TREESNAP: A CITIZEN SCIENCE TOOL TO HELP OUR FORESTS

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Invasive diseases and pests threaten the health of forests worldwide. We created a mobile app available for iOS and Android, TreeSnap, which connects interested citizens with tree breeding and research programs to help fight these threats through both awareness and research. In the past, restoration tree breeding programs each had their own portals and requirements for submitting potential trees for inclusion in breeding programs. TreeSnap provides a unified submission gateway for citizen scientists to submit information to scientists that will meet their individual requirements. TreeSnap prompts users to take photos of trees and answer questions specified by each tree breeding programs. This information, along with GPS coordinates, is sent to the TreeSnap web database, where scientists can access it, curate, and follow up with users. Our goal is that scientists will gain data on trees to use in research programs while the public will become more engaged in and informed about forest health. Since its release in 2017, TreeSnap has attracted over 2,389 users and been used to record information about over 3,000 trees. Trees currently featured on TreeSnap with partnering research programs include American chestnut, American elm, ash, eastern larch, Florida torreya, hemlock, Pacific madrone, tanoak, and white oak.