

FAMILY ASTERACEAE

Mostly herbacious, but often shrubs, vines, or occasionally trees

Leaves usually alternate, but opposite in some major groups

Leaves simple or compound

Flowers in heads

Heads subtended by leafy bracts (phyllaries), organized into racemes, corymbs, panicles

Flowers bisexual or unisexual

Two types of flowers: actinomorphic disc flowers and zygomorphic ray flowers

Heads may contain disc flowers only, ray flowers only, or both

Calyx reduced to separate scales or bristles (pappus), or absent

Corolla of five fused petals (sometimes four)

Androecium of five (sometimes four) stamens fused by their anthers to form an anther tube

Gynoecium of two united carpels but with only one chamber in the ovary; two styles or stigmas

Ovary inferior

Fruit an achene

Some Common Names: Sunflower, Aster, Daisy, Ragweed, Zinnia, Marigold, Goldenrod, Thistle, Dandelion, Cosmos, Cocklebur, Chrysanthemum

Some Important Plants: Lettuce, Artichoke, Chicory, Sunflower, Safflower, Echinacea

Member of Subclass Asteridae

	Primitive	Advanced
Sepals (Pappus)		
Few or absent		x
Separate	x	
Petals		
5 (or 4)		x
United		x
Stamens		
5 (or 4)		x
United by anthers		x
Pistil		
1pistil		x
2 united carpels		x
Ovary inferior		x
Symmetry		
Actinomorphic	x	
Zygomorphic		x