

## 21. *Dalea pulchra* / Mixed Perennial Grass Shrub Savanna Association (P)

Santa Catalina prairie clover / Mixed Perennial Grass Shrub Savanna Association (P)

This community is characterized by a moderately open (>20% cover) subcanopy stratum (0.5–2 m) dominated by Santa Catalina prairie clover (*Dalea pulchra*) and a variable (15–40%) field stratum (<0.5 m) of mixed perennial grasses. The canopy strata (>2 m) are very sparse (<5%), with ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) providing the most consistent (0.57), albeit low (1%), cover. Patches of Mexican blue oak (*Quercus oblongifolia*), Arizona white oak (*Quercus arizonica*), velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*), and California rosewood (*Vauquelinia californica*) were also documented within this community, typically associated with minor drainages and/or bedrock outcrops. Overall, Santa Catalina prairie clover (*D. pulchra*) is the most dominant (0.88) and consistent (1.0) species, with average cover of around 10%, locally ranging from a scant 1% to dense expanses above 20%. Common sotol (*Dasyllirion wheeleri*) and cactus apple (*Opuntia engelmannii*) are consistent (1.0, 0.88) associates, with average cover of 2–3%. Perennial grass cover includes Lehmann lovegrass (*Eragrostis lehmanniana*), spidergrass (*Aristida ternipes*), sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), slender grama (*Bouteloua repens*), tanglehead (*Heteropogon contortus*), bullgrass (*Muhlenbergia emersleyi*), Arizona cottontop (*Digitaria californica*), and bush muhly (*Muhlenbergia porteri*).

### Common names

- *Dalea pulchra*
- *Dasyllirion wheeleri*
- *Opuntia engelmannii*
- *Eragrostis lehmanniana*
- *Agave schottii*

This community covers 2.4% (654 ha/1,616 ac) of the Rincon Mountain District and is primarily located on the slopes around Bridal Wreath Falls, but was documented in other scattered locations throughout Tanque Verde Ridge. It is commonly found on slopes of moderate (24%) grade, often with a western-trending aspect, from 1,100 to 1,350 meters (3,608–4,429 ft). The surface cover is characterized by shallow and well-drained, gravelly to skeletal loamy soils. Covering/interspersed with the soil is a dominant layer of gravel and cobble with occasional exposed bedrock. Parent material is typically composed of metagranodiorite.



Rincon Mountain District, Saguaro National Park

