

**YORK UNIVERSITY**  
**Ontario Universities Program in Field Biology**

<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Plants and Fungi of the Carolinian Zone</b>
<b>Instructor:</b>	Mark Vicari, Department of Biology, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3; <a href="mailto:mvicari@yorku.ca">mvicari@yorku.ca</a> ; 647-895-3401
<b>Dates:</b>	Tues May 6 2025 - Mon May 19 2025
<b>Location:</b>	May 6-12: Rondeau Provincial Park; accommodation at University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus, Ridgetown, ON. May 13-19: Pinery Provincial Park; accommodation at Western University, London, ON
<b>Cost:</b>	<b>\$2600.00.</b> Non-refundable deposit of \$350 to your home university upon enrolment. Balance of \$2250 is payable to <i>York University</i> and is due no later than two weeks in advance (i.e. by Tuesday, April 22nd 2025 at the latest), preferably by bank draft, money order, or certified cheque. The bank draft, money order, or cheque should be mailed to: <i>Rosella Abinoja</i> , Biology Accounts Assistant, 151 Farquharson Life Science Building, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON M3J 1P3. <u>Fee includes:</u> accommodation at Ridgetown College and Western University, breakfast and dinner meals, transportation between field and accommodation sites, and transportation from Ridgetown to London on May 13. <u>Not included:</u> Travel to Ridgetown on May 6; return travel from London on May 19; lunches; tuition payable to your home university.
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	A second-year ecology course
<b>Enrolment:</b>	14 (3)
<b>Course Description:</b>	The Carolinian region of southwestern Ontario represents only 1% of Canada's land area, but contains more native species and species at risk than any other forest region in the country. This course will focus on the plant and fungal biodiversity of Carolinian Ontario, with an emphasis on field identification. We will spend a week in each of Rondeau and Pinery Provincial Parks, on the southern and northern edges of Ontario's Carolinian, respectively, to benefit from the range of different community types found within the region.
<b>Evaluation:</b>	Virtual (iNaturalist) Herbarium – 15% Plant Herbarium – 15% Fungal Herbarium – 15% I.d. Quizzes – 15% Presentation on a Carolinian Species at Risk – 10% Presentation on Final Project – 10% Final Project Writeup – 20%

## An Average Day – What to Expect

(a) Daily timeline	Breakfast will be served at 7:30. On most days we will be occupied from 8:30 to 5:30, with field and/or classroom activities. Field activities will include in situ species identification, specimen collection for herbaria, and data collection for a group project. Classroom activities will include lectures, student presentations, identification of collected specimens, and quizzes. After dinner, there will be free time on most days but we may have 1 or 2 days each week with evening activities.
(b) Work habitat & Physical exertion	We will be walking throughout the parks, on and off trails, for 4-8 hours on most days. Off-trail hiking will be through wooded, sometimes wet, areas.
(c) Common activities	Hiking through wet woodlands with a backpack and equipment, identification of species in the field and in the classroom, photographing and collecting specimens, conducting vegetation surveys.
(d) Weather, dehydration, & biting insects	Weather in May is unpredictable and changeable; it may be cold, with nighttime frosts, or summer-like. Bring a range of clothing suitable for a wide range of weather. Rain gear, including rain pants, is essential as we will be working outside, rain or shine. A large water bottle, sunscreen and sun hat are essential. Mosquitoes and black flies may be abundant; insect repellent is highly recommended. Insect nets will only be useful in some circumstances (because in the bush they may tend to get caught/torn). We will be in the heart of Ontario tick country, at the peak of tick season; there will be ticks (see below).
(e) Toxic/poisonous, wildlife/ plants	Black-legged ticks that can potentially carry Lyme, and (less often) other, diseases are present in Rondeau and Pinery. To protect yourself, long pants tucked into socks, and long sleeves, are required. Light-coloured clothing is recommended to allow easier detection of ticks before they get underneath clothing. Clothing infused with permethrin, a tick repellent more effective than DEET, is available from Mark's Work Wearhouse and is strongly recommended. We will take frequent breaks to check ourselves and each other for ticks and remove ticks quickly, using tick keys, if they do bite. Lyme disease is unlikely to be transmitted unless a tick has been attached for more than 36 hours.  Poison ivy is present in the parks; training will be provided to recognize and avoid this plant. Consumption of any fungal (or plant) material is strictly prohibited, as a number of deadly species occur in Ontario. All Ontario fungi can be handled safely if not ingested.
(f) Sleeping, washroom & laundry facilities	We will be staying in single-accommodation student residences in Ridgetown and London. In the parks there are limited washroom facilities.
(g) Meal plans & food allergies	Breakfast and dinner will be provided by the meal plan services at Ridgetown and London (included in module fee). You must provide your own lunches, including packed lunches when we are in the field.
(h) Non-academic responsibilities	Cleaning of work/lab areas at Ridgetown College and Western University.
(i) Degree of isolation	Ridgetown (population ~3,000) is a small town with a number of restaurants and other businesses. While we are there during the first week, we will drive to and from Rondeau every day (~15 minutes). London is a city of 450,000. During the second week we will commute from our Western university residence in London to Pinery Provincial Park every day (~45 minutes each way).  During the evenings there will be opportunities to shop for food, visit pharmacies etc..
(j) Alcohol & drugs	Drugs and alcohol are not permitted at field, classroom or lab locations.
(k) Vaccinations/ Insurances	Full vaccination against COVID-19 and tetanus is strongly recommended. Any York University vaccination or masking policies that are in effect at the time of the course will be enforced.
(l) Social Situations	Students are required to be considerate of those with whom they share space in classrooms, labs and vehicles, and to work collaboratively with those with whom they will be working on course activities.
(m) Final comments	The Carolinian region is a biodiversity hotspot within Canada that is often overlooked. Given the threats it currently faces from urban development and climate change, it is more important than ever for ecologists working in Ontario to experience and appreciate this hidden natural gem.