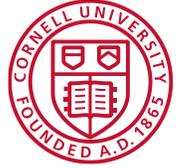


Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Garden-Based Learning



Plant Biology FAQs

Q: What is an inflorescence?

A: The inflorescence of a plant is all parts of a flower structure, including but not limited to flowers and bracts. See this Cornell University fact sheet for more information on botany terminology <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/f/575/files/2015/12/fact-sheet-botany-language-156ysah.pdf>

Q: Botanical Latin is difficult to remember! Do I really need to use it as a Master Gardener?

A: Yes! It makes life easier for Master Gardener Volunteers to use the two-part, Latin name when discussing a plant species. One common name may be used for many different species and many species have several different common names. While common names are often useful to know alongside the two-part name, they should always be accompanied by the two-part name.

Q: What's the difference between *Acer saccharum* and *Acer saccharinum*?

A: This is a tricky one! Both species are very common, so it is worth knowing the difference. *Acer saccharum* is sugar maple. *Acer saccharinum* is silver maple.

Q: How might plant families be useful for a Master Gardener Volunteer?

A: Occasionally, volunteers are asked to identify plant species in the lab or in the field. Knowing some of the major characteristics of some of the families can be helpful for getting started on accurate identification. For example, species in the *Asteraceae* family have the shared characteristics of an inflorescence that is a head with many tiny bracts and flowers, which lack sepals. Knowing these shared characteristics can make your life easier when asked to identify species. Look at this helpful list from Rutgers' Lena Struwe of 50 common plant families: <https://cornell.box.com/s/1d6pp2e41clyru6d5ske4w7brwujkmo8>

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Q: Does every species in a plant family share these identifying characteristics?

A: On occasion, a species may have a characteristic that diverges from a typical characteristic in its family. This happens very infrequently.



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