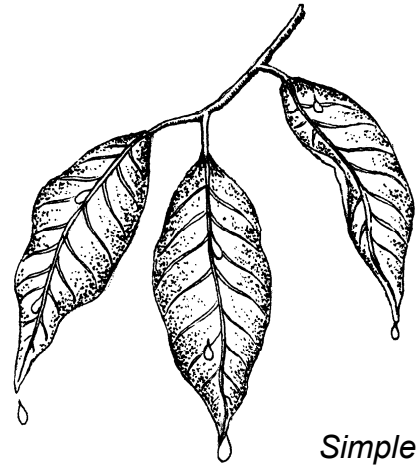


Tropical Factsheets

Leaf shapes

Simple leaf

- Most **simple leaves** have a central vein or **midrib** from which secondary veins branch off. These veins carry nutrients to and from the tissue of the leaf. Many rainforest leaves have **drip tips** which help to funnel water away from the leaf surface.



Simple leaf

Lobed leaf

- To transport nutrients and water more efficiently, some leaves have a deeply **lobed** shape, and have no leaf tissue in those areas far from the major veins.



Lobed leaves

Compound leaf

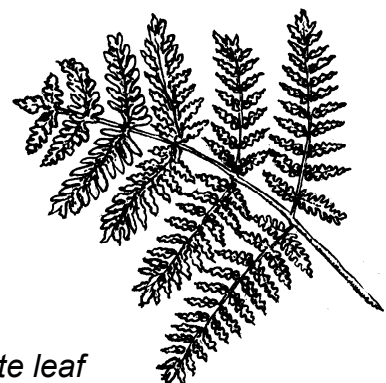
- Other plants take this lobing around the secondary veins a stage further so the original leaf looks like a collection of smaller leaves, called **leaflets**. Such leaves are called **compound** or **pinnate leaves**.



Compound leaf

Bi-pinnate leaf

- In **bi-pinnate leaves** the leaflets form around tertiary veins, instead of secondary veins. Therefore, what looks like many small leaves are actually **leaflets**, which are all part of just **one compound leaf**.
- One way to distinguish a **leaflet** from a **simple leaf** is to look at the junction between the leaf-bearing twig and the stalk of the leaf itself. With a **simple leaf** there is a **bud** at this junction. There is **never** a bud at the junction between a leaflet and its stalk (which is really a primary or secondary vein).



Bi-pinnate leaf