



Leaf and Stem Terminology

Leaf: Primary site of photosynthesis; anything below the bud is a leaf.

Blade: Flattened, expanded portion of the leaf; lamina

Petiole: leaf stalk

Winged petiole: bearing flattened lateral surfaces

Stipule: Paired leaf parts at leaf base, sometimes fused or modified into spines.

Leaf arrangement: Number of leaves per node

Alternate: one (1) leaf per node; spiraled

Opposite: two (2) leaves per node; paired leaves equidistant from each other

Whorled: three (3) or more leaves per node

Leaf venation: the pattern of vascular tissues (veins) in the blade of a leaf

Pinnate: feather-like, arising along a central axis. Referring to major veins or to leaflets or segments

Palmate: fan-like, parts arising from a common point. Referring to major veins or to leaflets or segments.

Leaf margin: edge of a structure (edge of blade)

Entire: margin smooth, without indentations

Undulate: margin wavy, otherwise entire

Crenate, serrate, dentate: margin with scallopes; margin with saw-like or fine sharp-pointed teeth usually directed inward; or margin toothed with teeth directed outward

Leaf surface

Glabrous: smooth, without trichomes or "hairs", not pubescent

Pubescent: epidermal projections of various forms; trichomes or "hairs"

Simple leaf: Of only one (1) part, not completely divided into separate segments; continuous leaf blade

Midvein: the main or central grouping of vascular tissues in a simple leaf blade



Compound leaf: completely separated into two (2) or more leaflets or segments; bearing leaflets, twice and thrice compound leaves bearing leaflets subdivided into secondary leaflets or again subdivided into tertiary leaflets respectively.

Rachis: central bundle of vascular tissues (midvein) of a compound leaf blade to which leaflets are attached.

Stem: One of two main structural axes of a vascular plant (the other being the root) that supports leaves, flowers and fruits, transports water and dissolved substances between the roots and the shoot in the vascular tissues (xylem and phloem), stores nutrients, and produces new living tissue.

Node: portion of stem to which a leaf (leaves) is attached; often swollen

Internode: stem portions lying between two consecutive nodes (sites of leaf attachment)

Axil: angle formed by the juncture of two structures, such as upper leaf surface and stem.

Armed: bearing spines, thorns or prickles.

Bud: stem tip, leaves and/or flowers, site of potential growth; located at a branch apex or at the base of a leaf, in the axil.