

Graduate Module Outline

Title: Native Plants and Their Non-Timber Forest Products' (NTFP) Uses

Instructor: Prof. L. Mapplebeck

Timing (month/year module will be offered): During Mid-May to Mid-June, 2012.

Module Description:

There are approximately 2000 species of native plants in the Atlantic Provinces. Nova Scotia has approximately 1500 species. Each and every plant species has its place in the 'great scheme of things'; however, only a relatively small number (mainly trees) directly contribute significant dollars to the economy via timber/wood fiber harvest (lumber, pulp and fuel). This module will only occasionally touch on this use of our native flora. One would be remiss to not mention the massive importance of our flora in its contribution to our natural landscape, both for those of us who live here and for those who visit. We all know the importance of tourism and one can argue that most, if not all, tourism in Atlantic Canada is eco-tourism in its broad definition. This course will also only touch briefly on this.

What will we cover?

The module will examine some of our native Nova Scotia plants from a number of perspectives. We will examine native plants from the standpoint of those that are used, and often underused, in our 'created landscapes', and those that are used for food, medicine, craft, ceremonial and other purposes. These uses may be past, present and/or future. Utilization may be through cultivation (nursery production for landscape purposes, using a broad definition of landscape - ranging from domestic landscapes to land reclamation, riparian strips and coastal stabilization), 'domesticating' ie. establishing plantings for plant and plant part harvesting (example: Canada holly for ornamental fruit covered twig harvest), management of native stands (examples: lowbush blueberries-food and Canada yew-medicinal), and wildcrafting (example: club mosses- interior Christmas wreaths), etc. Sustainable and ethical wildcrafting will also be discussed.

Students must be physically fit and have appropriate foot wear and clothing for the rigorous demands of 'back country' botanizing.

Format:

In addition to the lecture (3 – 2 hour sessions) content, there will be 3 field trips (Roland Intervale, Kemptown; Dover/Peggy's Cove Coastal Area; the Hilden Uplands &/or the Partridge Island Isthmus (3 of these 4 locations), requiring 2 days of travel and plant studies. An essay will be required on a topic related to the subject matter; based on the specific interest of the student.

Proposed Method of Evaluation: Participation – 50%
Essay – 50%

Prerequisites: Students should be in their 2nd or later semester within their M.Sc. Programme.

Proposed Dates and Times: The module will be presented on 3 full days, during the mid-May to mid-June period, subject to seasonal/weather factors and the schedules of the students and instructor.

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