

The larkspur genus, *Delphinium*, is large (300+ species world wide) and California is one of the centers of diversity (the others are Asia and the Mediterranean) with approximately 45 species/subspecies. In the field and herbarium, larkspur species may exhibit much variation; therefore, identifying larkspurs has been notoriously difficult. Most current keys rely on root characters that require sacrificing the plant or cannot be seen on herbarium specimens. Other characters used to identify larkspurs are often minute, difficult to discern, and overlap among species. Delphiniums are also known to hybridize adding to the mess by blurring species boundaries. The use of molecular data may shed light on the nature of this group and may be helpful in developing better keys. However, relationships among the North American larkspurs are also not well resolved. With the upcoming revision of the Jepson Manual, I am attempting to make the *Delphinium* key easier to use and less reliant on single characters and those that are hard to assess in the field or from herbarium specimens. Will I be successful? You will be the judge and your input is welcome. I also hope to offer some hints and suggestions to ease discomfort when trying to identify larkspurs.