



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

The Yerba Mansa Project: yerbamansaproject.org

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Background: The Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Field Guide is a work in progress, representing the effort of Albuquerque-area students coming together to produce a free online resource for anyone wishing to learn more about the plants that are found in our local ecosystem. We appreciate your efforts on this assignment and hope you have fun and learn something neat about plants. Please take a moment to visit the Field Guide (see link) and check out some of the entries that Albuquerque students have already contributed. Be sure to check back as select entries from your class will be added to this amazing community resource! (<https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/2071>)

Create Your Plant Entry:

1. **Open** the Plant Sign Up Sheet (see link). **Select a plant** that no one else has already researched. **Sign up** for your selected plant by entering your full name, school or organization, age and grade, the date, and your teacher's name and email in the columns. (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TEJRPnNLCzcMHjFAC_ZDrQPHTt16HY7wZket-7xewoE/edit#gid=1476665152)

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. You may want to start with our Resources for Further Exploration and Lesson Planning document (see link) for a list of books and credible websites to use. Make sure to write down the bibliographic information for each book, website, etc. you use and include those references in your report so that readers know your information is good! (<https://yerbamansaproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Resources.docx.pdf>)

For your plant report, try to include information **in your own words** on the following characteristics of your plant:

- **Botanical:** height, stem, leaf shape, flower, etc. Be sure to mention it's scientific and common names in English and any other languages you'd like to include.
- **Ecological:** favored habitat conditions and what it contributes to the local ecology or wildlife.
- **Ethnobotanical:** how it might be useful to people as food, medicine, building materials, or in artistry.
- **Your choice!** Feel free to include anything that you found interesting about your plant.

Add a 1-3 sentence summary statement about your plant at the beginning of your report and your reference list at the end.

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 several 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 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. If you aren't able to find your plant, consider making a plant sketch (see below). Be sure to email us your photos along with your plant report.

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. Plant sketches can be done using a live plant or by looking at photos of your plant in a book or on the internet. A great collection of plant sketches and an excellent book for identifying plants is *Flowering Plants of New Mexico* by Robert DeWitt Ivey. Be sure to include your first name, age, and school somewhere on your sketch and either scan and email it with your report or turn it in during our field trip together.

6. **Email your complete work to shannon@yerbamansaproject.org.** Include any photos and/or plant sketches you may have done, or bring them with you to turn in at our field trip together. We will read through your entry to check for completeness, accuracy, and that it includes credible references. Outstanding entries will be selected and uploaded by us to the online field guide, and it may even appear in a printed version showcasing the work of Albuquerque's students.

Thank you for participating in the Yerba Mansa Project! You are leaving a lasting gift to our community by contributing to this field guide so that others can learn to appreciate the plants of the Rio Grande Bosque. You can download the free iNaturalist app to your phone and begin using this awesome field guide while walking in your neighborhood or hiking in the Bosque.