

## Field Guide Instructions, Part 1: How to Create Your Entry for the Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Field Guide

The Yerba Mansa Project: [yerbamansaproject.org](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 your full name, school or organization, the date, your email, your parent or teacher's name, and their email.

2. **Do some research on your plant and write a report\***. Use your plant's scientific and common name to search for information on your plant using resources you find both online and at the library. We have provided a list of Resources for Further Exploration and Lesson Planning you may want to start with on the Students + Educators page on our website. Make sure to write down the bibliographic information for each book, website, etc. you use! Find out about your plant's various common names in both English and Spanish, its botanical characteristics (height, stem, leaf shape, flower, etc.), 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.

3. **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 it 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.

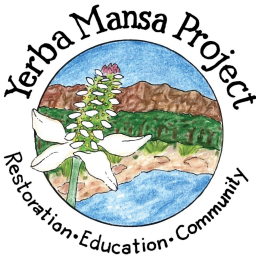
4. If you get to observe your living plant, **take lots of photos**. Take different kinds of photos that show all the parts of the plant as well as the whole plant. People will want to see things like the leaf shape, flower, bark, and structure of the plant so that they have several clues to identify 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, the iNaturalist website will supply one for you. 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.

5. 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.

**6. Upload your entry on our iNaturalist Guide.** Now that you have your plant report and any photos, range maps, and/or plant sketches ready, follow the instructions in *Part 2: How to Upload Your Field Guide Entry to iNaturalist* to publish your work!

**\*Suggested Resources:** For a list of resources to get you started on your research, please visit the Students + Educators page on our website and look for *Resources for Further Exploration and Lesson Planning*.



## Field Guide Instructions, Part 2: How to Upload Your Field Guide Entry to iNaturalist

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1. **Create your entry on our iNaturalist Guide.** We have made an entry in our guide as an example for 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>, then click on SignUp and fill in your information.
- B. Email us 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 the 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. Note: at this point, please make sure to edit your entry only! Do not edit information on other plants or accidentally click on the red X's to delete our existing entries!
- 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 plant sketch. Alternatively, click the grey Import Photos button to view additional iNaturalist photos that you can use. 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. Your entry should have at least two or more photos that are in clear focus and show multiple aspects of the plant including the whole plant, leaf shape, flower, seed, or other unique features. You can use a combination of your  
own  
photos and select additional ones offered by iNaturalist, if you like.
- 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

(see entry for Yerba Mansa for an example). 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, including your references and your name/age/school at the end. (First names are fine if you do not like to include your full name.)

- I. In the Ranges section below, add a range map for your plant by clicking the Import Ranges button and selecting the NatureServe map that shows the United States. (Most plants have a NatureServe map. If yours does not, you can try to find another US map and upload it or you can leave it blank.)
- J. Next add some tags to your entry so that all of the plants in our guide will be nicely organized and searchable and easier to use. Remember that we will have several hundred guide entries 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. Aim to have at least 6 tag words for your entry. The tags should describe the prominent features someone would notice about a plant they are looking at in nature. For example, whether a plant is flowering or has berries, flower color, whether it is prickly, shiny, hairy, etc. Also include whether your plant is a tree, grass, shrub, or an herbaceous plant, whether it is perennial or annual, and whether it is native or non-native, exotic.  
All tag words must be lower case and singular (e.g. red berry or thorn). To add a flower color tag you must type it like this: color=white. Your listing of tags might look like this: color=white, perennial, herbaceous, groundcover, medicinal, native.
- 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.

2. 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.