**Recommended Plant Identification References for West Virginia**

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**Books**

* Flora of Virginia (Weakley, Ludwig, Townsend 2015).  This is the best single reference for West Virginia, including all but a handful of West Virginia species.  It is available in book form and as a user-friendly Android/iOS app with graphical and text keys and some line drawings.
* Flora of West Virginia (Strausbaugh and Core 1978). Book: outdated and incomplete but a good secondary reference, with West Virginia habitats and line drawings of most species.
* Aquatic and Wetland Plants of Northeastern North America Vols I-II. (Crow and Hellquist 2000 & 2006). Book: easy-to-use keys and detailed line drawings.  Does not include all WV wetland species.
* Flora of North America (FNA 1993+). Book: excellent but not all families have been completed.  Volumes 22-25 (grasses, sedges, rushes) are particularly helpful. Some volumes are on-line: <http://www.efloras.org/flora_page.aspx?flora_id=1>
* Flora of the Southern and Mid-Atlantic States (Weakley 2015).  Available as an electronic book (free pdf download) or iOS “FloraQuest” app.  Includes the entire flora of WV, with excellent technical keys, which can be filtered by state.
* Field Guide to Grasses of the Mid-Atlantic (Chamberlain 2018). Easy-to-use heavily illustrated key.
* Common Mosses of the Northeast and the Appalachians (McKnight, Rohrer, Ward, Perdrizet 2013). Beautiful and easy to use with photos, drawings, and keys.

**Apps and Websites**

* Flora of Virginia (includes all but a few WV species, has beginner-friendly graphical keys)

Android and iOS app, $19.99 (worth every penny and then some!)

<http://floraofvirginia.org/flora-app/>

* FloraQuest (covers the southeast, can be filtered for WV only; mostly technical botanical keys with some beginner-level woody plant keys)

iOS app, $7.99

<http://www.floraquest.com/>

* GoBotany

Excellent website, well-illustrated keys covering many, but not all, West Virginia species.

<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/>

* Biota of North America Plant Atlas

County distribution maps on website: check whether your species is in range. <http://bonap.net/Napa/Genus/Traditional/County>

* iNaturalist

iOS app or website

Free. Upload photos and the image recognition software on this app or website may recognize your plant. If your photos are good quality, botanists in the iNaturalist community will likely identify them. Be sure to check against one of the references above, as mis-identifications occur in this crowd-sourced knowledge base. It is nevertheless one of the best free identification tools available.

**For Beginners**

(apps and websites above are all good beginner references)

* Newcomb’s Wildflower Guide (Newcomb 1977). Field guide with easy-to-use non-technical keys. This book will help you find the right genus.
* Tree Finder & Winter Tree Finder (Watts 1991). Booklets with graphical keys, non-technical language.
* West Virginia Wildflowers

Android, iOS app

Free – this app is okay to get an idea of the family or genus, but should NOT be used to identify plants to species. It is designed for casual wildflower enjoyment and contains many mis-identified species or species that are not in West Virginia. Still, it is a useful tool to get started and doesn’t require any botanical expertise.