

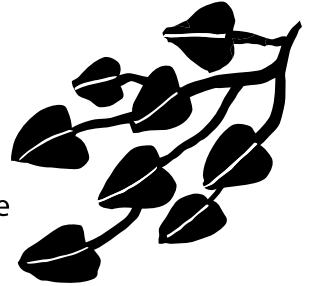
PLANT DRAWING TIPS

How to look at plants so you can draw and stylize them better



"If you stare at an object, as you do when you paint, there is no point at which you stop learning things from it." – Wayne Thiebaud

"Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get the real meaning of things." – Georgia O'Keeffe



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING AT PLANTS

Flowers:

Are the petals long or short? Smooth-edged or jagged? Are there lots of them or just a few? Are some bigger than others? Do they overlap? Is there a prominent center of a different color? Can you see seeds? Stamens? Is there one flower on each stem, or several (or lots) grouped together? How is the flower connected to the stem?

Stems:

Is it green, or some other color? Does it have bumps or hairs or thorns? Does it have ridges across it or down its length? Is it one long straight piece, or does it branch or curve or even curl around? Are there leaves coming out of it?

Leaves:

Are they rounded, lobed (blobby), long and skinny or palmate (like your hand)? Do they have a smooth edge or a jagged one? Are they smooth or fuzzy? Do they come out along the stem, or are they all at the base of the plant? If they're on the stem or branch, are they set opposite each other or alternating? Do they clasp around the stem, or attach directly to it, or come out on a little stem (the "petiole") of their own?

What details make this plant unique and identifiable? What makes this plant this plant?

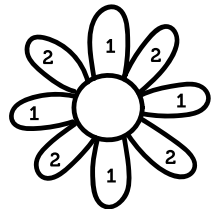
TIPS AS YOU DRAW

★ To stylize something, try drawing the same thing several times, getting a little more stylized each time. You'll learn what parts are necessary and what you can change or discard.

★ Start by sketching out the very basic shapes of your plant - are the flowers circles? Half-circles? Are the leaves teardrops or circles or swords? Where do the stems go? Draw light until you get it right!

★ When drawing parallel lines, like a stem, look at the line you're paralleling, not the line you're drawing.

★ When drawing a flower like a daisy, start with the petals at the four cardinal points, then fill in between them to help you get equal spacing all the way around your circle.



★ If you're struggling with depth or angles, try flattening everything out like a vintage botanical drawing or cyanotype.

★ Try using a bigger brush/pen to force yourself to omit unnecessary details.