

# Introduction

The passing of 2009 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Vascular Plants of Massachusetts: A County Checklist* (“the *Checklist*”) (Sorrie and Somers, 1999). After a decade of hard use, this much-referenced document earned its place in the backpack of every Bay State botanist, and dog-eared, marked-up copies abound throughout the 14 counties. Supplies of the original *Checklist* dwindled as the decade progressed, and the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), publisher of the *Checklist*, decided the time was ripe for a freshly-revised edition of the work. This volume is the result of that endeavor, and combines the research and compilation efforts of four past and present NHESP botanists, as well as the new record contributions of many individuals.

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This revised Checklist draws on our own herbarium and field research, that of our many colleagues in botany, and all of the above-referenced works. It is, in sum, a compilation of the work done by the many industrious field and herbarium botanists and ecologists of Massachusetts. This volume is a testament to their collaborative spirit and collective efforts, as well as the contributions of many past botanists.

## About the Checklist

### New to this revision

While the authors have attempted to keep the general format and layout of the *Checklist* as close to the original 1999 edition as possible, there are numerous new features included to increase the informational value for the conservation community it serves, and to bring the *Checklist* up-to-date with the scientific literature. For a complete discussion of these features and their related terms, see the text below this summary.

To provide more information about each taxon, we have:

- Assigned “S-rank” values to each, where possible
- Included “Invasive rank” categories assigned by the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG), where applicable, and
- Distinguished between introduced taxa that are well-established (“I” for “Introduced”) in the Commonwealth, vs. those that have appeared but not persisted here (“W” for “Waif”)

To bring the information up-to-date with NHESP research, we have:

- revised the MESA-Listed, Historical and Watch-list rankings
- updated the county distributions of tracked taxa

To bring the *Checklist* up-to-date with current botanical systematics, we have:

- Separated related families into six, rather than three, major taxonomic groups
- Revised taxonomic circumscription of families and their component genera and species, and
- Updated the nomenclature throughout. Circumscription and nomenclature follow either *Flora of North America* (Flora of North America Editorial Committee, eds. 1993+) or *Flora Novae-angliae* (Haines, in press).

To add to the completeness of the *Checklist*, we have:

- Included a more exhaustive representation of hybrid taxa, supported by much original herbarium research
- Included **319** new taxa (including newly-discovered, recently-elevated, recently annotated, and newly-included hybrid taxa)
- Included **676** new county-level records (many other evaluated and not accepted. In addition, if specimens could not be critically evaluated for correctness of identification, they were not included)
- Included a separate list of taxa that have been reported but for which we have not yet been able to locate a voucher specimen, and
- Added complete (rather than abbreviated) synonyms for each taxon

To keep the *Checklist* as rigorous as possible, we have:

- Listed **56** new exclusions from Massachusetts since the last edition, and
  - Excluded taxa from counties in cases where specimen determinations changed
- vi To clarify which entry is attributed to which county on a given page, we have shaded entries for alternate counties to help the eye associate an entry with the correct county.
- Entries for Berkshire, Hampshire, Worcester, Essex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Dukes counties are shaded, and
  - Entries for Franklin, Hampden, Middlesex, Suffolk, Bristol, Barnstable and Nantucket counties are not shaded.