

## The Yerba Mansa Project: How to Create Your Entry for the Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Field Guide on iNaturalist



The Yerba Mansa Project: <http://yerbamansaproject.org>

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1. **Sign up for a plant** that no one else has already selected. You can sign up by entering your information on the Google document called **MRGVeg\_Sign up.xlsx**, located here: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TEJRPnNLCzcMHjFAc\\_ZDrQPHTt16HY7wZket-7xewoE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TEJRPnNLCzcMHjFAc_ZDrQPHTt16HY7wZket-7xewoE/edit?usp=sharing). Please enter the student's full name, school or organization, the date, teacher's name, and email.
2. **Try to find your selected plant in the wild or in a garden.** A good way to start is by looking up some photos online or in a book to see what your particular species looks like. When you are ready to search, you may look in the Bosque, the Rio Grande Nature Center's outdoor educational gardens, or the Botanical Gardens at the BioPark. Some plants may be difficult or impossible to find and that is OK. This process will help you to understand if your plant is common or not. Hopefully you will have a fun time during these adventures and don't worry if you can't visit these places. It's not required. If your group signs up for 10 or more plants you can request a guided plant walk/natural history walk in the Tingley Beach Bosque with the Yerba Mansa Project Director and Education Outreach Coordinator. There are also transportation grant opportunities for classrooms of 25 or more students.
3. If you get to observe your living plant, **take lots of photos.** Take different kinds of photos that show all the parts of the plant as well as the whole plant. People will want to see things like the leaf shape, flower, bark, and structure of the plant so that they have several clues to identify it. Make sure your photos are clearly focused and that your subject fills the space of the photo. If you are unable to locate your plant to take your own photos, iNaturalist will supply one for you when you upload your report. If you find your plant, but it is winter and it looks dead or dormant, take photos anyway. This will help people to identify it at any time of year. You can also come back in the spring or summer to take more photos and add them to your field guide entry at a later time.
4. If you would like to **make a plant sketch**, that is great! Sketches can offer details that are difficult to see in photos. The act of making a plant sketch will also help you to remember the details of your plant so that you can easily identify it again in the future. A great collection of plant sketches and an excellent book for identifying plants is *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* by Robert DeWitt Ivey.

5. **Do some research on your plant and write a report.** Find out about its various common names in both English and Spanish, its botanical characteristics, favored habitat, what it contributes to the local ecology or wildlife, and how it might be useful to people as food, medicine, building materials, or in artistry. Include any botanical, ecological, or ethnobotanical information you think is interesting and make sure to include your references so that readers know your information is good. You may also like to find a map or make a map that shows the range of this plant or create your own map. Save or scan this image so that you can include it in your iNaturalist entry.

6. **Create your entry on our iNaturalist Guide.** I have made an entry in our guide as an example to you—its Yerba Mansa. You can see that example and the others in our guide here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/2071>. Here's how to create your own:

A. Go to the iNaturalist website and create your account:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/guides>

B. Please notify us at the contact information listed at the top of this document as soon as you have created your account. We need to know your iNaturalist user name so that we can add you as an editor to the field guide. You will not be able to start your own entry until we add you as an editor.

C. Find our guide called *Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque* and click on the title to begin. You can take a look at my entry for Yerba Mansa to get an idea of what you can do with your own entry. Click on the *Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque* link at the top left of the page to return to the main guide and begin creating your own entry.

D. Click the Edit button at the top right of the page.

E. Click the blue Add Taxa button at the top center of the page. Type the name of your plant and select the species from the drop down menu. Click the blue Add Taxa button.

F. Click on the blue link for your plant in the field guide listing.

G. iNaturalist provides a photo for you. You may keep this one or delete it if you have your own to add. Click the green Upload Photos button to add your own photos or scanned drawings. Please add captions that describe the part of the plant, the season, or other relevant information. The first photo should be your best one because it will be the only image seen on the main field guide page showing all of the plants.

H. In the Description Sections below, you can begin adding your textual information.

In the Summary box, type one or two sentences that summarize your plant. In the Edit Body section immediately below you can add your research report. Simply select or highlight all of the text that is already there and replace it with your entire report. Next click the green Add Section button and type in your name (first names are fine if you do not like to include your full name), school or organization, and your grade.

I. If you have a map to show the range of your plant click the green Upload Range button. Add the relevant information in the fields.

J. Next add some tags to your entry so that all of the plants in our guide will be nicely organized and searchable. Tags are important to make our guide usable for

people. Remember that we will have several hundred listings over time and it will be difficult for anyone to find what they are looking for if we do not have tags to organize the listings into searchable groups. Important tags include the color of the flower and whether it is a tree, grass, shrub, or an herbaceous plant. You can also tag the plant as a perennial or annual. To add a flower color tag you must do it like this: color=white. Your listing of tags might look like this: color=white, perennial, herbaceous, groundcover, medicinal.

- K. When you are done adding your images and text click the blue Save Taxon button at the bottom left of the page.
- L. Review your entry and see if you made any mistakes, forgot anything, or want to make any changes. When you are on the main listing of all entries for our guide, click the grey Save button on the lower left side of the page. Please DO NOT make any changes to existing information added by others.

7. When your entry is complete, make sure to **let us know** so we can check it out. Our emails are listed at the top of this document. We may provide some suggestions or edits for you to complete. This will help you to do your best work and also to create a field guide that is top quality and useful to plant enthusiasts and scientists alike.

Thanks for participating in the Yerba Mansa Project. You are leaving a lasting gift to our community through habitat restoration and in creating this field guide so that others can learn to appreciate the Rio Grande Bosque. You can download the free iNaturalist app to your phone and begin using this awesome field guide while you are hiking in the Bosque.

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