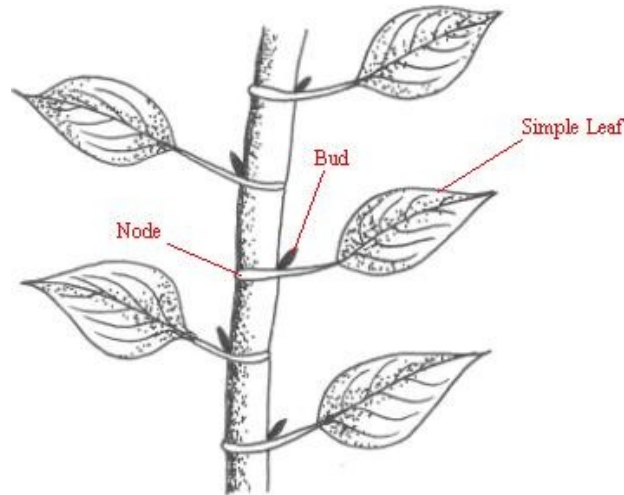


Leaf Classification¹

Scientists often identify plants by examining their flowers or fruits, however leaves are often useful to identify a plant (think of poison ivy, croton, grapes, etc.). In order to identify a plant based on its leaves, it is helpful to recognize the diversity of leaf types and know the terminology for different leaf patterns, shapes and arrangements.

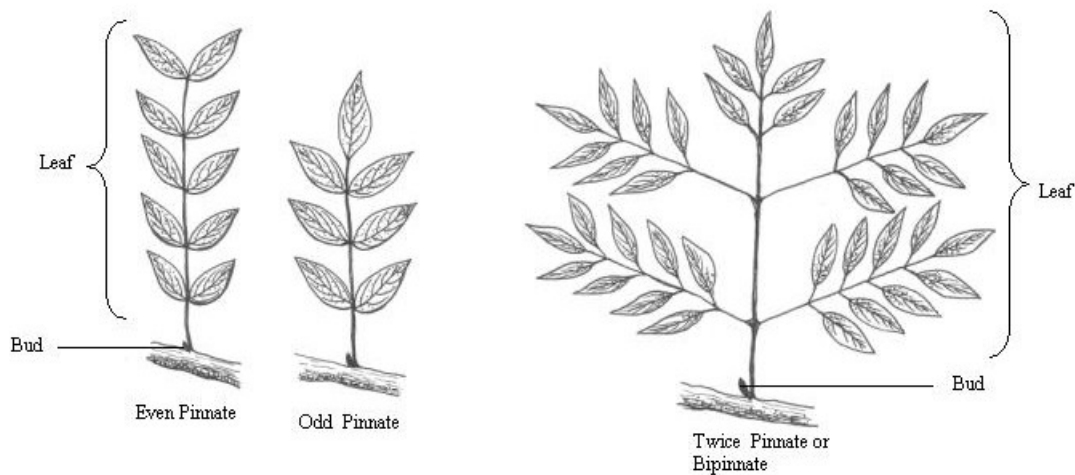
Simple leaf pattern

Simple leaves are whole, undivided leaves growing from a **bud** on the stem. The **node** is the part of the stem where leaves are attached.



Compound leaf patterns

Compound leaves are divided into leaflets, growing from one axillary bud on the stem.



¹Drawings by artist and FTBG volunteer Betty Packler.

Compound leaf patterns continued...



Palmate



Trifoliolate

Leaf arrangement

Nodes can have one leaf or many leaves, often in the following arrangements:



Alternate
(one leaf/node)

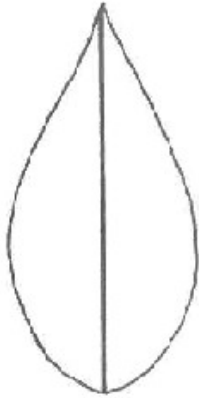


Opposite
(two leaves/node)

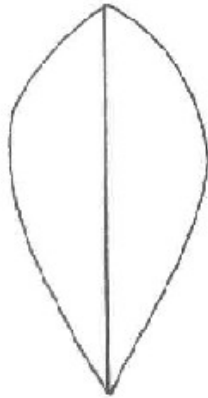


Whorled
(three or more
leaves/node)

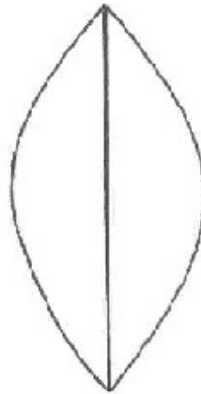
Basic leaf shapes



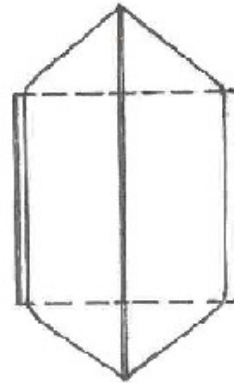
Ovate
(widest near base)



Obovate
(widest near apex)

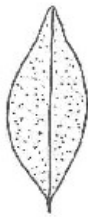


Elliptic
(widest near middle)



Oblong
(parallel sided)

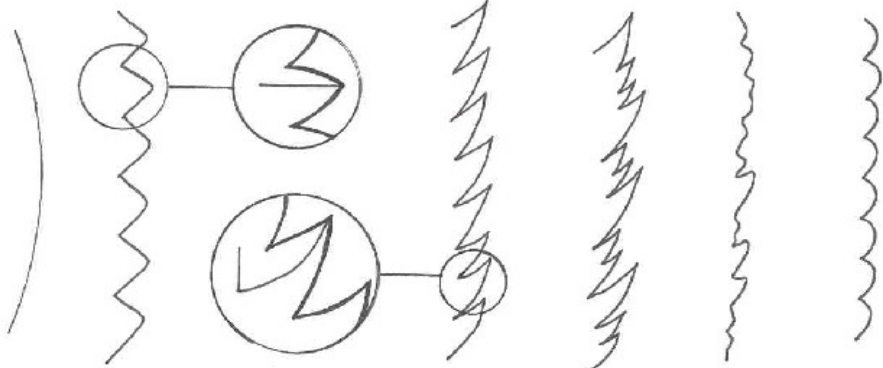
Leaf margins



Entire



Lobbed



Entire Dentate

Serrate

Compound
serrate

Erosette

Crenate