

The GA-VSC Herbaria Collaborative: Phase I of a Statewide Consortium



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Collaborative

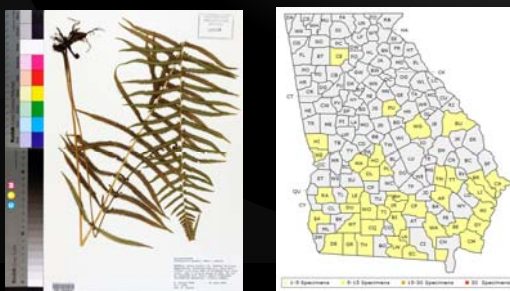
The University of Georgia Herbarium (GA) and Valdosta State University Herbarium (VSC) have initiated a three-year collaborative project funded by the National Science Foundation, Collections in Support of Biological Research (CSBR) program. GA and VSC herbaria comprise over 325,500 accessioned sheets with focus on Georgia and the southeastern United States.



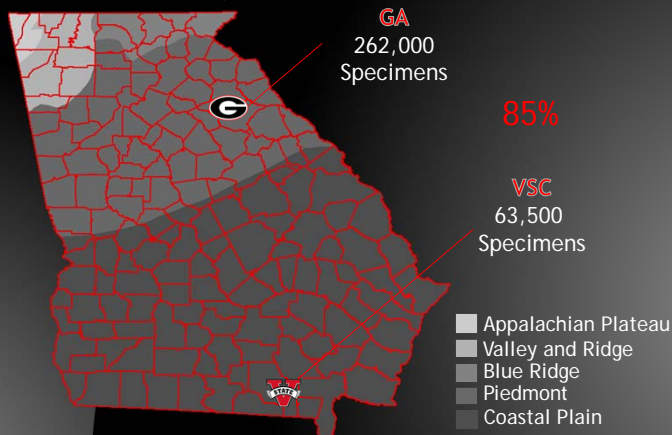
Left: Carter, Zomlefer, and Giannasi at VSC, Feb 2009. Right: Carter, Giannasi, Zomlefer, and Wichmann at GA, Jan 2012.

GA-VSC Plant Atlas

A primary goal of the alliance is a publicly accessible, digital GA-VSC Atlas linked to specimen images and core label data. Over 84,000 GA specimens have been databased and linked to interactive maps. Thus far 10,000 VSC specimens have been imaged and databased. The comprehensive atlas of vouchered specimens will be the basis of a checklist of Georgia's flora.



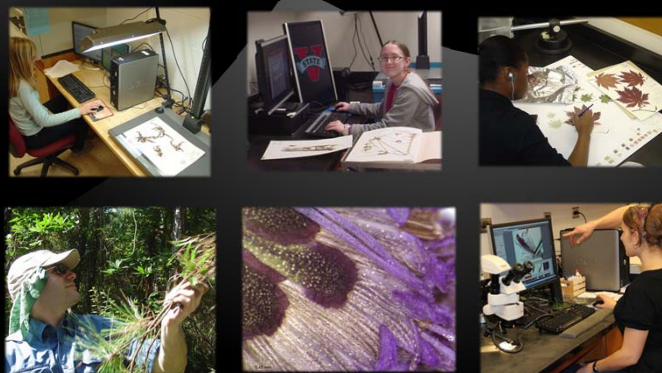
Left: VSC specimen of *Thelypteris kunthii*. Right: Distribution map of this species based on GA specimens.



Georgia is 75,513 sq. miles with 159 counties and 5 physiographic provinces. The GA-VSC Herbaria Collaborative is digitally capturing the state's vouchered plant diversity. GA and VSC herbaria house over 85% of the specimens in Georgia.

Student Training

Undergraduate and graduate students are involved in all phases of the project. Both herbaria use a well lit copy stand with a Nikon D3X camera. Core label data is archived using the Specify6 database management system.



Outreach

GA herbarium will be supporting the creation of a herbarium for Trees Atlanta, a non-profit organization advocating preservation of the city's trees. The new collections will be integrated with the imaging and atlas project.



Left: Trees of Atlanta improves city streets. Right: Trees Atlanta participant pressing plants for herbarium specimens.

A five-day teachers' course at VSC will combat plant blindness with activities designed around imaging and databasing, including plant identification and collections management. Lesson plans will focus on topics such as invasive species and rare and threatened flora.



Left: Field class at VSC. Center: PI Carter at VSC. Right: Tulip Tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*.



Phase I serves as a model enabling estimation of costs and workflow issues and the most effective data mobilization as other collections in the state are added into the system (Phase II).

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