

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

An App to Track Invasive Plants

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

There was a joke going around recently about how we have the collective knowledge of humanity accessible through a device that fits in our pocket, which we mainly use to look at pictures of cats. It's kind of amazing the frivolity that lies at the heart of most of our smart phone use. However, there are opportunities to use these tools to make this world a better place.

The folks down at the University of Georgia have developed an app that enables everyone with an iPhone to contribute to our collective knowledge about invasive exotic plants. These are plants that aren't native to an area and, lacking the natural controls of their homeland, have an incredible ability to propagate and spread, to the detriment of local natural communities.

The Southeast Early Detection Network app allows you to submit invasive plant sightings directly from your smartphone in the field. With this app you can submit a photo of your sighting and it cues in on your smartphone's GPS to note the location of the sighting. Your observation is uploaded to a database that includes sightings from across the Southeast. You can also use the app to pull-up real-time distribution maps centered on your location, and it offers species ID guides for the worst exotic invasive pests in the Southeast.

The app is available free at iTunes.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.