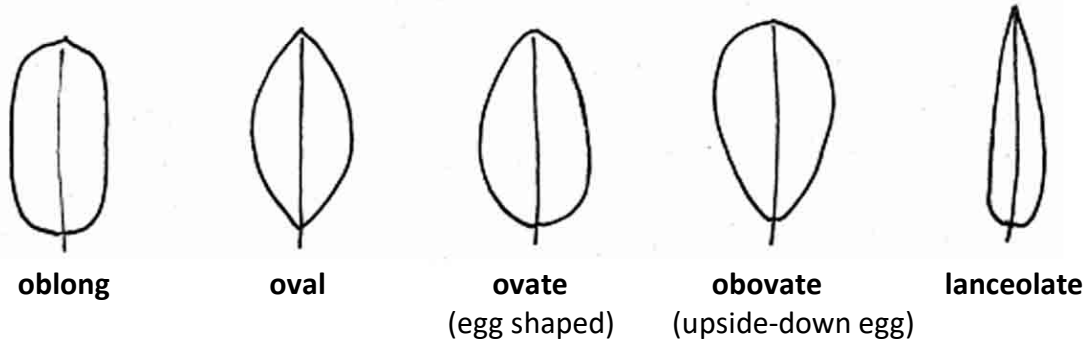


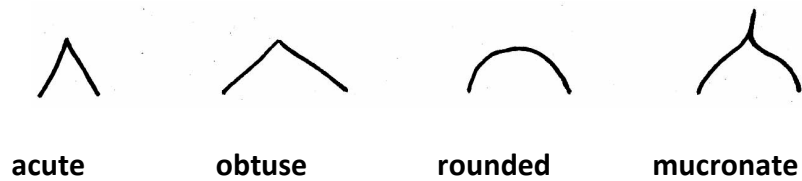
Part of Unit 2 – Terminology

Describing leaf or leaflet shape:

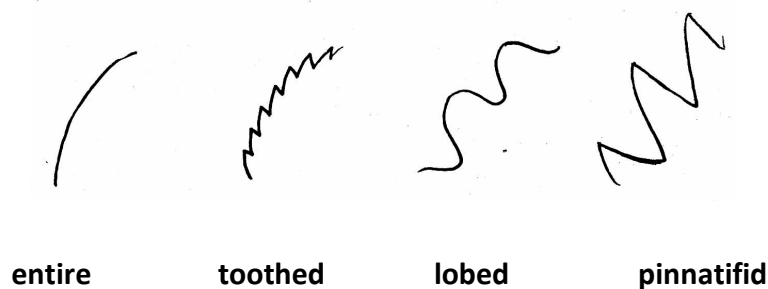
First, look at the overall outline of the leaf, ignoring teeth, lobes etc. The commonest shapes are:



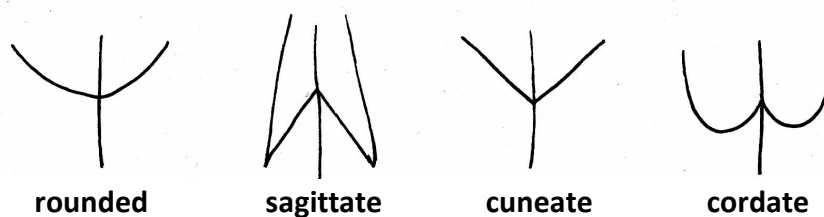
Then look at the leaf tip. It may be **acute** (less than 90°), **obtuse** (more than 90°), **rounded**, or **mucronate** (ending in a tiny, stiff, bristle-point called a mucro).



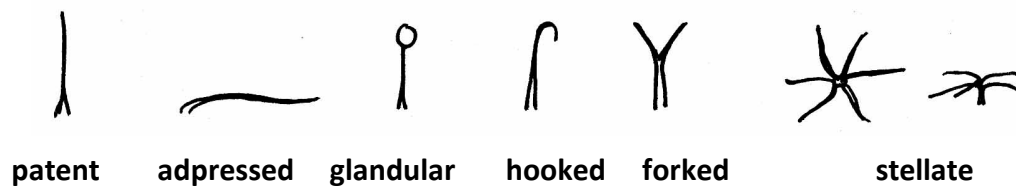
The leaf margin takes a great variety of forms which can be broadly classified as **entire** (smooth, without teeth or lobes), **toothed** (sometimes double toothed), **lobed** or **cut**. A **pinnatifid** leaf is more or less deeply cut into pinnately arranged lobes.



The base may be **rounded**, **sagittate** (arrow shaped), **cuneate** (wedge shaped) or **cordate** (heart shaped).



Finally, look with a lens for hairs. They may be restricted to certain positions, e.g. only on the abaxial surface, at the vein junctions or on the petiole. They may be stiff or woolly, **patent** (sticking out) or **adpressed** (or **appressed**). They can be **forked**, **hooked**, **stellate** (with several branches like umbrella spokes) or **glandular**. **Glabrous** means without hairs.



Describing the almost infinite variety of leaf forms is a great challenge for flora writers and there are many terms in addition to the ones given above. They will always be in the glossary however. Accurate observation is much more important than knowing the words.