



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

CACTI OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: MELANIE DAVIS

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH (ZOOM 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM) SUNDAY, MAY 5TH (8:00 AM - 3:00 PM)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Get to know the cacti of Joshua Tree National Park and its surrounding desert environs. Students will learn all kinds of fascinating facts about cacti in this immersive one-day lecture and field course, and will be taught how to identify cacti species in the Mojave and Colorado deserts using common field identification techniques. Students will begin the course on Saturday evening with a classroom lecture that will introduce the basics of cacti identification, the main types of cacti in this part of the California desert, and the individual species we will come across in the field the following day. Sunday's exploration will take students to various areas throughout Joshua Tree National Park with the intent of seeing every single species of cacti that grows within its boundaries. This course involves car caravanning and will finish in a different location in which it begins; students provide their own transportation, meals, and lodging.

PROGRAM AGENDA

Day 1

We'll have a zoom lecture on Saturday evening at 6p. Students will be introduced to local cacti species and the basic techniques of field identification. We will also review a list of the species that we will be seeing in the field on day 2. The zoom session will end by 8p.

Day 2

On Sunday, we will meet at the Joshua Tree Visitor Center parking lot (in Joshua Tree) and make our way down to the Colorado desert (Cottonwood), making several stops along the way. We'll finish the class at Cottonwood Visitor Center (south end of park.)

Please note that this course ends in a different location than it begins.

MEETING LOCATION

Field outing: [Joshua Tree Visitor Center](#) parking lot, 6554 Park Blvd, Joshua Tree, CA 92252 (please note we will finish at [Cottonwood Entrance Station](#), approximately 60 miles from JT visitor center)

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.

REQUIRED PREPARATION

Waiver: All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle): For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass, you may use that!

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate ▾ Walking up to three miles on trails that could have uneven or sandy terrain. Elevation gains will be no more than 300 feet. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Hand lens
- Supplemental written materials/handouts from instructor

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation

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 (please leave no trace)
- 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

Required for this course:

- Full tank of gas or EV charge

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

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.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

This class will be car caravanning to a few locations; students are responsible for their own transportation, meals, and lodging. Please purchase and print or download your park pass ahead of time, and make sure you have a full tank of gas or full EV charge before the Saturday field course begins, as there will be no gas stops along the way.



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FAQ+ _

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please 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***, please plan accordingly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

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.

WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

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) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

