

If you'd like to develop a series of signs for your phenology walk or community phenology trail, we've developed some templates and guidelines to use to help you get started. Below you will find instructions for creating a "Welcome sign" as well as individual species signs to mark plants in the field for observation. Ideal sizes of signs are indicated below.

Phenology Walk Welcome Sign

Two sign sizes are available. The size of the sign in the Word Doc is the small size, but it can be scaled up to the larger size. Choose the larger sign if your viewers will be further away from the sign and/or more text is needed:

- Small is 12" x 18" (Phenology-Trail-Sign-Template-12x18.doc)
- Large is 24" x 36" (Phenology-Trail-Sign-Template-24x36.doc)



Always Save the Original Template:

Always keep a copy of the original template file. Choose "Save As", with a different name.

Font and Font Size:

The primary font in the sign template is Arial. Georgia Italic is used as an accent font. General guidelines suggest readers will stand between one to four feet from a sign. As a general rule, at this viewing distance, the point size for text should be:

- Titles.....60-72 point minimum
- Subtitles.....40-48 point minimum
- Body Text.....24 point minimum
- Captions.....18 point minimum

While this won't be possible with the 12 x 18 version (and viewers will be standing closer with smaller signs), keep these considerations in mind and keep your text concise. Research suggests keeping body text down to about 250-300 words. This does not include titles, subheadings, or captions. Keep paragraphs to 45-60 words.

Sentence structure and paragraph layout can greatly affect overall readability of the sign. Keep sentences to about 10-15 words and paragraphs to about 3-5 sentences.

Scaling Text:

Scale your text to meet the above requirements. Do not extend text beyond the blue guidelines. To do so will make your sign look busy and unprofessional. If necessary, make your text smaller or better, find ways to make it more concise.

Spacing and Alignment:

Keep a consistent amount of white space between the three text areas. When changing the size of the text areas, make sure to size photos vertically to come close to the bottom most area of text, and to equalize the white space between text areas.

Make sure everything is aligned before printing your sign. Items can easily lose their alignment in Word. Use the blue guidelines to help with alignment.

Logos: in addition to the USA-NPN and Nature's Notebook logos, you may insert 2 additional logos. Scale to a size that's proportional to the existing two. Align bottom to the blue guideline

Optional QR code:

There is a space for a QR code. If you do not want a QR code, delete the placeholder QR code before printing.

Bleeds, crop marks, and saving your Word document to a high-quality PDF for printing:

When you submit your poster to the printer, you will want to tell the print vendor that there are 1/8" bleeds around all edges, which enables the image to extend all the way to the four edges of the paper rather than having a white border. In order for this to happen, the image area extends beyond the actual sign size, enabling the print vendor to 'trim' from each edge to arrive at the final size. Before the file is trimmed, the

actual size will either be or 12.25" x 18.25" or (depending on which size you use). Make sure to communicate this to your printer.

The best way to submit your poster is by exporting the Word document to a PDF (some vendors may be able to print from your Word document). To create a PDF (this is the Mac version), choose "File > Print" then choose "PDF" > "Save as PDF".

If you have the option to do so, select "High Quality Print", and click print.

If you don't have Adobe Acrobat, you will need to ask your print vendor if they will accept your Word Document for print. Make sure they print your sign at 300 dpi at 100% scale.

Photographs and Map:

Replace the photographs (if desired), and map, to create your own sign. Note that for printing, all images must be at least 300 dpi at the full scale showing on the template. Images should also be converted to CMYK before printing.

If you are using a standard camera (or phone camera), you will most likely need to convert the image size for print as the default image size on cameras is 72 dpi (dots per inch), and images for print need to be 300 dpi, which is 4.16 times larger in resolution. (Keep in mind that if you are taking photos with your phone camera, your final image will likely not be large enough for the main [the largest] portrait-formatted photograph (if you are using a photograph rather than a map).

Size and dpi are directly proportional. So, for example, if you are taking a photo on an iPhone 5, your default image size at your portrait photo's full scale will be 13.333" x 17.778" at 72 dpi (the reverse for landscape). This means that at 300 dpi, your image will be 4.1666 times smaller, ending up at only 3.2" x 4.267". Once you convert your photographs, as long as they are at least as large as needed (they may be larger), you may place them in the Word template.

If you do not have a high-quality photographs, you will either need to have one taken on a camera with large enough resolution, or purchase one from one of the many stock photograph websites (you can usually find great images for \$10 or less per image). Some recommended sites: <http://istockphoto.com>
<http://www.shutterstock.com>

A note on color:

When creating your map, use colors that are harmonious with the colors of the template, using a color picker device if helpful. Greens, oranges, light browns, and a light off white are some of the main colors used. While colors in your art and photographs don't need to be exact, they should complement the existing colors. The following Hex colors are used in the template itself (these colors can also be found in the color palette):

Dark green: #495535

Medium green: #718B50

Off white: #FEF0D8

Species phenophase sign

We have created two poster sizes: a small version, at 9" x 12" (species-template-minimaltext-9x12.doc and species-template-maxtext-9x12.doc), and a large version at 12" x 16" (species-template-minimaltext-12x16.doc and species-template-maxtext-12x16.doc). For optimal legibility, the large version is recommended when you are using a lot of text. We recommend you print one first as a way to determine whether these sizes meet your needs. If you feel different sizes are needed, please let us know.



Version with maximum amount of text



Version with minimum amount of text

Definitions for Phenophase Key - Leaves, Flowers, and Fruits:

You will be copying and pasting the text found for each of your chosen species from our Phenophase Definition Pages onto the template. Be sure to copy the text from the definitions pages identically, as those

are the standardize protocols that have been vetted and reviewed by our scientists. Definitions for all of our 1000+ species can be found on The Plants and Animals search page: usanpn.org/nn/species_search.

Fonts:

The primary fonts in these posters are all variations of Arial, a common font on most computers (the only exception being the Latin species name, which uses Georgia Italic). If these are not fonts that you have, please use Verdana, Myriad Pro, or Helvetica in place of Arial, and Times New Roman in place of Georgia. Also, please let us know if you do not have these fonts.

Scaling Text: the common name for your plant may need to be scaled down to fit in the given space and not look crowded. (“Ocotillo” – the template example plant – is a relatively short name so the font can be larger.)

Poster sizes*:

9” x12” (available for posters with smaller amounts of text)

12” x 16” (available for both small and large amounts of text)

*While you may decrease the size of these posters proportionately, they may not be increased in size (to do so will compromise the image quality).

Optional QR code:

There is a space for a QR code if you would like to include it. If you do not want a QR code, simply delete the box before printing. Always keep a copy of the original template file. Any new poster created should be saved as a separate document.

Bleeds, crop marks, and saving your Word document to a high-quality PDF for printing:

When you submit your poster to the printer, you will want to tell the print vendor that there are 1/8” bleeds around all edges. What this means is that the image area will go all the way to the edge of the paper rather than having a white border. In order for this to happen, the image area actually extends beyond the actual size of the poster, meaning that the printer actually trims the outer 1/8” of each edge to arrive at the final size (either 9” x12” or 12” x 16”). Before the file is trimmed, the actual sizes will be 9.25” x 12.25” and 12.25” x 16.25”. Make sure to communicate this to your printer.

The best way to submit your poster is by exporting the Word document to a PDF. To do this (this is the Mac version), choose “File > Print” then choose “PDF” > “Save as PDF”.

If you have the option to do so, select “High Quality Print”, and click print.

If you don’t have Adobe Acrobat, you will need your print vendor to create the PDF for you from your Word Document. Make sure they save it at the highest resolution possible.

Photographs:

If you are using a standard camera (or phone camera), you should not have to scale or crop your photographs (and should not), but you will most likely need to convert the image size for print since the

default image size on cameras is 72 dpi ([dots per inch](#)). Images for print need to be 300 dpi, which is 4.16 times larger in resolution.

If on the other hand you are taking photos with your phone camera, your final image will likely not be large enough for the main [the largest] portrait-formatted species photograph. If it is a good quality phone camera, it should work for the smaller, horizontally-formatted photographs.

12" x 16" poster photograph size requirements:

Large, portrait-formatted photographs must be at least 5.625" x 7.5"* at 300 dpi.

Small, landscape-formatted photographs must be at least 2.6" x 1.95"* at 300 dpi.

9" x 12" poster photograph size requirements:

Large, portrait-formatted photographs must be at least 4.25" x 5.625"* at 300 dpi.

Small, landscape-formatted photographs must be at least 2" x 1.5"* at 300 dpi.

*Note: these sizes are approximate – as long as you do not crop or disproportionately scale your photograph, and as long as your photograph is at least as large as the largest dimension, it will be fine.

Size and dpi are directly proportional. So, for example, if you are taking a photo on an iPhone 5, your default image size at your portrait photo's full scale will be 13.333" x 17.778" at 72 dpi (the reverse for landscape). This means that at 300 dpi, your image will be 4.1666 times smaller, ending up at only 3.2" x 4.267", which again, will not be large enough for the main (the largest) portrait-formatted species photo. This would however be large enough for the smaller horizontally-formatted photographs. Once you convert your photographs, as long as they are at least as large as needed (they may be larger), you may place them in the photo boxes in the Word template. Always use a vertical (portrait) photo for the main species image and horizontal (landscape) photos for the three smaller species photos.

If you do not have a high-quality photographs for the large species photographs, you will either need to have one taken on a camera with large enough resolution, or purchase one from one of the many stock photograph websites (you can usually find very nice images – depending on your species – for around \$10 per image). Some recommended sites include: <http://istockphoto.com> or <http://www.shutterstock.com>