Apache Plume

Fallugia paradoxa

This plant is found throughout the Chihuahuan desert, often growing wild in arroyos. It has small divided leaves and is semi-evergreen (harsh winter conditions will cause a plant to drop most of its leaves). It blooms in spring. The name, Apache Plume, is derived from its feathery fruits or seeds. These "plumes" are pinkish-purple in color and resemble and Apache head-dress. The feathery seeds are carried and distributed by the wind.

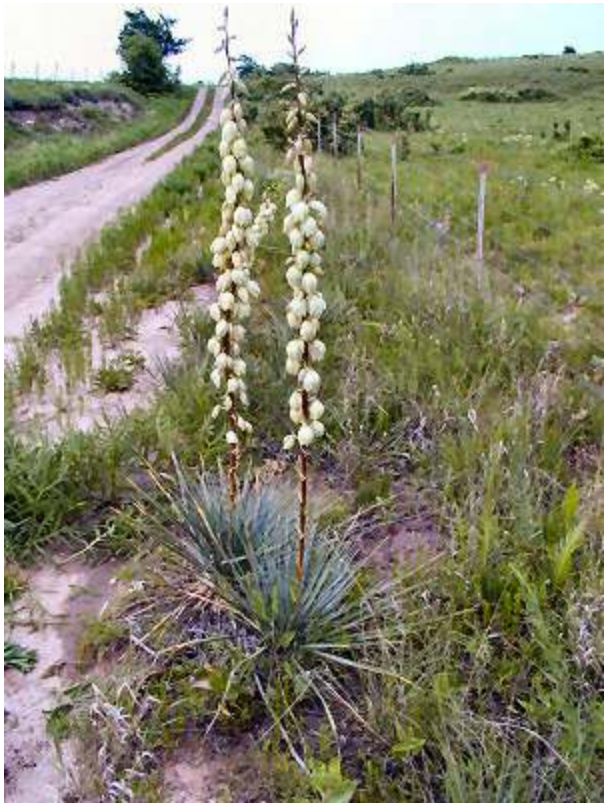
Yucca

Yucca harrimaniae

Yuccas have rosettes of evergreen, tough, sword-shaped leaves. They are native to the hot and dry parts of North America.

Yucca flowers have a light color that helps attract their very specialized night pollinator—the Pronuba moth.

New Mexico's state flower, *Yucca glauca*, is closely related to this yucca.



Yucca glauca in bloom

Pronuba moth in a yucca flower

Mountain Mahogany

Cercocarpus montanus

This mountain mahogany is a deciduous shrub or small tree. It is native to New Mexico.

The mountain mahogany loses its leaves during the hot, dry season to conserve water. In its native habitat, mountain mahogany grows very slowly. When water is available, mountain mahogany can grow into a tree; when water is not available, it usually grows as a small shrub.

In fall, mountain mahogany has seeds with a plume to help them be disbursed by the wind.

Cercocarpus montanus seeds

Winterfat

Ceratoides lanata

The common name for this compact perennial shrub, Winterfat, refers to this plant's usage as an important winter forage plant for wildlife and livestock. The stems, branches, and leaves of winterfat are covered with dense long hairs.

The grey-green leaves remain on the plant during winter and are shed when new leaves grow in the spring or when the plant is water stressed.

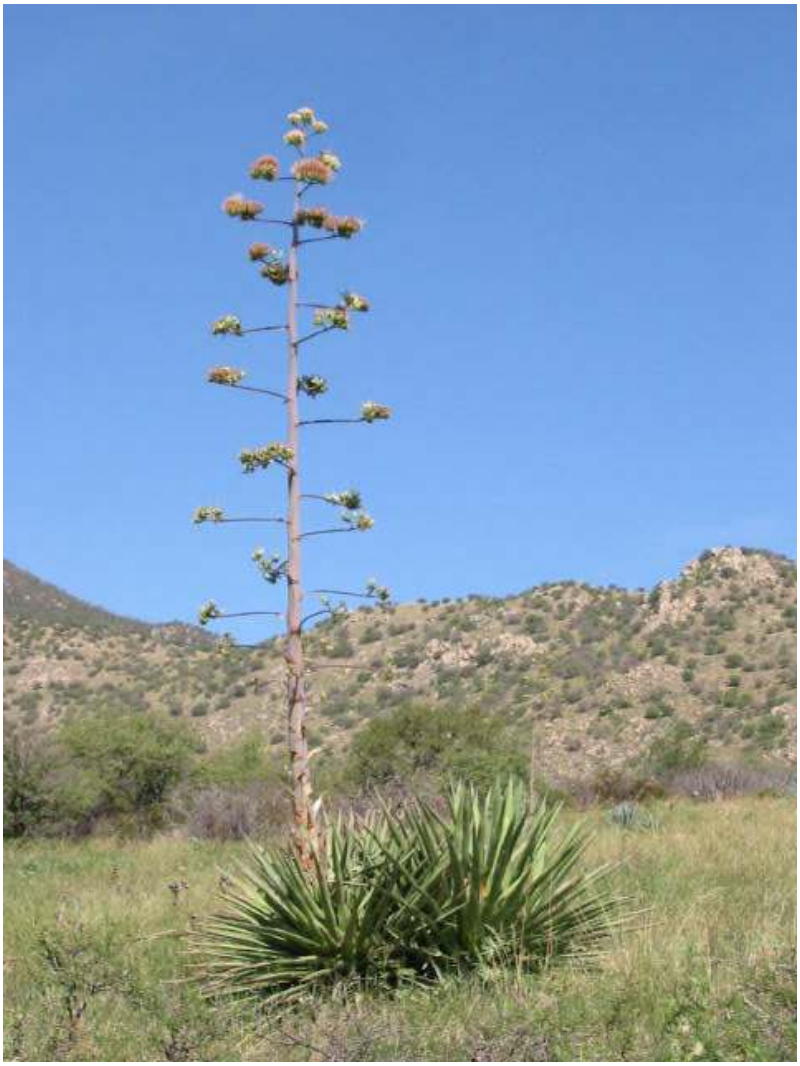
Seed production depends on rain. Good seed years occur when there is lots of summer precipitation and little browsing.

Agave
Agave species

Agaves are succulent plants that grow in the Southwest United States. The plants have a large rosette of thick fleshy leaves ending in a sharp point. Sometimes the leaves have a spiny edge. The leaves can swell to store water.

Agaves grow slowly and finally send up a tall stem with lots of flowers. The light-colored flowers are usually pollinated by bats or nocturnal insects.

After development of fruit the original plant has used up its energy stores and dies, but suckers are frequently produced from the base of the stem which become new plants.



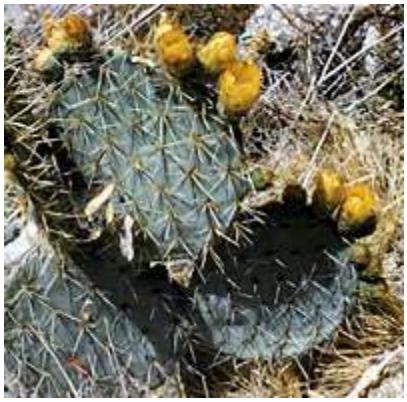
Prickly Pear
Opuntia species

Prickly pears species are found in abundance in the Southwest and Western United States, and also throughout much of Mexico.

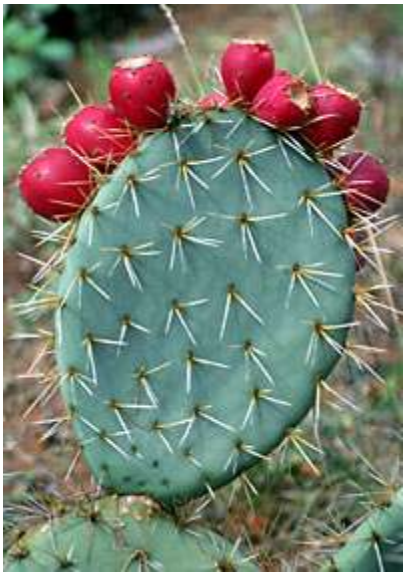
Prickly pears are a type of cactus. They usually have flat, round pads that are armed with two kinds of spines—large, smooth spines and small, hairlike spines called glochids.

The green pads are actually the cactus's stem and the spines are modified leaves. The stem has chlorophyll and photosynthesis happens here.

The fruits (tunas) and the young stem segments (nopales) are edible, although they must be peeled carefully to remove the small spines before eating.



Opuntia species in flower



Opuntia species with fruit

Buffalo Gourd
Cucurbita foetidissima

Buffalo gourd is a relative of our garden pumpkins, squash, and cucumbers. It is native to the southwest and easily recognizable by its stinky smell (fetid, as the Latin name suggests) and bitter, ball-shaped gourds.

Buffalo gourd grows along roads and in disturbed soils. It is extremely fast growing and is well adapted to arid conditions.

The root can be huge. It can grow 4-6 feet long underground and stores water. This example of a dried root from a buffalo gourd plant used to weigh over 100 pounds!

The plants included are:

1) Cottonwood

2) Coyote willow
3) Cattail
4) Horsetail reed
5) Screwbean mesquite
6) Four-wing saltbush
7) Cocklebur
8) Yerba mansa
9) Salt cedar
10) Russian olive
11) Siberian elm
12) New Mexico olive