



BOWMAN'S HILL WILDFLOWER PRESERVE

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B o w m a n ' s H i l l W i l d f l o w e r P r e s e r v e ' s P l a n t S t e w a r d s h i p I n d e x

Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve is pleased to announce the Plant Stewardship Index FREE Calculator/Database.

www.bhwp.org

The conservation and stewardship of the land we own, whether public or private, is an important mission with widespread public support on the federal, state, county, and municipal levels. One essential goal of conservation projects is to preserve and protect those remnants of the natural environment that remain relatively intact and to protect these sensitive areas from being adversely impacted by human activities. An essential component of these efforts is a standardized assessment tool. A standardized assessment tool can provide land stewards with the information they need to establish priorities and set goals for the management of these public trusts. The Plant Stewardship Index (PSI) is an analytical tool developed by Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve with the generous help of many regional botanical experts. The PSI will enable stewards of public and private lands in New Jersey and in the Piedmont* area of Pennsylvania to survey and assess the status of the native plant populations on the properties they protect and manage. As a quantitative assessment of the floristic quality and botanical integrity of a site, the PSI offers a method for monitoring and evaluating land management practices, and affords granting agencies the ability to track those results. This method, adapted from the Floristic Quality Assessment Index (FQAI or FQI) methodology developed by Floyd Swink and Gerould Wilhelm, assigns relative values (Coefficients of Conservatism or CCs) to every plant found within a survey area, and calculates an overall PSI value for each area. These surveys, repeated at regular intervals, will allow land managers to monitor and quantify the results of their land management practices.

As part of its Plant Stewardship Index initiative, the Preserve has compiled a floristic quality database for New Jersey and the Piedmont region of Pennsylvania that reflects the combined expertise of eminent regional botanists. The database and PSI calculator are available to the public at no charge on the Preserve's website at www.bhwp.org. The PSI calculator automatically computes the Native mean C, the Total mean C, the FQI and PSI values for any plant list entered onto the website. Accounts are free. Account-holders may compile and save site lists, modify lists, track lists, print reports, and view all other users' site lists. The Plant Stewardship Index is the first time a resource based on this methodology has been developed for the Delaware River basin area of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The Preserve is providing free access these lists as a public service and to encourage others to become interested in native plants. The Preserve hopes this regional floristic quality database will make important information available to the public and will increase understanding of the native flora in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Please contact Jeannine Vannais, PSI Coordinator at 215-862-2924 or e-mail at vannais@bhwp.org for more information about educational courses and other services that the Preserve provides in support of the Plant Stewardship Index program. We welcome your comments and questions.

*In Pennsylvania, the Piedmont area encompasses the counties of Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware, Chester Lancaster, York and Adams, as well as parts of Berks, Lebanon and Dauphin Counties.



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SPECIMEN IDENTIFICATION SERVICES

Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve (BHWP) can identify specific plants at a cost of \$7.50 per specimen. Please send all specimens to Jeannine Vannais, PSI Coordinator.

Please, observe good ethics when you collect: Always obtain permission from the property owner.

- ❑ First, note whether the species is abundant enough that collections will be unlikely to harm the population.
- ❑ **If in question, DO NOT take a specimen**, but mark its location with a flag to find it later, or take a digital photograph of the plant, with your hand, a coin or a pen in the photograph to indicate scale.

PLANTS in FLOWER can often be identified from digital images. Email digital photographs or scanned images as a JPEG file to vannais@bhwp.org.

- ❑ If you determine that there is a large enough population to justify a collection, be sure to carefully take the **ENTIRE PLANT including lower leaves and roots**. It is almost impossible to identify a species by a single leaf or leaf branch.

- ❑ Color photocopies of a fresh whole plant in flower also may be detailed enough to allow for expert I.D.

FERNS: Since a detailed examination of sori is necessary, a specimen must be sent. Please include growth pattern information (i.e. running or clumping).

SEDGES, GRASSES and RUSHES are generally safe to take as a specimen since you would only take PART of one clump. Grasses and sedges are difficult to identify if they are not in seed. You are better off marking their location and returning to it later.

- ❑ Place each specimen in a separate plastic bag and label **each** with a number. If you are not able to bring the specimen in to BHWP within 24 hours, press it in a plant press or between newspapers. Bring in the pressed specimen or send it to my attention still pressed between newspapers, packing it in a large envelope with stiff cardboard to keep it from bending.

FOR ALL SPECIMENS/PHOTOGRAPHS/COLOR COPIES:

Please include the following information:

1. Number (assigned by you)
2. Date collected
3. Location and habitat (wet meadow, rocky forest, etc)
4. Color, odor, size and other salient characteristics

Your name, organization, and contact information should accompany each shipment of specimens.

FULL PSI FIELD SITE SURVEY

For organizations in need of full Plant Stewardship Index Assessment services: BHWP will arrange for experts trained in the PSI methodology to survey, analyze and evaluate current vegetation on a given area and to present the client with a full report of their findings and a calculation of the area's Plant Stewardship Index. These surveys, repeated at regular intervals, will enable land managers to monitor and quantify the results of their land management practices. BHWP will provide this service at a billed base rate of \$400/ half day and \$700/ full day, plus transportation.

- ❑ Organizations should first discuss the approximate area to be covered. It may be advisable to start the assessment with a particular portion of a site and then gradually cover more area.
- ❑ Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve will act as a clearinghouse for these surveys, arrange scheduling, the timely delivery of reports and creation of an online account for the client to access findings online.

To schedule a Plant Stewardship Index Field Site Survey, please contact Jeannine Vannais, PSI coordinator, at (215) 862-2924 or e-mail at vannais@bhwp.org. As many of our field botanists have limited scheduling opportunities, please plan to arrange for these services several months in advance.

The Mission of
Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve
is to lead people to a greater appreciation of native plants,
to an understanding of their importance to all life,
and to a commitment to the preservation of a healthy and
diverse natural world.

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www.bhwp.org
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