

Plant Morphology: Keys for Grassland Plant Identification

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Plant groups

Grasses:

Hollow stems

Slender leaf blades

Flowers not showy

*Note: sedges and rushes
are grass-like but not
actually grasses*



Broad-leaved plants:

Large, broad leaves

Showy flowers

Forbs

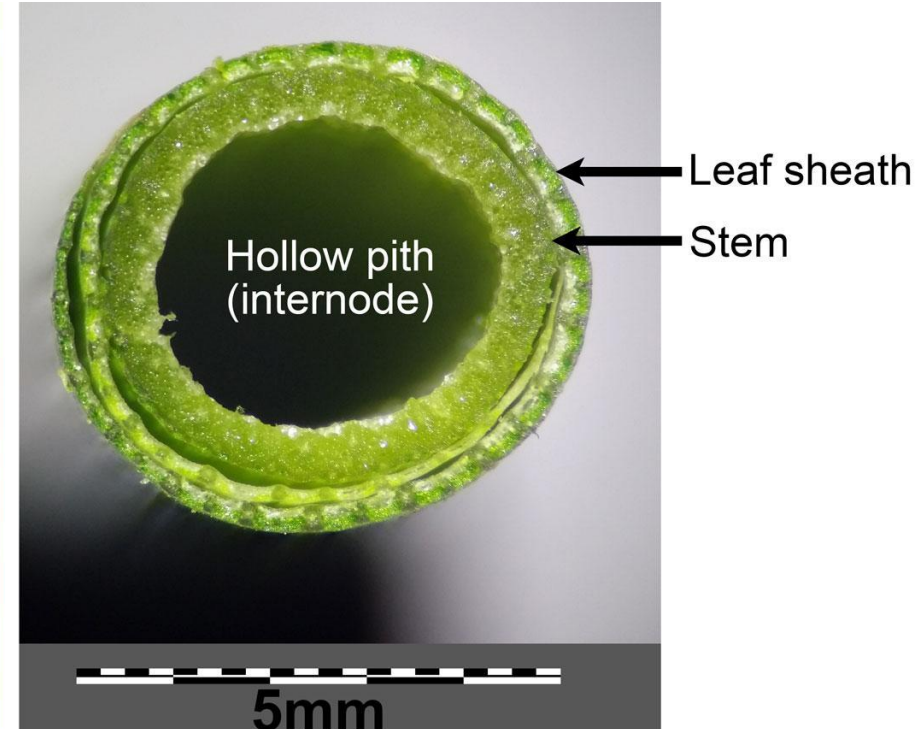
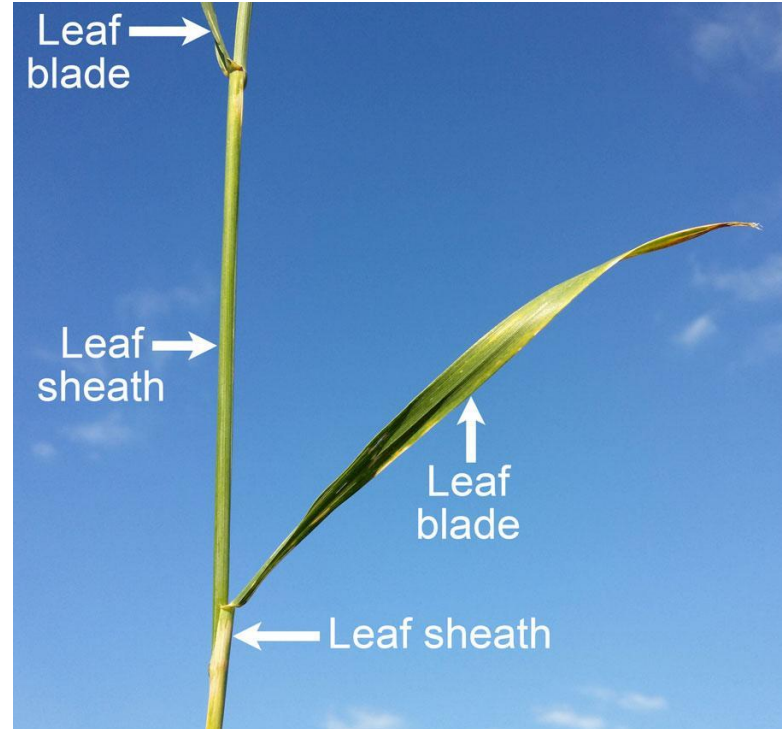
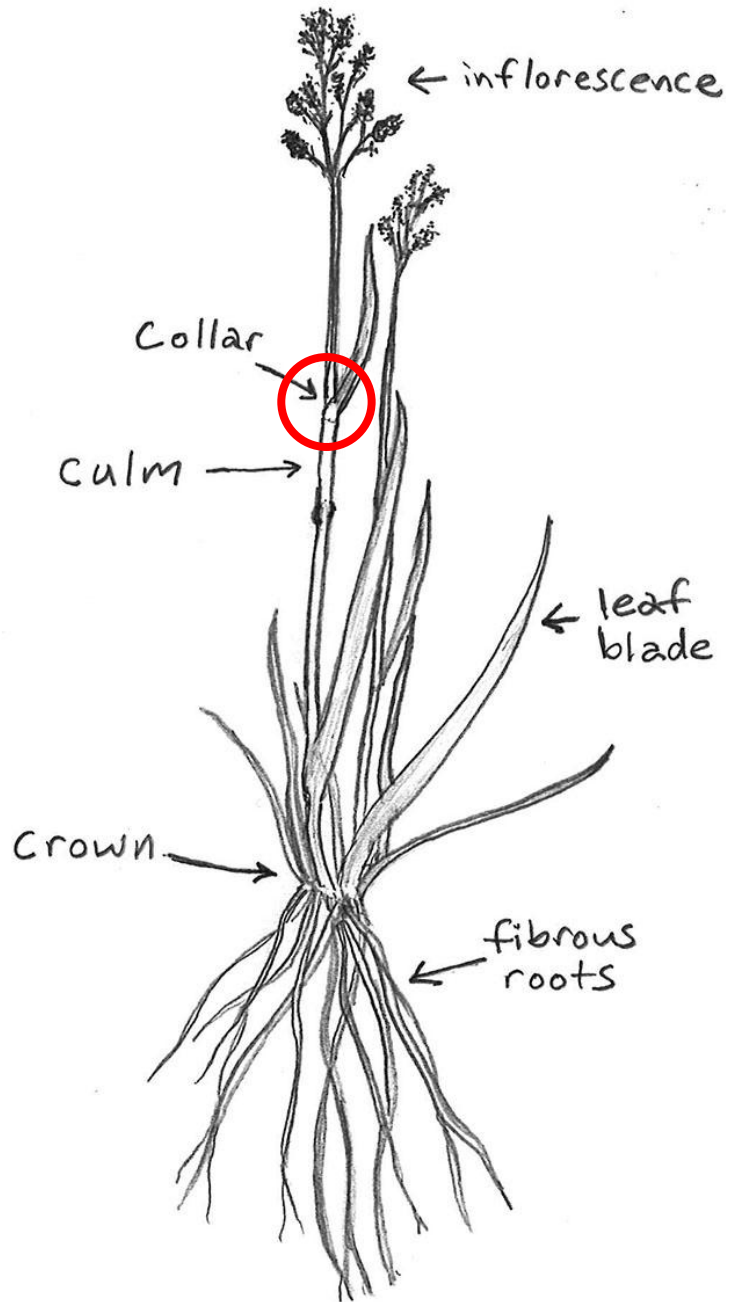
Legumes

Shrubs

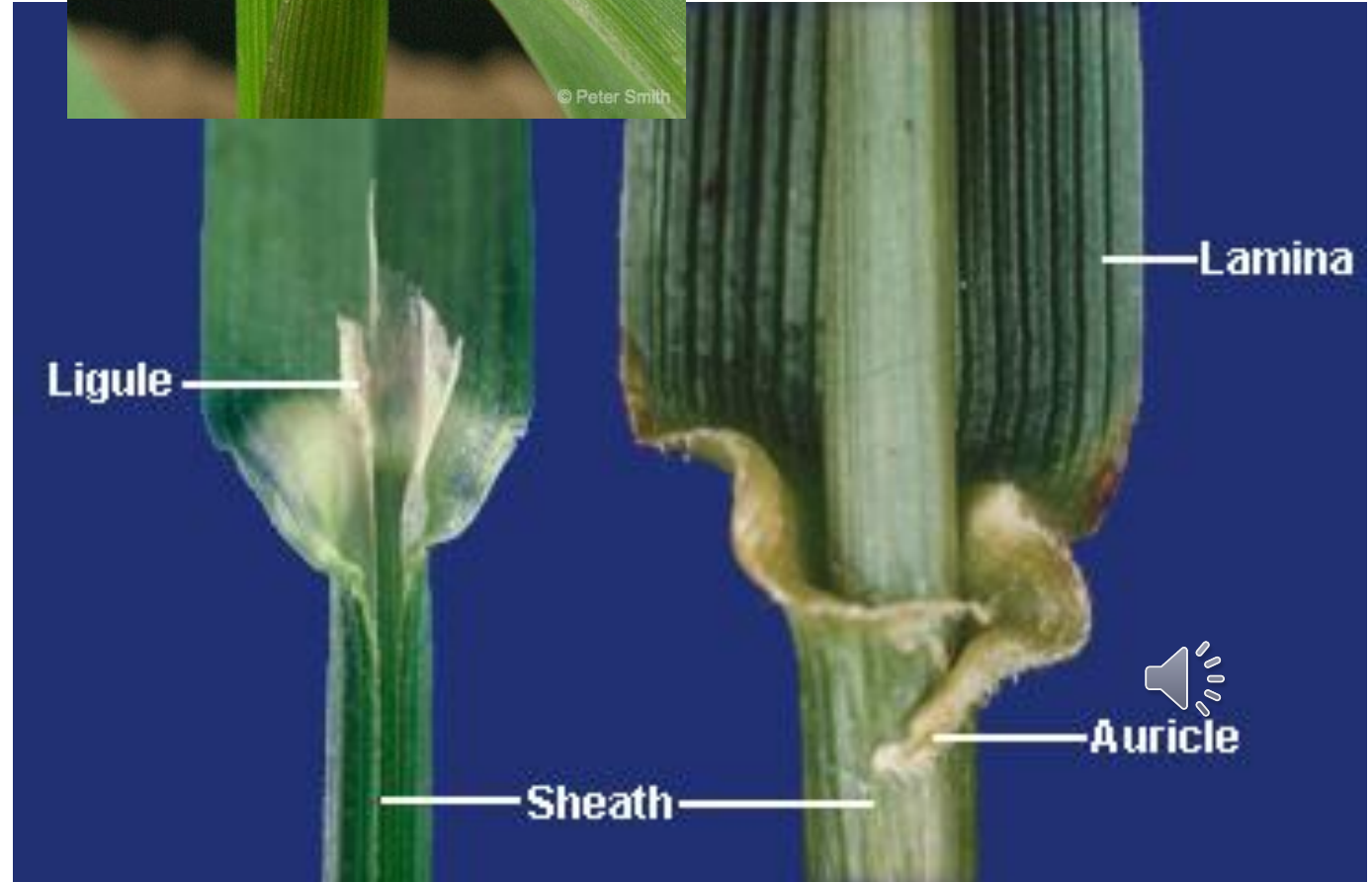
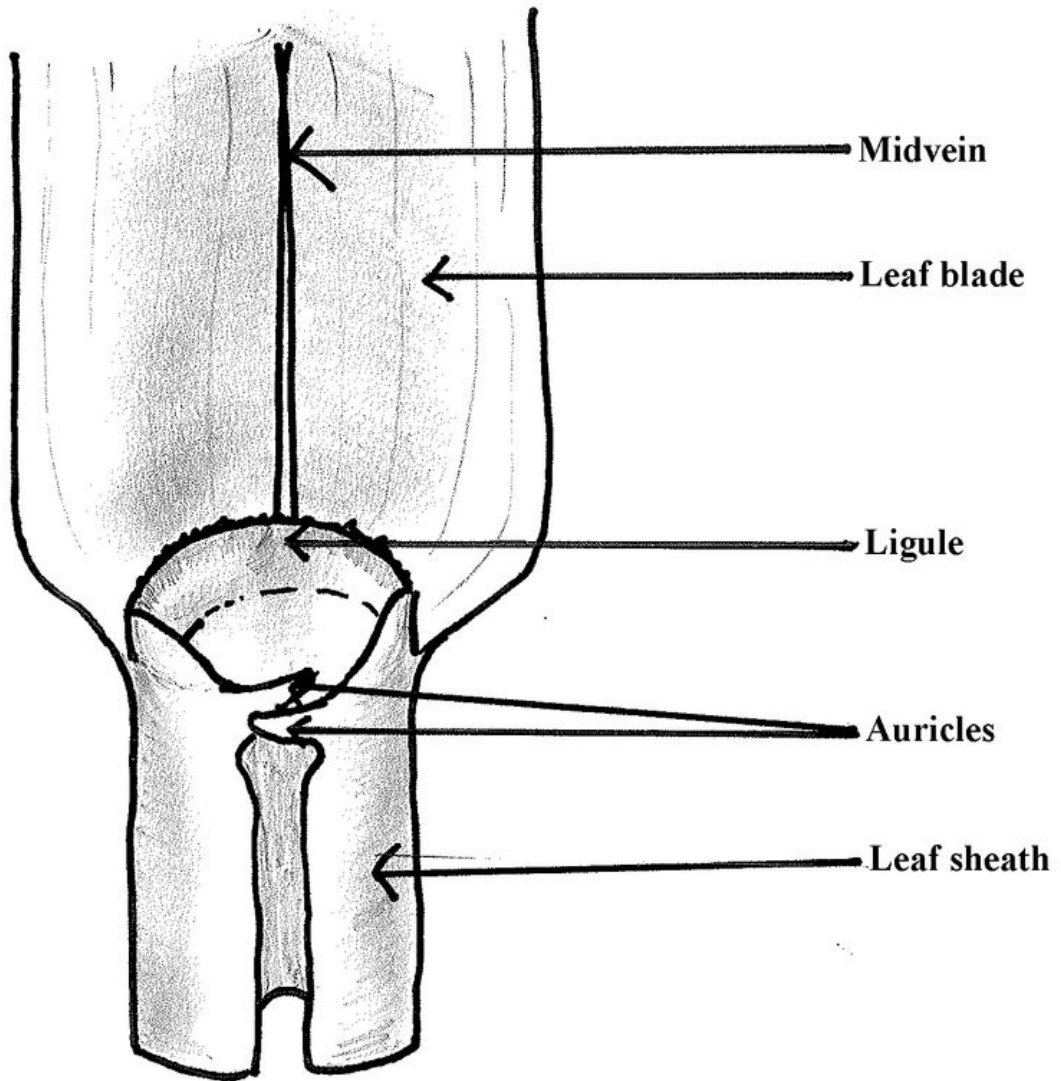
Trees



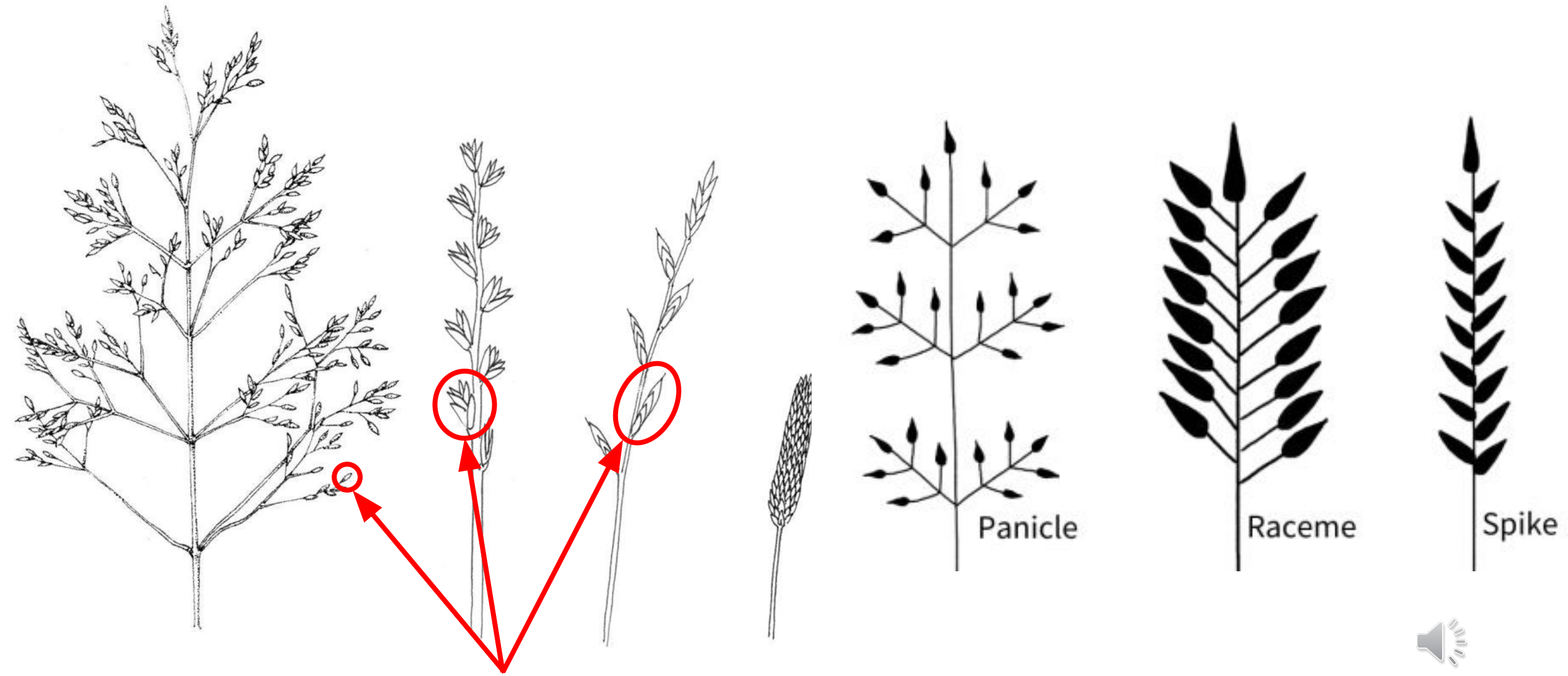
Grass identification



Collar area



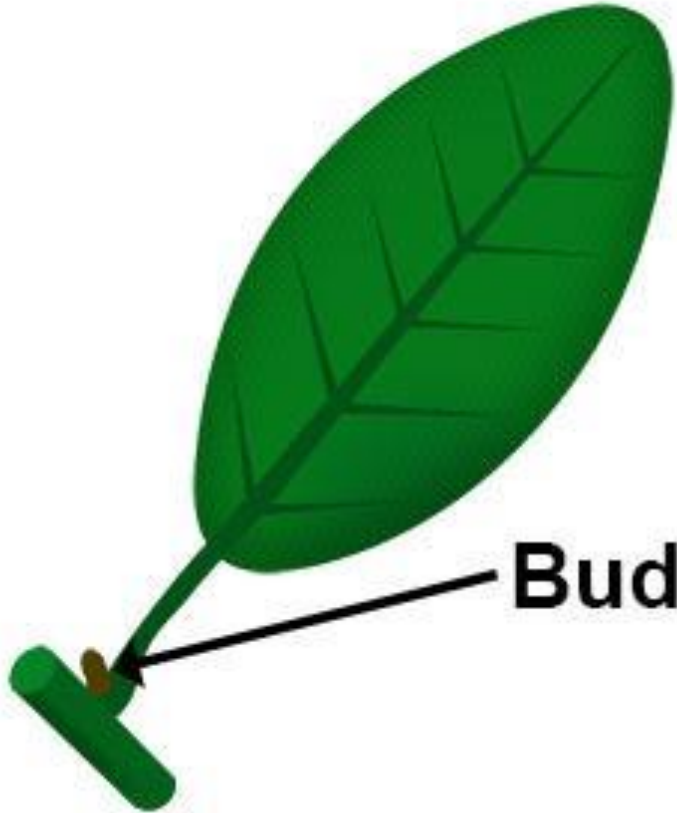
Inflorescences



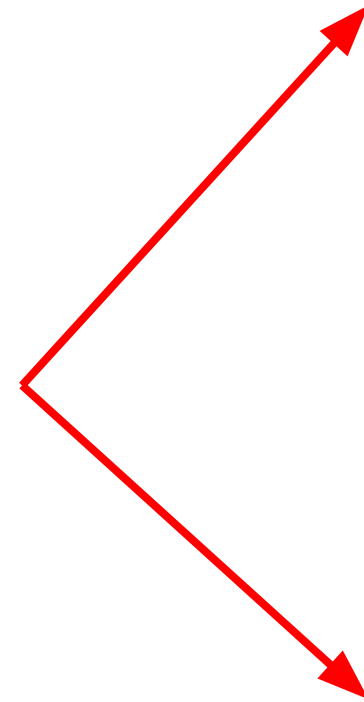
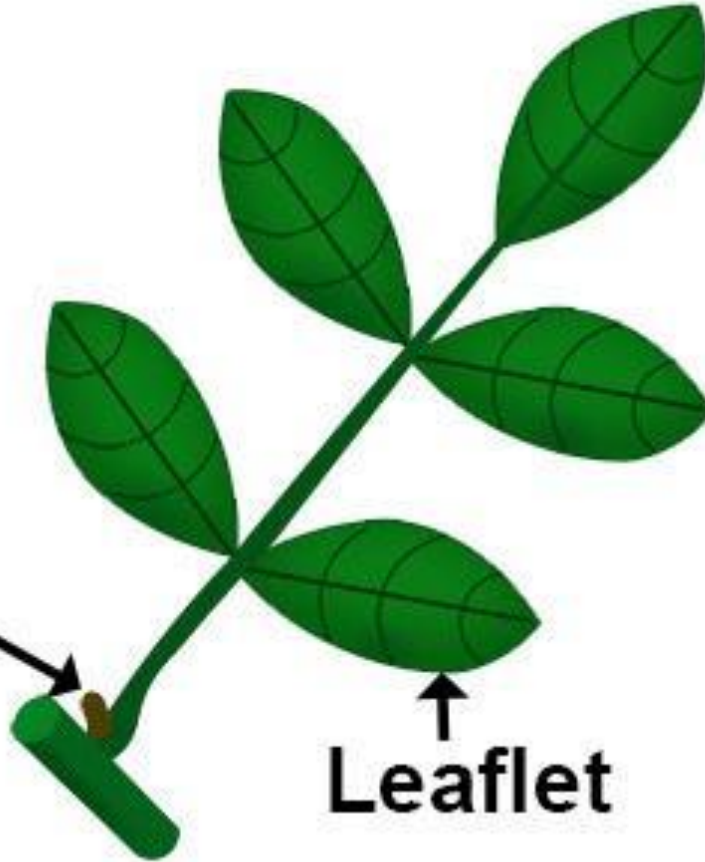
Spikelet = flowering unit of grasses

Leaf types

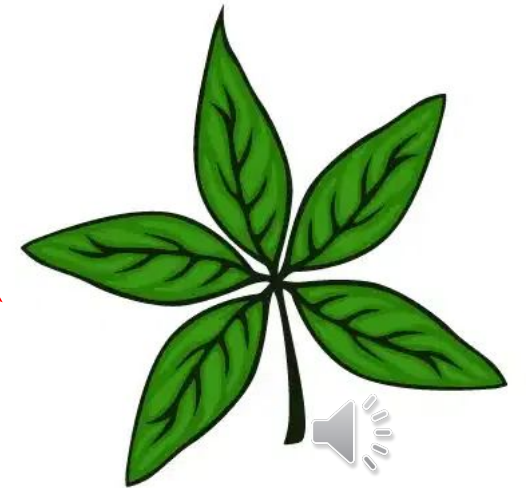
Simple Leaf



Compound Leaf

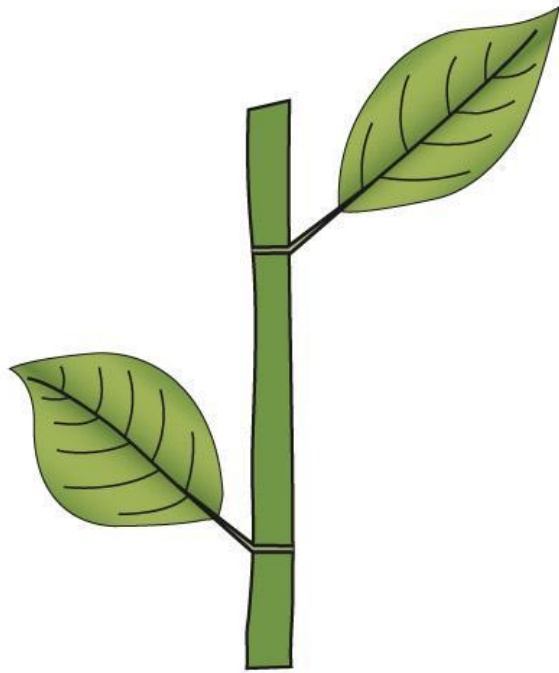


Pinnately

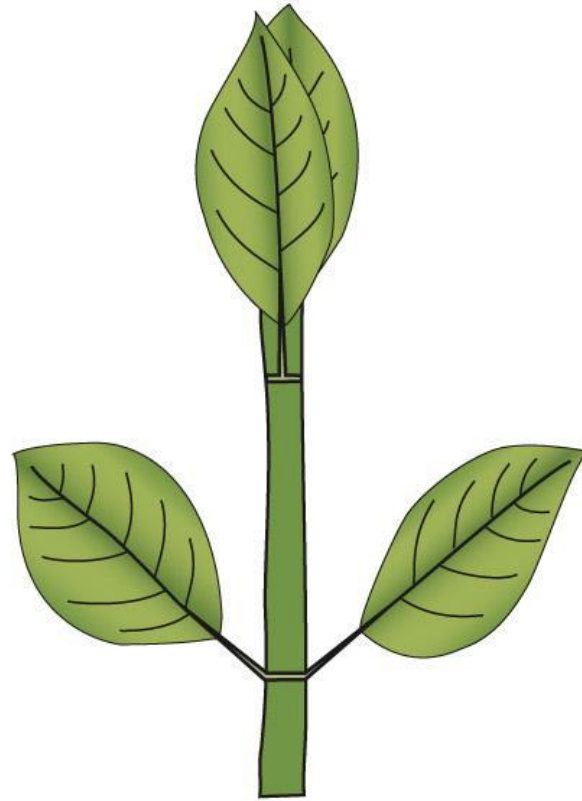


Palmately

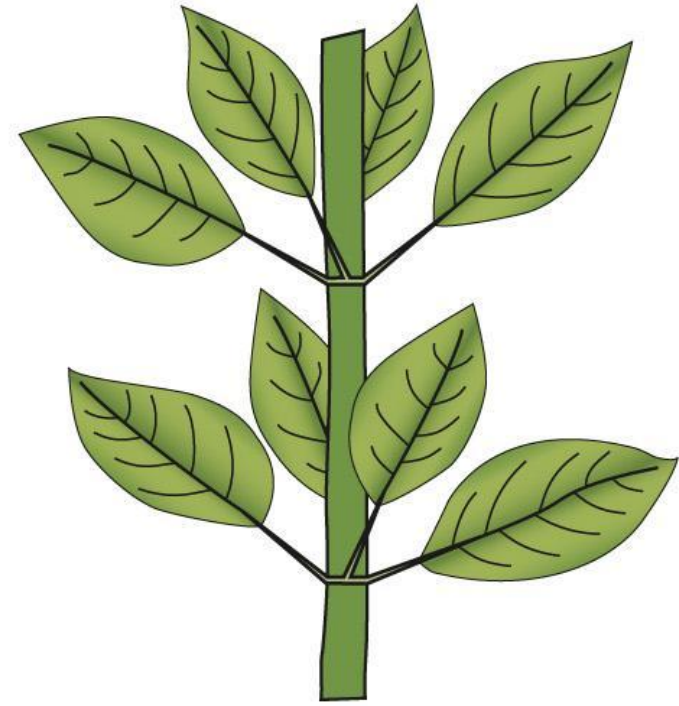
Leaf arrangement



Alternate
(1 leaf/node)



Opposite
(2 leaves/node,
placed on opposite
sides of the stem)



Whorled
(3 or more
leaves/node)



Leaf shapes



linear



lanceolate



oblong



elliptical



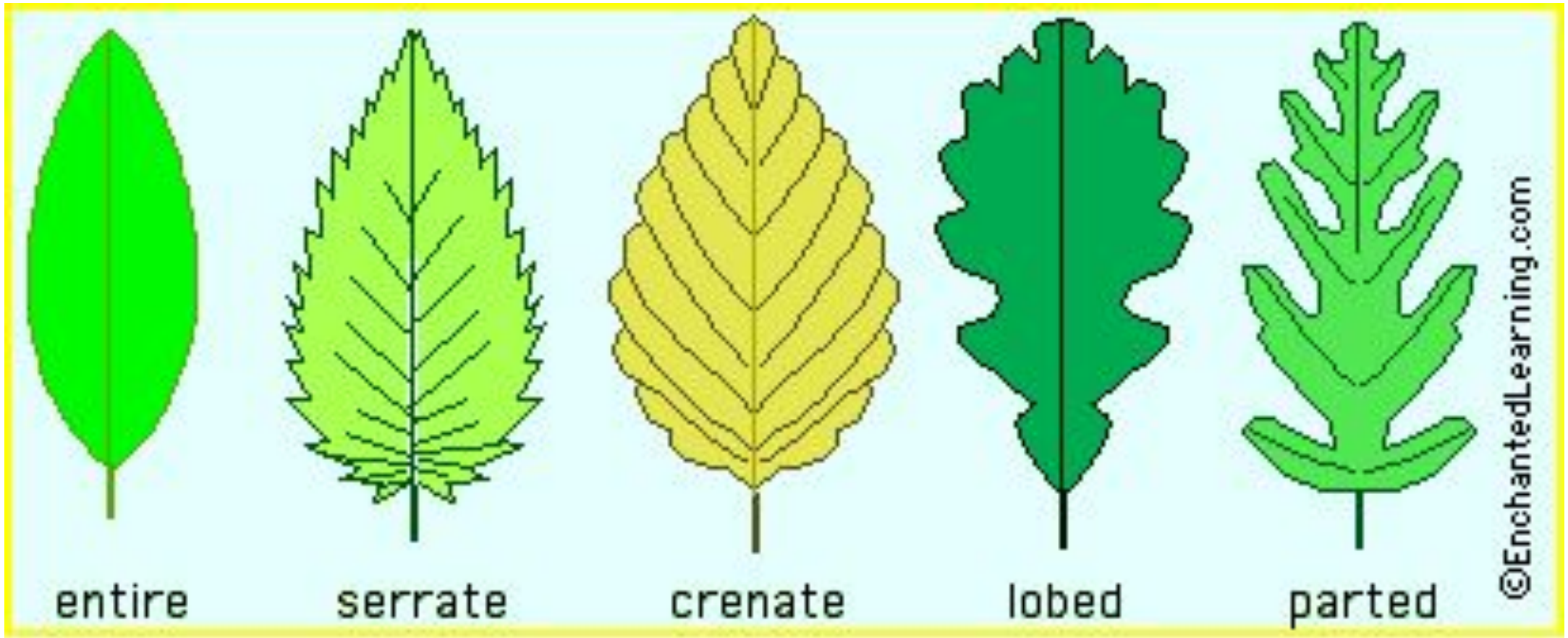
ovate



cordate



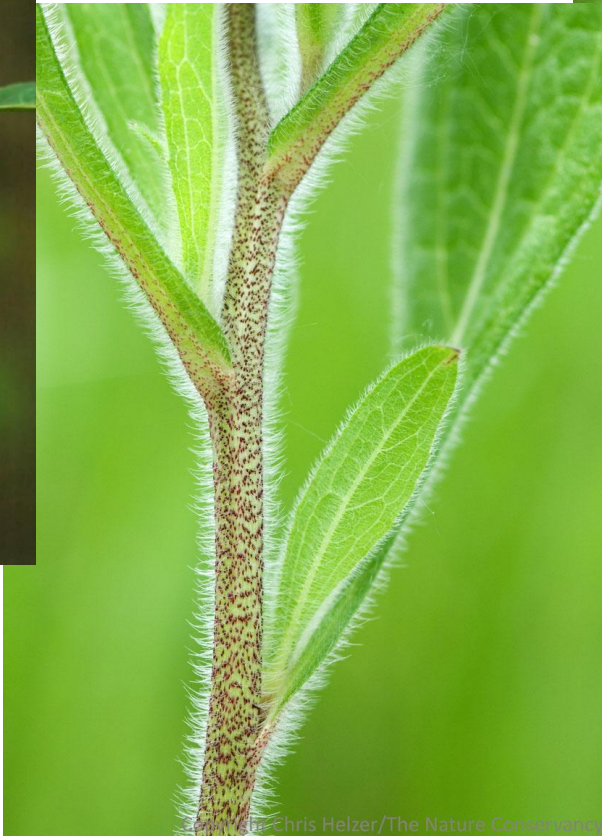
Leaf edges (margins)



Stem and leaf texture



Smooth



Hairy



Prickly

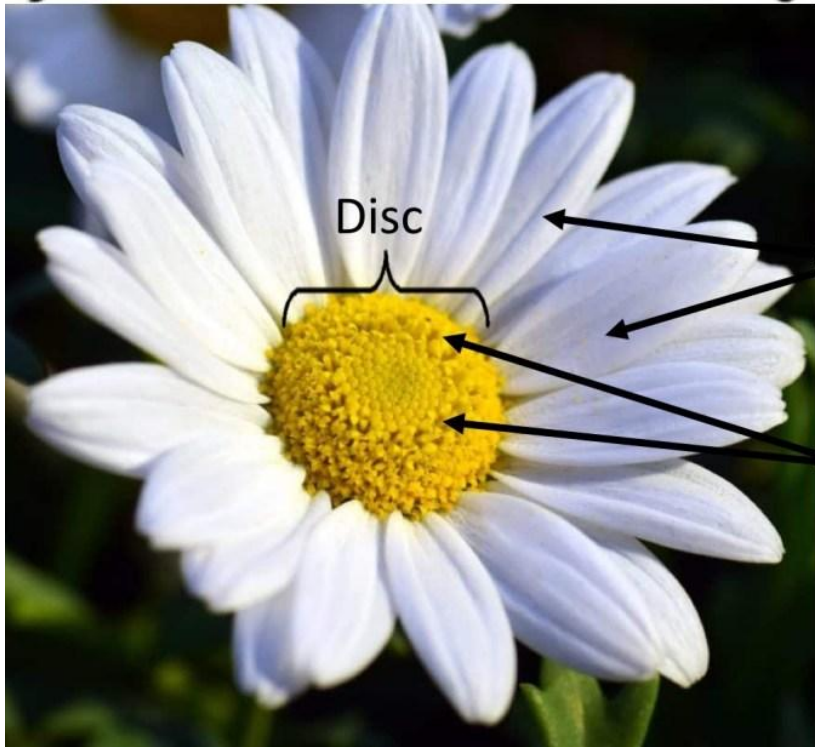


Square



Flowering structure

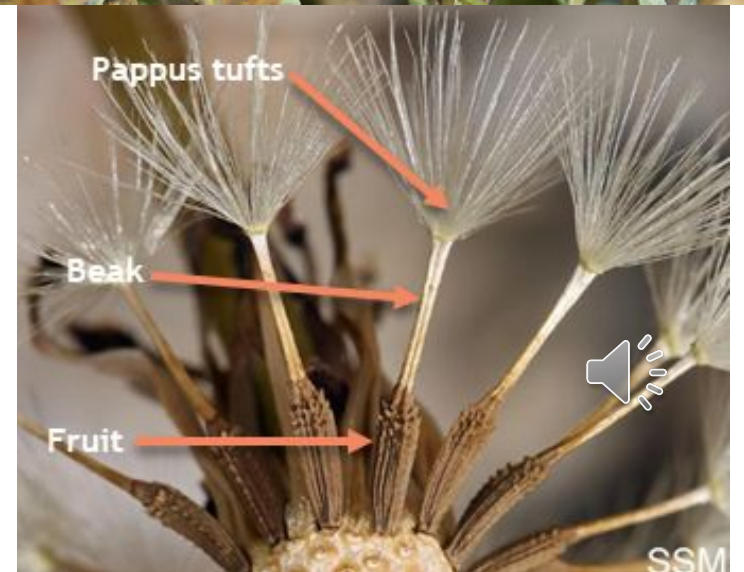
Capitulum or flower head



Disc

Ray flowers

Disc flowers



Additional resources

- This post in the biodiversity blog provides more information on leaves
 - <https://biodiversity.utexas.edu/news/entry/leaves>

