

Plant Observation Exercise

Choose a plant to examine and describe the following characteristics:

- **Leaf characteristics:**

1. Does this plant have leaves? If so, draw a detailed sketch of a leaf, and be sure to include veins, shape, edge of leaf (margin), etc. (if there are any leaves present):

- **Stem/trunk characteristics:**

2. How many stems or trunks does your plant have? (1, more than 3, more than 5, etc.) _____
3. Is the stem smooth, rough, or other (describe)? _____
4. Does the stem have thorns? _____
5. Sketch the stem or trunk (base of the plant):

- **Habitat**

6. What sort of habitat is this plant growing in? Is it growing near the creek, on the hillside, in the sun or in the shade? Please describe:

- **Ecological Function**

7. What is this plant's role in its ecosystem (i.e., does this plant provide food, shelter, nesting materials, etc.)? How do you think different animals and insects might use this plant?

Sketch the plant that you just described. Try to include enough detail that you would be able to use this sketch to find this plant 1 year from now.

Based on the characteristics that you just observed, imagine you are a botanist who just discovered this new plant species, what do you want to name it?