



Dear Plant Enthusiasts,

Welcome to the **Southern Appalachian Naturalist Certification Program: Plants**. Whether this is your first course or eighth course, we hope this is one of many weekends we'll learn and practice naturalist skills together as we gain knowledge about the Great Smoky Mountains. Please read this letter in full, as it contains information about our new procedures related to COVID-19.

The Smokies are a wonderful place to learn—especially when it comes to plants. This region is a living laboratory known for its biodiversity of plant species and plant communities. By the end of the weekend your head will be full of new information and your heart brimming with a new appreciation for this place through the world of plants. It will be a weekend you won't easily forget!

In Residence:

While in residence we will cover material and skills that could easily take up a semester-long class. If this sounds ambitious you are right! In order to accomplish our goals it is necessary for you to do some homework, in the form of readings, to give you the background necessary to take part in discussions and build your toolkit of skills. Before your arrival be sure to read *Botany Basics*, which will be emailed to you when you register. We will do our best to keep lecture time to a minimum in order to learn and practice skills in the field. Do NOT feel like you need to have any sort of special skill set related to plants in order to be up to speed—we will learn and practice together and start with plant basics! DO expect to practice the 'sharing' of new knowledge with your new classmates, and do your best to learn a few new terms before you arrive.

Instructor:

I am pleased to be one of your instructors for this workshop. Visit our website to learn more about me and the rest of our [faculty](#). Your primary instructor will be Jennie McGuigan, former Manager of School Partnerships and Teacher Development and current Education Director at Ijams Nature Center. Guest instructors will also be joining us for this intense weekend spend focusing on botany and opening our senses to the world of plants.

Field Journal:

As with all of our programs here at Tremont Institute, we model the latest in brain-based pedagogy (the study of how people learn), and will encourage the very best skills in you as a developing Naturalist. As many of you know, keeping and maintaining a field journal of the phenomena you witness in nature, is a long-time Naturalist skill and practice that has much value. We will be making time for ample field journaling during this weekend, so each participant will receive a 6" X 8" blank field journal (no lines) that comes with a weatherproof sleeve. If already have a journal that you would prefer to use, feel free to bring it, but it must fit well in a backpack and it should be in a zip-loc bag, as we will be taking them everywhere during the weekend. Please feel free to get excited about honing this field skill by bringing any colored pencils, watercolors, charcoal pencils, etc.

Arrival and Departure:

Our check-in has been modified due to COVID-19. Plan to arrive at Tremont on Friday between 4:00 and 5:00 pm in order to have enough time to move into the dorm and meet other participants before our 6:00 pm evening meal. A staff member will be posted at the gate to direct you to the check-in station where you will have your temperature taken; if no one is at the gate to greet you, follow the instructions for late arrivals below.

Late arrivals: If you arrive after 5:00 pm, please park in the lot across from the gate, walk past the gate across the bridge, up the service road, stay to the right of the green dormitory building, and proceed to the open-air Pavilion where you will find the check-in station. If you expect to arrive late, please call 865-448-9732 ext. 23 and leave a message with your expected arrival time.

Weather:

According to our Walker Valley records, the average daily high temperature for these days in August is 88 degrees F. and the average daily low is 64 degrees F. We will be outside much of the time, rain or shine. Bring a rain coat! The Smokies are very wet and humid- you can *expect precipitation in one form or another* at some point during your stay here.

Logistics:

Please read our COVIDSafe guidelines and let us know if you have any questions or concerns. In order to slow the spread of COVID-19, please bring a mask and wear it when social distancing is impractical. Please read the "Your Visit to Tremont" link for important packing information. Along with your linens and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress, plus a bedside light or headlamp if you are a late-night reader. If you'd like to bring a camp chair for the outdoor classroom you may find that more comfortable than the provided benches. Also bring binoculars if you own a pair. If you don't own any we have a limited number of pairs to loan. Also bring a notepad and pencil and any field guides you like. Sturdy walking shoes/boots, outdoor clothing, and a hat are a must for personal comfort. *Note: though wifi is available in the Activity Center, we invite and encourage you to unplug for the weekend.* Learn more about our [food](#) and [facilities](#). Please note that food is not allowed in the dorm.

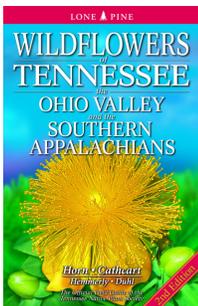
Preparation:

Please read the attachment emailed to you in advance of the course: *Botany Basics*.

A special offer just for YOU...

You will receive a copy of *Birds of the Smokies* during the weekend. Also, during the weekend, you will receive a 15% discount on any merchandise you purchase from our gift shop—this is a great deal!

Suggested Field Guide to purchase (available in our gift shop):



This field guide is used daily by our faculty during the wildflower seasons.

Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley and the Southern Appalachians Paperback (2nd Edition printed in 2013) by: Dennis Horn (Author), Tavia Cathcart (Author)

"A first-rate new guide to more than 1,200 species. Photos are easy to use; reproduction quality is excellent." --Chattanooga Times Free Press

I hope this information is helpful to you in planning for your upcoming visit to Tremont. Please tell a friend about us so that they too can learn about the wonders of the Smokies. If you have further questions, please feel free to call me at (865) 448-9732 Ext. 21.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Lloyd
Manager of Field Programs & Collegiate Studies

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