

University College of the North

Natural Resources Management Technology Program

Summer Plant Collection

Questions & Answers

A list of commonly asked questions and answers has been compiled for you. The aim of this is to assist you, and relieve some of the stress associated with this project.

If your question is not answered, please feel free to contact me. Over the summer the best way is via email, mleclaire@ucn.ca (Mitch Leclaire).

1. Am I expected to have all 15-plants collected, identified, pressed and on herbarium sheets ready to submit when I arrive in Fall?

Answer: Working in the Lab with your new classmates will be a good time to meet them as you help each other identify plants. The more you have done the better, but don't be stressed because you have been unable to identify a few plants on your own.

At a minimum have 10-plants collected and pressed. It is suggested that you collect and press more than one specimen for each plant. This will enable you to have multiple specimens in case one is missing (or not showing) an identifying feature.

(see Question 10).

2. I am terrible at drawing! Do I really need to draw each plant?

Yes, it is the best way to learn the plant. I encourage you to sketch the plant a "museum quality" drawing is not needed, however, the drawing should be better than what a Grade 2 student would create.

For me, please don't feel the need to spend a lot of time sketching the plant. There are no extra marks for your artistic ability. But, for your own interest and learning you may want to invest some time drawing the plant, and labeling important features.

Photos you take, are acceptable, though the educational benefit is often missed when going this "easy" route (see Question 8).

Images, whether they be drawings, or photos, may be discounted if of poor quality.

3. Do I really need to collect five aquatic plants? My feet might get wet!

Yes, you really do need to collect **five** aquatic plants your feet might get wet? Get used to it.

Aquatic plants is a broad category so there is little reason for not collecting a minimum of five.

4. Can I collect mushrooms?

No. Mushrooms are not considered plants, they are fungi.

5. Do the roots really need to be collected?

I make allowances for this. For instance, I don't expect you to include the root of pond lily, but would expect the root of Canada Bunchberry to be included. A rule of thumb is that if the root is huge or very difficult to obtain then I don't expect you to collect it.

6. Can I collect trees for my plant collection?

No. That will be left for the following year. I will permit the collection of a few shrubs such as red osier dogwood, Saskatoon berry, and high-bush cranberry. Willows (*Salix* species) are very difficult to identify so it's best to avoid them.

Except for trees, just about every plant in the text book can be used for this collection. So there is a wide array of available plants. However, some plants such as mosses are difficult to press, so they aren't recommended. (also, see Question 8).

7. If I provide the UTM coordinates or a GPS location (or legal description, etc.) which provide an exact location of where I found the plant, do I still need to provide a "written" location?

Yes. Be able to direct me (or anyone else) with clear written directions to find the location of where you found the plant. To be considered "clear written directions" usually means a starting point and ending point are needed, and be understood by someone other than yourself. It's a good idea to bounce your directions off your classmate (someone not familiar with the area you collected the plant).

For instance: Unacceptable

--Grandma's backyard, Inwood.
--Just north of The Pas.

Acceptable

--234 Smith Avenue, Inwood, Manitoba.
--100m east of the point 10km north on Hwy 10
from the Saskatchewan River Bridge, The Pas,
MB.

We will go over many more examples in class. Be prepared, and don't be surprised if I ask you for more details. We can go over the reasoning for this as well.

8. Other than the five aquatic plants, are there any other requirements? In addition to the aquatics can I collect 7-grasses and fulfill the assignment successfully?

Yes, and No. You can collect 7 grasses and fulfill the "marking" requirements of the assignment successfully. However, you would be missing out on the true value of this assignment.

There is a very strong correlation between the effort invested in this assignment and the final grade for the course. Simply, those students that put minimal effort into the collection tend to struggle with the course. Those that take short-cuts may still receive a "good mark" on their collection but miss out on valuable learning that would have helped them later.

Those students that invest effort and time on the collection tend to better comprehend the

concepts that are discussed later in the course as well as in other courses. One of the ways to get the most out of this assignment is to collect a wide variety of plants. For example, collect a plant from a shady location in a conifer forest; one from beneath an aspen forest; another from a full-sun location in a meadow; another from a dry, sandy location; another from a damp soil site, etc. this will expose you to many different plant habitats. Later in the course when we discuss which plants inhabit certain areas, and not others, you will have an advantage. In similar fashion, the student that pays attention to detail (ie. Giving clear directions; takes time to provide accurate habitat description; labels distinguishing features, etc.) will reap benefits in the future.

9. When providing the description of the plant can I just copy it out of the text? Or internet? Etc. (see Question 8). No, it is not recommended. It's best if you use the text as a guide and write the description in your own words, so you can understand the description. This is an opportunity for you to learn botanical terms, so also include them alongside your own description.

10. If I am not expected to have the plant collection completed by beginning of term, when is it due?

The exact due date hasn't been set yet. Specimens will be submitted one at a time to allow students to improve the quality of each new submission as you receive feedback on the last specimen submitted.

It may appear to you that there is ample time, and there is to a certain degree, but this is an assignment that can't be done the night before it's due! (see Question 8).