

Tropical Botany: Useful plants

Course code: ENV 3150

Total contact hours: 60 hours

Pre-requisite: None

Course Overview

This course will provide students with a general overview of valuable Neotropical plants.

Students will gain insight into basic botanical concepts and will be able to explore a variety of tropical ecosystems and life zones, their flora, and the multiple and complex ecological interactions in these areas, as well as the most important uses of plants in the Neotropics.

Costa Rica is a tropical country with vibrant biodiversity and, for this reason, a very representative area of these studies. Emphasis will be given to the most common plant families in Costa Rica, but we will discuss other Neotropical families.

The course includes four laboratory practices about Phytomorphology (Plant Morphology), Plant reproduction, and Costa Rican plant diversity. Activities during lab sessions include observation, dissection, and plant identification. Students also learn to mount herbaria botanic samples during the course.

Field trips will provide an essential experience of different Neotropical ecosystems and the Flora diversity of Costa Rica. The class can observe necessary plant adaptations and ecosystemic interactions. A Field practice using quadrants and transects to compare plant diversity could include forest strata in one field trip during the course, depending on the sites visited and weather conditions.