

J.S. Acker Park

“What Am I?” Plant Guide

Station #1 MISTLETOE in OAK

I'm an evergreen plant that is parasitic on deciduous or evergreen trees. My white berries are poisonous to you.

Station #2 OAK TREE/RIPARIAN HABITAT

We evergreen oaks to the left are among the largest oaks in AZ, growing up to 60'. The White and Emory oaks here provide acorns for animals and birds. This area overlooking the seasonal creek bed site offers an excellent variety of plants that can be found in riparian areas and provide important habitat for many birds and animals.

Pst! Pack rats live in the park. Can you find their homes of piled up sticks and debris?

Station #3 PONDEROSA AND PINYON PINES

I'm a young **Ponderosa Pine** growing to the left of the larger juniper tree. Needles tufts are 4-6" long. My bark is dark to red brown and smells of vanilla.

2-Needle Pinyon Pine is located about 15' to the right of the large juniper. It is brighter green and often used for Christmas trees. Another is located by the trail ahead on your right about 15'. My 2" double needles grow on stems like a bottle brush. I provide a highly edible seed in a short flatter cone favored by many animals and birds.

Station #4 SKUNKBUSH - MEADOW AREA

The Skunkbush located in the left foreground grows up to 10 feet tall and is related to poison oak but isn't poisonous. My lemony tasting berries form in spring. My leaves turn colorful orangy-red in the fall.

Station #5 PLAINS PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS

My spiny, flat pads grow in chains low to the ground; yellow flowers. My cactus needles are modified leaves.

Station #6 WRIGHT SILKTASSEL and POINT-LEAF MANZANITA

I, **Wright Silktassel** (at left) look a lot like Manzanita, but have lighter green leaves growing opposite and alternate of each other on gray stems.

Point-leaf Manzanita has long-oval, sharp pointed leaves grow alternately along red skinned branches. I have fragrant pink, bell-like flower. My name means “small apple” in Spanish, attributed to my fruit-like shape and apple-scented flowers.

Station #7 MOUNTAIN MAHOGANY and CEANOOTHUS

The **Alderleaf Mountain Mahogany** (foreground) leaves are small, wedge shaped and toothed on the top edges. My seeds are feathery corkscrew in shape.

Desert Ceanothus (see-a-no-this) at right is also called wild lilac. My cupped leaves are small, oval, leathery & thick. I have white clustered flowers.

Station #8 BEAR GRASS and YUCCA

Bear grass to the left, and behind has a narrow, grass-like leaf with no spines at tip. My flowering stalk can grow to 8' tall.

Banana Yucca (foreground) has long, broad, stiff spine-tipped leaves with thin fibers on leaf edges. My seed fruits are banana shaped and are pollinated by a Yucca moth only at night.

Station #9 NATIVE GRASSES in SUCCESSION AREA

Blue Grama - My feathery curved seed tassel is at top and on sides, with a blue-green grass color.

Side-oats Grama - My seed tassels grow individually along the side of my grass stalk.

Station #10 SHRUB LIVE OAK

Shrub Live Oak has small, bluish green, holly-like leaves. I bare small brown pointed 3/4" acorns in the fall providing a good food source for small animals.

Station #11 APACHE PLUME & CLIFF-ROSE

Apache-plume (foreground right) has five times as many feathery seed plumes than does Cliff-rose. My fern-like leaves are dark green on top with white woolly hairs beneath. My flower is white to yellow.

The **Cliff-Rose** (right and behind) has leathery glandular-dotted leaves. My yellow flower produces up to five 2" long feathery seed plumes in late summer to fall. Both plants are in the Rose family.

Station #12 ALLIGATOR JUNIPER

Alligator Juniper is the largest species of juniper in Arizona with thick, deeply grooved bark, broken into small 1" - 2" square plates resembling alligator skin. We grow as separate male and female trees. The two males in the foreground left of the station provide pollen for two females trees (usually with berries) to the right and behind you.