



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

+1-760-819-4714
desertinstitute@joshuatree.org
55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

SPRING FLORA

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: MELANIE DAVIS

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Explore the diversity and understated beauty of spring desert flora. This class is an entry-level course designed to familiarize students with the common spring-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.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll start off at the Joshua Tree Visitor Center parking lot and then caravan into Joshua Tree National Park. We will make several stops throughout the Nat'l park and cover spring flora and the plants we expect to see. We will spend the day out in the field identifying plants as well as other fall flora and end the class at 2:00 PM.

MEETING LOCATION

[Joshua Tree Visitor Center Parking Lot](#), 6554 Park Blvd, Joshua Tree 92252, approximately 5.1 miles from the West Entrance in Joshua Tree.

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 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.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Hand lens
- Handouts from instructor

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Personal Equipment such as backpack, hiking poles, and sun protection

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:

- None

Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

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

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.

