

Deciding which plant it is

The description in the text is designed to help work out which plant you have found. Although plants have individual features which can help differentiate between species, these differences can be small and variable. As a general rule, useful things to note include:

- ▶ the stem – is it smooth or hairy and round or square?
- ▶ the leaves – what shape are they, what form do they take, where are they on the plant?
- ▶ the flowers – what is their colour, size and shape and how many petals do they have?
- ▶ the fruit and seed – what shape and size are they?

Other factors, such as soil type, fertiliser/herbicide use will affect the variety of species that occur.

Identification aids

Some species, such as the cornsalads and fumitories have very subtle differences. A magnifying glass can be extremely useful in helping to distinguish between them.

To help in measurement in the field, the inside cover of this book has a ruler scale along its long edge.

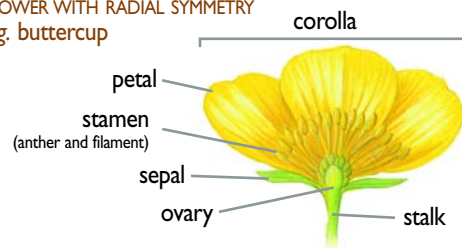
Plant terminology

The terms used to describe parts of plants can be difficult to interpret without experience. Wherever possible, this guide has tried to avoid using these terms. Where they are used there is an explanation of their meaning in the following *Glossary*, along with diagrams indicating their location, where relevant, on both a flowering plant and a grass.

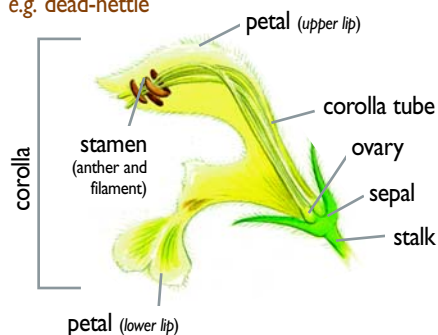
Plant Structure

BROAD-LEAVED PLANTS

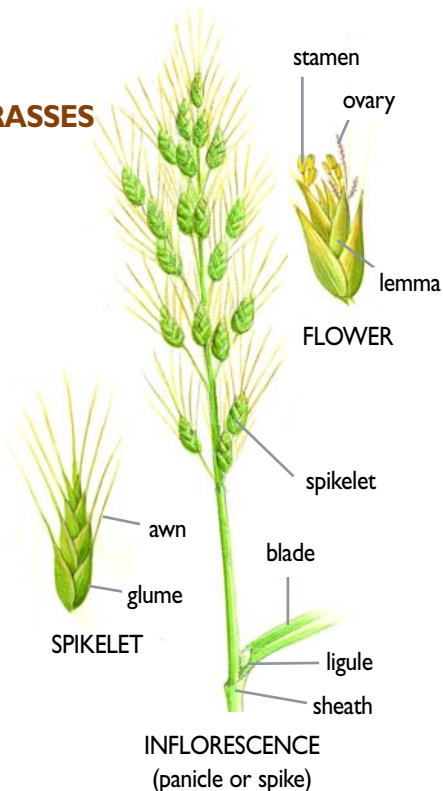
FLOWER WITH RADIAL SYMMETRY
e.g. buttercup



FLOWER WITH BILATERAL SYMMETRY
e.g. dead-nettle



GRASSES



Glossary

anther	The part of the flower, at the end of a stalk (filament), that produces the pollen.
appressed	Flattened against but not joined to.
auricle	Small projections at the base of a leaf (especially GRASSES).
awn	A stiff bristle projecting from the glume or lemma in grasses.
axil	The junction of leaf and stem.
basal rosette	A circle of leaves that forms close to the ground.
bract	A small leaf-like organ from which the flower arises and which may or not be also a bracteole .
bracteole	A bract directly below the flower (especially in the carrot family APIACEAE).
calyx	the ring of, usually green, petal-like sepals just below the actual petals .
corolla	the petals as a whole unit, especially when they are joined, often as a tube-like structure.
floret	A small flower that is part of a compound flower-head.
fruit	The organ that contains the seeds.
glumes	The two bracts at the base of a spikelet in grasses.
inflorescence	The part of a plant that bears the flowers.
lanceolate	Spear-shaped, narrowly oval and pointed (LEAVES).
leaflet	One part of a compound leaf (LEAVES).
lemma	The lower of two bracts enclosing the flower in grasses.
ligule	The growth, usually membranous, at the inner junction of the leaf-sheath and blade in grasses.
lobe	Part of a divided leaf, although not divided into separate leaflets .
midrib	The large, strengthened vein from the stem to the tip of a leaf.
ochrea	A sheath at the base of the leaf forming a tube around the stem (plural ochreae) (especially KNOTGRASSES, POLYGONUM SPP.).
ovary	The part of the plant that develops into the seed.
panicle	The branched flower-head of a grass.
pappus	An arrangement of fine hairs.
petal	One part of the flower or corolla .
pinnate	Divided into separate leaflets (LEAVES).
raceme	A long inflorescence with flowers on either side.
ray	One stalk of an umbel .
ray-floret	An individual floret that looks like a petal .
sepal	One part of the calyx .
spike	A long inflorescence with flowers arising from a central stalk.
spikelet	The base unit of the inflorescence containing one or more flowers in grasses.
spur	A tubular projection from a petal or sepal .
stamen	The male organ of a flower comprising an anther on a stalk (or filament).
stipule	A scale- or leaf-like organ at the base of a leaf stalk.
umbel	A flower-head shaped like a flattened umbrella.
whorl	Three or more flowers or leaves arising from the same part of the stem.