

Local Flora - BOT 3151C (3 credits) – Spring 2026
Meeting times: Thursdays periods 3 - 6 (9:35 AM - 1:40 PM)
Rolfs Hall 105, in the field, or behind Bartram-Carr halls (see schedule)

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 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)
- A clipboard
- A plastic bag for collecting plants (the kind you put your items in at the grocery store is fine)
- 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

Grading scale:

90 – 100% = A; 80 – 89.9% = B; 70 – 79.9% C; 60 – 69.9% D; below 60 = E

See also the [University of Florida's Grades and Grading Policies](#) page.

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. Attendance taken will be used to tabulate the attendance portion of your grade (presence = 1/absence = 0). Each student is allowed one "free" absence on a "life happens" excuse. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#)

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 for 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.

Make up policy:

Due to the unique constraints of a field course, field trips and field quizzes **CANNOT** be made up. Alternative arrangements to earn credit are possible in instances of legitimately **documented** and excused absences.

Absences that may be excused are at Dr. Davis's discretion - **do not assume** you will escape a zero for a missed field quiz or key exercise.

Academic Policies:

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, [please see this link](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/). (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 and time (am)
Jan 15	Introduction I: background for understanding our local flora	Rolfs 105 @9:35
Jan 22	Introduction II: how to read a plant's vegetative characteristics	Rolfs 105 @9:35
Jan 29	Field trip 1: Prairie Creek Preserve	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.
Feb 5	Field trip 2: Austin Cary Forest	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.
Feb 12	Key exercise 1 Introduction III: how to read a plant's reproductive characteristics	Rolfs 105 @10:30
Feb 19	Field quiz 1: Austin Cary Forest	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.
Feb 26	Field trip 3: Suwannee River	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.
Mar 5	Field trip 4: NATL	NATL @10:00
Mar 12 and 20	NO CLASS – Dr. Davis traveling, Spring break	
Mar 26	Field quiz 2: NATL	NATL @10:00
Apr 2	Field trip 5: Withlacoochee Gulf Preserve	Behind Bartram Carr @8:00 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.
Apr 9	Key exercise 2 Review	Rolfs 105 @10:30
Apr 16	Field quiz 3: TBD	Behind Bartram Carr @9:35 - Students must travel in the class van unless other arrangements are made ahead of time.