

Osher Life Long Learning Institute

Course Title: Global Ethnobotany: Plants, People, and Culture

Instructors: Dr. Thomas Carlson, UC Berkeley Professor Dept. Integrative Biology
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Course Overview:

Humans have utilized plants over millennia for food, fiber, shelter, medicine, art, ritual, scent, dyes, and more. In this six-week course, you will gain an understanding of ethnobotany, the study of the complex relationships between people and plants across space and time. Some of the topics covered include ethnolinguistics, ethnopharmacology, conservation and biocultural diversity. Through a combination of lecture and hands-on lessons, you'll be taken on a journey through six geographic regions looking the botany and anthropology of those regions, culminating in a tour of the UC Botanical Garden, where you'll see the plants in person in our globally diverse collection of over 10,000 different kinds of plants across 34 acres of naturalistic plantings.

Week 1. January 28 | South Asia

Selected plants: Vetiver (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*), Indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*), Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*)

Week 2. February 4 | East and Southeast Asia

Selected plants: Tea (*Camellia sinensis*), Opium Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*), White Mulberry (*Morus alba*), Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*)

Week 3. February 11 | Europe/Mediterranean/ Middle East

Selected plants: St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Chamomile (*Matricaria chamimilla*), Linen (*Linum ussitasiumum*)

Week 4. February 25 | Africa

Selected plants: Madagascar periwinkle *Catharanthus roseus*, Hoodia (*Hoodia gordonii*), Myrrh (*Commiphora* sp.)

Week 5. March 4 | Tropical Americas

Selected plants: Chinchona (*Cinchona officinalis*), Chocolate (*Theobroma cacao*), Angel Trumpet (*Brugmansia sanguinia*)

Week 6. March 11 | North America

Selected plants: Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)

*Docent – led tours of the Garden will be scheduled for a choice of **Monday March 18 at 10am** or **Friday March 22 at 10am**, you must sign up in class on **February 11th** to reserve a space.

Recommended Readings:

Laws, Bill. (2017). *Fifty Plants that Changed the Course of History*. Quid Publishing, Brighton UK.

Nabhan, Gary Paul. (2016). *Ethnobiology for the Future*. University of Arizona Press

Voeks, Robert A. (2018). *The Ethnobotany of Eden*. University of Chicago Press.