

The SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide to Plants

Edited by Jim McCann*

Welcome, and thank you for purchasing or borrowing or stealing the SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Plants. Identifying plants can be a daunting task, but this guide will help you make your way to a positive identification with just a few simple questions. Consider your responses carefully. After all, we're doing science here.

Let's begin.

Question 1: Are you in a field?

if **yes** – proceed to Question 2

if **no** – service not available at this location. Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 House Guide To Plants.”

if **not sure** – you should check! Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Fields.”

Question 2: Is the object you are identifying alive?

if **yes** – proceed to Question 3

if **no** – it is not a plant; perhaps it is a rock? Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Rocks.”

Question 3: Perform an exact count of the number of cells in the object. Do not shirk! Only an exact count will be sufficient to accurately determine the answer to this question. An error of even one cell could change entirely the classification result you attain.

Now, is your count:

many – proceed to Question 4.

one – it is not a plant; perhaps it is a single-celled organism? Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Single-Celled Organisms.”

none – it is not a plant; are you sure it's not a rock? Return to Question 2.

Question 4: Excise a cell from the object and perform a chemical assay on the cell walls. Does the assay report cellulose is present?

if **yes** – proceed to Question 5

if **no** – it is not a plant; perhaps it is an animal? Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Animals.”

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Question 5: Do you still have that cell you removed? You're going to need it for Question 6.

if **yes** – proceed to Question 6

if **yes but you left it in your car** – we talked about this, Gary. This is just not professional. Second strike, Gary. Second strike.

if **no** – well, get another cell! (If you can't find another cell, return to Question 3.) Then proceed to Question 6.

Question 6: Find a chloroplast in your cell.

if **you found one** – proceed to Question 7

if **you don't know what a chloroplast is** – consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Chloroplasts.”

if **there are none in this cell** – well, check the rest of the cells. Seriously, Gary, I'm wondering why we even hired you. Come on, get to it. This is going on your performance review.

if **there are no chloroplasts in the object** – it is not a plant; consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Fungi.”

Question 7: Observe the chloroplast over the course of several days. Is it carrying out photosynthesis?

if **yes** – proceed to Question 8

if **no** – this is not a plant; consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Objects With Non-functional Chloroplasts”

Question 8: Now, did you borrow, steal, or legitimately purchase this guide?

if **borrowed** – Congratulations, the object you have tested *would generally be considered a plant!* Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Plants.”

if **stolen** – Seriously, Gary, theft of company property? This is the last straw. Consider buying the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Plants,” or consider not coming in next Monday. No I'm not talking about a vacation. I'm talking about *you're fired*, Gary.

if **purchased** – Congratulations, the object you have tested *would generally be considered a plant!* Consider buying a second copy of the “SIGBOVIK 2020 Field Guide To Plants.”