In Kentucky, there are 21 institutions with herbaria. These, with collections totaling over 10,000, are as follows: Univ. of Ky. Biology — 10,000; Univ. of Louisville — 10,000; Morehead State Univ. — 10,000; Univ. of Agriculture — 12,000; Eastern Ky. Univ. — 15,000; Murray State Univ. — 15,000; Western Ky. Univ. — 15,000; Northern Ky. Univ. — 15,000; Berea College — 15,000. Most collections are based on a survey conducted in 1960-61. The total number of specimens in Kentucky herbaria is roughly 215,000, and this total has been increasing at the rate of 1,000 per year for the last decade. These numbers are not quite as impressive as collections in adjoining states. For example, in 1969, there were over 500,000 specimens in Tennessee herbaria, and over one million in Ohio herbaria. It is obvious that there is much work to be done in Kentucky before this state is on a par with Tennessee, or neighboring states.

Do you know herbaria exist? They have numerous functions in the areas of teaching, research, and public service. A herbarium is used as a source of collected specimens for teaching taxonomy and general courses. Students, botanists, naturalists, and just anyone interested learning the identity of a particular plant, can use the facility. Those involved in the writing of floras and keys find herbaria invaluable. These collections are also used for information on specimen presence and distribution. Researchers doing geographic or ecological studies of various plants or groups of species herbaria provide data. Some herbaria are used to compile state checklists. The herbarium is, in reality, a great storehouse of information. It is in many ways like a museum, and each specimen is comparable to a book. Plant taxonomy enthusiasts show one another how much information is available from a single specimen — hundreds of bits of information, and it is therefore obvious why collections are being used more and more to handle these data. Might you find it fitting to compile some data begun in order to use the herbarium as a "textbook."