

Keyword vs Subject Searching

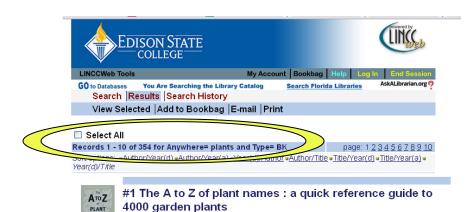
In the library's catalog, you have the choice to search by many different fields. This handout focuses on the difference between KEYWORD and SUBJECT searching.

KEYWORD searching uses keywords or words that relate to or are similar to the topic you're researching.

SUBJECT searching uses specific language used by librarians to place sources that relate to your topic in the catalog

Let's say you're researching native plants in Florida

You perform a KEYWORD search using "plants" as your KEYWORD

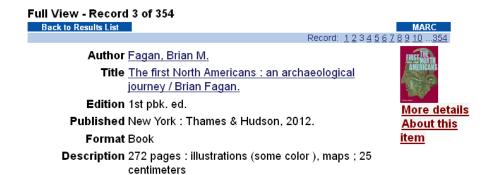


Here you can see that we get 354 results when we search Edison's catalog for "plants" and limit the format to books. 354 is a lot of books to go through!

Looking through your results you might notice that many of the books are not specifically about native plants or even specifically about plants!

Keyword vs Subject Searching

Let's look at a record to show you how KEYWORDS work



Notes Includes bibliographical references (p. 258-262) and

Contents Foundations. The earliest Americans; After Clovis;
The Far North: West to East; Foraging the west
Coast; Before the Pueblos; People of the Plains,
The Eastern Woodlands: nuts, native plants, and
earthworks
Apogee. The Far North: Norton, Dorset, and Thale;

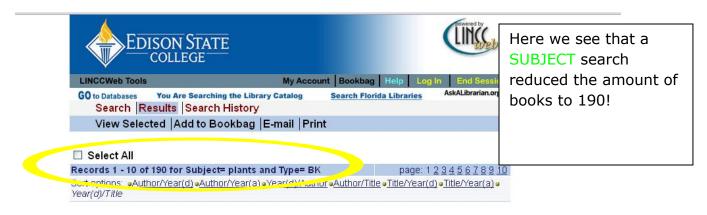
Apogee. The Far North: Norton, Dorset, and Thui The West coast: not a Garden of Eden; The Southwest: villages and pueblos; The Eastern Woodlands: moundbuilders; The Mississippian: Eastern Woodlands climax; The Northeast:

Algonquians and Iroquoians.

Series (Ancient peoples and places)

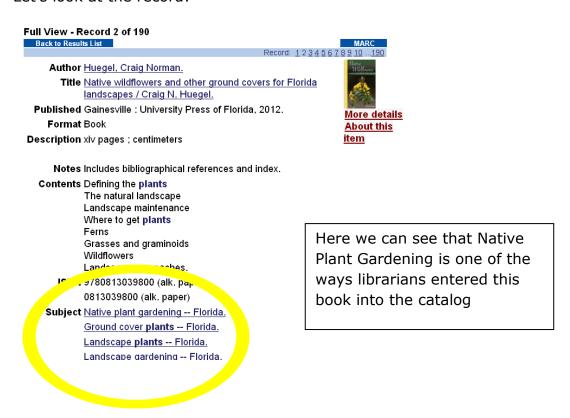
This book, The First North Americans: an archaeological journey is not specifically about plants but there is a chapter that mentions plants and that is why the word is highlighted in the record, and why this books comes up under a KEYWORD search for "plants"

Let's now look at what happens when you perform a SUBJECT search for "plants"



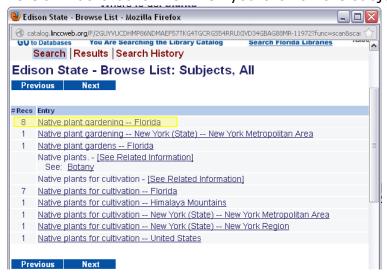
Keyword vs Subject Searching

The SUBJECT search for plants brought back the book: *Native Wildflowers and other Groundcovers for Florida Landscapes* which is exactly on our research topic. Let's look at the record:



Since we know that this book will be helpful, clicking on the blue linked subject headings will show us how many books Edison has in their collection that are on that subject

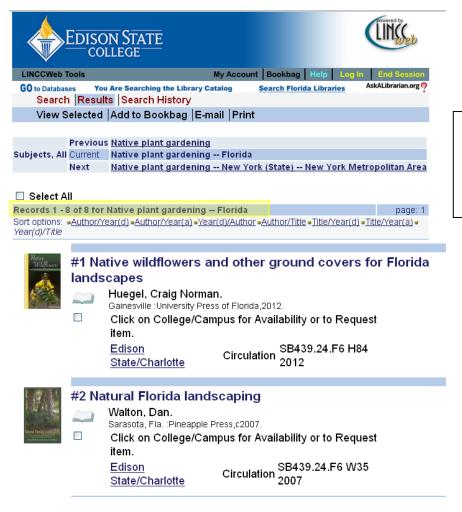
Here's what it looks like when you click on the subject heading:



This shows us a further break down of how many books Edison has on Native Plants

Keyword vs Subject Searching

Clicking on the subject heading next to the number then takes us to a catalog search results list like this:



So now you can see how SUBJECT searching allowed us to shrink 354 results to just 8 results

Use KEYWORD searches to bring back a wide variety of sources and SUBJECT searches to bring back a narrow list of specific results