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Bishop Museum's Botany Collection Attains Digitization Milestone

*Featuring the largest Hawaiian plant collection in the world,
all 180,000-plus specimens are now digitally accessible to the public*

Honolulu, Hawai'i — [Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum](#), the State of Hawai'i Museum of Natural and Cultural History, has attained a digitization milestone in its Botany collection: featuring the largest Hawaiian plant collection in the world, all 180,000-plus specimens are now digitally accessible to the public.

Digitally scanned images of the specimens, photography from the field, scientific names, plants' occurrences throughout the major Hawaiian islands, and other natural history information can be found on the website, [PlantsOfHawaii.org](#). The years-long effort to completely digitize Hawai'i's plants is part of Bishop Museum's ongoing [Digital Futures Initiative](#) to modernize the Museum's IT infrastructure and expand its digital operations, with the goal to dramatically increase digital access to its knowledge and collections.

"It's vitally important that we understand and have a record of what plants we have in Hawai'i, and especially how invasive species have affected Native plants over time," said Tim Gallaher, Ph.D., Bishop Museum curator of Botany. "For more than a century, Bishop Museum's Natural Science collections have been an invaluable resource for researchers and government agencies around the world. Now, through [PlantsOfHawaii.org](#), anyone can have access to our database of plant information and imagery at anytime, and from anywhere."

In 1992, the Hawai'i State Legislature designated Bishop Museum to launch and manage the Hawai'i Biological Survey, and its work to track the biota in Hawai'i over time — information and observances about plants and animals, where they are observed, who observed them, their ecosystems, and other important data that, paired with the voucher specimens that the Museum cares for, are critical to the work of natural resource managers and those working to preserve the Earth's fragile biodiversity. The Museum's Botany collection currently has more than 500,000 database entries, with 25-50 new introduced species catalogued every year. Some are potentially invasive, while others need to be observed closely over time to determine their effect on our islands' ecosystems.

"Our hope is that through [PlantsOfHawaii.org](#), we can encourage both experts in their field, as well as citizen scientists, to join in the effort to better understand — and protect — our Native flora," said Barbara Kennedy,

Bishop Museum Botany collection manager, whose team oversees the digitization project. “Keiki wishing to know more about our ‘aina and the plants in their backyards and gardens are especially welcome to explore our digital resource.”

The work of digitizing the Museum's hundreds of thousands of botany specimens is ongoing, and Kennedy thanks the many staff members and community volunteers who have helped in the effort.

“It’s truly been a community effort, and we’re appreciative of everyone who have helped us reach this milestone,” said Kennedy. “The work continues, and we’d like to ask that those who may be interested in donating their time and talents to please visit [BishopMuseum.org](https://www.bishopmuseum.org) and learn more. Mahalo nui loa!”

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About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, the State of Hawai‘i Museum of Natural and Cultural History:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum's mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration, and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai'i and the Pacific. The Museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world's premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content.

Bishop Museum's vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over 2 million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and 1 million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai'i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years.

Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits.

To learn more about the Museum's research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit [BishopMuseum.org](https://www.bishopmuseum.org), follow @BishopMuseum on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), become a fan of Bishop Museum on [Facebook](#), visit Bishop Museum's [YouTube](#) channel, or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Bishop Museum is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer, and welcomes applicants from the military, veterans, and those with disabilities. Learn about careers at Bishop Museum at [BishopMuseum.org/Careers](https://www.bishopmuseum.org/Careers) and on its [LinkedIn](#) page.

[Bishop Museum Press](#) is Hawai'i's oldest book publisher and one of the first scholarly publishers in the Western Hemisphere, and has published over 1,200 titles and distributed over 1 million books in 72 countries worldwide.

Past news releases can be viewed and downloaded at BishopMuseum.org/NewsRoom.