Chapter 5: Morphology of Flowering Plants

Comprehensive Study Notes

Class 11 Biology - NCERT Based

EXAM SPRINT - Complete Coverage for NEET and Board Examinations

Introduction

Flowering plants (Angiosperms) show remarkable diversity in external structure or morphology despite sharing common features: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Understanding morphological variations and adaptations is crucial for plant classification and identification.

Basic Plant Organization:

- Underground part: Root system
- **Above ground part**: Shoot system (stem, leaves, flowers, fruits)

Importance of Morphological Study:

- Classification: Standard technical terms and definitions
- **Identification**: Understanding variations and adaptations
- **Evolution**: Structural modifications for different environments
- **Taxonomy**: Basis for plant family characteristics

5.1 THE ROOT

Definition and Origin:

- **Primary root**: Direct elongation of radicle in dicots
- Function: Absorption, anchorage, storage, hormone synthesis
- **Growth pattern**: Grows inside soil, bears lateral roots

Types of Root Systems:

1. Tap Root System:

- **Occurrence**: Dicotyledonous plants
- **Structure**: Primary root + secondary, tertiary roots
- **Example**: Mustard plant
- Characteristics: Main root prominent, lateral roots smaller

2. Fibrous Root System:

- Occurrence: Monocotyledonous plants
- **Structure**: Primary root short-lived, replaced by numerous roots from stem base
- **Example**: Wheat plant
- Characteristics: No main root, all roots similar size

3. Adventitious Root System:

- Origin: From parts other than radicle
- **Examples**: Grass, Monstera, Banyan tree
- **Special cases**: Prop roots, stilt roots

Functions of Root System:

- 1. **Absorption**: Water and minerals from soil
- 2. **Anchorage**: Proper support to plant parts

3. **Storage**: Reserve food materials

4. **Synthesis**: Plant growth regulators (hormones)

5.1.1 Regions of Root

Root Cap:

• **Structure**: Thimble-like covering at apex

• **Function**: Protects tender root apex during soil penetration

• **Composition**: Dead, thick-walled cells

Region of Meristematic Activity:

• **Location**: Few mm above root cap

• Cells: Small, thin-walled, dense protoplasm

• Function: Repeated cell division for growth

Region of Elongation:

• **Location**: Above meristematic region

• **Process**: Rapid cell elongation and enlargement

• **Function**: Responsible for root length increase

Region of Maturation:

• Location: Above elongation region

• Features: Cell differentiation and maturation

• **Root hairs**: Fine, thread-like extensions for absorption

• Function: Water and mineral absorption

Root Modifications (Additional Information for NEET):

For Storage:

• **Fusiform**: Radish (swollen in middle)

• Napiform: Turnip (swollen at top)

• **Conical**: Carrot (broad at top, narrow at bottom)

• **Tuberous**: Sweet potato (swollen without definite shape)

For Support:

• **Prop roots**: Banyan tree

• **Stilt roots**: Maize, sugarcane

• Buttress roots: Large trees

For Respiration:

• **Pneumatophores**: Mangrove plants

• Function: Gaseous exchange in waterlogged soils

5.2 THE STEM

Definition and Characteristics:

• Structure: Ascending axis bearing branches, leaves, flowers, fruits

• Origin: Develops from plumule of germinating seed

• Features: Bears nodes and internodes

• Color: Generally green when young, woody and brown when mature

Distinguishing Features:

Nodes and Internodes:

• **Nodes**: Regions where leaves arise

• Internodes: Portions between two nodes

• **Significance**: Characteristic feature distinguishing stem from root

Buds:

• Terminal bud: At stem tip

• **Axillary bud**: In leaf axil

• **Function**: Give rise to branches

Functions of Stem:

1. **Support**: Spreading branches with leaves, flowers, fruits

2. **Conduction**: Water, minerals, and photosynthates transport

3. **Storage**: Food storage in some stems

4. **Protection**: Thorns and spines

5. **Vegetative propagation**: Runners, stolons, bulbs

Stem Modifications (Important for NEET):

Underground Modifications:

• **Rhizome**: Ginger, turmeric (horizontal growth)

• **Tuber**: Potato (swollen tips of stolons)

• **Bulb**: Onion (shortened stem with fleshy leaves)

• **Corm**: Colocasia (swollen stem base)

Aerial Modifications:

• **Tendril**: Grape, cucumber (climbing support)

- **Thorn**: Bougainvillea, lemon (protection)
- **Phylloclade**: Opuntia (flattened, leaf-like)
- **Cladode**: Asparagus (cylindrical, green branches)

5.3 THE LEAF

Definition and Origin:

- **Structure**: Lateral, generally flattened organ on stem
- Origin: Develops at nodes from shoot apical meristem
- **Arrangement**: Acropetal order (young leaves toward apex)
- **Function**: Primary organ for photosynthesis

5.3.1 Parts of a Typical Leaf:

1. Leaf Base:

- Function: Attaches leaf to stem
- **Stipules**: Two lateral, small leaf-like structures
- Monocots: Expands into sheath covering stem
- Pulvinus: Swollen leaf base in leguminous plants

2. Petiole:

- Structure: Stalk connecting leaf base to lamina
- Function: Positions blade for optimal light exposure
- Flexibility: Allows movement in wind for cooling
- **Sessile leaves**: Leaves without petiole

3. Lamina (Leaf Blade):

• **Structure**: Green, expanded portion

• Midrib: Prominent central vein

• **Veins and veinlets**: Transport channels and support

• Variations: Shape, margin, apex, surface texture

5.3.1 Venation Patterns:

Reticulate Venation:

• **Pattern**: Veinlets form network

• **Occurrence**: Dicotyledonous plants

• Examples: Mango, peepal

Parallel Venation:

• **Pattern**: Veins run parallel to each other

• Occurrence: Monocotyledonous plants

• **Examples**: Grass, banana, maize

5.3.2 Types of Leaves:

Simple Leaves:

• **Definition**: Lamina entire or incisions don't reach midrib

• Axillary bud: Present in axil of petiole

• Examples: Mango, peepal

Compound Leaves:

• **Definition**: Incisions reach midrib, breaking into leaflets

• Axillary bud: Present in axil of petiole, not leaflets

• Types: Pinnately and palmately compound

Pinnately Compound:

• **Structure**: Leaflets on common axis (rachis)

• Rachis: Represents midrib of leaf

• Examples: Neem, rose, tamarind

Palmately Compound:

• **Structure**: Leaflets attached at common point (petiole tip)

• **Examples**: Silk cotton, cannabis

5.3.3 Phyllotaxy (Leaf Arrangement):

Alternate Phyllotaxy:

• **Pattern**: Single leaf at each node alternately

• **Examples**: China rose, mustard, sunflower

Opposite Phyllotaxy:

• Pattern: Pair of leaves at each node, opposite each other

• **Examples**: Calotropis, guava

Whorled Phyllotaxy:

• Pattern: More than two leaves at each node forming whorl

• **Examples**: Alstonia

Leaf Modifications (NEET Important):

For Support:

• **Tendrils**: Pea (leaflet modification)

• **Hooks**: Bougainvillea

For Protection:

• **Spines**: Cactus, Opuntia

• **Scale leaves**: Underground stems

For Storage:

• Succulent leaves: Aloe, Agave

• Bulb scales: Onion

For Insect Capture:

• **Pitcher**: Nepenthes

• Venus flytrap: Dionaea

5.4 THE INFLORESCENCE

Definition:

• Concept: Arrangement of flowers on floral axis

• **Formation**: Shoot apical meristem → floral meristem

• Modification: Internodes don't elongate, axis condenses

• Solitary flower: When single shoot tip becomes flower

Classification Based on Growth Pattern:

5.4.1 Racemose Inflorescence:

Characteristics:

- **Main axis**: Continues to grow (indeterminate)
- Flower arrangement: Lateral, in acropetal succession
- Age pattern: Older flowers toward base, younger toward apex

Types:

- **Raceme**: Flowers with stalks on elongated axis (mustard)
- **Spike**: Flowers without stalks on elongated axis (Achyranthes)
- Catkin: Spike with unisexual flowers (mulberry)
- **Spadix**: Spike with fleshy axis (palm)
- Corymb: Flowers at same level due to different stalk lengths (candytuft)
- **Umbel**: Flowers arise from common point (onion)
- **Head/Capitulum**: Sessile flowers on flat receptacle (sunflower)

5.4.2 Cymose Inflorescence:

Characteristics:

- **Main axis**: Terminates in flower (determinate)
- Growth: Limited
- **Flower arrangement**: Basipetal order (older flowers toward apex)

Types:

• Monochasial cyme: One lateral branch (Heliotropium)

- **Dichasial cyme**: Two lateral branches (jasmine)
- **Polychasial cyme**: Many lateral branches (Callistemon)

Special Inflorescences:

- **Cyathium**: Euphorbia (cup-shaped with unisexual flowers)
- **Hypanthodium**: Ficus (hollow receptacle with flowers inside)
- **Verticillaster**: False whorl in mints

5.5 THE FLOWER

Definition and Function:

- Structure: Reproductive unit in angiosperms
- **Purpose**: Sexual reproduction
- **Composition**: Four whorls on swollen stalk end (thalamus/receptacle)

Flower Symmetry:

Actinomorphic (Radial Symmetry):

- **Definition**: Can be divided into equal halves by any radial plane
- Examples: Mustard, datura, chilli
- Symbol: ⊕

Zygomorphic (Bilateral Symmetry):

- **Definition**: Can be divided into equal halves by only one vertical plane
- Examples: Pea, gulmohur, bean, Cassia
- Symbol: %

Asymmetric (Irregular):

• **Definition**: Cannot be divided into equal halves by any plane

• Examples: Canna

Flower Sexuality:

Bisexual (Perfect/Hermaphrodite):

• **Structure**: Both androecium and gynoecium present

• Symbol: ♥

• **Examples**: Hibiscus, mustard

Unisexual (Imperfect):

• **Types**: Only stamens (male ♂) or only carpels (female ♀)

• **Plant types**: Monoecious (both sexes on same plant), dioecious (sexes on different plants)

Floral Parts Number:

• **Trimerous**: Parts in multiples of 3 (monocots)

• **Tetramerous**: Parts in multiples of 4

• **Pentamerous**: Parts in multiples of 5 (dicots)

Bract Presence:

• **Bracteate**: With bracts (reduced leaves at pedicel base)

• **Ebracteate**: Without bracts

Position of Ovary:

Hypogynous:

• Position: Gynoecium at highest position, other parts below

• **Ovary**: Superior

• **Examples**: Mustard, china rose, brinjal

Perigynous:

• **Position**: Gynoecium central, other parts on thalamus rim at same level

• Ovary: Half inferior

• **Examples**: Plum, rose, peach

Epigynous:

• **Position**: Thalamus margin grows upward, fusing with ovary

• **Ovary**: Inferior (other parts above ovary)

• Examples: Guava, cucumber, sunflower ray florets

5.5.1 Parts of Flower:

5.5.1.1 Calyx:

Structure and Function:

• Position: Outermost whorl

• **Members**: Sepals

• Characteristics: Generally green, leaf-like

• **Function**: Protection during bud stage

Types:

• **Polysepalous**: Sepals free (china rose)

• **Gamosepalous**: Sepals united (hibiscus)

• Persistence: Persistent or caducous (falling off)

5.5.1.2 Corolla:

Structure and Function:

• Position: Second whorl

• **Members**: Petals

• Characteristics: Brightly colored

• Function: Attract insects for pollination

Types:

• **Polypetalous**: Petals free (rose)

• **Gamopetalous**: Petals united (morning glory)

Shapes:

• Tubular: Tube-like (tobacco)

• **Bell-shaped**: Campanulate (morning glory)

• Funnel-shaped: Infundibuliform (Datura)

• Wheel-shaped: Rotate (tomato)

Aestivation (Arrangement in Bud):

Valvate:

• Pattern: Sepals/petals just touch at margins without overlapping

• **Examples**: Calotropis, Annona

Twisted (Contorted):

- **Pattern**: One margin overlaps the next in regular sequence
- **Examples**: China rose, lady's finger, cotton

Imbricate:

• **Pattern**: Margins overlap irregularly

• **Examples**: Cassia, gulmohur

Vexillary (Papilionaceous):

• **Pattern**: Five petals - largest (standard) overlaps two lateral (wings) which overlap two smallest anterior (keel)

• **Examples**: Pea, bean family

5.5.1.3 Androecium:

Structure:

• **Position**: Third whorl (male reproductive)

• Members: Stamens

• Parts: Filament (stalk) + anther

• Anther structure: Bilobed, each lobe with two pollen sacs

• **Function**: Pollen grain production

Stamen Attachment:

• **Polyandrous**: Stamens free

• **Epipetalous**: Attached to petals (brinjal)

• **Epiphyllous**: Attached to perianth (lily)

Stamen Union:

- Monoadelphous: United into one bundle (china rose)
- **Diadelphous**: United into two bundles (pea)
- Polyadelphous: United into many bundles (citrus)

Stamen Length Variation:

- **Didynamous**: Four stamens, two long, two short (Salvia)
- **Tetradynamous**: Six stamens, four long, two short (mustard)

Special Terms:

- **Staminode**: Sterile stamen
- Anther dehiscence: Longitudinal, transverse, or poricidal

5.5.1.4 Gynoecium:

Structure:

- **Position**: Central whorl (female reproductive)
- Members: Carpels
- **Parts**: Stigma + style + ovary

Carpel Parts:

- **Stigma**: Receptive surface for pollen (at style tip)
- **Style**: Elongated tube connecting ovary to stigma
- **Ovary**: Enlarged basal part containing ovules

Carpel Arrangement:

• **Apocarpous**: Carpels free (lotus, rose)

• **Syncarpous**: Carpels fused (mustard, tomato)

Placentation (Ovule Arrangement):

Marginal:

• **Structure**: Placenta forms ridge along ventral suture

• Ovules: In two rows

• **Examples**: Pea, bean

Axile:

• **Structure**: Placenta axial in multilocular ovary

• **Examples**: China rose, tomato, lemon

Parietal:

• **Structure**: Ovules on inner ovary wall

• Chamber: One, becomes two due to false septum

• **Examples**: Mustard, Argemone

Free Central:

• **Structure**: Ovules on central axis, no septa

• **Examples**: Dianthus, Primrose

Basal:

• **Structure**: Placenta at ovary base

• **Ovules**: Single ovule attached

• **Examples**: Sunflower, marigold

Central:

- **Structure**: Ovules attached to central column
- **Examples**: Members of Caryophyllaceae

5.6 THE FRUIT

Definition and Formation:

- Origin: Mature or ripened ovary after fertilization
- Parthenocarpic fruit: Formed without fertilization
- **Structure**: Pericarp (fruit wall) + seeds

Pericarp Structure:

Layers:

- **Epicarp**: Outer layer (skin)
- Mesocarp: Middle layer (flesh)
- **Endocarp**: Inner layer (around seed)

Fruit Types (Important for NEET):

Simple Fruits:

- **Drupe**: Fleshy fruit with stony endocarp (mango, coconut)
- **Berry**: Fleshy with soft endocarp (tomato, grapes)
- **Pome**: Fleshy with cartilaginous endocarp (apple, pear)
- Capsule: Dry, dehiscent (cotton, poppy)
- **Nut**: Dry, indehiscent, hard (groundnut)

Aggregate Fruits:

• Formation: Multiple carpels of single flower

• **Examples**: Raspberry, strawberry

Composite Fruits:

• Formation: Multiple flowers of inflorescence

• **Examples**: Pineapple, fig, mulberry

Special Cases:

• **Mango**: Well-differentiated drupe (thin epicarp, fleshy mesocarp, stony endocarp)

• Coconut: Fibrous mesocarp drupe

• False fruits: Apple, strawberry (developed from thalamus)

5.7 THE SEED

Formation and Structure:

• Origin: Ovules after fertilization

• **Basic structure**: Seed coat + embryo

• Embryo components: Radicle + embryonal axis + cotyledons

5.7.1 Dicotyledonous Seed Structure:

Seed Coat:

• **Layers**: Testa (outer) + tegmen (inner)

• Hilum: Scar of attachment to fruit

• Micropyle: Small pore above hilum

Embryo:

• Cotyledons: Two, fleshy, food storage

• Radicle: Future root (at one end of embryonal axis)

• **Plumule**: Future shoot (at other end of embryonal axis)

Endosperm:

• **Endospermic seeds**: Endosperm present (castor)

• Non-endospermic seeds: Endosperm absent (bean, gram, pea)

5.7.2 Monocotyledonous Seed Structure:

Maize Seed:

• **Seed coat**: Fused with fruit wall (pericarp)

• **Endosperm**: Bulky, food storage

• **Aleurone layer**: Proteinous layer separating endosperm and embryo

Embryo Structure:

• **Scutellum**: Single, large, shield-shaped cotyledon

• Axis: Short with plumule and radicle

• Coleoptile: Sheath covering plumule

• Coleorhiza: Sheath covering radicle

Seed Types Based on Endosperm:

• **Endospermic**: Food stored in endosperm (castor, coconut, maize)

• **Non-endospermic**: Food stored in cotyledons (bean, pea, gram)

5.8 SEMI-TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Components of Description:

1. **Habit**: Herb, shrub, tree

2. **Vegetative characters**: Root, stem, leaves

3. Floral characters: Inflorescence, flower parts

4. Floral diagram: Visual representation

5. Floral formula: Symbolic representation

Floral Formula Symbols:

Basic Symbols:

- **Br**: Bracteate
- **K**: Calyx (sepals)
- **C**: Corolla (petals)
- **P**: Perianth (when calyx and corolla similar)
- **A**: Androecium (stamens)
- **G**: Gynoecium (carpels)

Additional Symbols:

- **G**: Superior ovary
- **G**: Inferior ovary
- ♂: Male flower
- ♀: Female flower

- \(\dagge\): Bisexual flower
- \oplus : Actinomorphic
- %: Zygomorphic
- (): Fusion (gamosepalous/gamopetalous)
- Line above: Adhesion

Example - Mustard (Brassicaceae):

Floral Formula: $\bigoplus \normalfont{V} \normalfont{K}_{2+2} \normalfont{C}_4 \normalfont{A}_{2+4} \normalfont{G}_{(2)}$

Interpretation:

- Actinomorphic, bisexual flower
- Calyx: 4 sepals (2+2 arrangement)
- Corolla: 4 free petals
- Androecium: 6 stamens (2 short + 4 long)
- Gynoecium: 2 fused carpels, superior ovary

5.9 FAMILY SOLANACEAE (Potato Family)

Distribution:

- **Range**: Tropics, subtropics, temperate zones
- **Size**: Large family
- Common name: Nightshade family

Vegetative Characters:

Habit:

• Plants: Mostly herbs, shrubs, rarely small trees

Stem:

• **Type**: Herbaceous, rarely woody

• Nature: Aerial, erect, cylindrical, branched

• Structure: Solid or hollow

• **Surface**: Hairy or glabrous

• **Special**: Underground stem in potato

Leaves:

• Arrangement: Alternate

• Type: Simple, rarely pinnately compound

• **Stipules**: Exstipulate

• Venation: Reticulate

Floral Characters:

Inflorescence:

• **Types**: Solitary, axillary, or cymose

Flower:

• Sexuality: Bisexual

• **Symmetry**: Actinomorphic

Calyx:

• Number: 5 sepals

• **Union**: United (gamosepalous)

• **Persistence**: Persistent

• **Aestivation**: Valvate

Corolla:

• Number: 5 petals

• **Union**: United (gamopetalous)

• **Aestivation**: Valvate

Androecium:

• **Number**: 5 stamens

• Attachment: Epipetalous

Gynoecium:

• **Carpels**: 2 (bicarpellary)

• Position: Obliquely placed

• **Union**: Syncarpous

• **Ovary**: Superior, bilocular

• Placentation: Axile

• Ovules: Many on swollen placenta

Fruit:

• **Types**: Berry or capsule

Seeds:

• Number: Many

• **Endosperm**: Present (endospermic)

Floral Formula:

Economic Importance:

Food Plants:

• **Tomato**: Lycopersicon esculentum

• Brinjal/Eggplant: Solanum melongena

• Potato: Solanum tuberosum

Spices:

• Chilli: Capsicum annuum

Medicinal:

• Belladonna: Atropa belladonna

• Ashwagandha: Withania somnifera

Other Uses:

• **Tobacco**: Nicotiana tabacum (fumigatory)

• **Petunia**: Ornamental

Important Members:

• **Solanum nigrum**: Makoi (black nightshade)

• **Datura**: Thorn apple

• **Physalis**: Ground cherry

NEET-Specific Important Points

High-Yield Topics for NEET:

1. Root System Types:

- Tap root vs fibrous root
- Root modifications and functions
- Root regions and their characteristics

2. Leaf Morphology:

- Simple vs compound leaves
- Venation patterns (diagnostic for monocot/dicot)
- Phyllotaxy types
- Leaf modifications

3. Flower Structure:

- Parts of flower and their functions
- Placentation types (very important)
- Floral formula interpretation
- Ovary position (superior/inferior)

4. Inflorescence Types:

- Racemose vs cymose
- Economic importance of different types

5. Seed Structure:

• Monocot vs dicot seed differences

• Endospermic vs non-endospermic

Common NEET Question Patterns:

1. Identification Questions:

- Identify plant parts from diagrams
- Recognize placentation types
- Distinguish inflorescence types

2. Comparison Questions:

- Monocot vs dicot characteristics
- Simple vs compound leaves
- Root system types

3. Functional Questions:

- Functions of different plant parts
- Adaptive significance of modifications
- Economic importance

Memory Aids and Mnemonics

Root Regions (Base to Tip):

"My Enthusiastic Elephants Make"

- **M**aturation
- **E**longation

- **M**eristematic
- **M**ake (Root cap)

Placentation Types:

"Many Ants Prefer Big Fresh Carrots"

- **M**arginal
- **A**xile
- **P**arietal
- **B**asal
- Free central
- **C**entral

Aestivation Types:

"Very Intelligent Tigers Visit"

- **V**exillary
- Imbricate
- **T**wisted
- **V**alvate

Floral Parts (Outside to Inside):

"Can Cows Always Give"

- **C**alyx
- **C**orolla
- **A**ndroecium

Practice Questions for NEET

Multiple Choice Questions:

- 1. Which type of root system is found in monocotyledonous plants? a) Tap root b) Fibrous root c) Adventitious root d) Both b and c
- 2. In which type of placentation are ovules borne on the central axis with no septa? a) Axile b)
 Parietal c) Free central d) Basal
- 3. The flower of mustard plant has: a) 4 sepals and 4 petals b) 6 stamens (4 long + 2 short) c) Superior ovary d) All of the above
- 4. Scutellum is found in: a) Dicotyledonous seed b) Monocotyledonous seed c) Both d) None
- 5. Which family is known as potato family? a) Brassicaceae b) Solanaceae c) Fabaceae d) Malvaceae

Short Answer Questions:

- 1. Differentiate between simple and compound leaves with examples.
- 2. What is placentation? Describe different types with examples.
- 3. Define phyllotaxy. Explain its types with suitable examples.
- 4. Describe the structure of a dicotyledonous seed.
- 5. What are the distinguishing features of family Solanaceae?

Long Answer Questions:

- 1. Describe the different types of inflorescence with examples.
- 2. Explain the structure and functions of different parts of a flower.

3. Compare the morphological features of monocotyledonous and dicotyledonous plants.

Important Diagrams for NEET

Must-know Diagrams:

1. Root regions: Showing root cap, meristematic, elongation, and maturation zones

2. **Types of roots**: Tap, fibrous, adventitious

3. Leaf types: Simple, pinnately compound, palmately compound

4. **Venation**: Reticulate vs parallel

5. **Placentation types**: All six types with cross-sections

6. Flower structure: Complete flower with all parts labeled

7. **Seed structure**: Both monocot and dicot seeds

8. Floral diagram: Standard representation method

Economic Importance Summary

Food Plants:

• **Cereals**: Wheat, rice, maize (monocots)

• **Pulses**: Pea, bean, gram (legumes)

• **Vegetables**: Tomato, brinjal, potato (Solanaceae)

• Fruits: Mango, apple, orange

Medicinal Plants:

• Solanaceae: Belladonna, ashwagandha

• Others: Neem, tulsi, aloe

Commercial Plants:

• **Fiber**: Cotton (Malvaceae)

• Oil: Mustard, sunflower

• **Spices**: Chilli, turmeric

Ornamental Plants:

• Flowers: Rose, jasmine, marigold

• **Foliage**: Ferns, palms

EXAM SPRINT - Master morphology of flowering plants through systematic study of plant parts, their modifications, family characteristics, and practical applications. Focus on diagrams, comparisons, and economic importance for comprehensive NEET preparation.

Source: NCERT Biology Class 11, Chapter 5 - Complete coverage for NEET and Board examination success