

Checklist of Trees, Shrubs and Vines



Granite spires and monoliths are not the only things to feast one's eyes on when visiting City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park. These parks boast the largest pinyon pine forest in Idaho, as well as Idaho's state champion pinyon.

Because these parks are located in the transition zone between the Northern Great Basin and the Snake River Plain, a variety of trees, shrubs and vines may be observed. This checklist of 45 common woody plants provides another tool for those wanting to further their plant knowledge while visiting the parks.

Trees, shrubs and vines are especially important to wildlife in high desert

country; they provide critical food and shelter. For example, pinyon jays are dependent on pinyon pine; hollow aspen snags accommodate red-naped sapsuckers, chickadees and mountain bluebirds; sage grouse require sagebrush; and antelope bitterbrush is a staple browse for mule deer.

The native plants on this checklist are arranged alphabetically by families, then by their scientific name. Common names are listed last because a single plant may have many different names, depending on the region and language spoken. Common names can create confusion when communicating about a particular species. Scientific names are given in Latin, which is recognized

worldwide. These names are often very descriptive of the plant. For example, the species name for Curleaf Mountain Mahogany ends with *ledifolius*, which means curled foliage.

Each plant is listed with its most common bloom color (some species may have several colors). Earliest and latest bloom dates are also provided. Plants found blooming outside these dates may be reported to the park at:

City of Rocks National Reserve
P.O. Box 169
Almo, ID 83312
(208) 824-5519
Wallace_Keck@nps.partner.gov

Checklist Key

W = White
P = Pink
R = Red
O = Orange

Y = Yellow
G = Green
B = Blue
L = Lavender or Purple
Br = Brown

1, 2, 3, 4... = Month of the year
A, B, C, D... = Week of the month
Example: 4C-7D = 3rd week of April through the last week of July

Published May 2008; Wallace Keck and Holly Scherbel

	Color	Date
Aceraceae (Maple Family)		
___ <i>Acer negundo</i> Box Elder	Br	2C-4C
___ <i>Acer glabrum var douglasii</i> Rocky Mtn. Maple	Br	5A-5D
Asteraceae (Sunflower Family)		
___ <i>Artemisia arbuscula</i> Little Sagebrush	Y	6A-9A
___ <i>Artemisia biennis</i> Biennial Wormwood	Y	8A-9B
___ <i>Artemisia dracunculoides</i> Tarragon	W	7A-9A
___ <i>Artemisia nova</i> Black Sagebrush	Y	9A-9D
___ <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> Big Sagebrush	Y	9A-9D
___ <i>Chrysothamnus vicidiflorus</i> Green Rabbitbrush	W	7C-10C
___ <i>Ericameria nauseosa</i> Rubber Rabbitbrush	Y	7C-10C
Betulaceae (Birch Family)		
___ <i>Alnus incana</i> Mountain Alder	Br	4C-5A
Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle Family)		
___ <i>Sambucus cerulea</i> Blue Elderberry	W	6C-7C
___ <i>Sambucus racemosa</i> Red Elderberry	W	6B-7C
___ <i>Symphoricarpos oreophilus</i> Snowberry	P	5D-7B

	Color	Date
Cornaceae (Dogwood Family)		
___ <i>Cornus sericea</i> Red Osier Dogwood	W	5D-9B
Cupressaceae (Cypress Family)		
___ <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> Rocky Mountain Juniper	O	4D-5C
___ <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> Utah Juniper	R	5A-5B
Grossulariaceae (Currant Family)		
___ <i>Ribes aureum</i> Golden Currant	Y	4B-6A
___ <i>Ribes cereum</i> Wax Currant	W	4D-6A
___ <i>Ribes setosum</i> Missouri Gooseberry	O	7A-7C
___ <i>Ribes montigenum</i> Alpine Prickly Currant	W	4D-5D
___ <i>Ribes viscosissimum</i> Sticky Currant	W	7A-7C
Pinaceae (Pine Family)		
___ <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> Subalpine Fir	G	5A-5C
___ <i>Pinus contorta</i> Lodgepole Pine	Y	6D-7C
___ <i>Pinus flexilis</i> Limber Pine	G	6C-7C
___ <i>Pinus monophylla</i> Singleleaf Pinyon Pine	Y	5B-6A
___ <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> Douglas Fir	G	5A-5C

	Color	Date		Color	Date
Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)			Salicaceae (Willow Family)		
___ <i>Clematis ligusticifolia</i> Western Virgin's Bower	W	7A-7D	___ <i>Populus angustifolia</i> Narrowleaf Cottonwood	O	4D-6A
Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)			___ <i>Populus tremuloides</i> Quaking Aspen	W	3C-5C
___ <i>Ceanothus velutinus</i> Snowbush Ceanothus	W	6D-7A	___ <i>Populus nigra</i> Lombardi Poplar	W	4C-5D
Rosaceae (Rose Family)			___ <i>Salix drummondiana</i> Drummond's Willow	Y	4B-5B
___ <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i> Saskatoon Serviceberry	W	5A-6A	___ <i>Salix exigua</i> Coyote Willow	Y	4D-5C
___ <i>Amelanchier utahensis</i> Utah Serviceberry	W	5A-6A	___ <i>Salix geyeriana</i> Geyer Willow	Y	4C-5D
___ <i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i> Curleaf Mountain Mahogany	R	4D-5D	___ <i>Salix lasiandra</i> Whiplash Willow	Y	5A-5C
___ <i>Holodiscus dumosus</i> Mountain Spray	W	7A-7C	___ <i>Salix lutea</i> Yellow Willow	Y	4C-5B
___ <i>Prunus virginiana</i> Choke Cherry	W	5A-6B	___ <i>Salix scouleriana</i> Scouler's Willow	Y	4C-5A
___ <i>Purshia tridentata</i> Antelope Bitterbrush	Y	5B-7A	Ulmaceae (Elm Family)		
___ <i>Rosa woodsii</i> Wood's Rose	P	5C-7B	___ <i>Ulmus pumila</i> Siberian Elm	Br	3C-3D

Species Spotlights

Singleleaf Pinyon Pine

Pinaceae

Pinus monophylla Torrey & Fremont

Singleleaf pinyon needles are attached individually to the twig; hence its species name *mono* (meaning single or one) and *phylla* (meaning leaf). Most other pine species have needles bundled in groups of two or more. Pinyon needles are rounded, and may remain on the tree up to 12 years before being replaced by new growth.

In addition to being very attractive, pinyon provides food and shelter for wildlife, such as the pinyon jay and many small which

rodents that depend on nuts within the cone.

Native American tribes of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau value the pine nut for its high oil and fat content, and for taste. Early explorers traded cloth and other valuables to acquire pine nuts. Like other evergreens, the pinyon does not produce blossoms, but instead produces male and female cones on separate trees. Pollen is released from male trees in the spring, and female tree cones are fertilized.



City of Rocks and Castle Rocks boast the largest forest of singleleaf pinyon in Idaho, as well as the state champion tree. Because the parks are situated near the northern extent of the pinyon's range, few if any are found north of the Snake River in Idaho.

Antelope Bitterbrush

Rosaceae

Purshia tridentata Pursh

Antelope bitterbrush is one of the more abundant shrubs in the parks, second only to sagebrush. Here, as in many other areas, it dominates communities immediately below pinyon-juniper woodlands, where the dry, open slopes and sandy, well-drained soils provide the perfect habitat.

Bitterbrush is a medium sized shrub with extensive branches and many small,

three-lobed leaves, similar in appearance to sagebrush. These leaves will often roll inward as a protective response to heat, exposing the densely hairy underside to prevent water loss.

Since bitterbrush is a member of the rose family, its blossoms exhibit a five-petal arrangement of numerous, small, cream-colored flowers that create a dramatic display in late spring. Aptly named, antelope bitterbrush provides critical winter browse for pronghorn, mule deer and other ungulates. The seeds are an important dietary staple for birds and small rodents.

Land managers utilize bitterbrush to vegetate disturbed areas caused by erosion or wildfire. Many flowers are associated with bitterbrush, such as lupine, Arrowleaf Balsamroot and Mule's Ear.

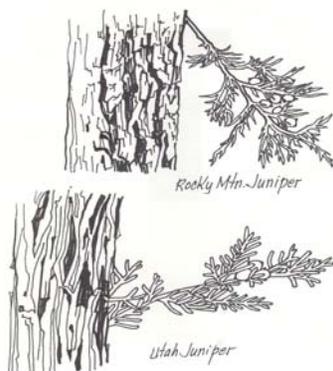


Rocky Mountain Juniper and Utah Juniper

Cupressaceae

Juniperus scopulorum (Torrey) Little; *Juniperus osteosperma* Sargent

Juniper is one of the most readily identifiable trees in City of Rocks and Castle Rocks. They are also the most abundant. Rocky Mountain Juniper and Utah Juniper are closely related and can be difficult to tell apart. The Rocky Mountain Juniper is a taller tree, and may grow to between 30 and 40 feet tall. Its foliage is dark green, and the bark is broken into short, stringy scales that are outwardly a weathered gray, and underneath, reddish-brown. The wood is soft and smooth-grained with bright red



heartwood and white sapwood. Rocky Mountain Juniper branches spread horizontally and the leaves/scales are smooth. Its smaller berries are blue with a whitish cast, and are easily crushed between two fingers.

Utah Juniper is much shrubbier than Rocky Mountain Juniper, and seldom grows above 20 feet. Foliage of Utah Juniper is rusty-green. The bark is finely divided by deep, narrow furrows and is

ashy-gray. The wood is fairly brittle, has yellow heartwood and white sapwood, and is not as aromatic as other junipers. Utah Juniper branches curve out and upward away from the trunk. The leaves/scales are pointed. Utah Juniper berries are a reddish-brown with a white cast. Its species name *osteo* means "bone," and *sperma*, "seed." The large, bone-hard seeds are this juniper's best identifier.

Both junipers species are slow growing. A six-inch diameter tree may be as old as 145 years. Additionally, both junipers are well suited to the arid, sagebrush-steppe habitat. They have extensive root systems that probe deep and wide for water, and their leaves/scales retain water more efficiently than deciduous leaves. Many junipers become infested with parasitic mistletoe, because the birds that transport the mistletoe parasite rely on juniper berries for food.