

App brings wildflower identification to your fingertips

April 25 2014, by Daniel Robison



Beargrass grows in Oregon's Cascade Range. The Oregon Wildflower app offers photographs, natural history, range maps and more for nearly 1000 plants.

Credit: Tanya Harvey

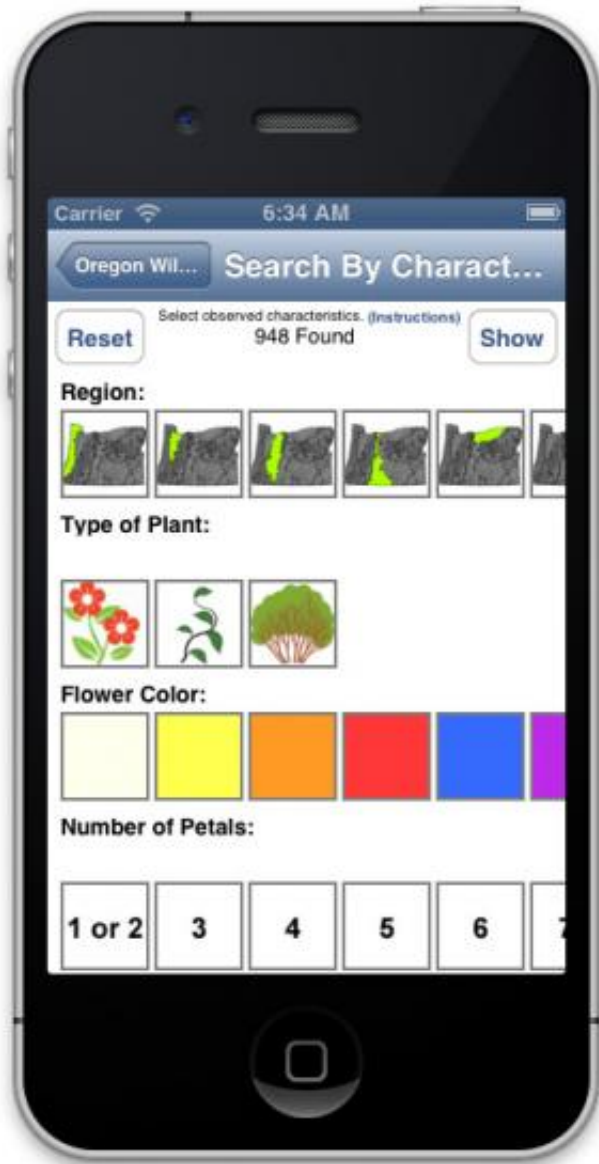
(Phys.org) —Information about the Pacific Northwest's wide array of wildflowers is just a swipe away with a new mobile app designed in part by botanists at Oregon State University.

Available for iOS and Android devices, the Oregon Wildflowers app provides multimedia and information on nearly 1,000 wildflowers, shrubs and vines common in Oregon and adjacent areas in Idaho, Washington and California. For each plant, the app offers photographs, natural history, range maps and more. It works without an Internet connection once downloaded.

"You can use the app no matter how remote your wanderings may take you," said Linda Hardison, the director of the Oregon Flora Project, an OSU effort to develop resources, like the new app, to help people learn about plants in Oregon.

"It's designed for both budding wildflower enthusiasts and experienced botanists to learn about plant communities and ecology throughout the Pacific Northwest," added Hardison, a botanist in OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences.

The majority of species featured in the app are native to the region, with some introduced species that have become established. Plants are organized by common name, scientific name or family, which app users can identify by browsing through high-resolution photographs.



Screenshot of the Oregon Wildflower app.

To identify an unknown plant, users can select from 12 illustrated categories, which include geographic region, type of plant, flower features (color, number of petals), leaf features (type and shape), plant size and habitat.

The app is available at Amazon, Apple and Google app stores for \$7.99 and is compatible with all Android devices, Kindle Fire, iPhones and iPads. A portion of revenues will support conservation and botanical exploration in the region, said Hardison, a professor in OSU's Botany and Plant Pathology Department.

The Oregon Flora Project is also preparing a new Flora of Oregon publication for release in 2015. The last book about the flora for Oregon was written in the 1950s, said Hardison. The new edition will be updated to reflect the latest scientific research. It will serve a broad spectrum of audiences, including policymakers, land use managers, scientists studying climate change, gardeners and the public, she added.

The [Oregon Flora Project website](#) contains additional information about all of Oregon's 4,560 vascular [plants](#), which have special tissues—known as lignified tissue—that allows water and minerals to flow through the plant.

The Oregon Wildflowers [app](#) was developed in partnership with High Country Apps, which specializes in providing [natural history](#) information on mobile platforms.

Provided by Oregon State University

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