



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 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:**

Before your arrival be sure to read **pages 5-22** of the Botany Primer linked below. 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 skillset 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 your primary instructor for this workshop. Visit our website to learn more about me and the rest of our [faculty](#). Guest instructors will also be joining us for this intense weekend spent focusing on botany and opening our senses to the world of plants.

**Field Journal:**

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 you 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.

**Arrival and Departure:**

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. **When you arrive, head to the Gift Store at the Main Office for name tags and check-in.** You can then pull up to the pavilion to unload your belongings if you are staying on campus. Please move all vehicles to the blacktop at the bottom of the hill before dinner.

Late arrivals: If you arrive after 5:00 pm, please park on the blacktop across from the activity center next to the field. We will give you your nametag and check in materials in the pavilion.

[See the full schedule here.](#)

**Weather:**

According to our Walker Valley records, the average daily high temperatures for May are in the mid 70s F and the average daily lows in the low 50s. 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 latest [COVID-19 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.

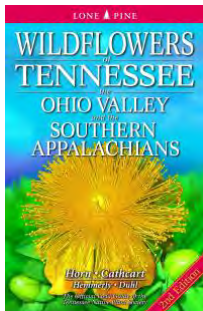
Please also read the "[Your Visit to Tremont](#)" document for important packing information. Along with your linens and toiletries, you may want to bring a mattress pad to ease the firm mattress, plus a bedside light or headlamp if you are a late-night reader. If you'd like to bring a camp chair for the outdoor classroom you may find that more comfortable than the provided benches. Also, bring 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:**

Before the course begins, be sure to read [pages 5-22 of Botany Primer](#) from the National Phenology Network.

**A special offer just for YOU...**

You will receive a copy of *Wildflowers of the Smokies* and *Ferns of the Smokies* during the weekend. Also, on Friday 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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) 448-6708.

Sincerely,

Erin Canter, Manager of Science Literacy and Research