

How to Take Identifiable Photos of Plants for iNaturalist.ca

Pro Tip

A bonus of plants is that they don't move! So, you can take your time to get multiple photos and make sure they are in focus. Some cameras tend to focus on the background instead of the plant, so make sure you're capturing it properly - you can use your hand or another object to put behind the plant part to help focus.

6 Record any **visible roots**, ideally with a scale. This is especially important when identifying aquatic plants. Avoid pulling the plant to check, since we're trying to conserve species not uproot them!

5 Take a photo **both sides of the leaf**. You want to show if it has a simple leaf membrane (one defined leaf) or compound (has two or more distinct leaflets) as well as the leaf edge shape and the vein structure on the underside. For needle-like leaves, try to roll one in your hand to determine if it is flat or rounded. Explain your findings in the notes section of the observation.

4 Photograph any **flowers, fruit, seeds, seed pods or cones** present. The number of petals, petal colour and overall flower shape can help differentiate plant species. This also applies to fruit, seeds and seed pods or cones of plants.

3 Take an in-focus photo of the **stem or trunk** if your plant has one. You want to show the texture, patterns and colour to help others identify the species.

2 Take a photo or explain the general **habitat** the plant is found in (ex. forest, field, roadside, yard, or wetland).

1 You want to try to narrow down the classification of your plant by taking a photo of or explaining the **overall structure**. Examples of different plant subgroups include trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, grasses or flowering non-woody plants.



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The **flower** is often the most identifiable feature of a plant, and in absence of a flower, it is usually the **leaf**. Consider putting these features in the first photo of your observation to help it get identified quicker.



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It can be difficult to take photos of wildlife. It is not essential to photograph every point on this diagram to get an identifiable observation. Just try your best! For your safety and theirs, please do not collect or damage plants. It is also illegal to harm or move species-at-risk anywhere in Canada.



Created by the CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION
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