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On the Cover

Plant identification is an essential skill for many environmental, agricultural, and veterinary science careers. Learning to identify plants involves not just memorization, but conceptual learning, as a taxon is a concept. The conceptual nature of taxa is demonstrated by the fact that species' definitions and names change over time. However, the large number of taxa to be mastered, variability within each taxon, and lack of student familiarity with plants engender low student motivation and make plant identification extraordinarily difficult to master. In this issue, Kirchoff, Delaney, Horton, and Dellinger-Johnston report the results of a controlled experimental test of a new method of teaching plant identification. The method uses a software implementation of the spacing, retrieval, and interleaving mechanisms for category learning as a way of developing visual expertise. The software presents multiple examples of plant taxa using standardized images so that the students cannot use extraneous cues to identify the plants. The software makes use of quizzes to teach students to discriminate among taxa. The study found that the software use improved final exam scores and produced better retention of plant identification skills. The cover shows photographs of *Quercus rubra* (Northern Red Oak), similar to those used in the software. Photographs by David Gallagher.