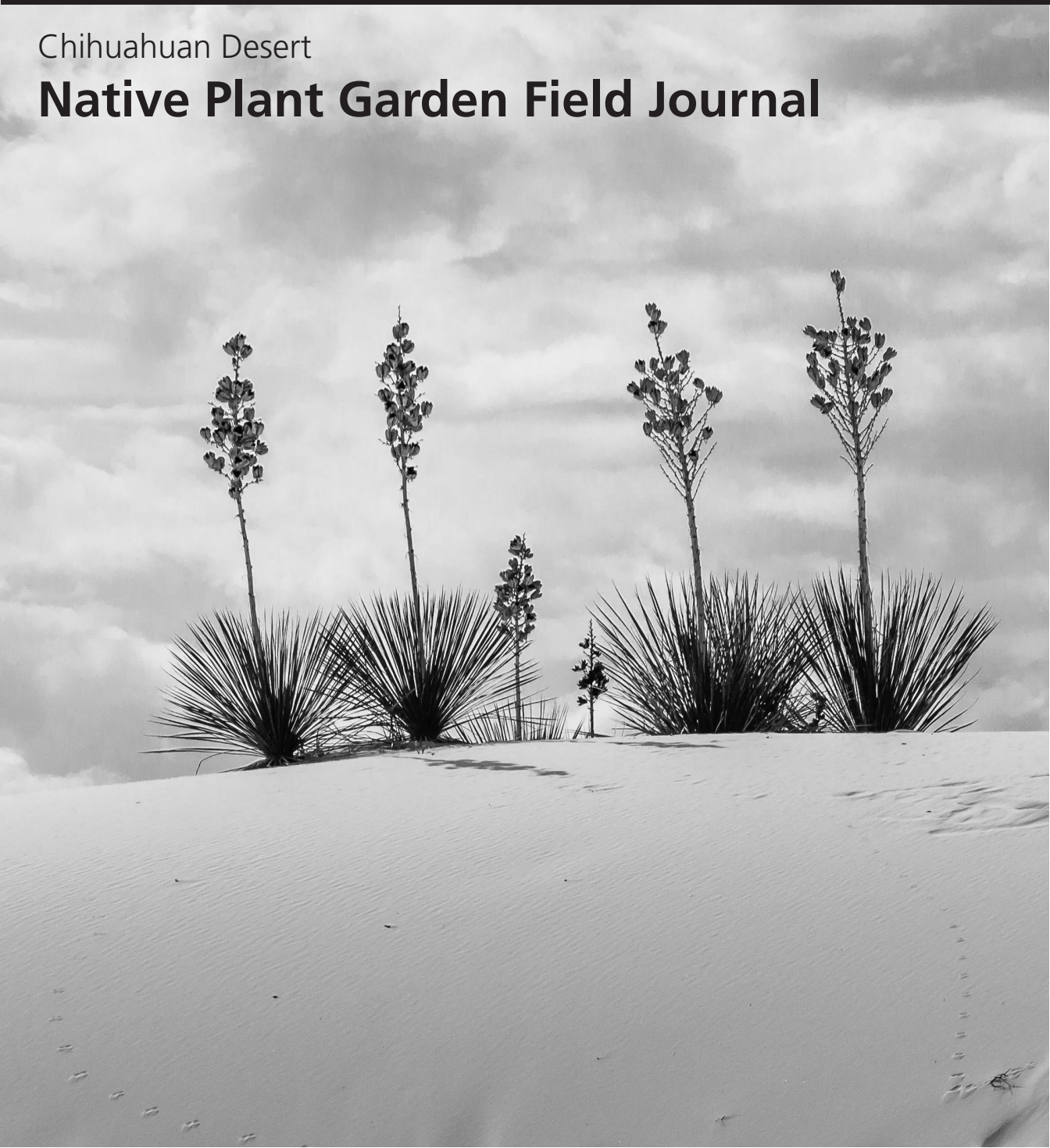
White Sands

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
White Sands National Monument

Chihuahuan Desert

Native Plant Garden Field Journal

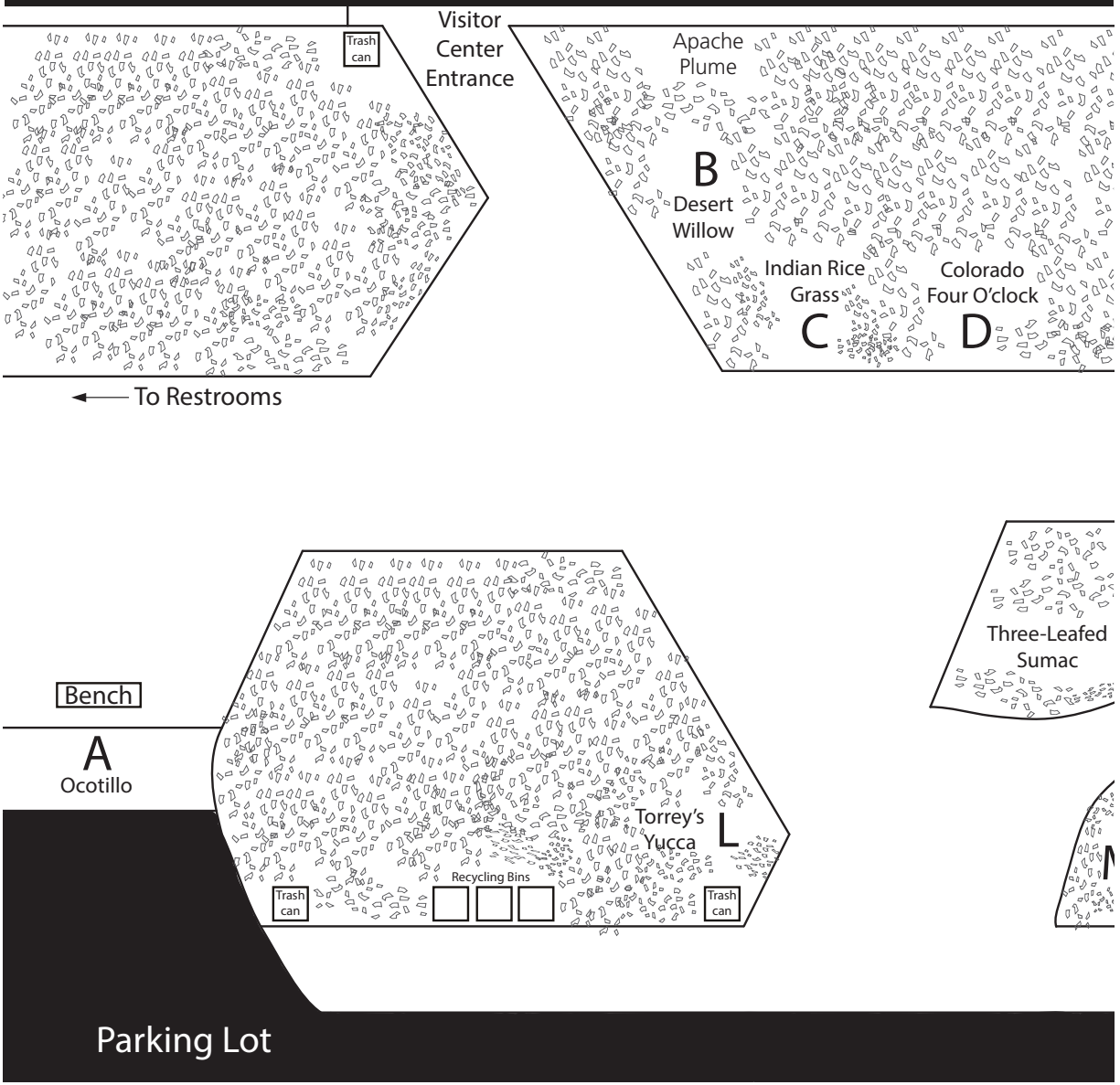


More than just colorful flowers or interesting shapes outlined by toasty sunsets, the wild plants of the Chihuahuan Desert have met the needs of the people who have crossed this harsh desert's path. For hundreds of years these plants have provided food, medicine, shelter, and have become an important part of many cultures' traditions. This guided tour will take you back to a time long before food markets and hardware stores when people had to learn, the hard way, which plants were useful and what purpose each one served.

The native plant garden in front of the White Sands National Monument Visitor Center provides a tiny sample of the many plants that form the unique Chihuahuan Desert landscape. Please keep in mind that these plants are here for the enjoyment of all visitors so that they may learn, examine, and appreciate them. No part of the plants may be removed or damaged in any way. Remember, you are a guest at these plants' home. Please be mindful and respectful of all parts of nature, both living and non-living.

NATIONAL
PARK
SERVICE

White Sands


Trash can
Visitor Center Entrance
Apache Plume
B
Desert Willow
Indian Rice Grass
C
Colorado Four O'clock
D
To Restrooms
Three-Leafed Sumac
Bench
A
Ocotillo
Torrey's Yucca
L
Recycling Bins
Trash can
Trash can
Parking Lot

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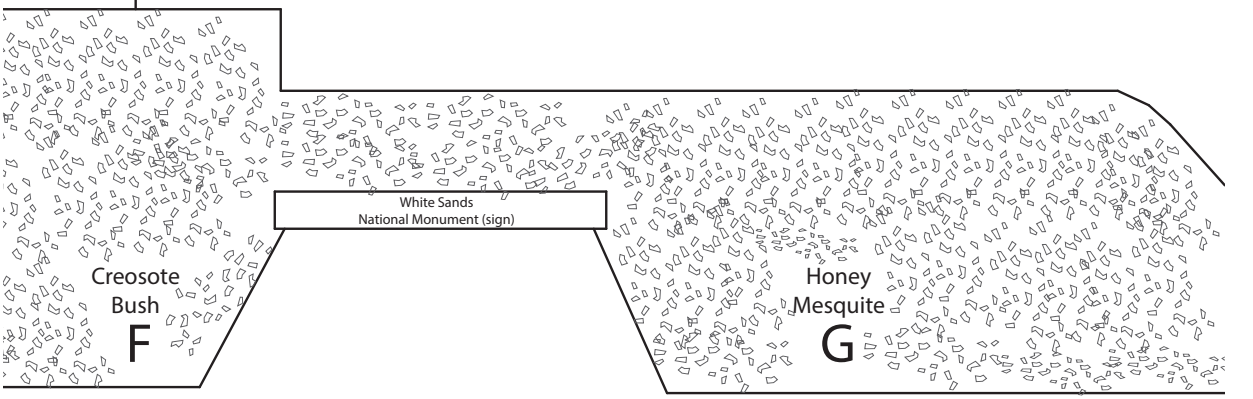
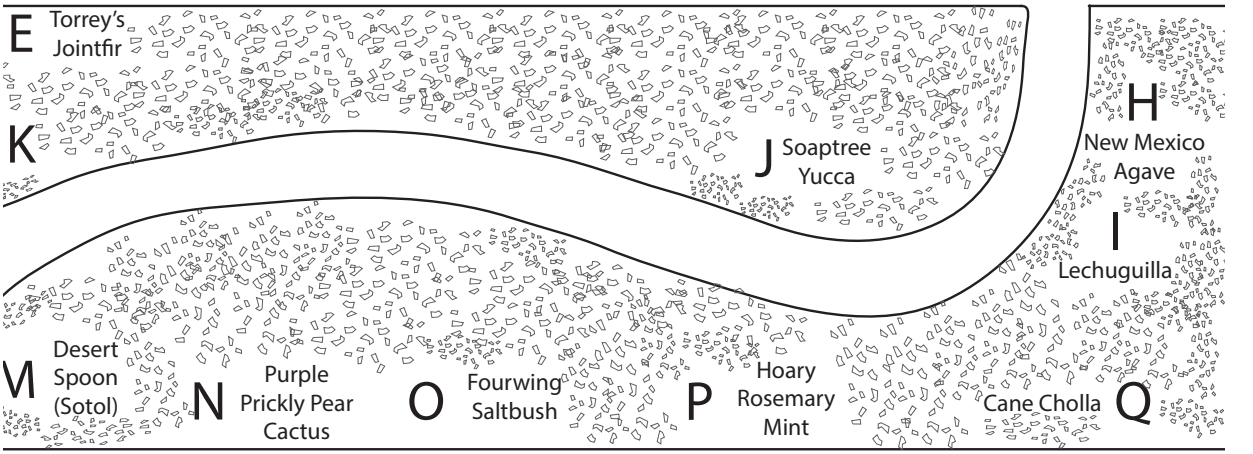




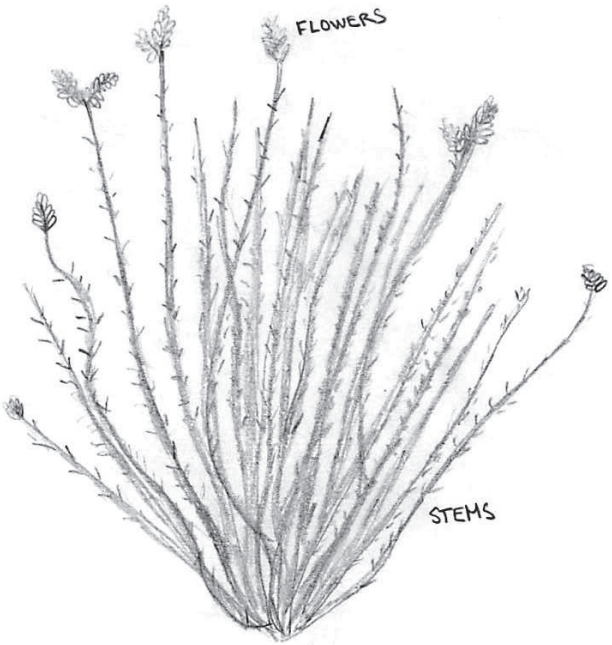
Parking Lot

Common Name: Ocotillo
Scientific Name: *Fouquieria splendens*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

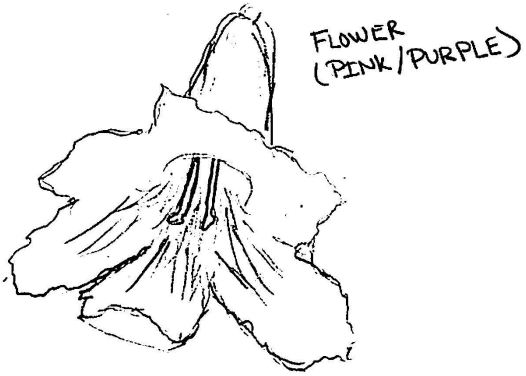


Common Name: Desert Willow
Scientific Name: *Chilopsis linearis*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

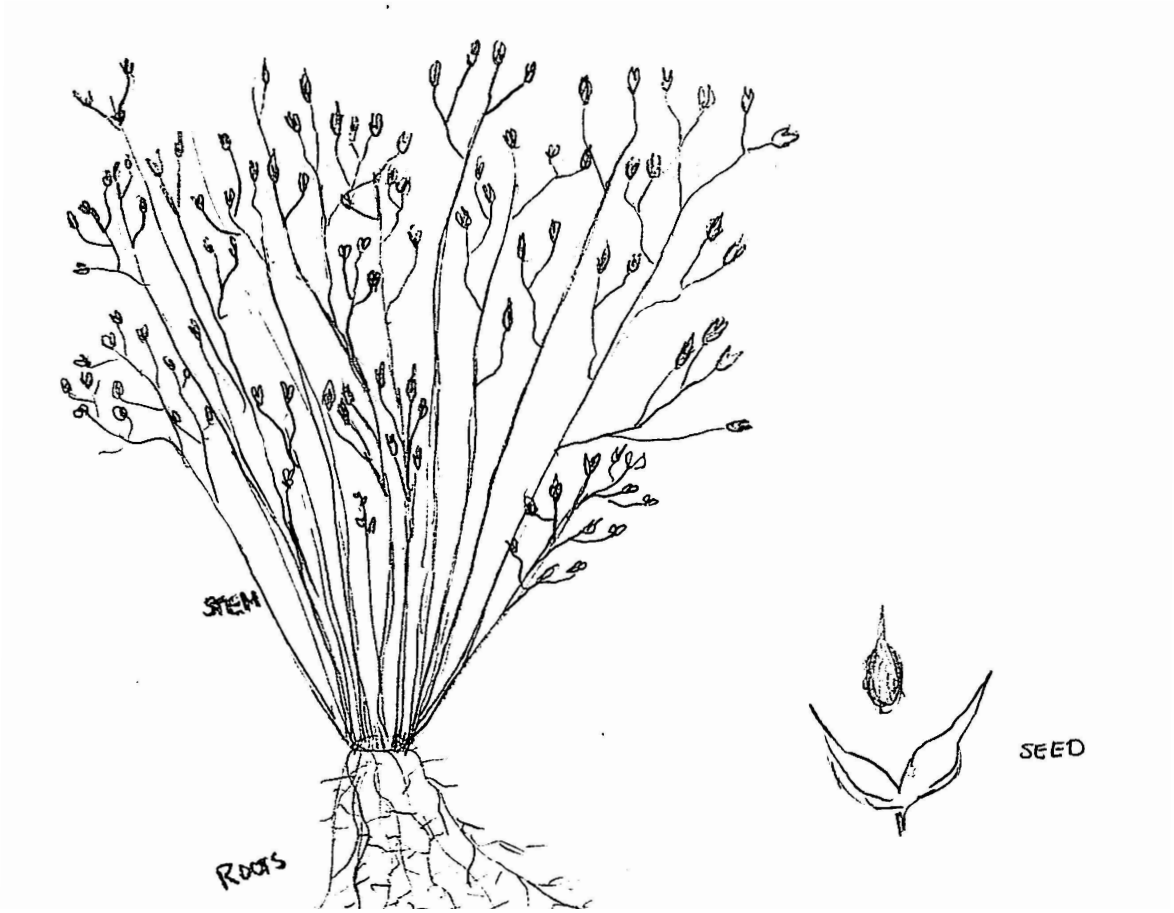


Common Name: Indian Ricegrass
Scientific Name: *Oryzopsis hymenoides*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

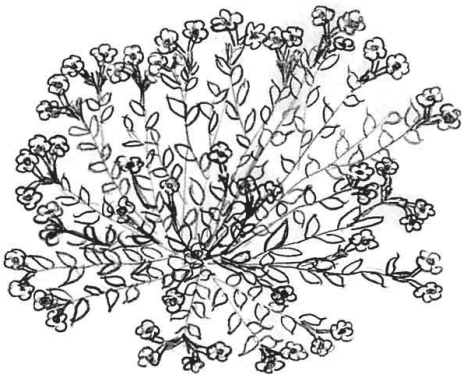


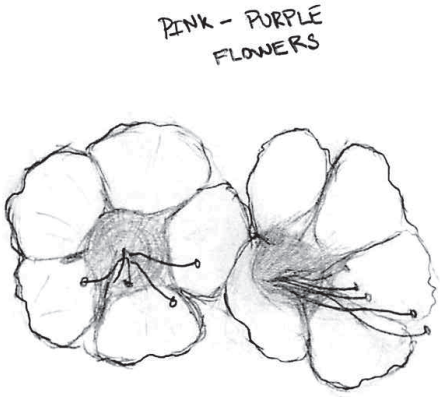
Common Name: Colorado Four O'Clock
Scientific Name: *Mirabilis multiflora*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:



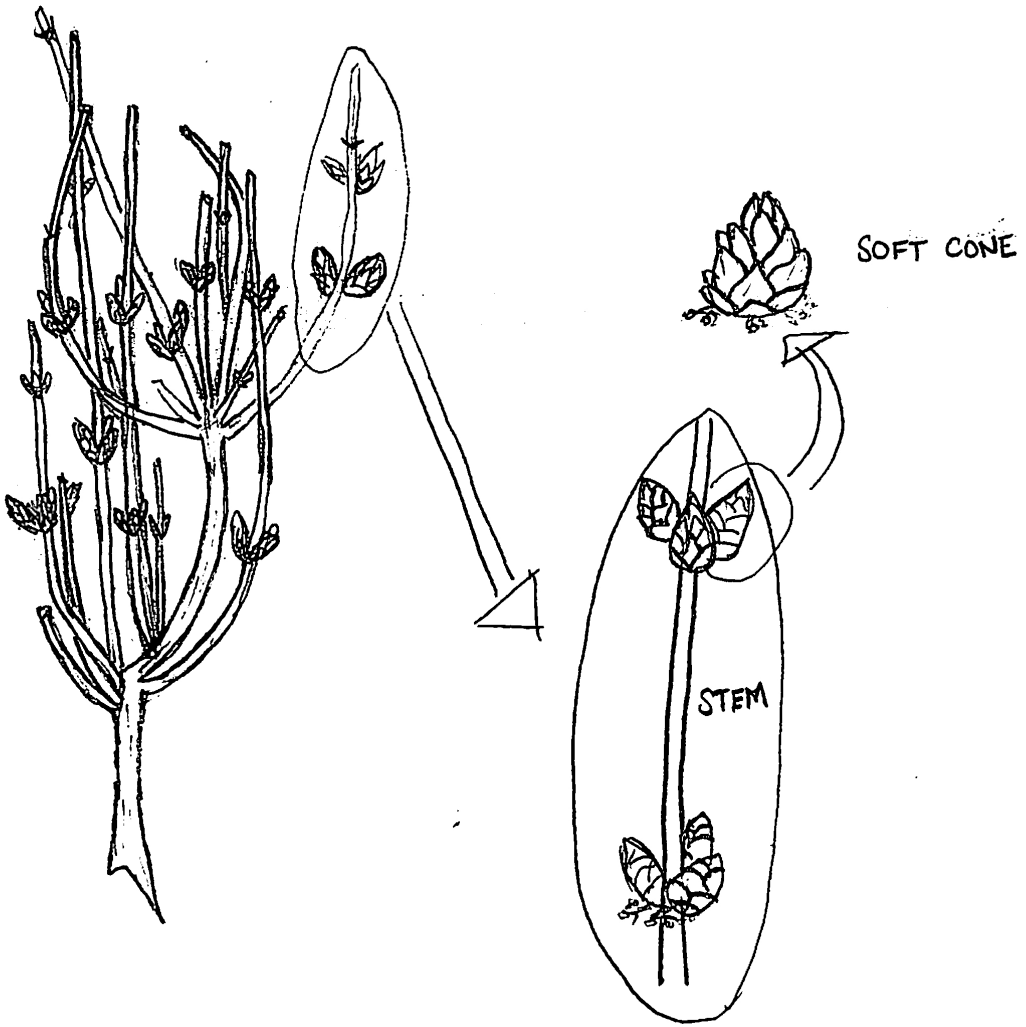


Common Name: Torrey's Jointfir
Scientific Name: *Ephedra torreyana*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

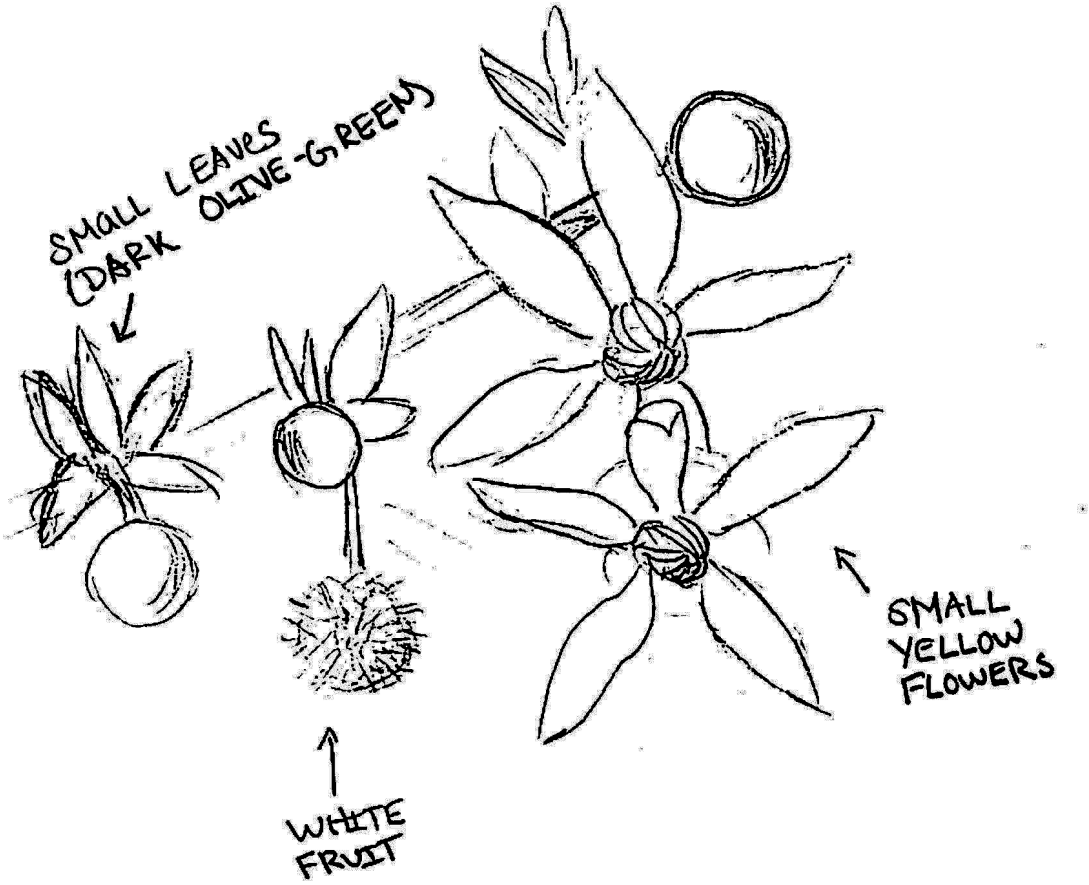


Common Name: Creosote Bush
Scientific Name: *Larrea tridentata*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

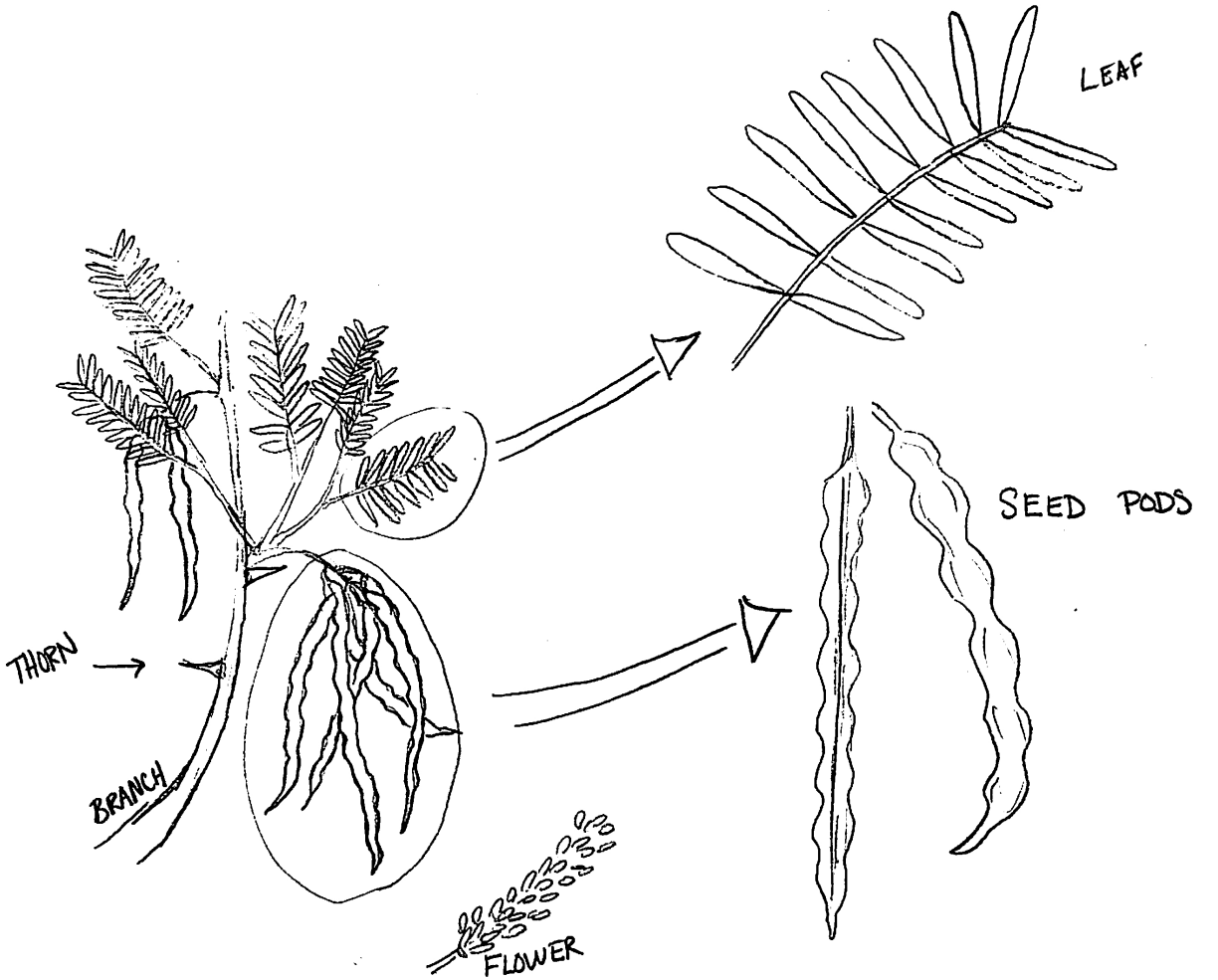


Common Name: Honey Mesquite
Scientific Name: *Prosopis juliflora, p. glandulosa, p. pubescens*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

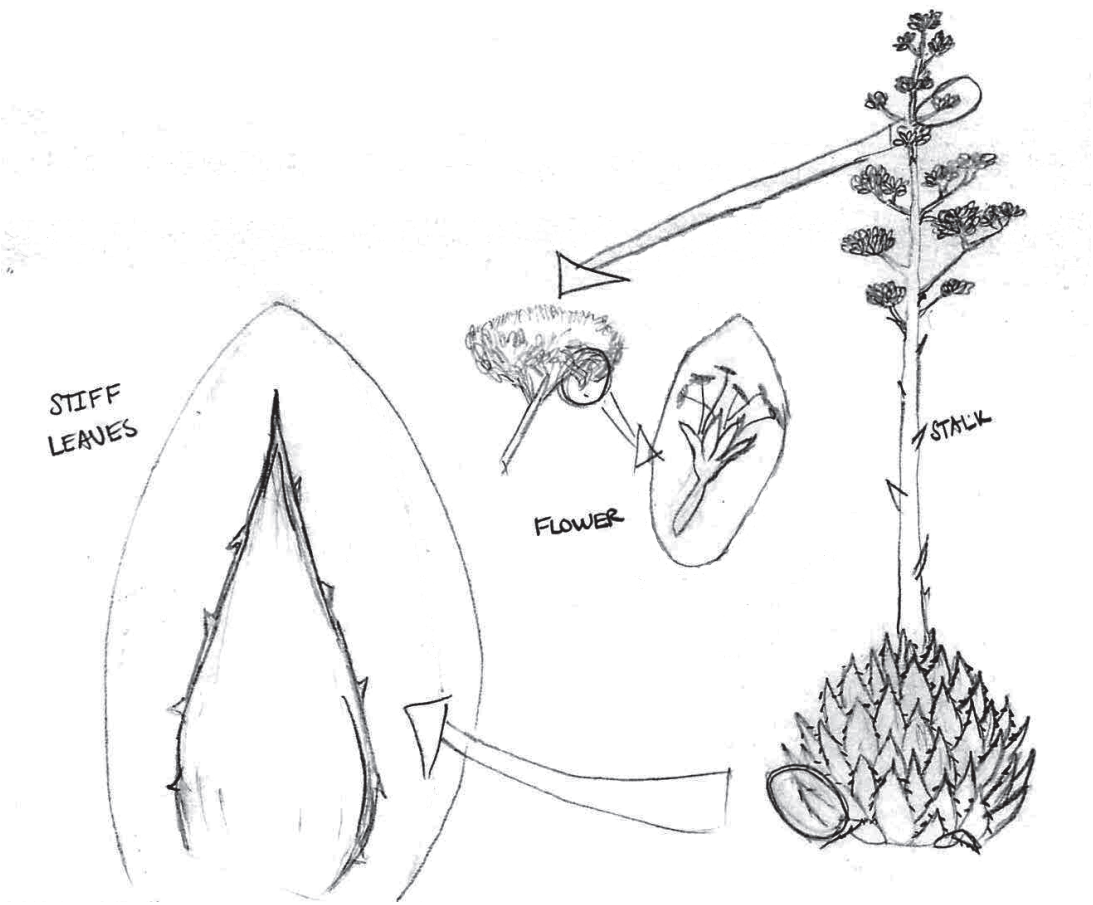


Common Name: New Mexico Agave
Scientific Name: *Agave parryi var. neomexicana*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

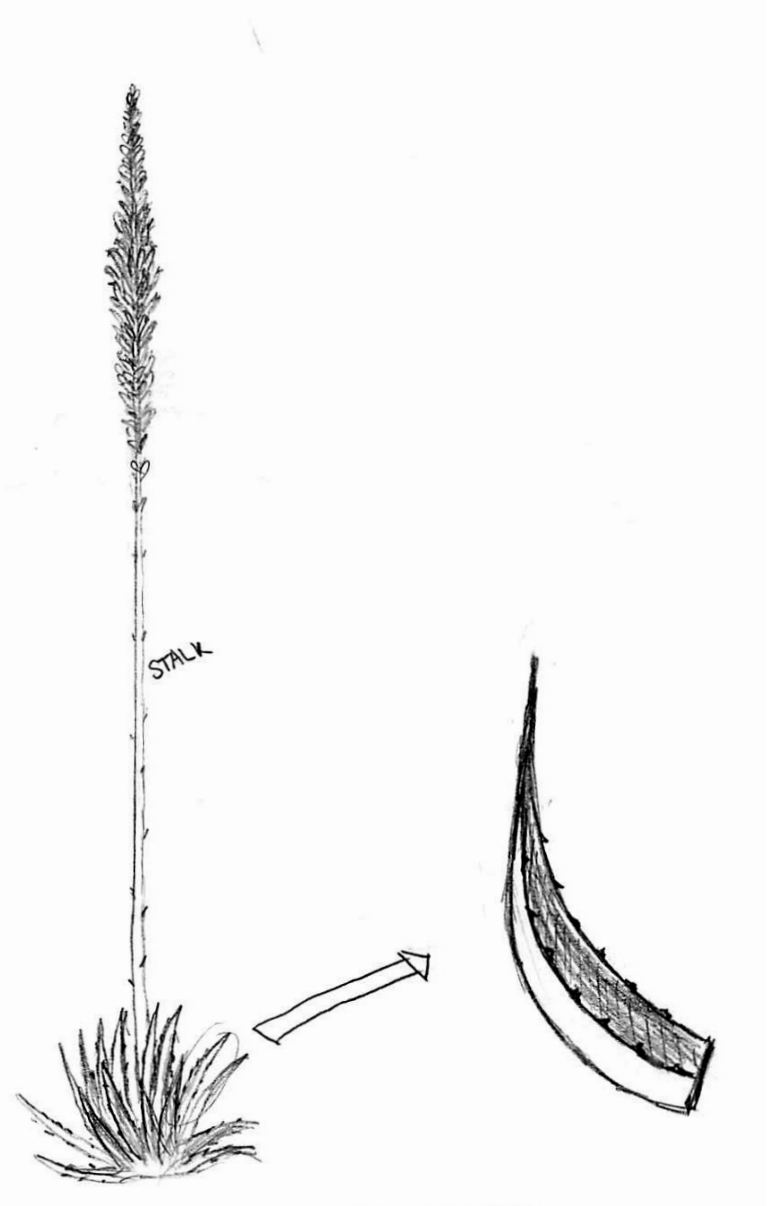


Common Name: Lechuguilla
Scientific Name: *Agave lechuguilla*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

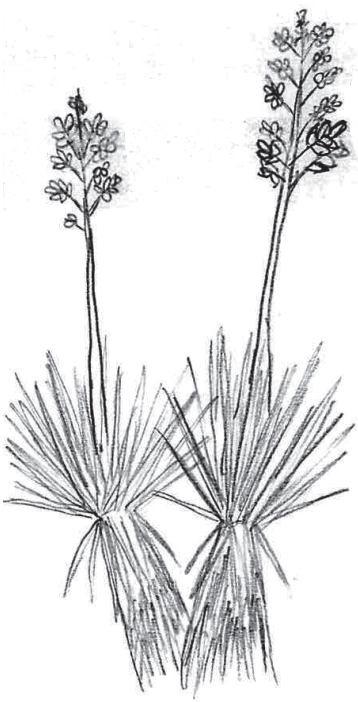


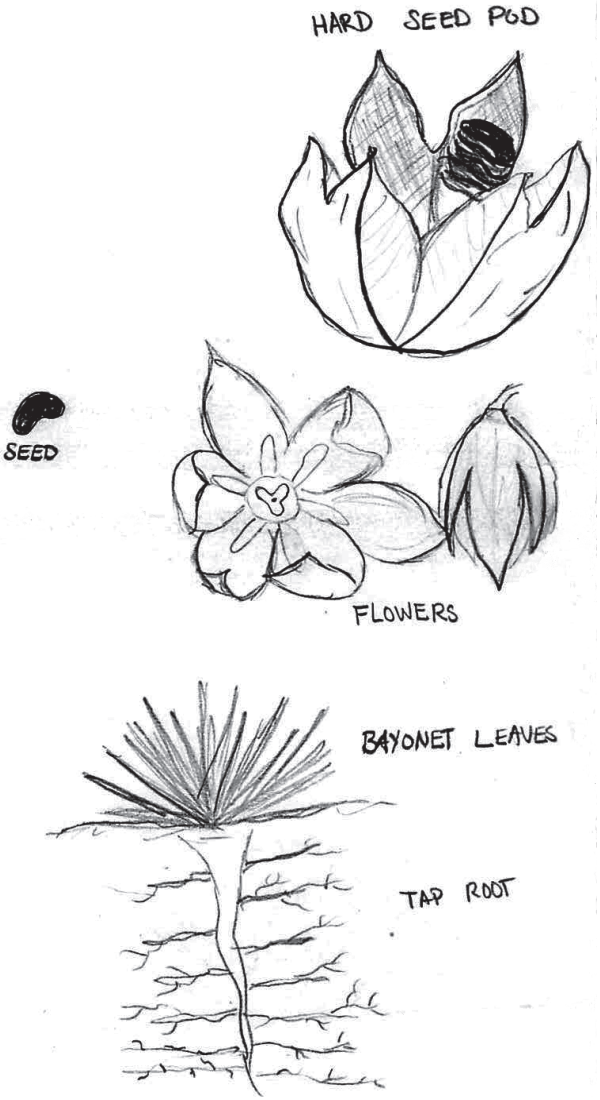
Common Name: Soaptree Yucca
Scientific Name: *Yucca elata*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:



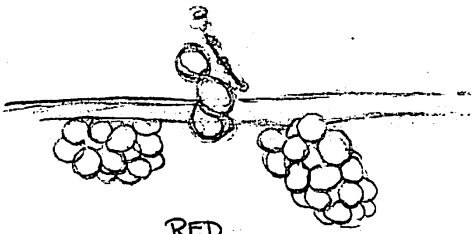


Common Name: Skunkbush Sumac
Scientific Name: *Rhus trilobata*

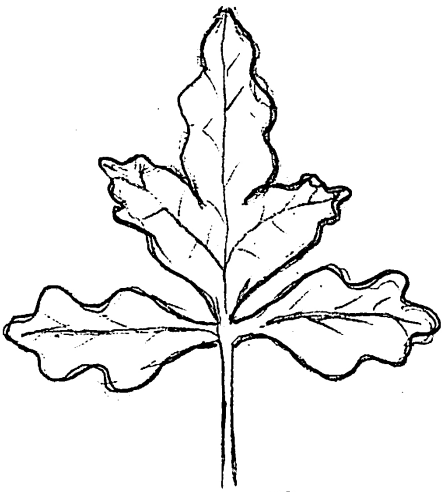
Description:

Uses:

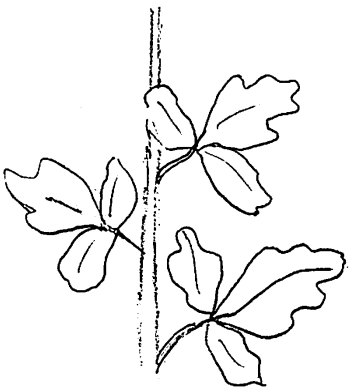
Notes:



RED BERRY-LIKE FRUIT



THREE-LEAVED

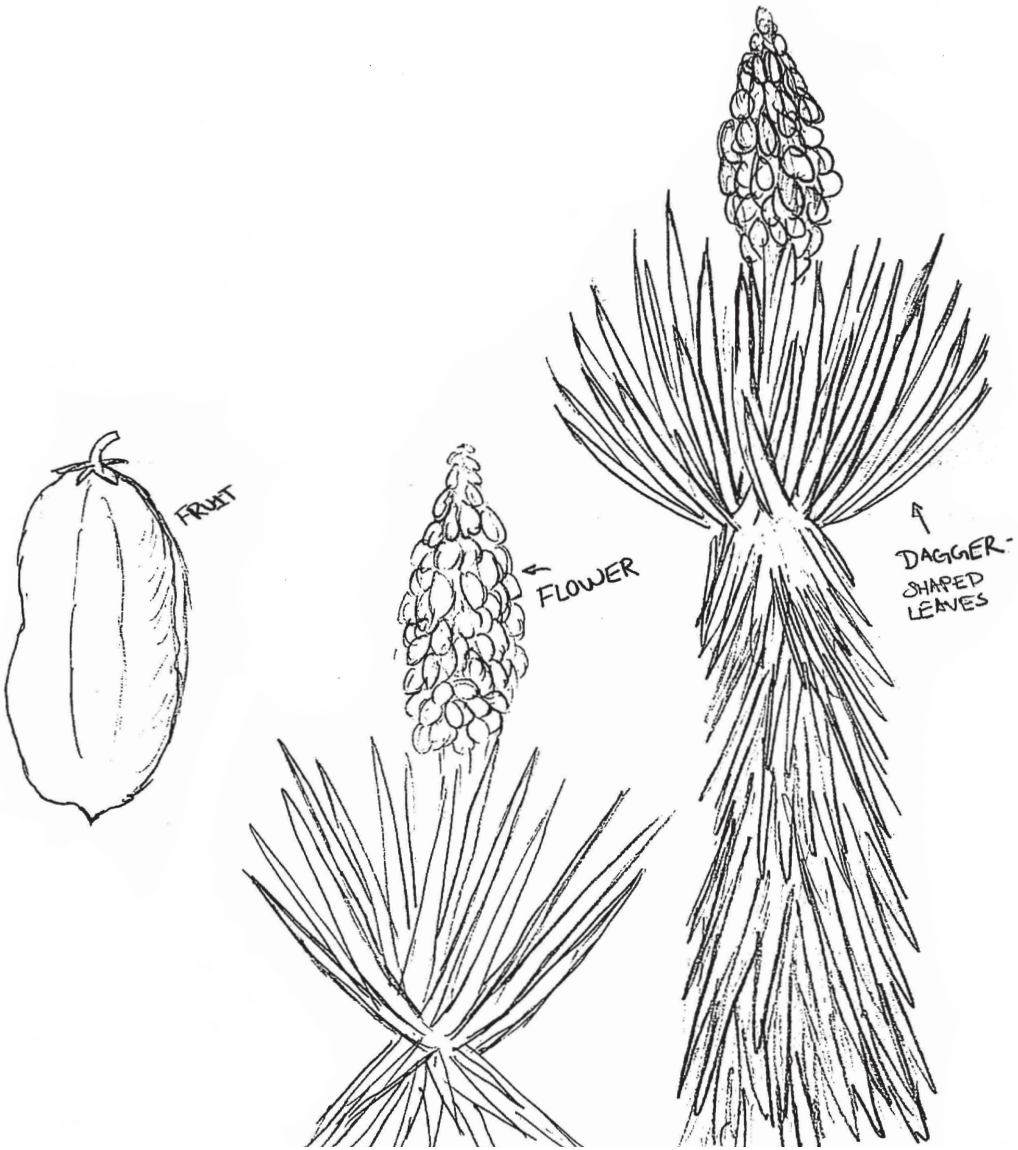


Common Name: Torrey's Yucca
Scientific Name: *Yucca torreyi*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

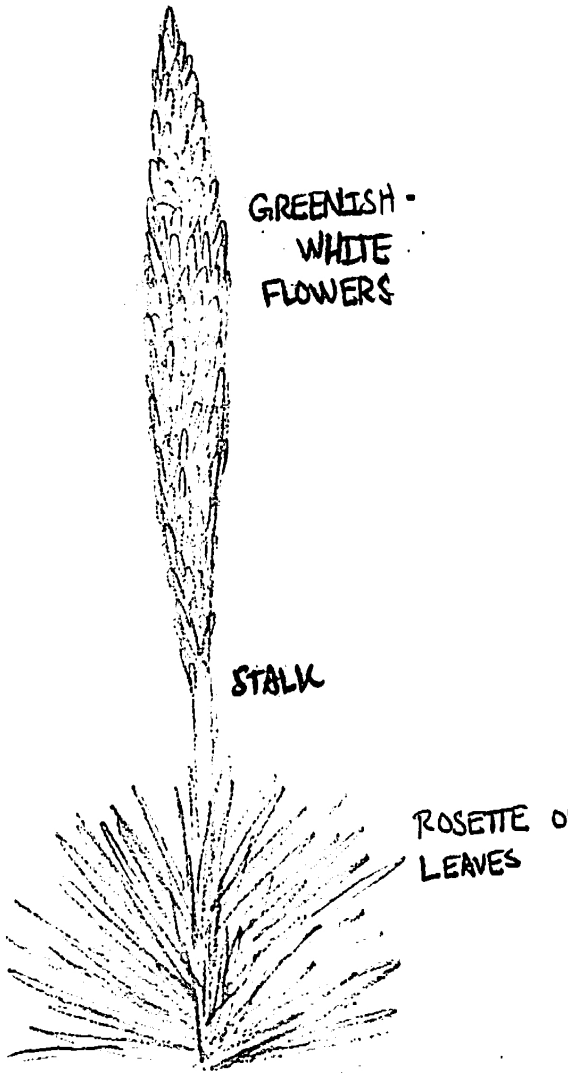


Common Name: Desert Spoon (Sotol)
Scientific Name: *Dasylirion wheeleri*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

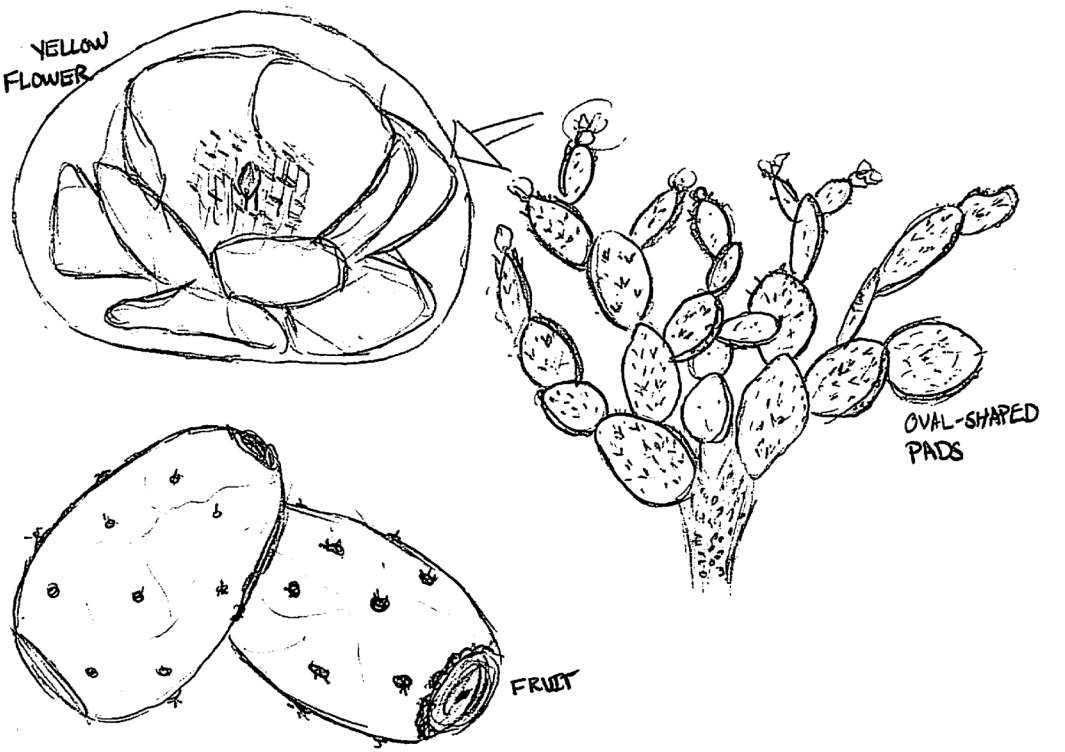


Common Name: Purple Prickly Pear Cactus
Scientific Name: *Opuntia engelmannii, o. phaeacantha, o. macrocentra*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

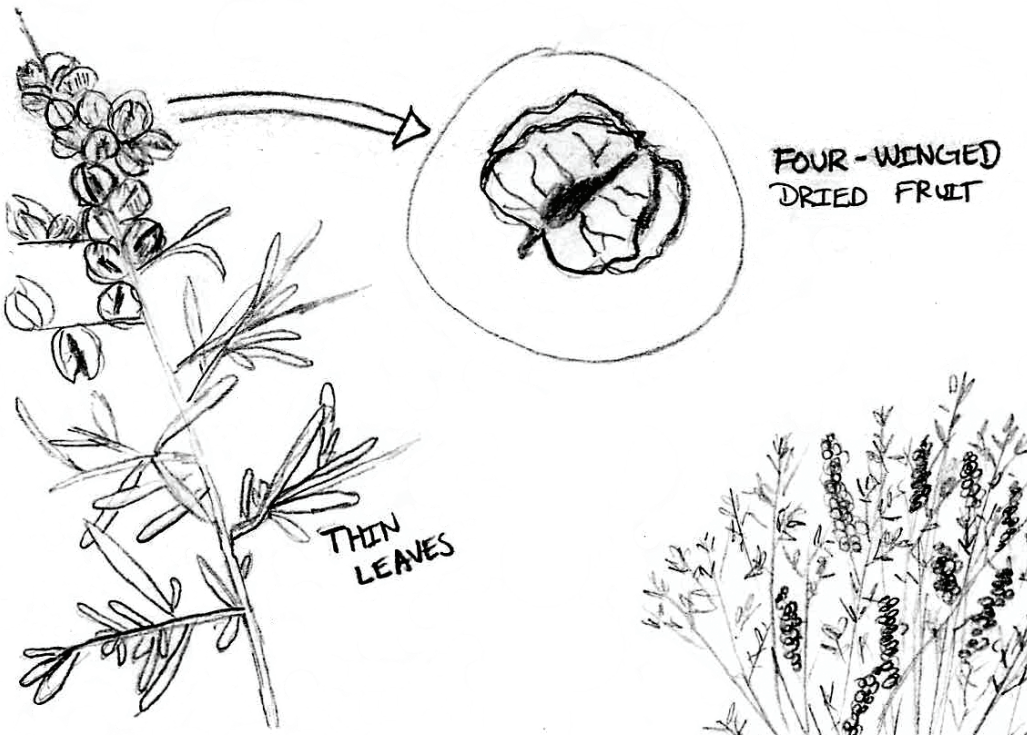


Common Name: Four-wing Saltbush
Scientific Name: *Atriplex canescens*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

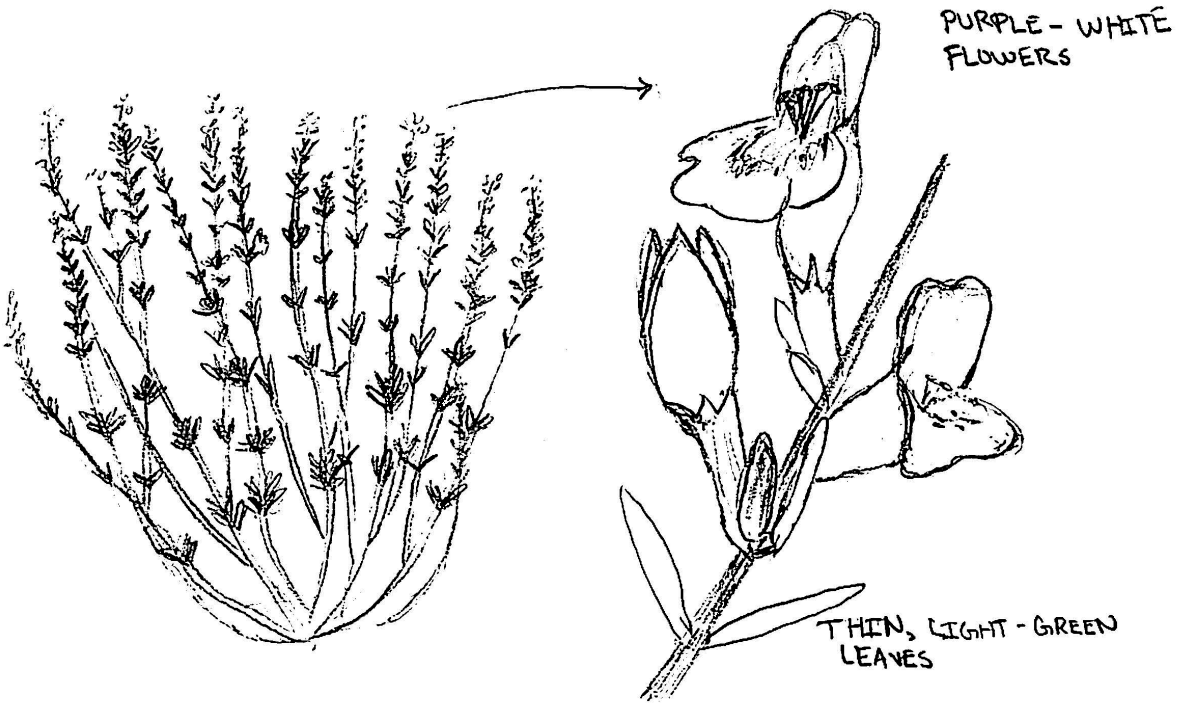


Common Name: Hoary Rosemary Mint
Scientific Name: *Poliomintha incana*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:

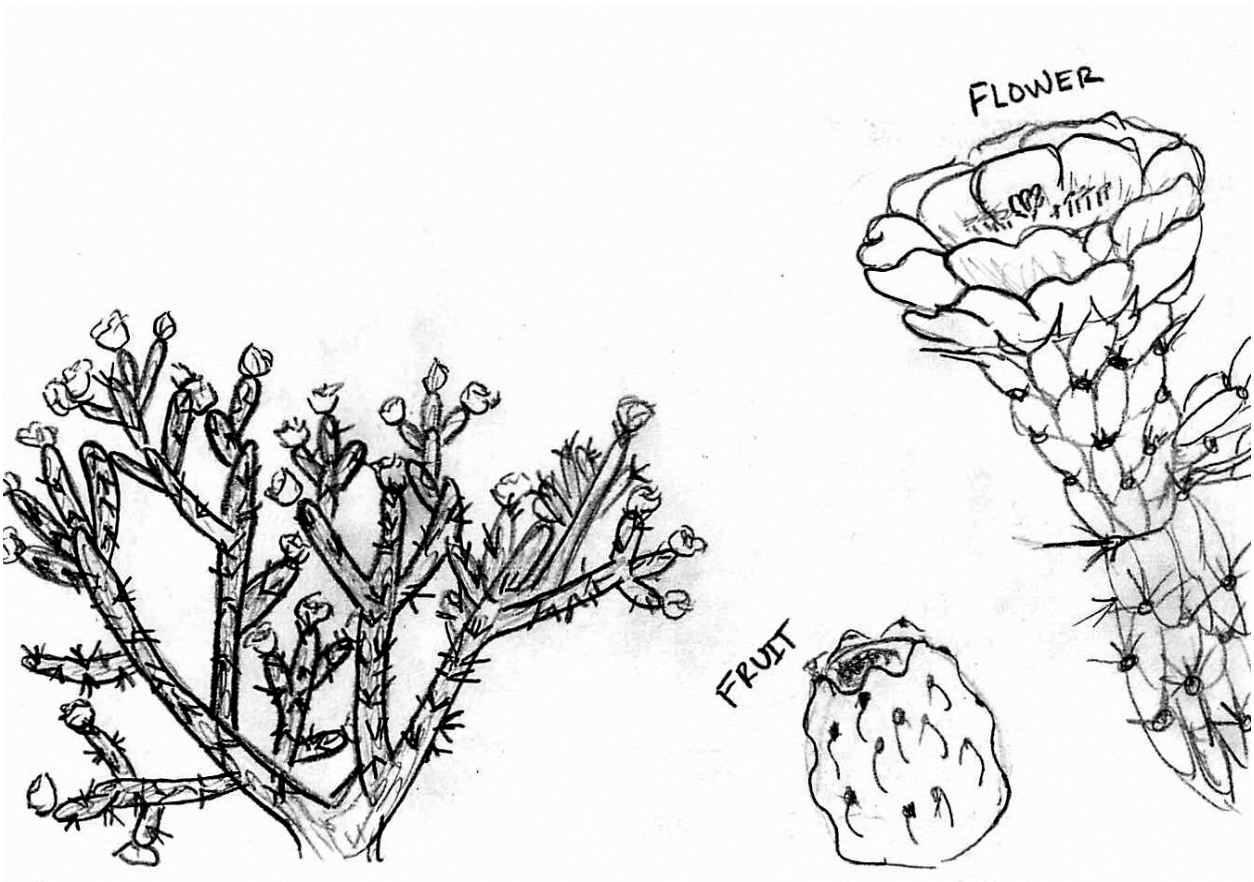


Common Name: Cane Cholla
Scientific Name: *Cylindropuntia imbricata*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:



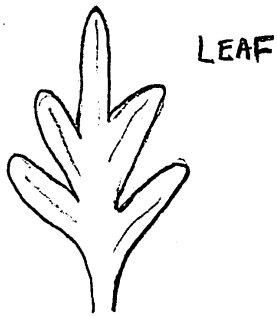
Additional Plant in the Native Garden

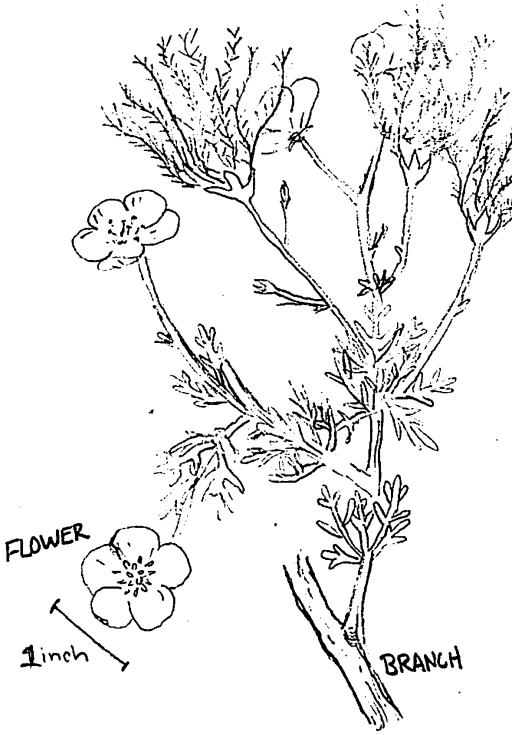
Common Name: Apache Plume
Scientific Name: *Fallugia paradoxa*

Description:

Uses:

Notes:





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