

Local Flora - BOT 3151C (3 credits) – Fall 2025
Meeting times: Thursdays periods 3 - 6 (9:35 AM - 1:40 PM)
Carr Hall 611, in the field, or behind Bartram-Carr halls (see schedule on last page)

Dr. Christine Davis (she/her)

Email: christine.davis@ufl.edu

Office hours: By appointment

Description:

Local flora is a fun, field intensive course in which you'll be introduced to local Florida plant communities and ecosystems and learn to identify the plants within them. Students may come to the class having had no previous botany background. Local flora requires students to master some basic botanical concepts in order to do well. If you are a beginner, don't worry! All the botany you need to know will be taught as we go along. If you are more advanced, you will still find the course challenging. We make every effort to make the course valuable to everyone.

Learning outcomes - by the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Identify ~100-130 species of local plants using morphological and habitat clues.
- 2) Develop a systematic approach to identifying an unknown plant using knowledge about plant diversity, habitat, and vegetative morphology.
- 3) Identify unknown plants using a dichotomous key along with text and web resources.
- 4) Discuss and describe connections between plant species and the local ecosystems in which they are found.

Optional but recommended materials:

- A hand lens
- A pair of pruning shears (available at hardware and gardening stores)
- Wunderlin, R. P. and Hansen, B.F. 2011. Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida, 3rd Edition. University Press of Florida, Gainesville

Your course grades will be determined based on:

1) 3 field trip quizzes @60 pts each	180 points
2) 2 key exercises @15 points each	30
3) Attendance	<u>60</u>
	270 points

Description of the components of your grade:

1) Field trip quizzes. These quizzes test your knowledge of the plant species we've learned on field trips. For each quiz, you will be asked to identify on site and/or find examples of 20 of these species we've learned. Quizzes will be given at a field site and will be given in two parts: 1) individual work, and 2) teamwork. For the individual part, you'll be asked to identify a species and write its scientific name down. For the team part, I'll assign teams of 2-3 to venture off to work together; each team of two will be randomly assigned a set of species to find together. Each team will hand in their own set of specimens assigned and will be given an individual grade. Students will not be permitted to use notes or electronic devices to complete the quiz.

Each field trip quiz is cumulative. Only Latin binomial plant names will be accepted: Correct genus name = 2 pts, correct species (genus name plus specific epithet) = 3pts. No credit will be given for common names.

2) Key exercises. These exercises will take place in the classroom. You'll work within a group to identify an unknown species of plant using a provided dichotomous key. You'll also be given a set of known plants and asked to construct a dichotomous key to identify them.

3) Attendance. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class each week, starting on the second week of class. Attendance points cannot be made up.

Field trips:

We will visit several different types of plant communities and habitats. We will study the local plant life right in the places where the plants grow, and you will learn basic techniques of field botany. On these field trips, you'll collect and learn to identify the plants upon which you'll be quizzed and observe the characteristics of their communities. You'll have a lot of fun seeing other creatures, too.

- Bring to the field trips - Clippers and bags for collecting plants in places where we are permitted to collect, clipboard or notebook, water to drink, and snacks/lunch. Smartphones taking photos.
- Specimen collection – **Where permitted** on our field trips, each student will be encouraged to collect a small specimen of each plant species we cover to use as a study aid. You should bring clippers or scissors and a bag for specimens (a plastic grocery bag will do) with you. Masking tape for labeling plant specimens may also be useful.
- Dress appropriately - Wear long pants and old shoes. Sandals are not recommended. Be prepared for normal Florida conditions (i.e. heat, sun, mosquitoes, poison ivy, rattlesnakes, ticks, rain, alligators, etc.) and expect sometimes to get your feet wet. Field trips will not be canceled due to weather.

Academic Policies:

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#). (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

Course schedule – I will notify you as soon as possible if changes to the course schedule are necessary.

Meeting	Agenda	Meeting place	Homework assigned:
Aug 21	Introduction I: background for understanding our local flora	Carr 611 @9:35	
Aug 28	Introduction II: how to read a plant's vegetative characteristics	Carr 611 @9:35	
Sep 4	Field trip 1: Natural Areas Teaching Labs (NATL)	NATL @10:00	
Sep 11	Field trip 2: Alfred Ring Park	Alfred Ring Park @10:00	
Sep 18	Introduction III: how to read a plant's reproductive characteristics Key exercise 1	Carr 611 @9:35	Review for field quiz 1
Sep 25	Field quiz 1: Alfred Ring Park	Alfred Ring Park @10:00	
Oct 2	Field trip 3: Prairie Creek Preserve	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35	
Oct 9	Field trip 4: Austin Cary	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35	Review for field quiz 2
Oct 16	Field quiz 2: Austin Cary	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35	
Oct 23	NO CLASS – Dr. Davis is traveling		
Oct 30	Field trip 5: San Felasco State Park	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35	
Nov 6	Field trip 6: Gold Head Branch	Behind Bartram Carr @8:00 am	
Nov 13	Key exercise 2	Carr 611	Review for Field quiz 3
Nov 20	Field quiz 3: San Felasco State Park	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35	