

Plant Identification Resources

VSP Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/635070733322198/>

- o Members post photos of unknown and/or known plants:
 - o Overall growth form
 - o Close-up of fine features
 - o Flower or flowering head if present
 - o Comment on site conditions and additional features which might not be obvious from photo (e.g. presence of cilia, texture of leaf or stem etc.)
 - o Other members comment on photos with their suggested ID
 - o Reference online resources or literature to confirm ID
 - o Group is listed as private

Trusted Online Resources:

Go Botany - New England Wild Flower Society:

<https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/full/>

- Online dichotomous key for plant ID
- Use full key to select general growth form (e.g. grass-like plants > sedges)
- Use question prompts on the left hand side to narrow down potential matches
- Once options are narrowed enough, click on matches to view photos and additional information
- If you find a potential match, use other resources to confirm identity
- If you cannot find a match, remove already answered question filters

Ontario Wildflowers: <http://www.ontariowildflowers.com/>

- Online plant photo and description database for Southern Ontario
- Can search by general growth form, family, specific species, flower colour etc

Unknown Plants

Unknown Plant – Sample Collection

- When taking photos and collecting samples: capture the fruiting heads, leaf margins and roots if possible.
- Label plants with masking tape and include the date and plot ID.

- Make sure to bunch together grass and sedge specimens with masking tape so blades are not loose.
- Take care as to not damage fruiting heads of grasses and sedges as sometimes a photo is not enough to guarantee proper identification.
- Always take note of the habitat the samples were collected from (i.e. wetland vs. upland) as this may help narrow down species.
- Be aware of species at risk and do not collect these samples if you are unsure.

Unknown Plants – Photos

- Photos are especially important for sedges and grasses, as transport in plastic bag can damage fruiting heads needed for identification. If no fruiting heads can be found, make sure to collect a good root sample. You can also look for samples outside of the plot but make sure they are the same species.
- Use the back of a clipboard or other solid colour in background to get the clearest picture.
- If taking picture using phone, label picture right away. Some applications such as 'Snap Chat' which label photos right away have proved useful (Figures 1 -2 below)
- Upload photos onto VSP Facebook Group – make sure to specify the type of habitat they were present in (i.e. wetland vs. upland)

Plant Sample Preservation

- Refrigerate plant samples right away to maintain freshness (up to ~2-3 weeks maximum)
- Press plants if they cannot be ID'd within 2-3 week time frame (may be pressed after being in refrigerator)
- Use fresh newspaper to best absorb moisture. Re-using newspaper may cause samples to mold faster
- Spread out samples (leaves, flowers, roots) as best possible and remove dirt from roots
- Materials: Newspapers, weight or load strap/bungee cord (to apply force on sample)



Figure 1. Example of unknown plant label using 'Snapchat' application. Later identified as Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) (Williams, Charlene August 2016).



Figure 2. Example of unknown plant label using 'Snapchat' application. Later identified as Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) (Williams, Charlene August 2016).