

# DO PLANTS REALLY HAVE FAMILIES?

Yes! A *family* of plants includes members that share botanical features. Ranking just above the level of genus, a family includes one or more genera that in turn include one or more species. Members of a family are discernibly similar in appearance, and with a little guidance, many people can learn to recognize plant families.

There are as many as 500 plant families. Some families are quite small: the lonely *Ginkgo biloba* knows no other living relative, just as humans are the lone representative of the family Hominidae. Other families have a wealth of living species. Eleven of the largest and best-known families are featured here on the Conservatory terrace.

