The City of Alexandria Herbarium (AVCH)

An herbarium is a collection of dried plant specimens maintained for scientific reference, like a museum.
It can also contain reference books and photographic collections, as well as specimens of fungi, mosses, and lichens.
Specimens are prepared with archival-quality materials and are intended to last for *centuries*.

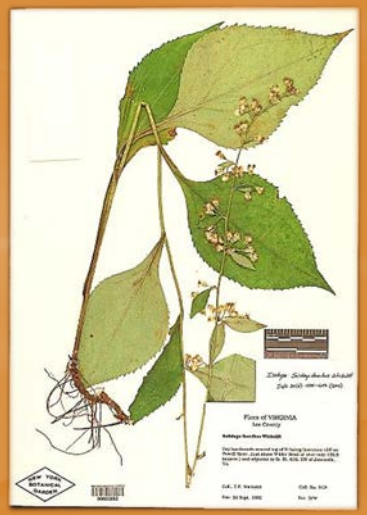
The City of Alexandria Herbarium was founded to document the native and naturalized plants of Alexandria as an aid to conservation planning, but is also a reference collection for research and identification of plants of the eastern U.S.

What type of information does a specimen contain?

- DNA can be extracted from the leaf tissue
- Vegetative and reproductive features
- Project name
- Scientific name
- Precise locality
- Ecological data
- Observations
- Collection date
- Fragments for dissection
- Unique reference number
- Collectors' names

How are herbaria useful to science? A few examples…

- By housing physical evidence of all plant species for comparative study.
- By maintaining historical ecological data about the natural landscape.
- By enumerating all plants of specific geographic regions, such as Northern Virginia.



A record of a newly discovered plant species in Virginia

An historical document about Alexandria's plant communities

Specimens to aid identification

Image adapted courtesy of Dr. Andrea Weeks, Director of the Ted R. Bradley Herbarium (GMUF) at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. The City of Alexandria Herbarium (AVCH) is located at 2900-A Business Center Drive - Dept. RPCA, Natural Resources Division. For further information contact Rod Simmons, AVCH Herbarium Curator, at Rod.Simmons@alexandriava.gov