



Go Botany!

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Funded by the National Science Foundation, this innovative website is free at <http://www.newenglandwild.org/gobotany>. Go Botany features an interactive Simple ID Key to 1200 of the more common vascular plants of the region, covering all species groups from aquatic plants to graminoids to trees. In three easy steps, users home in on the identification of a plant species while increasing observational skills. All technical terms are linked to illustrated, pop-up definitions. Users can visit informative species pages to learn more: fun facts and uses, maps of the species range, gorgeous images, information about all its features, look-alike species, and whether it is native, invasive, or rare in New England. Coming soon will be a set of advanced tools for more experienced botanists, including a Full Key, which uses the same friendly interface as the Simple ID Key to identify all 3,500 species, subspecies, and varieties of plants in the New England flora, and a clickable, technical Dichotomous Key that allows users to trace their steps, change their choices, and key out families or genera. A growing body of teaching resources will also be available. Later this summer, the site will introduce PlantShare, an online forum that connects users with other plant enthusiasts to create and share checklists and photographs of species they have seen. New England Wild Flower Society has tested the Simple Key with beginners and experts, students and teachers, aged 8 to 80, and it is welcomed by a broad audience as a way to learn and teach about plants. Go Botany is a user-friendly, comprehensive, and sophisticated web application that allows many people to identify and learn about the plants of our region. Although our emphasis is on the New England flora, botanists throughout the northeast will find it very useful. The Society is also working with several organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution, to customize the Go Botany database and software for other regional floras. For more information, contact gobotany@newenglandwild.org

Article pictures

