

## News Article

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## Resources for Plant Identification

Do you know your plants? Can you name all the flowers and trees in your landscape, or all the vegetables growing in a diverse garden? Can you name all the vegetables and fruits at the grocery store without looking at the tags?

During the growing season, one common occurrence in local Purdue Extension offices is that people bring in plant samples that display problems. Of course, as Extension professionals, we try to help them identify what's wrong and offer suggestions to improve the situation. But, the first step in that process is to know what plant you have.

Purdue Extension recently launched a helpful website called the Purdue Plant ID Pal.

The web-based resource is easy to use. 4-H and FFA youth will find it especially helpful as they learn to identify ornamentals, fruits, and vegetables for local, state and national competitions.

Purdue Plant ID Pal has four sections:

- ornamentals (woody plants)
- flowers and indoor plants
- fruits and nuts
- vegetables

You'll find more than 850 photos of nearly 200 plants, brief text descriptions and a glossary of botanical terms.

Each plant entry has multiple images, including close-ups of stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, and in some cases specialized plant structures that might aid in identification. For example, the iris entry includes an image of specialized underground stems called rhizomes.

If you feel confident and would like to test your knowledge, the website has quizzes you can work through on the four topics above. Each quiz immediately lets you know whether you got the question right, and you may answer until it is right. You go at your own pace, and learn as you go.

You may have always wondered what certain botanical terms actually mean. The glossary answers questions like: What are the differences between an annual, a biennial, and a perennial? What are tendrils? Besides being an attachment on a cowboy boot, what is a spur on a plant?

So, if you are looking for a good learning exercise inside when nothing is growing outside, give the Purdue Plant ID Pal a try at: <http://purdue.ag/plant-id-pal>.

Finally, another good website for ornamental woody plant identification is the Purdue University Arboretum, at <https://www.arboretum.purdue.edu/>. The Purdue Arboretum Explorer tool on the website lets you search for trees by name, or you may take a virtual tour of trees on Purdue's campus.