BIOL 301 – The County List Project

Overview:

The goal of this project is to build an annotated list of plant species historically recorded for each county in the state. My purpose for developing such a list is to know which species could be used in ecological restorations, roadside plantings, native plant gardens, etc within any given county. The goal is to further sub-divide the list by habitat, to allow for more accurate restoration and plantings, and to include notes interesting to gardeners and other users.

Process:

* The main strategy will be to review Radford, the SC Plant Atlas and the USDA PLANTS Database to produce a county list of species, which will then be annotated by season of bloom, habitat, distribution, etc.
* Each student will be assigned a set of pages in Radford
* Approximately 30 species each – see the assignments on the Excel sheet that is linked on our website
* Once our enrollment has stabilized, I’ll make the assignments.
* Each species’ distribution map will be reviewed to see all the counties where the species has been recorded
* If the species is found in nearby counties, the more up-to-date SC Plant Atlas and USDA PLANTS Database should be consulted to verify distribution
* If a genus name has been changed, you may not find it in the Atlas. You will need to go to the USDA site first to get the modern name, then go back to the Atlas to search for the distribution map
* Some species are so rare that Radford does not include a dot map – for these you will need to scan the species description to see which counties are listed
* Each student will prepare a data record for each species that includes the county, the full technical name, the modern technical name (as listed in the USDA PLANTS Database), the flowering season, habitat, and distribution as described in Radford, and any pertinent notes (including sources other than Radford)
* Be sure to exactly copy the flowering season, habitat and distribution information, but spell out abbreviations
* eg: for *Strophostyles helvola*, RAB p. 640: flowering season – June-September; habitat – beaches, open woods and clearings; distribution – primarily Coastal Plain and Piedmont
* Almost all species are found in more than one county
* You must make a separate record for each county
* Type each county into the county column – after the first time, it should automatically fill, but make sure you auto-fill with the right name, eg: Charleston not Chesterfield
* Drag the rest of the information down to copy it for each county
* Do the county list first, then you should be able to drag all the other information at once
* I know I should be doing this as a database, but I don’t know how to use Access…
* Use the standard form linked on the website – please make NO CHANGES to the form. Make sure cells remain formatted to “wrap text”.
* Spelling of the technical names must be PERFECT; other words should be spell-checked with Excel – poor spelling has been the key problem with past projects.

Project Grade:

Your grade will be based on the quality and depth of your research, your adherence to the standard format, and your spelling. The final project report is due on 11 March; electronic copy only.

Grade breakdown:

1. Quality of research – appropriate extraction of information from sources (50%)
2. Depth of research – based on the number and quality of extra sources you consult for each species (10%)
3. Adherence to the standard format – I need perfection here (20%)
4. Perfect spelling – be sure to double-check the spelling of all technical names (20%)