

## INFORMATION CARD # 1

**Common Name: Catclaw Acacia**

**Scientific Name: Acacia greggii**

**Spanish Name: Una de gato**

**Facts: This plant is a shrub, eight to fifteen feet high. It has small, gray-green leaflets. The claws or thorns resemble the claws on a cat or rose plant, broad at the base and curving backward. The flowers are yellowish, cylindrical spikes that are similar to mesquite. The seed pods are three to five inches long and split after maturing.**

**Uses: The ground seeds of the cat claw acacia provided American Indians with a flour from which a mush or cake could be made. The green leaves, stems, and pods are powdered for a tea, and may be used for dysentery. The straight powder will stop bleeding, and can be dusted on infants for diaper rash. American Indians used it widely for treating sore backs and flanks on their horses. A tea can be made from the roots for treating a sore throat and dry cough.**

## **INFORMATION CARD # 2**

**Common Name:** Agave or Century Plant

**Scientific Name:** Agave neomexicana

**Spanish Name:** Maguey

**Facts:** Leaves are clustered at ground level and grayish in color. It has one tall stem with yellow, tubular flowers that attract insects and humming birds. When dry, the pods are brown and look like fingers. This plant only flowers once, then dies, but spreads and new plants grow quickly.

**Uses:** American Indians pounded the fibrous leaves with a dull instrument and wove them into mats, satchels, and ropes. Young flowers were roasted and eaten. The plant contains much sugar and was eaten as one would sugar cane. A tea was made from the roots for colic and painful indigestion. A beverage was made from this plant.

### **INFORMATION CARD # 3**

**Common Name: Algerita**

**Scientific Name: Berberis trifoliolata**

**Spanish Name: Agarito or Yerba de Sangre**

**Facts:** Algerita is a rounded shrub with beautiful bluish-green, holly-like foliage and clusters of fragrant yellow flowers from February through April. The fruit that follows is a bright red berry that is a magnet for birds and small mammals. The leaflets have sharp points at the ends.

**Uses:** The fruits when crushed and mixed with water make a delicious drink. The fruits were eaten by American Indians and made into a jelly.

## INFORMATION CARD # 4

**Common Name: Desert Willow**

**Scientific Name: Chilopsis linearis**

**Spanish Name: Mimbre**

**Facts: If you see this plant growing, there is water not too far below the surface during part of the year. It is a delicate, small native tree that has long narrow leaves. They resemble a willow. Flowers appear from March to September. They are trumpet shaped, and range from light pink to violet. They form slender seed pods that range from 6 – 10 inches long. Found in sandy washes and rocky soil.**

**Uses: The flowers may be brewed for a tea and used for hectic coughing. The powdered leaves and bark are an excellent first aid when dusted on scratches, and rock scrape. It was used as an anti-fungal treatment.**

## **INFORMATION CARD # 5**

**Common Name: Rio Grande Cottonwood**

**Scientific Name: Populus wislizenii**

**Spanish Name: Alamo**

**Facts: This tree grows mostly in sandy loam to rocky soil, and is usually found in canyons, streams, or river banks. The female plant produce considerable cotton on its seeds. The leaves are large, broad, and are toothed. Leaves are dark green in the summer, and turn yellow in the fall. They fall off after a freeze. The male flowers, or catkins, are reddish-purple, while the female catkins are green. They will split open to expose little seeds that have cotton-like strands.**

**Uses: The catkins were eaten raw. American Indians chewed the buds as gum. The fast-growing tree provided shade.**

## INFORMATION CARD # 6

**Common Name:** Emory Oak

**Scientific Name:** Quercus Emoryi

**Spanish Name:** Encinal

**Facts:** This tree grows less than 40 feet tall. The leaves are about 2 inches long and edged with spiny margins that resemble a “holly” leaf. Leaves are green and shiny. The tree has acorns that are slender and about ½ inch long. They ripen in August. This tree is found growing in sandy loam or silty-gravelly soil of igneous type.

**Uses:** American Indians ate these acorns. Wildlife and livestock browse the leaves. It was also used for shade and firewood.

## INFORMATION CARD # 7

**Common Name:** Sideoats Grama

**Scientific Name:** Bouteloua curtipendula

**Spanish Name:** Hierba

**Facts:** This grass is the official state grass of Texas. It is 2 to 3 feet high and found in gravelly, igneous (volcanic) soil.

Purplish, oat-like spikelets uniformly line one side of the stem, changing to a tan color in the fall.

**Uses:** It is considered a good foraging grass for livestock, and is also good for erosion control.

## INFORMATION CARD # 8

**Common Name:** Mormon's Tea

**Scientific Name:** Ephedra trifurca

**Spanish Name:** Popotillo

**Facts:** A spreading shrub, 3 to 4 feet tall, found on gravelly hillsides, on bluffs, or stony upland soils. This evergreen plant has many jointed, slender green stems about half the size of a pencil and long green, slender leaves that resemble joints. The flowers are actually tiny cones.

**Uses:** American Indians made a tea from the leaves to help with joint aches. Early settlers drank the tea for relief of arthritis.

## INFORMATION CARD # 9

**Common Name: Ocotillo or Coachwhip**

**Scientific Name: Fouquieria splendens**

**Spanish Name: Ocotillo**

**Facts: A 6-20 foot tall plant of many stems, containing vicious protective thorns from a central root. After a rain, tiny green leaves appear on the brown stems. In the spring, the end of the stems produce a scarlet colored bloom.**

**Uses: American Indians ate the flowers and fruit pods. They relieved fatigue by bathing in a tea made from the roots. Powdered roots were also applied to painful swelling. The stems were used for firewood. Early settlers used the stems for fences to keep coyotes or foxes away from chickens.**

## INFORMATION CARD # 10

**Common Name:** Red berry Juniper

**Scientific Name:** Juniperus pinchotii

**Facts:** This shrub or small tree grows to reach a maximum height of about 18 feet. The fruits range in color from reddish to copper-brown. Leaves are evergreen and scale-like. The leaves are aromatic.

**Uses:** Juniper was a truly useful and important plant for American Indians in the Southwest. It was widely used for ceremonial purposes. American Indians sprinkled the dried leaves over coals and inhaled the smoke for headaches. Its wood and bark was used as fuel and for tool making. Its small fruits were eaten and its leaves were used for medicine and ritual. An infusion of leaves was taken for colds and coughs. The berries were used by early settlers to flavor their meat when cooking.

## **INFORMATION CARD #11**

**Common Name: Soaptree Yucca**

**Scientific Name: Yucca elata**

**Spanish Name: Palmella**

**Facts: This plant grows from 3 to 5 feet tall. The trunk is brown, cylindrical in shape and has a small diameter. The leaves have sharply-pointed tips and narrow white margins and are long, narrow, green, and tough, producing white strings. They have smooth edges and are very pointed at the tip. Flowers are cream colored and bell shaped.**

**Uses: Used for its fiber by American Indians to make belts, sandals, baskets, cords, and mats. The flower petals were eaten either raw or cooked. The plant was commonly used for soap and shampoos. This is how it gets its common name, Soaptree Yucca.**

## INFORMATION CARD # 12

**Common Name: Prickly Pear**

**Scientific Name: Opuntia phaeacantha**

**Spanish Name: Nopal**

**Facts: Prickly pear is a large, round, spiny cactus that bears numerous deep red, juicy-sweet fruits. From May to July, flowers bloom a yellow to pink color. The fruit begins to ripen in midsummer to a deep red color.**

**Uses: The leaves (pads) are prepared and used for food. After removing stickers, the leaves are also placed over wounds, as patches, to aid in healing. They are used for burns, such as the aloe vera plant. Fruits are eaten raw, or made into a juice or jelly.**