

**Introduction to Alaska's Flora**  
BIOL F195P F02  
Summer Session 2009

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The objective of this class is to introduce you to Alaska's unique flora. Lectures, laboratory sessions and local field trips are designed to familiarize students with the origins of our flora, plant morphology, using technical keys and other references for field plant identification. Another goal is that you will appreciate the function of, and become more comfortable with using, scientific names. Upon completion of this class, you should be able to recognize several common northern plant families and plant species native to interior Alaska.

**Credit:** 1

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Required text:** None. Handouts will be provided and reference books will be available throughout the course. Several books will be suggested as valuable but their purchase is optional. A hand lens or any hand-held magnifier will be very helpful in lab and for field trips (try Alaska Prospector's Supply on College Road). Bring a notebook for writing and drawing, and plastic bags if you wish to make your own collections in the field for identification in the lab.

**Location:** IRV I 103, central part of West Ridge, large lab in basement of Irving, watch for signs on the building. Parking behind the Museum or in front of IARC. Evening and weekend parking on campus does not require a parking permit!

**Course requirements:** Attend and participate in all lectures, field trips, and group discussions. Course grade will be Pass/Fail and dependent upon attendance of all lectures and field trips as well as the recognition of common plant families noted below. If you **know** you will miss any class time, consider auditing the course.

**Grading:** During our last afternoon together, students will be quizzed on the field recognition of at least 6 of the plant families introduced during the class.

**Class schedule:**

**June 4, Thursday**

Lecture, 6-9 pm (3 hours)

- Introductions
- Review of syllabus and references used in the course
- General plant morphology needed for identifying and describing plants

- Causes for the morphological variation observed in nature
- Exercise in creating and using technical keys
- Introduction to common plants encountered on campus

### **June 6, Saturday**

Lecture, 10-12 pm (2 hours)

- Origins of Alaska's flora
- Introduction to plant families: buttercups (Ranunculaceae), heaths (Ericaceae), peas (Fabaceae), birches (Betulaceae) and willows (Salicaceae)
- Use of keys for these families and those introduced previously

Field trip, 1-4 pm (3 hours),

Visit boreal, wetland, disturbed and rock bluff habitats on and near campus. Please, be prepared for the weather, mosquitoes, and walking on wet and undulating ground. Bring snacks, water, hand lens, notebook and collecting bags.

### **June 11, Thursday**

Lecture, 6-9 pm (3 hours)

- Review of morphology
- Introduction to plant families: mustards (Brassicaceae), roses (Rosaceae), and chickweeds (Caryophyllaceae)
- Practice using technical keys
- Introduction to more common plants encountered on campus

### **June 13, Saturday**

Lecture, 10-12 pm (2 hours)

- Quick review of previously introduced families
- Introduction to plant families: sunflowers/asters (Asteraceae), figworts (Scrophulariaceae), saxifrages (Saxifragaceae)
- Introduction to ferns and related groups, and common monocot families: grasses (Poaceae), sedges (Cyperaceae), rushes (Juncaceae), lilies (Liliaceae) and orchids (Orchidaceae)
- Use of keys for these families and those introduced previously

Field trip, 1-4 pm (3 hours)

Visit mid-to high elevation site near town to access sub-alpine habitats.

- Class field quiz: recognition of 6 or more plant families, notebooks can be consulted for family determinations.

Again, please be prepared for the weather, mosquitoes, and walking on wet and undulating ground. Bring snacks, water, hand lens, notebook and collecting bags.