

## Flora of Virginia Update

With the 1923 founding of the Virginia Academy of Science and the subsequent 1926 establishment of the Academy's Virginia Flora Committee, the door was opened that led to the development and publishing of the modern Flora of Virginia.

The primary mission of the Academy's Flora Committee was to "promote the study of and publications of the flora and vegetation of Virginia." There were important steps taken towards realizing this mission through the years. Over the next seventy-five years a number of Academy members and their graduate students conducted floristic studies of many areas in Virginia with the goal of producing a flora for Virginia. In 1930, the *Flora of Richmond and Vicinity* by Paul Merriman was published by the Academy. In 1970, Alton Harvill, active in the Botany Section and the Flora Committee, published *Spring Flora of Virginia* and in 1977 with Academy support published Part 1 of the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora*.

Harvill then organized the Virginia Botanical Associates which published subsequent editions of the *Atlas* through the early 1990s. This *Atlas*, essential to the development of a flora for Virginia, is now in digital format. All of these accomplishments laid the foundation for a modern flora for Virginia.

In 1999, with support of the Academy's Flora Committee, chaired by Rex Baird, and the Academy, a Small Project Grant was provided to assess the feasibility of developing a modern flora for Virginia. In August 2001, with the support of funding from the Academy and other partners, the Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project (FFVP) or Flora Project was established. In 2002, the Academy supported a symposium on the Flora of Virginia Project, which brought further attention to the endeavor.

The Flora Project's mission has always been "to inspire conservation of Virginia's native flora through education, outreach, and production of the Flora of Virginia, in print and

electronic formats." This goal was achieved with the support and generosity of the Virginia Academy of Science along with other partnerships when the *Flora of Virginia* manual was published in 2012, and in 2017 with the release of the electronic version of the *Flora of Virginia* as an App. The *Flora App* had a major update in 2020 to keep the science current. The financial and other support from the Academy and Fellows has been instrumental in the Flora Project publishing the *Flora of Virginia* manual as well as developing the *Flora App*.

To fulfill the Flora Project's mission of education and outreach efforts, several of the members of the FFVP board gave presentations, taught workshops, and presented papers at Academy annual meetings. To further the education and outreach mission, a Flora Education Committee was appointed by the Flora Project Board. Earlier this year that committee developed and recorded seven educational ... *contd. P7*

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In "A Tour of the Flora," Marion Lobstein traces the development of Virginia floras from 1762's *Flora Virginica* (99.99% in Latin!) to the *Flora of Virginia* (2012) and the *Flora of Virginia* Mobile App (2017, with a major update in 2020). These modules are a milestone of the Flora Project's education and outreach mission.

## VAS Centennial Celebration

The Virginia Academy of Science held its first official meeting in April 1923, at the College of William & Mary. The Academy is making plans for a Centennial Celebration, with many actions taking place in 2022, as we move toward a celebration at The College of William & Mary in the Spring of 2023.

The preparations for this celebration have begun and President Michael Wolyniak appointed Richard Groover to be the Centennial Committee Chairperson. A Centennial Committee held its first meeting in January 2021, giving the Academy a great deal of time to develop ideas and planning before the celebrations become public.

Yet Yet to be confirmed, events for the Centennial may include recognition of outstanding scientists who are or have been members of the Academy, recorded testimonials from famous individuals, and a spe-

cial event, with invited dignitaries, honoring Presidents and Fellows of the Academy.

The Centennial Planning Committee is exploring special historical recognition for the creation of the Science Museum of Virginia, the establishment of the Virginia Junior Academy of Science, and development and support for the publication of *The Flora of Virginia*. This event will include highlighting participation and support in the creation of the Virginia State Park's System and the

Scopes Monkey Trial. Special fundraising events will coincide with the Centennial.

The Centennial Committee ZOOM meetings take place once every other month, if you are interested in attending these meetings please contact;

**Richard Groover** at  
rgroover@reynolds.edu



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video modules. This series of videos modules breaks down the wealth of information and various features of the *Flora of Virginia* manual and its App into concise but simplified presentations. The videos are suitable for a wide range of audiences and have the option of closed-captioning available. The following is a list of the titles of the video modules: Tour of the *Flora of Virginia*, How to Use the *Flora* App, Basic Botany, Taxonomy, Keying, Plant Families, and Habitats. While each presentation stands alone, the series provides a comprehensive approach to understanding and using the *Flora*, and the *Flora* App. Each video presentation is about an hour long and divided into sections. Timestamps and descriptions allow viewers to navigate to specific topics or sections of interest.

Live links provide additional resources. Presenters included *Flora* Board Education Committee members Marion Lobstein, Sally Anderson, Michelle Prysby, Jan Hodges, Ann Regn, and guest Linda Wilcox. Mark Murphy, the Virginia Native Plant Society's webmaster, recorded, edited, and posted the video modules on both the *Flora of Virginia* Project's website, <https://floraofvirginia.org/> and the Virginia Native Plant Society's website, <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8814177> and <https://vnps.org/my-journey-with-the-flora-of-virginia/>.

Over the last twenty years, I have had the honor to be involved in establishing and serving on the first and second FFVP boards of directors and vice president of the second board. The third decade of the *Flora of Virginia* Project has now begun with a new

Board of Directors. Three members of the second board, Chris Ludwig, Sally Anderson, and Ann Regn, are continuing to serve on the third board. Of the nine new members, three are active members of the Virginia Academy of Science. These are Conley McMullen, former VAS president who is an Academy Fellow and active in the Botany Section and the Virginia *Flora* Committee, as well as Andrea Weeks and Jordan Metzger who are both active in the Botany Section of the Academy. The other six new members are Caitlin Cyrus, Irvine Wilson, Ryan Huish, Ashley Moulton, Joey Thompson, and Eli Wright.

The *Flora of Virginia* Project moves into its next decade in very capable hands, and the partnership with the Virginia Academy of Science will play a vital role in the future of the *Flora* Project.

Submitted by **Marion Lobstein**

