, shrubs, and wildflowers.

I'm proud to live in such a unique state with a strong history of outdoor recreation, farming, ranching, home gardens, and tourism based on enjoyment of our unique natural attributes as a state. From the towering Redwoods to incredible Oregon Myrtlewood, which feature prominently in my earliest memories growing up on the south coast (ever camped at Loeb State Park and awoken to the wonderful smell of biggest old-growth Oregon Myrtlewood?), and the plants found miraculously thriving on our coastal Sea Stack rocks amidst intense conditions, to the jewel-like beauties of mariposa lilies and shooting stars found in hikes and our botanical trails that I love to explore, we have some pretty cool botanical treasures! Oregon has 120 species that are ONLY found in our state. And 70% of the plant species in Oregon are native to Oregon (as opposed to brought in from elsewhere). **There's no one better to keep a compendium of our botanical knowledge than us, Oregon, and to keep it publicly-accessible!**

How OregonFlora Has Deepened My Learning

I've been able to undertake my self-study of Oregon's native plants (and invasive exotic weeds!) through the Oregon Flora project website. It has plant search and ID tools, 1.48 million mappable records of where the plants are found, thousands of color field photos (meaning identified in-place), and fact sheets for every plant family and genus. I've learned: 1) how to identify invasive weeds in my yard before they go to seed, 2) how to determine which plant is which with look-alikes for edible plants I want to forage, 3) where to find a particular botanical treasure in the state (like an elusive lily or other wildflower), when it will be in bloom, and whether it's suitable for a home garden. I first learned how to use a taxonomic key tool using the one on Oregon Flora.

Used with Pollinator Gardening Community Education

As a volunteer tabling at community garden events, I find that a lot of people are interested in pollinator plants and creating pollinator gardens. I've been able to point people to Oregon Flora to use the garden planning tool to identify pollinator-favorite

plants that will work with no additional irrigation in their specific site conditions (shady, sunny, wet, dry, coastal elevation, etc)

A Cross-Section of Natural Resource Users Rely on OregonFlora

I've worked with Soil and Water Conservation District people, trail and park maintenance, plant nursery owners, etc, who all use Oregon Flora to keep Oregon's economy moving forward and to increase the appreciation and research of our native plants.

Check It Out for Yourself

If you haven't had a chance to explore OregonFlora, I encourage you to at <https://oregonflora.org/garden/index.php> as a good place to get started. Or, click "Explore" and check out the Identify Plant tool and learn about one just a few feet away from you that perhaps you don't know the name of, or look up a favorite wildflower from your childhood or state park memories.

Major Investment by Oregon Researcher & Citizen Scientists Already Made

One of the opportunities of HB 3173 is that it doesn't need to be started from scratch. Thirty years of research, citizen science and volunteer contributions have made it what it is what it is today. Now Oregon has a chance to sustain the investment already made to create this resource for the use of all Oregonians and natural resource users who come to this state.

Thanks for your support of 3173.

Sincerely,

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