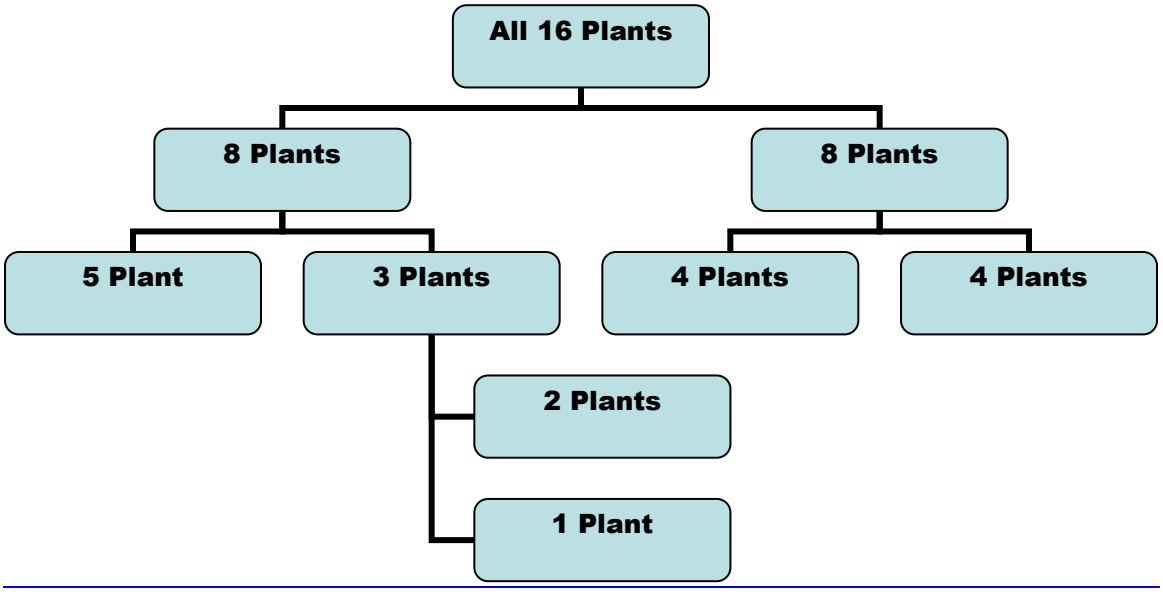
Dichotomous Key

2nd period Field Biology

Using 16 of the plants that we identified in class, create a dichotomous plant key. A dichotomous key uses a series of questions to successively divide a group of plants (or other organisms) into two groups until a particular species is identified.

Working with a partner, you should create a dichotomous key for the specified plants that we've looked at in class. Start by creating a diagram that shows how you will break your plants into successive groups (as started below). Indicate on the diagram what questions you will ask to divide your groups. Groups should divide as equally as possible.



Next, turn your diagram into a formal dichotomous key. Your key should satisfy the following requirements:

1. Each plant should be identified by a unique series of questions
2. Each plant should be identified by its correct common and scientific name. Scientific names are always written in italics, with the first word capitalized and the second word lower case (for example, *Elymus glaucus*).
3. Questions may be used more than once, in different sections of the key – but they will be used to separate different groups of plants!
4. Each question should be identified by a number or a number and a letter, and the two answers to each question should direct the reader to either a specific plant species or to another question.
5. Your questions should be geared towards the types of visual observations someone might make from a plant specimen in the classroom.

Here are some examples of plant keys on-line:

http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/keys/trees/treekey01.html
http://www.zoo.utoronto.ca/able/volumes/vol-12/7-timme/7-timme.htm
http://www.botany. hawaii.edu/reefalgae/Redskey201.htm