



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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Yucca Valley, 92284

FALL FLORA

FIELD CLASS / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Explore the diversity and understated beauty of fall desert flora. This class is an entry-level course designed to familiarize students with the common fall-flowering shrubs and annual plants of the Mojave desert within the Joshua Tree and Pinyon-juniper woodland plant communities. Students will be introduced to the use of field guides, botanical keys, and other tools for plant identification. We will review the common and scientific names of species found along the way during our field excursion, and will practice recognizing the identifying characteristics found in common desert plant families. This course involves easy-to-moderate hiking over uneven terrain.

MEETING LOCATION

Black Rock Nature Center, 9800 Black Rock Canyon Rd, Yucca Valley, CA 92284

DATE and TIME

Sunday November 12th, 8a to noon

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

Walking at a slow pace for up to 3 miles along trails that could have uneven terrain, with elevation gains of up to 300 feet. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

None

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park (please download or print your park pass ahead of time, or you will have to pay fees at the gate!)
- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Hand lens
- Handouts from instructor

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Personal Equipment such as backpack, hiking poles, and sun protection

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Melanie Davis

Melanie Davis lives in Joshua Tree and is a research field ecologist and botanist at UC Riverside's Center for Conservation Biology in Palm Desert. She has been working in the California deserts since 2017. Her field research brings her to remote corners of the Colorado, Mojave, and Sonoran deserts to study the effects of climate change and human disturbance on desert ecosystems, as well as the distribution of rare native plants. She is also an artist and has published illustrated field guides to several groups of native desert plants. Melanie holds a bachelor's from The Evergreen State College and the Desert Ecologist and Naturalist certifications from College of the Desert.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll start off at Black Rock Nature Center in the northwest corner of the park, and Melanie will give a brief presentation on the plants of Black Rock, fall flora, and the plants we expect to see in the field later in the day. We will then spend the rest of the class in the field identifying plants that we talked about that morning, as well as other fall flora. We'll end the class at noon.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Please make sure you check the weather ahead of time and dress accordingly.

Participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) at least one day ahead of the program start date.

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field, for the duration of your course
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day
- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

Required

- None

Recommended

- None

FAQ

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Please call our main line: 760-819-4714 and if no one answers, please call the Desert Institute coordinator, Benny Lopez: 949-241-9693.

For classes meeting in the park, please take into consideration the time it will take to go through the entrance gate—on weekends after 9am, you may wait up to 45 minutes! (15-20 minutes is typical.) For afternoon activities, you will also want to allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. **There is no cell service in the park**, so please plan accordingly!

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified 14 days in advance. If we are notified less than 14 days in advance, we are unable to process refunds for any reason. (But we would like you to notify us if you are unable to attend.)

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful. If we do not meet our minimum of 4 registered participants for any given activity, we will cancel the activity with 48+ hours notice. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

ARE THERE ANY THINGS I NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

All participants must return the completed [health questionnaire and signed waiver](#) before the day of their activity. **Failure to do so will cancel your registration.** If your course enters Joshua Tree National Park, you must **download or print your park pass** ahead of the class, or you will pay the entrance fee at the gate, which is currently \$35 per vehicle.

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities unless noted in the activity description. If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) meets the age requirements. As much as we love our pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.