Native plants benefit native wildlife and use less water!

Text written by staff. Photos by Roy Barnes and Dr. John Weser.

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<td>Pencil Cholla</td>
<td>Yerba Mansa</td>
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</table>
Scientific Name: *Hymenoxys acaulis*
Perrennial herbaceous shrub
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Grows to about 1 ft. tall
It has yellow flowers that bloom from spring to fall

**Photo:** Taken at Scottsdale Community College on June 10, 2007.
ARIZONA SYCAMORE (PLATANUS WRIGHTII)

Scientific Name: *Platanus wrightii*
Native riparian tree
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Wind pollinated
Found in riparian woodlands
Will lose leaves as temperatures drop below freezing

**Photo:** to be added.
ARROW WEED (PLUCHEA SERICEA)

Scientific Name: *Pluchea sericea*
Native evergreen bush
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Forms dense shrubs up to 10ft
Flowers are lavender
Arrows were made from this plant
Grows close to rivers

**Photo:** To be added.
BAJA FAIRY DUSTER (CALLIANDRA CALIFORNICA)

Scientific Name: *Calliandra californica*
Exotic evergreen shrub
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Flowers attract hummingbirds and insects
Desert animals feed of foliage
Flowers are puff-shaped and bright red
Grows to 4 ft wide and high

Photo: to be added.
**Scientific Name: Yucca baccata**
- Perennial from the Agave Family
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Pollinated by yucca moths that rely exclusively on this plant. The moths themselves depend on the yucca, because they lay their eggs on the ovary. When the eggs hatch, they feed upon some of the developing yucca seeds.
- Has banana-like fruits
- During this plant’s lifetime it will flower many times; always recuperating for several years afterward.
- Native American ate fruit and made rope from the green blades; leaves were used to make baskets, sandals and mats.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown’s Ranch on October 26, 2007.

**Brown’s Ranch:**

[Image of the plant]

[Image of the plant]

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BARREL CACTUS (FEROCACTUS SPP.)

Scientific Name: *Ferocactus* spp.
Cactus, native to the Sonoran Desert
Most of the species flower in summer and are pollinated by bees
Usually live less than a century
Also known as compass cactus
They range from less than 1 ft tall to 6-12 ft tall
They can store gallons of water within their bodies
It is a myth that water can easily be obtained from this cactus in an emergency

Photo: Taken at Jewel Creek Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
BEAVERTAIL CACTUS (OPUNTIA BASILARIS)

Scientific Name: *Opuntia basilaris*
Native cactus
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Made up of hundreds of blue-gray fleshy pads
Rose purple flowers bloom from spring to summer
The beavertail is smaller than a prickly pear cactus

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Parkinsonia florida*
- Deciduous tree
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- The state tree of Arizona.
- Pollinated by numerous species of solitary bees such as leaf-cutter bees, bumblebees, and carpenter bees.
- When pods fall bruchid beetle larvae consume them. Javelina, rock squirrels, quail and doves eat Blue Palo Verde seeds.
- This tree provides nesting sites: for example, the Verdin often builds a nest in a palo verde tree.
- This tree provides insect prey for many birds.
- Seeds are water dispersed by flash floods which cause scarifying of the pod case which allows for easier germination.
- Found mostly in riparian habitat due to its high need for water.
- Can grow 10-12m and its leaves are blue-green.

**Photo:** Taken at Scottsdale Community College on March 28, 2003.
BOOJUM TREE (FOUQUIERIA COLUMNARIS)

Scientific Name: *Fouquieria columnaris*

Stem succulent plant
Native to the Sonoran Desert
White fragrant flowers bloom at the top of the primary stem from July to September
This plant is one giant succulent stem with hundreds of non-succulent horizontal branches all lined with spines
Grows up to 60ft. tall
This is a very bizarre looking plant found mainly in Baja California

**Photo:** to be added.
BRITTLEBUSH (ENCELIA FARINOSE)

Scientific Name: *Encelia farinose*
- Shrubby perennial, native to the Sonoran Desert
- A favorite food of chuckwallas
- Pollinated by insects
- Flowers are bright and daisy-like
- Rain runoff from brittlebush leaves can deter the germination of some plant species
- Some species of annual flowers can only grow beneath the brittlebush
- Gum from the stems is used by the Tohono O'odham as incense

Photo: to be added.
BUCKHORN CHOLLA (OPUNTIA ACANTHOCARPA)

Scientific Name: *Opuntia acanthocarpa*
- Cactus, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Birds that nest in this plant include the Cactus Wren and the Curve-billed Thrasher. Other nesters that can be found less often here include the Mourning Dove and the House Finch.
- Buds eaten by Tohono O'odham

Photo: Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.

Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek:

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**CALIFORNIA FAN PALM (WASHINGTONIA FILIFERA)**

Scientific Name: *Washingtonia filifera*

Native tree

Native to the Sonoran Desert

Many species use this tree as a home, living in the thatch of dead leaves that forms in layers on the trunk, ie; Orioles, lizards, scorpions, spiders and paper wasps

Giant palm borers (thumb sized beetles) nest and mate in this tree as well as use the trunk tissue for food during their pupae stage

Has tiny white to cream colored flowers

Bears small hard fruit in huge bunches during the fall

The fruit is eaten by coyotes and were previously harvested by Native Americans

The leaves can be used for waterproof shelter that lasts for years; the trunks are used to make corrals and fences

Only grows where water is near the grounds surface

Is thick trunked and grows to about 45 ft.

Can live 150 to 200 years

**Photo:** to be added.
CASCALOTE (CAESALPINIA CACALACO)

Scientific Name: *Caesalpinia cacalaco*
Native evergreen tree
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Bear clusters of yellow pea-like flowers
Grows 10-15 ft. tall

**Photo:** to be added.

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**Scientific Name:** *Acacia greggii*

- Winter deciduous shrub or small tree.
- Native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Seeds are eaten by quail, doves, rodents, and javelina in the summer and fall.
- Verdins can be found in this tree.
- This tree provides escape cover for wildlife.
- The O'odham drink a tea made from this plant, and the Seri and Yaqui use the wood from this plant to make bows.
- They can live at least 130 years and can grow up to 20 ft tall.

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.

**Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek:**
Scientific Name: *Leucophyllum frutescens*
Rounded shrub
Native to Chihuahuan Desert
Flowers are rose-pink or lavender

Flowering triggered by high humidity or high soil moisture after rains

This is a hardy plant that can face droughts, freezes, high winds, hungry deer, and blazing heat

Dried leaves and flowers can be brewed into a sedative herbal tea; this tea is also used to treat colds, flues, coughs and rheumatism

Also called Texas Sage or Texas Ranger

**Photo:** to be added.
CHAIN-FRUIT CHOLLA (CYLINDROPUNTIA FULGIDA)

Scientific Name: *Cylindropuntia fulgida*
- Cactus native to the Sonoran Desert
- Seeds are dispersed by the animals that eat them
- Has one inch pink flowers that open on summer afternoons
- Flowers grow from the previous year's fruits and form a chain
- Detached joints will generate new plants by rooting and branching
- This cactus can easily attach itself to anything that passes by
- Often grow in dense clonal colonies
- Averages about 8 ft. tall
- Also called Jumping Cholla

Photo: Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.

Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek:
**Scientific Name:** *Malva parviflora*

- Weed introduced from Europe
- Used as food plants by the larvae of some Lepidoptera species (butterflies, moths and skippers)
- Young mallow leaves can be used as a substitute for lettuce and older leaves can be cooked as a vegetable
- In the family Malvaceae
- Common English name is mallow
- It is an invasive weed or garden flower
- Boiled and eaten by Native Americans

**Photo:** To be added.
CHRISTMAS CHOLLA (CYLINDROPUNTIA LEPTOCAULIS)

Scientific Name: *Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*

- Cactus native to the Sonoran Desert
- Pollinated by hummingbirds, honey bees, and one species of cactus bee
- Flowers are pale yellow and open in the afternoons of May and June for about 3 hours
- Fruit is bright red and remains on the plant through winter
- Usually grows among other plants such as bursages and creosote which makes them difficult to see
- Is made up of thin stems and grows to about 2 ft. tall

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel Creek Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
CHUPAROSA (JUSTICIA CALIFORNICA)

Scientific Name: *Justicia californica*

Evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
Pollinated by hummingbirds
Flowers are tubular, red and cover the plant in the spring and fall
Native Americans sucked the flowers for the sweet nectar
Grows 3 to 6 ft. tall
Also known as hummingbird bush

**Photo:** to be added.
Scientific Name: *Larrea tridentate*

- Shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Jackrabbits feed upon leaves during lean times.
- Rodents dig their burrows beneath the canopy.
- 60 species of insects depend on the creosote, 22 species of which are bees that feed exclusively on the flower.
- The creosote grasshopper and katydid are specific to the plant.
- Medicinal plant for some American Indians.
- Plants produce clones.

- Some plants may live for thousands of years.
- Creosotes are the most drought tolerant plants in North America.

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
Scientific Name: *Chrysactinia mexicana*
Perennial evergreen shrub
Native to Chihuahuan Desert
Flowers are daisy-like
Grows in a mound shape, 2ft tall and wide

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Baccharis sarothroides*

- Perennial native to the Sonoran Desert
- Blooms in the fall; seeds are dispersed by wind.
- Flowers attract butterflies and insects.
- A pioneer plant that colonizes disturbed soils.
- Usually grows from 3-6 ft. tall; can be up to 10 ft. tall.
- American Indians use plant ends as brooms and also chew stems to ease toothaches.

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Institute at the Gilbert Water Ranch in 2007. Note the Painted Lady Butterfly visiting the plant.

**Riparian Institute at Gilbert Water Ranch:**
Scientific Name: *Lysiloma watsoni*
Deciduous tree native to the Sonoran Desert
Attracts butterflies
Blooms creamy white colored flowers in the spring
**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Sphaeralcea ambigua*  
- Perennial native to the Sonoran Desert  
- Browsed by bighorn sheep, and domestic sheep  
- Tiny hairs on plants discourage herbivores  
- Grow to about 3 ft  
- Produces orange colored flowers. Many butterflies are attracted to the flowers and feed on the nectar  
- The Common Checkered Skipper butterflies lay their eggs on this plant  

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Celtis pallida*
- Evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Many birds and small mammals feed on the berries; deer and jackrabbits eat the leaves.
- This is a good place for ground dwelling animals and birds to nest.
- Migrating warblers can be found here.
- In August the orange berries ripen.
- Grows from 3-10 ft. tall.
- Has medium green leaves that are intricately branched.

Photo: Taken at Jewel of the Creek, Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
**Scientific Name:** *Anisacanthus thurberi*  
- Deciduous perennial native to the Sonoran Desert  
- Pollinated by hummingbirds and attracts some insects  
- Browsed by sheep and cattle  

**Photo:** To be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Baileya multiradiata*
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Short lived perennial, annual.
- Pollinated by bees and butterflies.
- Sheep and goats are poisoned from eating this plant.
- Blooms in response to rain.
- Reseeds readily.
- According to Epple, desert marigolds are an annual herb.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch on January 14, 2003.

**Brown's Ranch:**

**Scottsdale Community College:**

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Scientific Name: *Asclepias subulata*
Native to the Sonoran Desert
Milkweed butterflies feed only on milkweed plants; these butterflies have adapted to ingest this poisonous plant and become poisonous to their predators.
Many butterflies are attracted to the clusters of small yellow flowers.
Queen butterflies lay their eggs on the stems.
**Photo:** to be added.
Scientific Name: *Dasylirion wheeleri*
Perennial evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
Attracts many insects including flies, bees, wasps, and butterflies when in bloom
Consists of a rosette of long leaves that is usually stemless and about 6 ft across
The rosettes only flower once in several years
Older plants may develop trunks up to 6 ft. tall
The Tohono Oodham wove sleeping mats from the leaves

**Photo:** To be added.
DESERT WILLOW (CHILOPSIS LINEARIS)

Scientific Name: *Chilopsis linearis*
Tree native to the Sonoran Desert
Will flower from spring to fall if enough water is present
Pollinated by large bees such as carpenter bees and bumblebees
Pods contain winged seeds

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Preserve at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.
DESSERT ZINNIA (ZINNIA ACEROSA)

Scientific Name: *Zinnia acerosa*
Perennial shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
Blooms twice a year, in the spring and after the summer rains
Grows to about 10 inches

**Photo:** to be added.

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Scientific Name: *Clematis drummondii*

- Perennial semi-woody vine, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Attractive to bees, butterflies and birds
- It is dioecious with male and female flowers on separate plants
- Usually climbs on the ground over shrubs and trees
- Can grow up to 25 ft.
- Also called "Old Man's Beard" or "Love-in-the-mist"

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch on October 26, 2007.

**Brown's Ranch:**
DYSSODIA (DYSSODIA PENTACHAETA)

Scientific Name: *Dyssodia pentachaeta*
Herbaceous perennial wildflower native to the Sonoran Desert
Attracts butterflies
About 7 inches high and wide
Flowers are bright yellow and daisy-like

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Ephedra trifurca*

- Shrub native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Also known as Mormon Tea and Longleaf Jointfir.
- Grows from 2-5 feet
- Stems contain caffeine and ephedrine: both are stimulants. Ephedrine is synthesized and used in asthma and cold medicines.
- A tea made from dried stems has been used medicinally to treat syphilis, pneumonia, and diabetes.

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
FAIRY DUSTER (CALLIANDRA ERIOPHYLLA)

**Scientific Name:** *Calliandra eriophylla*
- Native to the Southwest.
- Perennial Shrub.
- Blooms in the beginning of spring or after rain.
- Butterflies, bees and hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers. Many animals feed on the foliage and the seeds.
- Livestock benefits unknown.
- Ethnobotany unknown.
- A member of the legume family.

**Photo:** To be added.
FIDDLENECK (AMSINCKIA INTERMEDIA)

Scientific Name: *Amsinckia intermedia*

- Winter annual native to the Sonoran Desert
- Lesser Goldfinches have been known to feed off the seed.
- Produces tiny yellow flowers.
- Seeds and foliage are poisonous to livestock.
- Shoots, seeds, and leaves are used by Native American tribes for medicinal properties.

Photo: To be added.
Scientific Name: *Penstemon eatoni*
- Herbaceous perennial, shrub or subshrub native to the Sonoran Desert.
- A large genus of North America.
- Roots have been used by Native Americans to relieve toothache.

Photo: To be added.
FOOTHILL PALO VERDE (PARKINSONIA MICROPHYLLA)

Scientific Name: *Parkinsonia microphylla*
- Perennial deciduous tree native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Pollinated by a wide variety of solitary bees.
- Provides nesting sites and insect prey for many birds including verdins and cactus wrens.
- When seeds fall they are eaten quickly by a variety of rodents and seed eaters.
- Seed dispersal is done by antelope ground squirrels and pocket deer mice who bury them.
- Humans also use the seeds as a source of food.
- This multi-trunked tree can grow 15-30 ft tall.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch on October 26, 2007.

**Brown's Ranch:**

[Image of Foothill Palo Verde]

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**FREEMONT COTTONWOOD (POPULUS FREMONTII)**

**Scientific Name:** *Populus fremontii*
- Tree, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Beavers use this plant for food and dam building
- Tree, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Beavers use this plant for food and dam building
- Seeds have cotton fluff that floats on wind
- Sprouts new leaves and blossoms in January
- Native Americans use bark and leaves for injuries, sores, insect stings, and headaches; berries were eaten or chewed like gum
- Hopis used roots for Kachina dolls and wood for drums

- This tree is part of a threatened forest type
- Can grow up to 100 ft in height
- Found in riparian zones
- Can grow up to 100 ft in height

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
Scientific Name: *Viguiera deltoidea*
- Perennial shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Grows up to 3 ft. tall
- Also called desert sunflower

Photo: To be added.
Graythorn (Zizyphus Obtusifolia)

**Scientific Name:** Zizyphus obtusifolia  
• Shrub native to the Sonoran Desert  
• Birds can be found from November to July eating this plant's purple fruits  
• Important for bird nests  
• Native Americans use plant parts medicinally  
• Can grow up to 10ft tall.  

**Photo:** To be added.  

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HONEY MESQUITE (PROSOPIS GLANDULOSA)

Scientific Name: *Prosopis glandulosa*
- Deciduous tree
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Pollinated by bees
- Pods are eaten by bruchid beetle larvae and many large animals
- When pods pass through an animals digestive track germination is assisted, without this a few years is needed to release the seeds
- Bloom in spring and sometimes again in midsummer
- The root system is the deepest documented
- The wood is great for furniture, but it is expensive because of habitat loss
- The inner wood was used by Indians and early settlers for basketry, fabrics, and medicine
- The gum from the stems is used to make candy gumdrops, mucilage for pottery mending and black dye
- Grows 10-30 ft tall

**Photo:** To be added.

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Scientific Name: *Zauschneria californica*

- Perennial shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies
- Browsed by deer
- Grows up to 2 ft. tall
- Flowers are red and trumpet-shaped
- Tends to out compete, displace, or overrun other plants once it is established
- Native Americans use this plant for medicinal purposes

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Olneya tesota*

- Tree native to the Sonoran Desert
- Seeds are eaten by many animals
- Plant associations are desert night-blooming cereus which grows beneath the ironwood and senita which can be found near it
- Blooms heavily every other year with lavender blossoms that open in late May and last 10-18 days
- This is a major nurse tree in the Lower Colorado River Valley
- Grows up to 35 ft
- They have been estimated to age at least 300 years
- Decomposition is extremely slow, the wood is almost non-biodegradable
- Pods are mildly toxic, the Seri cook them changing the water twice
- The Seri use the wood to make their famous carvings
- Makes good firewood and has been over harvested for this purpose as well as for carving wood
- Protected in both Sonora and Arizona

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Simmondsia chinensis*

- Evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Leaves are browsed by deer, javelina and bighorn sheep.
- Squirrels, rodents, and birds eat the nuts.
- Even though many animals consume the seeds, few rely on jojoba nuts: only pocket mice can digest the waxy coating.
- O'odham make a paste from the nuts to treat burns.
- Jojoba is a very economically important plant. The oil from the nut serves as an industrial lubricant that rivals sperm whale oil.
- Jojoba oil is also used in health and beauty product because it closely resembles human body oils.

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Preserve at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.

**Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek:**
**Scientific Name:** *Yucca brevifolia*

- Native tree (native to Mohave Desert)
- Pollinated by the yucca moth
- The yucca moth lays eggs inside the flower while she spreads pollen at the same time
- Yucca moth larvae feed on the seeds
- It is able to drop ovaries when too many eggs have been laid in them
- They grow from a seed or an underground rhizome of another Joshua Tree
- Reaches heights of 15 meters
- Named after Joshua Tree National Park where it was found
- Was named by Mormon pioneers because it looked like a prophet waving at them

**Photo:** To be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Cordia parviflora*
- Evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers are white clusters
- Grows 4-8 ft tall

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Sisymbrium irio*
- Winter annual native to the Sonoran Desert
- Naturalized from Europe.
- Produces pale yellow flowers.
- This plant is a pest in disturbed soils and gardens.

**Photo:** To be added.
MANGLE DULCE (MAYTENUS PHYLLANTHOIDES)

**Scientific Name:** *Maytenus phyllanthoides* (or *Maytenus texana*)
- Native evergreen shrub
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Adaptable - usually found along coasts in sandy soil, but can adapt to other soils and survive far from water
- Very high heat tolerance
- Grows 2-20 feet in height
- Medicinal uses: toothache and scurvy (leaves). **Other uses:** gum substitute for splint binding, golf balls, insulating material.
- Also called Florida Mayten or Guttapercha Mayten

**Photo:** to be added.

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**Scientific Name:** *Oenothera speciosa* (berlandieri)

- Perennial evergreen native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers are pink
- Known to be difficult to remove

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Typha angustifolia*

- Perennial native to the Sonoran Desert
- Eaten by Snow Geese, muskrats and beavers
- Provides cover for nesting ducks and spawning fish
- Grows to be 3.5 to 10 ft. tall

Photo: To be added.
Scientific Name: *Fouquieria splendens*
- Native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Important food source for migrant hummingbirds.
- Also pollinated by nectar thieves such as carpenter bees and verdins.
- Produces flowers year round depending on availability of water.
- Cut branches can be used to make a living fence.
- Flowers can be soaked in water to make a beverage.

Photos: Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
**Organpipe Cactus (Stenocereus Turberi)**

**Scientific Name:** *Stenocereus turberi*
- Tropical cactus native to the Sonoran Desert
- Nectar feeding bats pollinate it and disperse seeds
- Fruits fall from the plant when ripe
- Produces pinkish-white flowers from April through August that open after dark and close after sunrise
- Usually 9-11ft in height, but may be more than 20ft tall
- Is found mostly in Oregon Pipe Cactus National Monument and The Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation
- Fruits are regarded as the second best tasting cactus fruit and are commercially harvested
- The Seri made boat sealant and compresses for aches from dried organ pipe flesh

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Parkinsonia praecox*
- Deciduous tree native to the Sonoran Desert
- Attracts butterflies and birds
- Grows 20-40ft tall
- Flowers in the spring
- Also called Sonoran palo verde

Photo: To be added.
Parry's Agave (Agave parryi)

Scientific Name: Agave parryi

- Succulent native to the Sonoran Desert
- Slow growing rosette
- Pollinated by insects and hummingbirds
- Buds are reddish orange and turn yellow after opening
- Leaves are grey-green with a spine at the tip
- After 25 years the plant grows a flowering stalk which blooms then the plant dies
- New plants formed on the same root system will take over
- Native Americans use this plant for food, fiber, soap, beverages, and medicines

Photo: To be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Cylindropuntia arbuscula*

- Cactus native to the Sonoran Desert
- Produces green, yellow or brownish red flowers in spring which are followed by greenish-purple flowers that last at least one year
- Can grow up to 9ft tall

**Photo:** To be added.
PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS (OPUNTIA SPP.)

**Scientific Name:** *Opuntia* spp.
- Perennial, native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Prickly pear fruits ripen in July and August and will persist for several months, providing an important food source for rabbits, packrats, javelina, deer, squirrels, desert tortoises, cactus beetles, and may varieties of birds.
- Cattle will eat prickly pear pads if little else is available.
- Fruits are used to make jellies and red dye. The stem pulp is used in face creams and water purifiers.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown’s Ranch on October 26, 2007.
Scientific Name: *Opuntia santa-rita*

- Cactus native to the Sonoran Desert
- Pollinated by bees
- Birds, mammals and insects eat prickly-pear fruits
- The pads are eaten by jackrabbits, packrats, javelina, giant cactus beetles, cactus weevils, cochineal bugs, and one species of moth (*Copidryas cosyra*), which have all evolved to eat the oxalic acid toxic flesh
- Is a nest and roost site for Curved-billed Thrashers, Mourning Doves and Roadrunners
- Humans eat the flesh and fruit and cultivate them for drinks, syrup and jelly
- The juice has been used to strengthen adobe mortar
- They have stems that grow in jointed segments
- This species of prickly-pear is trunked as opposed to more shrubby prickly-pears

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Institute at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.  

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**Scientific Name:** *Justica candicans*
- Deciduous shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Attracts hummingbirds with tubular red flowers
- Grows to about 6 ft tall

**Photo:** To be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Penstemon barbatus*
- Flowers are red narrow and tubular.
- Pollinated by hummingbirds.
- Found along roadsides, in oak woods or in coniferous forests.
- It is used by Native Americans for medicinal and ceremonial purposes.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch, 2007.
**Scientific Name:** *Hesperaloe parvifolia*
- Evergreen perennial shrub
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies
- Flowers are red
- Grows 3ft. wide and 6 ft. tall
- Native to Texas and northern Mexico

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Ruellia peninsularis*
- Evergreen shrub native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers are blue and trumpet-shaped
- Grows to 2-4 ft

Photo: To be added.
SAGUARO (CARNEGIEA GIGANTEAN)

Scientific Name: Carnegiea gigantean
- Cactus native to the Sonoran Desert.
- The saguaro cactus blossom is the Arizona state flower.
- Pollinated by doves, bees, and bats.
- Produces a 3-inch long fruit in June or July that contains up to 2,000 seeds.
- Seed dispersal is accomplished by fruit-eating birds such as White-winged Doves, Gila Woodpeckers, and House Finches.
- Seedlings begin life under nurse plants that protect them from heat, frost, rodents and birds.
- Seedlings are eaten by birds and other small mammals.
- The Curve-billed Thrasher will dig up seedlings in search of insects.
- Mature saguaros are killed by lightning strikes, wind throw, freezing, and possibly flicker damage.
- The saguaro serves as a nesting site mainly to Cactus Wrens, Mourning Doves, Gila Woodpeckers and Gilded Flickers.
- Others birds that nest here are Elf Owls, House Finches, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Great Horned Owls, and Purple Martins.
- Red-tailed Hawks build nests between the arms and trunk of the cacti.
- They serve as a perch for birds.
- This is the largest cactus in the United States; it grows on average to 40 ft. and may reach a height of 78 ft.
- When fully hydrated they weight 80 pounds per foot.

Photo: Taken at Jewel Creek Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.

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SCREWBEAN MESQUITE (PROSPOIS PUBESCENS)

**Scientific Name:** *Prosposis pubescens*

- Native tree
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Is used as food by desert animals and humans
- Found near riparian areas and valleys
- Grows to about 20ft

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Preserve at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.
**SENITA (LOPHOCEREUS SCHOTTII)**

**Scientific Name:** *Lophocereus (Pachycereus) schottii*
- Native cactus
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Made up of many columns
- Flowers are light to dark pink
- Grow up to 8ft wide and 15ft high
- The Seri have used the ribs to build shelter

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Yucca elates*
- Native succulent, perennial.
- Native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Pollinated by moths.
- The central stalk can grow up to 23ft. The thin flexible leaves at the base of the plant grow to about 2 ft.
- Flowers are creamy white and are found on the upper half of the central stalk.
- Fibers are used for basket weaving by Tohono O'odham.
- Soap can be made from its roots.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch on October 26, 2007.

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STRAWBERRY HEDGEHOG CACTUS (ECHINOCEREUS ENGELMANNII)

Scientific Name: *Echinocereus engelmannii*

- Perennial cactus, native to the Sonoran desert
- Flowers are magenta in color from February to April
- Fruits are edible and produce a sweet juice
- Native Americans ate fruit raw and cooked; dried fruit was used as sweetener
- Grows slowly in clusters of up to 60 stems
- Found in sandy and rocky flats

Photo: Taken at Coon Bluff on April 19, 2003.

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**Scientific Name:** *Acacia farnesiana*  
- Deciduous bush native to the Sonoran Desert  
- Seeds are eaten by humans  
- Foliage and pods are eaten by livestock  
- Pollinated by insects  
- Flowers are used to make perfume  
- Pods contain tannin which is used for tanning leather  
- Used medicinally for sore throats, wounds and headaches  
- Can grow up to 30m tall and lives 25-50 years  
- Commonly known as needle bush because of the thorns along its branches  

**Photo:** To be added.
Texas Ebony (Pithocellobium flexicaule)

**Scientific Name:** *Pithocellobium flexicaule*

- Exotic evergreen tree
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Produces fragrant yellow to white blossoms
- Pod shells have been used as a coffee substitute
- Seeds from the pods are eaten
- Grows 15-30 ft. tall

**Photo:** To be added.
TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL (SOPHORA SECUNDIFLORA)

**Scientific Name:** *Sophora secundiflora*
- Evergreen shrub or small tree
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- It has very fragrant purple flowers and bright red seeds
- Beans were used by Native Americans as a hallucinogen

**Photo:** To be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Leucophyllum candidum*

- Exotic evergreen shrub
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Foliage is silver in color with deep purple flowers
- Their flower displays coincide with times of high humidity
- Grows 4.5 ft. tall and wide

**Photo:** To be added.
THORN-CRESTED AGAVE (AGAVE LOPHANTHA)

**Scientific Name:** *Agave lophantha*

- Exotic evergreen shrub
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Rosette shaped
- Grows to be 2ft. high and 3 ft. wide

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Pachycereus schotti* var. "Monstrosa"
- Succulent, native to the Sonoran Desert

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Dalea greggi*

- Bush, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers are rosy clusters that bloom in the spring and summer
- Grows up to 2 ft. tall and 8 ft. wide

**Photo:** To be added.
Scientific Name: *Ambrosia deltoidea*
- Shrub, native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Important nurse plant for the pincushion cactus.
- Stabilizes soils.
- The dominant understory plant of the Sonoran Desert upland.
- Can grow to 2 ft tall. May live for up to 50 years.
- May be confused with brittlebush or rabbitbrush.

**Photo:** Taken at Brown's Ranch on October 26, 2007.
Scientific Name: *Ericameria laricifolia*

- Evergreen shrub, native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers are in bright yellow clusters
- Bees and other insects are attracted to the flowers
- Flowers dry on the plant
- It is named after the smell of its crushed leaves
- Up to 3ft tall and wide, forms in a compact mound

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Preserve at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.
**Scientific Name:** *Agave geminiflora*

- Exotic shrub
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Grows in a 3ft by 3ft rosette shape
- Flower stalk can reach heights of 18 ft.
- Leaves become stiff in full sun
- Usually lives about 10 years

**Photo:** To be added.
VELVET ASH (FRAXINUS VELUTINA)

**Scientific Name:** *Fraxinus velutina*
- Deciduous tree native to the Sonoran Desert
- Seeds are dispersed by wind
- Native Americans use wood for bows, canes, staffs etc.
- May be infested by the ash borer beetle
- Grows to about 40ft
- They indicate a permanent underground water supply

**Photo:** To be added.
VELVET MESQUITE (PROSOPIS VELUTINA)

**Scientific Name:** *Prosopis velutina*
- Native deciduous shrub or tree in the Pea Family (Leguminosae)
- Pollinated by bees and other insects
- Provides shelter for many birds (for example, the Mourning Dove, Ladderback Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Verdin, Lucy's Warbler, and Vermilion Flycatcher all build nests in mesquite trees)
- Flowers are a source of honey
- Wild animals and livestock eat the ripe seed pods
- Germination is greatly enhanced when seed pods pass through the digestive track of large mammals; otherwise years of exposure are required to free the seeds of their protective coating
- A coyote's diet consists of 80% mesquite beans in the late summer and fall
- Desert animals browse leaves
- A meal called pinole is made by Native Americans as well as the bark for basketry, fabrics, and medicine
- The wood is an excellent source of fuelwood and is used for cabinet-making
- Restores nitrogen to the soil
- Found along desert washes, stream sides and where the water table is high
- Small forests of mesquite, called mesquite bosques, are found along rivers
- Grows to 30 ft. or more

**Photo:** Taken at Jewel of the Creek at Cave Creek on September 29, 2007.
**Scientific Name:** *Sarcostemma* spp. (including *S. cynanchoides, S. hirtellum*)
- Native perennials belonging to the Milkweed Family (Asclepiadaceae).
- Succulent shrubs or vines
- They climb on other shrubs, and trees
- The genus *Sarcostemma* includes Climbing Milkweed, Rambling Milkweed, and White Twinevine, among others
- Three *Sarcostemma* species are found in Arizona
- The Tohono O'Odham Indians consumed fruits (Epple, p.196)

**Photo:** to be added.
**Scientific Name:** *Lycium* spp.
- Shrub, native to the Sonoran Desert.
- Bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds can be found visiting this shrub.
- Birds eat the fruit.
- The Seri Native Americans eat the fruit.
- Produces hundreds of small greenish to purple flowers and pea-sized red berries.
- Height ranges from 2 to 8 or more feet.

**Photo:** Taken at the Riparian Preserve at the Gilbert Water Ranch, 2007.
Scientific Name: *Buddleia marrubiifolia*
- Exotic evergreen shrub
- Native to Chihuahuan Desert
- Blooms orange flowers from spring to fall
- Gets its name because it attracts butterflies
- Foliage becomes more silvery when water deprived

**Photo:** To be added.
**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Tecoma stans*

- Native perennial shrub
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Yellow trumpet-shaped flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds
- Grazed by livestock
- Leaves and roots are used for medicinal purposes
- The official flower of the United States Virgin Islands

**Photo:** to be added.
YERBA MANSA (ANEMOPSIS CALIFORNICA)

**Scientific Name:** *Anemopsis californica*
- Native perennial herb
- Native to the Sonoran Desert
- Flowers from March to September
- About 1-1.5 ft tall with spinach-like leaves
- Found along rivers
- There are many medicinal uses in its roots
- Native Americans use this plant to treat burns, sores, coughs and colds, pain, wounds and stomach aches; they also used seeds for bread or mush.

**Photo:** Taken at Scottsdale Community College on April 13, 2007.

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