

Scott Sundberg

(1954-2004)

Oregon Botanist, Director of the Oregon Flora Project

Scott Donald Sundberg was born in Eugene Oregon, on February 10, 1954. He began his botanical career as an undergraduate at the University of Oregon, where his early scientific mentors included Prof. George Carroll and his wife, Fannie. During studies at the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest, Scott collected the type specimen of a rare lichen, *Nephroma occultum*. He became fascinated with plant taxonomy, and soon was conducting independent study projects in the University of Oregon Herbarium. Scott benefited from working with two herbarium curators: recently-retired Georgia Mason, and newly-hired David Wagner. After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1978 with a BSc (Honors) in Biology, Scott worked as a botanist for the Coos Bay District of the Bureau of Land Management for two years. During that period, he learned the flora of southwestern Oregon, made numerous noteworthy collections, and discovered new localities for many rare plant species.

In 1981 Scott moved to Austin, Texas, to begin graduate studies in botany at the University of Texas, under the direction of Prof. Billie Turner. Like almost of all of Turner's students, Scott turned his attention to the composite family and his dissertation for a PhD completed in 1986 was "The Systematics of *Aster* Subg. *Oxytripolium* (Compositae) and Historically Allied Species." Scott's taxonomic research in the Asteraceae continued throughout his career.

Scott met Linda Hardison in Austin and they were married in Jakarta, Indonesia on August 13, 1986. That year Scott began a one-year post-doctoral position at Ohio State University, working with Prof. Tod Steussy. In 1987 the couple returned to the Pacific Northwest as Linda began her PhD studies at the University of Washington. Over the next several years, Scott taught courses and conducted plant systematics research in the Department of Botany. From 1991-1994, he was a Botanical Consultant for Ebasco Environmental, Inc. in Bellevue, Washington, conducting rare plant surveys throughout Oregon and Washington.

In early 1994 Scott moved to Corvallis to oversee the integration of the University of Oregon and Oregon State University herbaria, and Linda joined him in 1996 after finishing her dissertation. Upon completion of the herbaria consolidation, Scott initiated the Oregon Flora Project, and in 1999, he was promoted to a Research Assistant Professor. The same year, Scott and Linda's son Matthew was born.

Scott's 29 scientific publications include taxonomic papers (descriptions of new species, nomenclatural changes, and new classifications), laboratory-based investigations in plant systematics, and treatments for checklists, field guides, and floras. The majority of his publications concern the composite family. In addition, he contributed numerous articles to the *Oregon Flora Newsletter*, where a complete list of his work was published.



Scott Sundberg, September 2004. Photo courtesy of Linda Hardison.

Scott devoted the last decade of his life to the Oregon Flora Project. As Coordinator, he directed over 230 volunteers and supervised several professional and over 60 student employees. He established the *Oregon Flora Newsletter*, the Oregon Vascular Plant Checklist, and the Oregon Plant Atlas. It is tragic that Scott did not live to see the completion of his dream: a comprehensive Flora for the approximately 4,500 taxa in Oregon. Although he had struggled for many years, most of them privately, with multiple sclerosis, it was cancer that led to his death on December 30, 2004. However, Scott's leadership created a strong foundation for continued growth of the Oregon Flora Project. The Flora will serve as an enduring legacy to his commitment to botanical education, and the documentation and conservation of Oregon's unique and diverse flora. Memorial gifts in his honor can be made to NPSO – Oregon Flora Project, and mailed to P.O. Box 402, Corvallis, OR 97339.

—Aaron Liston, Oregon State University Herbarium Director