

## LESSON 1 – ASSIGNMENT

### PLANT REVIEW WORKSHEETS

With each assignment you will be required to prepare plant reviews. Each plant should be named, described and illustrated.

**As part of each assignment for this course you will be required to prepare TEN different plant reviews per assignment. A sample worksheet is included in the following pages (each worksheet holds two plants).**

#### **A TOTAL OF NINETY DIFFERENT PLANT REVIEWS WILL BE SUBMITTED OVER THE NINE LESSONS**

#### **Naming the plant**

Include the common name, scientific name; and the plant family name if possible.

If you cannot provide one of these, write a note to the tutor explaining that you attempted to find the information and why you could not.

Your tutor will often be able to help at least partly identify the odd unidentified plant; if you submit an illustration and good description (ideally presenting not only a leaf, but also a flower, fruit or seed head),

#### **Describing the plant**

You should record any information that might be important to selecting and using this plant for a landscape design eg.

- Height: how high can it grow in your locality?
- Width: how wide can it grow in your locality?
- Flowers: what colour and when does it flower?
- Leaf colour, shape, texture. What colour are the leaves when mature? Are the leaves round, feathery, lobed - spiky? Are the leaves fine or coarse textured?
- Scent: are the flowers scented?
- Animal attraction: does the plant attract birds, butterflies, bees? If so what part of the plant (flower or fruit)?
- Hardiness: is it frost tender? How does the wind affect it?
- Culture: are there any special things the plant requires? How hard should it be pruned and how often? Does it need good drainage? How often should it be fertilised etc?
- Pests and Diseases: list any pests and diseases that are particularly bad for this plant.
- Maintenance: are there any maintenance requirements for the plant such as pruning or raking fallen leaves in winter?

*Write approximately up to half a page for each plant.*

#### **Illustrating the plant**

This may be done any of the following ways:

a/ Submit a photograph or drawing of parts of the plant

b/ Send a scan of a photograph or drawing (do not send large graphics files over the internet.

Consult your student manual for details)

c/ Refer to a web site page location where you have found the plant illustrated on the internet.

d/ Submit a photograph of a pressed specimen (Note: do not send pressed specimens across state or national borders. To do so may be illegal and in breach of quarantine regulations).

ACS has a website that contains a plant directory you can access this site on

[www.acsgarden.com](http://www.acsgarden.com) there are many more sites that also have plant directories you might use.

## **A PRESSED PLANT COLLECTION CAN HELP**

You may decide to also collect and press specimens of plants.

While it is both difficult and may be illegal to send plants to us through the post (due to quarantine regulations); it can be a useful exercise for you to collect and label pressed specimens of plants. (Note: this is not a compulsory task – do not submit these pressings).

It is a well recognised fact (by most horticultural professionals) that the more you handle plants, the more you are able to identify them.

Plant specimens consisting of a few leaves and perhaps a flower or fruit can be preserved for hundreds of years by a simple technique known as "pressing". There are many ways of pressing a plant as outlined below (some being more permanent than others).

All basically involved the same general procedure:

- The plant specimen is laid out flat on a sheet of absorbent material such as newspaper.
- A second sheet is placed on top of the plant.
- The plant sandwiched between these two sheets is then placed in a situation where pressure can be applied squeezing all the liquid from the plant tissue (eg. placed between or in heavy books such as phone books, or placed in a plant press).
- Changing the paper frequently will speed up the drying process, and help reduce the likelihood of your specimens going mouldy. After a period of time anything from a week to several months, the plant can be removed and attached to a sheet of paper or card (ie. mounted).
- The mounted specimen should be stored in a dry situation if it is to be preserved for any length of time.

If you are having problems pressing your plants, or would like further information contact the school and ask us to send out a copy of the booklet 'Pressing Plants'.

## EXAMPLE OF A PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

Plant No. 1.

Plant Family.....	Sketch Or Photo
Species.....	
Genus.....	
Common Name.....	
How and Where to Plant it.....	
Height.....                  Spacing.....	
Hardiness .....	
Appearance .....	
Uses .....	
Culture .....	
Pest and Disease .....	

Plant No. 2.

Plant Family.....	Sketch Or Photo
Species.....	
Genus.....	
Common Name.....	
How and Where to Plant it.....	
Height.....                  Spacing.....	
Hardiness .....	
Appearance .....	
Uses .....	
Culture .....	
Pest and Disease .....	

**NOTE: This is a sample only! Change it as needed to suit your situation.**

**ASSIGNMENT**

1. What are the critical distinguishing characteristics of the three main groups of Australian flora (ie. Sclerophyll, Indo Malesian and Antarctic rainforest). Submit approx ½ page.

2. Visit a nursery that sells native plants. Note how many different genera in each of the following families are for sale in that nursery: Myrtaceae, Proteaceae, Fabaceae, Rutaceae, Rubiaceae, Sapindaceae.

Example: Myrtaceae they are selling Eucalyptus, Tristania and Agonis.

If you are in a very isolated area and cannot get to a nursery you may write for a catalogue, or visit a nursery web site and list from their catalogue what genera are represented in that nursery's stock.

List a minimum of 30 different species.

3. Select 5 plant families not yet looked at in this lesson and list what genera are found in those families. (Use any reference books you have access to including the schools online library).

4. Submit a list of nurseries and seed suppliers who you have been able to obtain price lists or catalogues from.

5. Comment on the value (ie. accuracy and application) of different resources, including: books, herbaria, botanical keys, journals and botanic gardens/collections. (Write no more than half a page of comments).

6. Prepare a table or chart comparing fifteen plant families studied in this lesson, such as: Asteraceae, Caesalpiaceae, Casuarinaceae, Epacridaceae, Poaceae, Mimosaceae, etc. Indicate at least one characteristic for each family which distinguishes it from the other fourteen plant families. Also provide a brief comparative culture statement.

EXAMPLE:

FAMILY	IDENTIFICATION	CULTURE
Myrtaceae	Oil glands on leaves	Often adaptable to variety of soils
Proteaceae		
Rutaceae		
.....etc		

Note: For this lesson and all future lessons:

All plants are to be written with the botanical name. Common names are optional. The best way to write plant names in your assignments is to write the botanical name first and common name in brackets afterwards, eg. *Eucalyptus ficifolia* (Red Flowering Gum)

**DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR PLANT COLLECTION (10 plants in total)**