

## **Unit A:** Basic Principles of Plant Science with a Focus on Field Crops

### **Lesson 4:** Understanding Leaf Anatomy and Morphology

**Student Learning Objectives:** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Describe the main parts of a leaf.
2. Describe some major types of leaves.
3. Discuss common vein patterns found in leaves.
4. Explain how a leaf is organized.

**Recommended Teaching Time:** 1 hour

**Recommended Resources:** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

- A PowerPoint has also been developed with use of this lesson plan
- [http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/gradstud/sonia/sargassum\\_echinocarpum/results-leaf%20anatomy.htm](http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/gradstud/sonia/sargassum_echinocarpum/results-leaf%20anatomy.htm)
- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/plants/leaf/>

### **List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

Writing surface  
Projector  
PowerPoint slides  
Transparencies from attached masters  
Copies of student lab sheet  
Pressed leaves from a leaf collection  
Pictures of leaves from your area  
Microscopes and prepared slides of leaf cross-sections

**Terms:** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics and on PowerPoint Slide #2):

- Compound leaf
- Cuticle
- Dichotomous venation
- Epidermis
- Guard cells
- Leaf blade
- Midrib
- Netted veins
- Palisade mesophyll
- Parallel veins
- Petiole
- Pinnately netted
- Simple leaf
- Spongy mesophyll
- Stomata

**Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

Bring several different leaves or plants with different leaves into class. Ask students to compare and contrast them. Use student responses to form a list of how the leaves are the same and how they are different.

Begin to build on their list. (Similarities may be that leaves are green or have a large flat surface.) What are the words that we use to describe the differences? Can we choose better terms?

**\*\* Use this activity to lead into the main parts of a leaf.**

## Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

**Objective 1:** Describe the main parts of a leaf.

**\*\* This PowerPoint slide allows you to explain the definition and then show the class the leaf part you are talking about. You can do this by clicking on the arrow button next to the definition. This should take you to the picture of the leaf. At this time ask the class to identify the part you are talking about based on the definition you just went over. For example after you go over the tip or apex definition, then click the arrow button (which looks like this:  ) next to the definition. When the leaf picture comes up, have the students guess where the apex is located. When you are finished on this part of the leaf, click the arrow next to the apex label. This arrow will appear as this  . This will bring you back to slide #7. You will be able to go through all of the definitions the same way. You may want to experiment with this before actually doing it with the class.**

### **(PowerPoint Slide #3)**

- I. Leaves are the primary food producing organs of the plant. They are designed to efficiently collect light and use that light energy to produce food. These are some of the parts of a leaf which help to encourage that efficiency.

### **(PowerPoint Slide #4)**

- A. Tip or apex – this is the top of the leaf; It can be pointed, round, smooth, etc
- B. Margin – is the edge of the blade; This is quite specific to each species of plant. Some are smooth, toothed, lobed or incised
- C. *Midrib* – the central vein running down the center of the blade
- D. Veins – contain the xylem & phloem of the plant. They can be parallel or netted in arrangement

### **(PowerPoint Slide #5)**

- E. Base – is found at the bottom of the blade; Like the apex, it can be round, heart shaped, flat, etc
- F. *Petiole* – is known as the leaf stem; It is not exactly like a stem, but it does hold xylem & phloem; Holds the blade away from the stem
- G. *Blade* – the main collecting structure of the leaf; Has a large, broad surface has many layers which help the plant move and store photosynthetic materials and by-products

**\*\*TM: 4-1 can be used as a visual aid. PowerPoint #6 also has a picture labeling the parts of the leaf. Have the students repeat the leaf parts together as a class. Instruct them to start at the top of the leaf and work down. Repeat this until all of the students say the leaf parts together.**

**Objective 2:** Describe some major types of leaves.

**(PowerPoint Slide #7)**

II. There are many different types of leaves. Some leaves are adapted to hot, dry climates by storing water or being smaller. Some leaves have very large blades to collect the maximum light in a shady location. In some leaves, the blade is broken up into several sections.

**(PowerPoint Slide #8)**

- A. A leaf which has only one blade on its petiole is called a ***simple leaf***. Most plants have simple leaves.
- B. In some leaves, the blade is divided into three or more sections. A leaf with multiple blades is called a ***compound leaf***. There are many different kinds of compound leaves.

**\*\*Show students examples of compound and simple leaves. This can be done by actually bringing in the plant specimen or by providing pictures from your area. Ask the students to distinguish between the petioles and stems. PowerPoint Slide #9 also has some pictures you can show the class.**

**Objective 3:** Discuss common vein patterns found in leaves.

**(PowerPoint Slide #10)**

- III. Veins of flowering plants are found in several patterns. Most of these patterns can be categorized into two groups.
- A. Monocots have leaves which have ***parallel veins***. While the veins may not be parallel in a strict mathematical sense, none of the veins on the whole leaf will cross each other. It may look like they fuse together at the top or bottom of the blade.

**(PowerPoint Slide #11)**

- B. Dicots have veins which connect and branch from each other. Veins in a branching pattern are called **netted veins**. Some leaves with netted veins have several smaller veins branching out of a dominant midrib, a condition known as **pinnately netted**. Other leaves have several dominant veins branching out from the petiole. This condition is known as palmately netted. A few plants have a spreading vein pattern called **dichotomous venation**. A ginkgo leaf has this type of veins.

**\*\*Ask students to predict whether a plant is a monocot or a dicot based on what pattern of veins they have. After you show them the plant and they give you their prediction, discuss as a class why it is either a monocot or a dicot. PowerPoint Slide #12 also has some pictures that can be used to show the class the vein pattern.**

**Objective 4:** Explain how a leaf is organized.

**(PowerPoint Slide #13)**

IV. A leaf is organized to collect sunlight and turn it, through photosynthesis, into food. The leaf blade has many layers of tissue to allow this to happen.

- A. On top of the leaf is a waxy non-cellular layer called the **cuticle**. The cuticle is on the leaf to prevent water from escaping. Generally speaking, plants which live in bright arid conditions have very thick cuticle layers.

**(PowerPoint Slide #14)**

- B. The next layer on the leaf is also there for protection. The **epidermis** is the skin-like layer of cells found on both the top and the bottom surface of the leaf. The epidermis may be one or many layers thick.
- C. Directly beneath the upper epidermis is a layer of cells which are standing on end and packed very tightly. These standing cells are responsible for most of the photosynthesis in the leaf and are called the **palisade mesophyll**.

**(PowerPoint Slide #15)**

- D. Under the palisade mesophyll are loosely packed cells called the spongy mesophyll. The **spongy mesophyll** forms air spaces which hold raw materials used and products of photosynthesis.
- E. The lower epidermis has holes in it for gas exchange. The holes are called **stomata** and they can open and close. The opening and closing is controlled by the **guard cells**, which surround each stomata.

**\*\*Use TM: 4-2 to help teach the concept. Ask the students to explain purposes for each leaf structure. PowerPoint Slide #16 has a diagram that can also be used.**

**\*\*LS: 4-1 will also help reinforce this objective. Divide the students into groups. The amount of groups will depend on how many microscopes you have. When each student is finished, discuss the results.**

**Review/Summary:** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Repeated practice using actual plants, pictures of plants, and drawing plants are very helpful. Student responses can be used to determine which objectives should be reviewed. A few summary questions can be found on PowerPoint Slide # 17 and #18.

**Application:** LS: 4-1 can be used to apply objectives to an actual leaf cross-section.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation should be based on student comprehension of the learning objectives. This can be determined using the attached sample written test.

## **Answers to Sample Test:**

### ***Part One: Matching***

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. b

### ***Part Two: Completion***

stomata  
spongy, palisade  
guard  
cuticle  
parallel, netted

### ***Part Three: Short Answer***

1. Compound leaves have more than one blade. Simple leaves have only one blade on each petiole.

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# Test

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## Unit A Lesson 4: Understanding Leaf Anatomy and Morphology

### **Part One: Matching**

*Instructions.* Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

- a. Epidermis
- b. Leaf base
- c. Midrib
- d. Petiole

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The single dominant vein in the middle of the blade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The layer of cells that make up the top and bottom surface of the leaf.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The leaf stem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The large flat surface of the leaf.

### **Part Two: Completion**

*Instructions.* Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

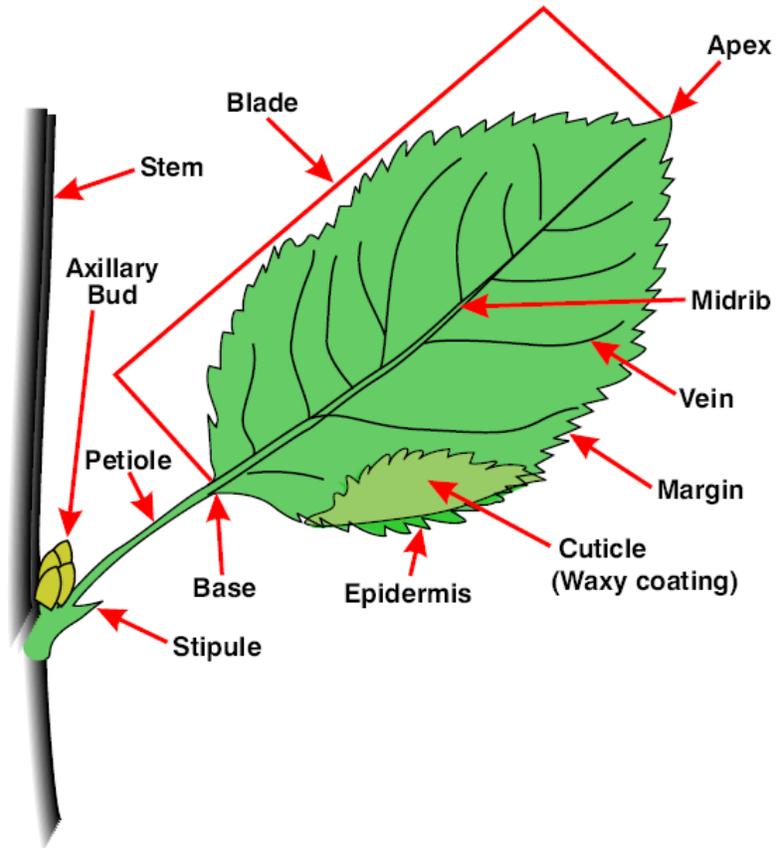
- 1. The part of the leaf which allows gas to escape is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. There are two types of mesophyll. The \_\_\_\_\_ mesophyll is loosely packed with many air spaces and the \_\_\_\_\_ mesophyll is tightly packed and stand on end.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ cells control the opening and closing of the stomata.
- 4. The waxy upper layer of the leaf is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. Monocots have \_\_\_\_\_ veins while dicots have \_\_\_\_\_ veins.

### **Part Three: Short Answer**

*Instructions.* Provide information to answer the following question.

Name the difference between compound and simple leaves.

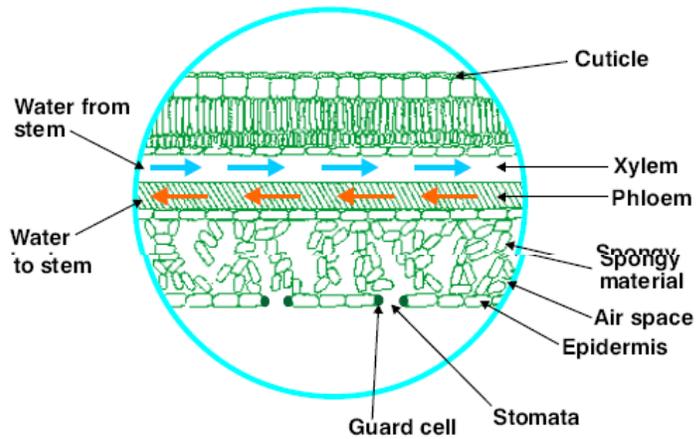
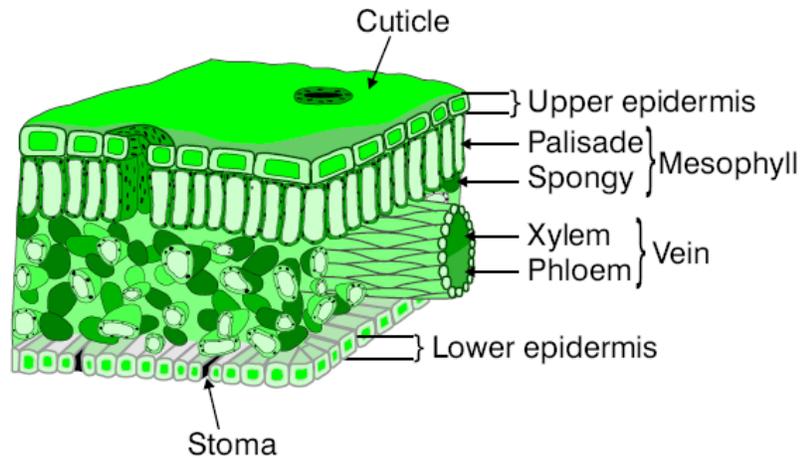
TM: 4-1



(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)

TM :4-2

## THE CROSS SECTION OF A LEAF BLADE



(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)

**LS: 4-1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lab Sheet

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1. Use the microscope to look at a prepared leaf cross-section. In the space provided below, draw a picture of a narrow section of leaf and label all of the following parts:

- cuticle
- epidermis
- guard cells
- palisade mesophyll
- spongy mesophyll