The first part of any research project is to select a topic.

If it is a topic you are familiar with you should feel confident. If it is not, then you will need to do a bit of background work to become a bit more knowledgeable. A good place to get an overview of a topic might be an encyclopedia, either a general one or a subject specific one. Wikipedia is a good one for an overview of a topic. Notice that I did not say you were to cite it! Use it for an overview. (For information on Wikipedia’s accuracy, see: https://www.livescience.com/7946-wikipedia-accurate.html.) You can also Google your topic to see what is out there. Again, we are not citing anything yet!

As you are picking up information on your topic, be sure and note the following: scientific names for a plant or animal; synonyms for your topic; or other keywords that might be useful as searches are being run.

Now, create your search strategy. Put your topic in the form of a question or statement. Pull out the keywords from that statement or question. Put those keywords together:

(sustainability OR green) AND (college OR university) campus*

Finally, try out your search strategy using the search box on the Library home page, or one of the databases on the Forestry & Agriculture Research Guide.

If you are not locating enough resources, take what you have (especially the journal articles) and check out the list of references used by the article author. No one writes anything that is published in the scholarly literature on his or her own. They need other information resources to back up their claims. You can then find those.
How do I find an article when I have the citation?


With your citation in hand (including journal title, date, volume, page numbers, the article title, and author), follow the instructions below:

1. Use the Search Box on the library homepage (https://library.sfasu.edu/)
2. From the drop-down menu, select *Journals@Steen*
3. Enter the **journal** title (not the article title) into the search box and click Search.
4. On the list retrieved, find the exact journal title you need. The list is in alphabetical order.
   Below the journal title, review the list of databases.
5. Compare the **date** you need with the dates available listed with each database/publisher.
6. Choose the database or publisher that matches the **date** you need.
7. Follow the link to the appropriate database or journal. Then, select the year or volume needed. Next, look for the article title or page numbers you need.
8. If there is not an electronic match for your journal title and date:
   a. Look for a link that says “in *Stephen F. Austin State University's Print Holdings.*”
   b. Follow this link into the catalog and look at the dates of our holdings.
   c. If we have the year you need, note the call number and retrieve the journal.
      Current and older issues of the print journals are on the 3rd or 4th floor depending on the first letter of the call number:  A-N 4th;  P-Z 3rd
9. **The library does not have everything cited in our databases.** If you really need the article, or other research materials, and there is no access, use Interlibrary Loan off the QUICK LINKS list to request the item. The best part? It is FREE!!

Need more assistance in finding information? Contact your Liaison Librarian:

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