

11,000 Flat Plants Featured at SWOSU Seminar on April 1

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There are 11,000 plant specimens, some of them over 100 years old, that fill a small room in the Old Science Building on the Southwestern Oklahoma State University campus. A SWOSU assistant professor will talk about the herbaria this Wednesday, April 1, on the Weatherford campus.

Dr. Lisa Castle of the SWOSU Biological Sciences Department will lead the discussion at 4 p.m. in Room 212 of the Old Science Building. The talk is free, and the public is invited.

The collection of plants, officially known as the Western Oklahoma Herbarium, is mostly unknown, but it is the hope of the department to explain the importance of the plants.

Castle will explain what an herbarium is, why these collections of preserved plants have been associated with medical schools for over 400 years, and how pressed plants can be used to answer questions ranging from the effects of climate change to the search for new medicines. She will show specimens from the Western Oklahoma Collection and teach how to use the collection in conjunction with digital access to millions of other specimens. Audience members will have a chance to touch living history and will leave with the knowledge and tools to do so again and again.

“11,000 Flat Plants” is part of the SWOSU Biological Sciences Seminar Series.