

## Preserving the Heritage of Native New Jersey Plant Species

New Jersey is losing an alarming amount of plant diversity to land development, changing climate patterns, and invasive plant species. Scientists and others are in a race against time to add data to existing plant collections so that researchers have access to critical information about New Jersey's flora.

Plant collections help botanists to recognize new species, identify native species that could be restored, and "find" native species that were erroneously believed to be lost. The collections also help botanists to recognize invasive plants that are threatening native flora, and provide data to track the changes in our forests, fields, and beaches that occur over time due to climate change and human impact.

Rutgers' Chrysler and Mycological Herbaria contain 120,000 specimens of New Jersey plants that have been collected over the past 200 years. These extremely unique and high-demand collections represent the best source of information on the flora of New Jersey.

Rutgers is making plans to protect these invaluable and irreplaceable collections. With the future of the collection secured, an online database and a collection of DNA plant samples will be created that will greatly expand the biological research capabilities at Rutgers and in New Jersey.

The vision includes programs that will enable Rutgers to educate a new generation about the importance of New Jersey's native flora. Knowledge of the importance of plants as essential sources of food, shelter, fuel, and medicines will be part of the curricula.

Your contribution will help to preserve New Jersey's plant heritage and ensure the future survival of the state's biodiversity. Please contact The Office of Development at 732-932-9000, ext. 576 or [development@sebs.rutgers.edu](mailto:development@sebs.rutgers.edu) for more information.

*For more information, visit us at [www.sebs.rutgers.edu/development](http://www.sebs.rutgers.edu/development).*

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