

STATE'S PLANT CITIZENS FEATURED ON WEB SITE

Nature and gardening enthusiasts on the Internet can now learn about South Carolina's native and introduced plant "citizens" through county distribution maps and photos posted on a regularly-updated plant atlas web site. Nearly 3,000 species of trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals - some illustrated by color photographs - from the wilds of South Carolina and their county distributions can be found inside the South Carolina Plant Atlas on the Internet.



The South Carolina Plant Atlas Web site at <http://cricket.biol.sc.edu/herb/> will be useful to those interested in natural history, botany or horticulture. Important geographical information on the state's indigenous and exotic flora are just a click away. For example, the site shows where the once-common native tree, Long Leaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*), grows naturally and would thrive if planted. The spread of introduced pest species like Florida Betony (*Stachys floridana*) can be followed. County discoveries of new or rare species like May White Azalea (*Rhododendron eastmanii*) or Schweinitz's Sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*) can be observed.

Original photos to illustrate plants are being added to the Web site periodically with a list of common plant names planned for the future. Since new county and even new state records are being incorporated into the current set of maps, the Atlas should maintain its usefulness even as new scientific information is published or shared.

The University of South Carolina Herbarium, Clemson University Herbarium, the S.C. Heritage Program of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, and the original 1994 South Carolina Plant Atlas cooperators joined efforts to totally overhaul the state plant atlas including corrections, additions and deletions up through year 2003. New digital photos to illustrate plants are added to the site almost daily.



"All records shown in the on-line plant atlas are based upon curated herbarium records, not anecdotal sightings, with many of the specimens further annotated by specialists," said Bert Pittman, S.C. Department of Natural Resources botanist. "Efforts to create an on-line version of the Atlas, rather than a paper document were hastened by the power of personal computers."

Users of the plant atlas Web site <http://cricket.biol.sc.edu/herb/> will need to know a plant's scientific or Latin name, at least the genus. Species are listed alphabetically by scientific or Latin name and a mouse click on a letter of the alphabet opens up a list of plant names.

Visiting the on-line plant atlas the Web user will discover that violets (27 species in S.C.) are *Viola*; sunflowers (23 species in S.C.) are *Helianthus*; dogwoods (six species in S.C.) are *Cornus*; meadow beauties (nine species in S.C.) are *Rhexia*; and blueberries (18 species in S.C.) are *Vaccinium*. Wildflower books, some Internet sites and most catalogs include scientific names of plants with their common names. Common names of plants can vary widely, and many native plants have no common name, just the scientific one.



Plant specimen records used in the Atlas came from nearly all the herbaria in South Carolina, including collections at Charleston Museum, The Citadel, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, Erskine College, Francis Marion University, Furman University, Savannah River Ecology Lab, University of South Carolina-Aiken, USC-Columbia, USC-Spartanburg, and USC-Sumter. Recent additions to collections of rare and endangered species were examined at the U.S. National Herbarium, the New York Botanical Garden, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Duke University and Florida State University.

Data updates to the South Carolina Plant Atlas as well as comments on format and nomenclature may be addressed to: Dr. John Nelson, Curator, A.C. Moore Herbarium, Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, e-mail: nelson@sc.edu. The South Carolina Plant Atlas Web site is maintained by Dr. T.A. Mousseau, Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, e-mail mousseau@sc.edu.

The W.T. Batson Endowment named for well-known USC Professor Emeritus Dr. Wade Batson of Cayce, is used to support activities for both the University of South Carolina and Clemson University herbaria such as hiring students to work with the herbarium, purchasing equipment and supplies and other needs. Donations are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to USC or Clemson with Batson Endowment written in the note line. For USC mail Professor John M. Herr Emeritus, Department of Biological Sciences, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208 or call at (803) 777-8110 in Columbia. For Clemson mail Professor Richard D. Porcher, Professor Emeritus, Biology Department, The Citadel, Charleston, S.C. 29409 or call at (843) 953-5203 in Charleston.

- Written by Mike Creel -