



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

FLORA OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: KURT LEUSCHNER

MARCH 5TH (ZOOM, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM)

MARCH 9TH (FIELD, 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM) -MARCH 10TH (FIELD, 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Students in this informal but purposeful class will have the opportunity to observe many of the flowering plants in Joshua Tree National Park, learn their names and something about their different places in the Park's greater plant community. Discussions in the field will also include plant families, pollinators and other insect associations, and general natural history. In addition, students will gain familiarity with the tools necessary to identify plants on their own.

Tuesday nights' zoom lecture will include a basic botany lecture with emphasis on local desert plants and an introduction to basic field guides. We will preview many of the expected annuals we hope to find during the field portion of the class. The use of plant keys for identification is encouraged in the field if you would like to try.

Saturday and Sunday are field days and will be spent in various regions of the Park. With instructor assistance, students will practice identifying flowering plants as we wander through Joshua Tree's different plant communities, learning as we go along. Walking distances for this class will be moderate, so bring comfortable hiking shoes.

PROGRAM AGENDA

Tuesday, March 5, 7 pm – 8:30 pm (*zoom online session*)

- Introductions and Class Overview
- Slide Show / Lecture

Saturday, March 9, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Location: Meet at the Joshua Tree Visitor Center on Park Blvd. just off Highway 62

- Field class in Mojave Desert section of the Joshua Tree National Park
- Lunch/snack break, bring your own food
- We will caravan to Barker Dam, Queen Valley and 49 Palms

Sunday, March 10, 8:30 am – 1 pm

Location: Meet at the Cottonwood Visitor Center at 8:30 am

- Field class in Colorado Desert section of the Joshua Tree National Park
- Lunch/snack break, bring your own food

- We will explore the Cottonwood area including the Bajada Trail and adjacent Box Canyon. *Please note that the class will end around 1 pm near Interstate 10 and the East entrance to Joshua Tree National Park.*

MEETING LOCATION

Tuesday, March 5, 7 pm – 8:30 pm	Online zoom meeting
Saturday, March 9, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm	Meet at Joshua Tree Visitor Center
Sunday, March 10, 8:30 am – 1 pm	Meet at Cottonwood 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 at the entrance!

ACTIVITY LEVEL

MODERATE Off-trail wandering to different plant species, potential rocky or loose terrain. Exposure to desert animal species, the sun and local weather. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

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:

- N/a

Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Notebook and pencil are always good to have
- **Mojave Desert Wildflowers*, Falcon Guide by Pam MacKay
- **Sonoran Desert Wildflowers*, Falcon Guide by Richard Spellenberg
- **California Desert Flowers* by Morhardt
- **The Jepson Desert Manual*, edited by Bruce Baldwin

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Wildlife Ecology, Professor of Natural Resources, College of the Desert. Leuschner's specialties include: ornithology, entomology, and desert ecology. He has led hundreds of field trips both locally and as far afield as Africa. He teaches natural history courses and leads field trips for the Desert Institute, the Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx, the Living Desert, the Desert Cities Bird Club, Western Field Ornithologists, California State Parks, the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, and many other conservation organizations.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

There is no cell service in the park! Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs). Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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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.

