

J.S. Acker Park Mural Trail Plant Guide

Station #1 WAX CURRANT

This red-berry forming shrub grows up to 6' wide and 8' tall with light green lobed leaves that provide food forage for elk and deer. Has tubular white to pink flowers blooming between May & July. The Hopi ate the somewhat sweet berries, used it medicinally for stomachaches and made a wash for sore eyes.

Station #2 SHRUB LIVE OAK

This common shrub has small, bluish green, holly-like leaves. Often grows in dense thickets into a many-branched shrub or small tree to 13'. Bears small brown pointed 3/4" acorns in the late summer & fall providing a good food source for small animals. Acorns can be edible for humans if prepared properly.

Station #3 DESERT OLIVE is a multi-branched, deciduous shrub, 4-9 ft. tall, with smooth, gray bark; arched branches; and light-green leaves. Flowers are understated but fragrant. Tiny, blue fruits occur in clusters on the female plants.

Station #4 PINYON PINE is bright green in color and often used for Christmas trees. 2" single (sometimes double) needles grow on stems like a bottle brush. Has a highly edible nutritional seed in a short, flatter cone favored by man and animals. Grows very slowly and typically to about 35' tall.

Station #5 Alderleaf Mountain Mahogany Its leaves are small, wedge shaped and toothed on the top edges. Branches have thin and smooth bark. Flowers start out red but becomes yellow at opening, followed by seeds that are feathery and corkscrew in shape. Will grow tall but typically is found in the 3' to 6' range due to browsing animals. Is considered a long lived species in the Rosaceae (Rose) family.

Station #6 PLAINS PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS

Classic ovoid shaped spiny, flat pads that will grow in chains low to the ground; yellow flowers. Its protective spines are really modified leaves.

Station #7 CLIFFROSE

The Cliffrose has small leathery glandular-dotted leaves. Its fragrant yellow flower produces 5-10 seeds with 2" long feathery plumes in late summer to fall. This plant is also in the Rose family. Native

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Americans used the stringy bark for padding in cradle boards, mats, rope, clothing and sandals. Its straight branches were used for ceremonial arrows, and fabric dye was made from its leaves.

Station #8 BEAR GRASS has narrow, grass-like saw tooth edged leaves with no spines at the tip. Flower stalk grows to 8', blooming May to August. Native Americans ate the roasted root-stalk. The grass-like leaves are long and used in Mexican basketry work.

Station #9 PONDEROSA PINE

This youngster can grow and mature to well over 75' tall. Branches have 4" - 6" long needle tufts and 3"- 6" long mature cones. Bark is dark-to-red-brown and will smell of fragrant vanilla in the heat of the day.

Station #10 DESERT CEANOTHUS: An easy name mnemonic is **See-I-know-this**. Also called wild lilac. Its cupped leaves are small, oval, leathery and thick. Clustered flowers bloom white in spring. The hardened wood was used by the Navajo to hold wool when spinning; when added to alder and juniper bark makes a reddish dye for their wool yarn.

Station # 11 ALLIGATOR JUNIPER is the largest species of juniper in AZ with thick, deeply grooved bark, broken into small 1" to 2" square plates resembling alligator skin. There are separate male (small pollen cones) and female (produce whitish-blue woody berries) trees.

Station # 12 POINT-LEAF MANZANITA has long-oval, sharp pointed leaves that grow alternately along red-skinned branches. Has fragrant pink, bell-like flower. Its name means "small apple" in Spanish, attributed to the fruit shape and apple blossom scented flowers. Some pretty good jam and jelly can be made from the green fruit.

Station # 13 SKUNK BUSH This strongly scented shrub with three-lobed leaves grows up to 10' tall is related to poison ivy, but isn't harmful. The lemony tasting sticky red to orange berries that form in spring and summer are high in ascorbic acid/Vitamin C. These fruits were used by Native Americans in foods, for a lemonade-like beverage, and medicines. Deciduous leaves turn a colorful yellow to red and drop off in fall. Provides deer and elk forage.

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