



Using Apps to Help You Identify Plants and Animals

Three Popular Applications You Should Try

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[iNaturalist](#)

I enjoy using iNaturalist on the computer by uploading the photos I take to help me identify the insects, birds, and other animals I see in the hopes I can learn more. I've found that I can ask questions about how to better photograph a subject to have it be more easily identified by others. I also enjoy knowing that researchers can use what I'm seeing and entering on my account to better understand a species.



iNaturalist is an app that can be used on a computer or a phone that “helps you identify the plants and animals around you while generating data for science and conservation. Get connected with a community of millions of scientists and naturalists who can help you learn more about nature! What’s more, by recording and sharing your observations, you’ll create research-quality data for scientists working to better understand and protect nature. iNaturalist is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature.”

It's also a *crowdsourced species identification system* and an *organism occurrence recording tool*. You can use it to record your own observations, get help with identifications, collaborate with others to collect information for a common purpose, and access the observational data collected by iNaturalist users.

For instance, in 2019, a large number of painted lady butterflies migrated in many parts of the United States. Because so many of us logged our sightings, researchers were better able to track the migration route, the numbers of butterflies, and the plants they were seen nectaring on. The same kind of research has helped monarchs and many other animal species.

For anyone interested, here is the link to an [iNaturalist biodiversity impact webinar](#).

[Plantnet.org](#)

I use Plantnet.org to help me identify types of plants I see that are cultivated in gardens. I can then look online to find out more about its care and maintenance, and whether it's

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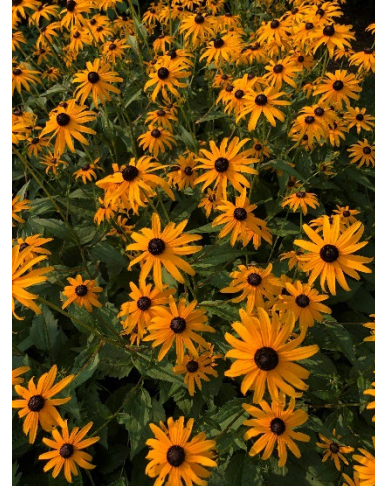


appropriate for my area. Plantnet.org is “a tool to help to identify plants with pictures. It is organized in different thematic and geographical floras. Choose the one that corresponds to your region or area of interest from the list below.”

[Google Lens](#)

One of the easiest and quickest apps I now use is on Google with Google Lens, which is described as “image recognition technology developed by Google, designed to bring up relevant information related to objects it identifies using visual analysis based on a neural network.” (Wikipedia) By

clicking on the  icon you can then input your image, and it tries to match your image to similar objects in its database. It’s not always accurate, but it is one more tool available to you. With any app, it’s important to remember that you might still double-check with another internet search to verify that the identity given is valid.



Based upon user preference and ease of use, you can access these apps on a computer or on your smartphones.

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