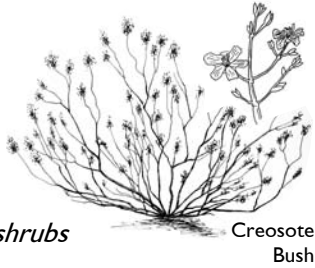


MOJAVE DESERT SHRUBS

*These are the dominant shrubs
of the Mojave desert*



Creosote Bush *Larrea tridentata*

Upright growing shrub with hard wooden branches, usually 3-5' tall but can be as much as 10'. Leaves are green and divericcate (2-parted) in shape. Flowers have 5 yellow petals, and may appear in fall as well as spring. Each produces a fuzzy seed pod. The creosote smell comes from the darkened rings on the stems and the leaves and is particularly noticeable when the shrub is wet. The bushes can sometimes be found growing in a ring called a Creosote Ring. The branches are a clone of the original plant and are connected underground to a common root network. These rings can be as much as 10,000 years old! The Creosote bush is the dominant plant of the Mojave and Sonoran deserts.

Silver or Golden Cholla *Opuntia echinocarpa*

An intricately branched cactus that can grow to 5' tall and is covered with silvery to golden spines about an inch long. Flowers are greenish-yellow with many petals about 1" long and appear April to May. The spiny fruit is edible. Cholla spines have a very tiny hook on the end that allows the plant to affix its cylindrical stems or joints to the most casual of passers by. They do not 'jump'. The ground at the base of the plant can be littered with joints, so don't get too close!

Burrobush or Burweed *Ambrosia dumosa*

Low, densely growing shrub that is usually less than 24" tall with tiny, grayish, hairy leaves. Very tiny petal-less flowers appear in clusters at the stem tips, with male flowers growing above the female flowers which make a brown, bur-like seed pod. Flowers appear February to June. Windblown pollen is often highly allergenic!

Beavertail Cactus *Opuntia basilaris*

Succulent with one to several flat stem-pads that are covered with brown clusters of very tiny bristles that transfer readily to the finger when touched and may be removed with tweezers or adhesive tape. The flowers are brilliant pink to magenta and up to 4" across with many, many bright yellow stamens.

Mojave Aster *Xyloriza tortifolia*

Sub-shrub 8-26" tall with many branches from the base and linear, tooth-edged leaves. The long-stemmed flower heads may be up to 2" in diameter and can have from 40-60 ray flowers that can vary from violet to lavender to pinkish or nearly white. All color variations have bright yellow disk flowers. Mojave Aster blooms March to May and is one of the most attractive of desert perennials.

Rabbitbrush *Chrysothamnus ssp.*

Shrub with greenish stems, usually 3-5' tall with 3" long, linear leaves. True to its Latin name, *Chrysos* for gold and *Thamnos* for shrub, thick clusters of bright yellow flowers appear on the terminal end of the branches in the fall. This shrub prefers to grow in places where the ground has been disturbed such as roadsides or in burned areas. Windblown pollen is highly allergenic!

MOJAVE DESERT WASH SHRUBS

These shrubs grow in sandy or rocky washes (past or present) or on loose, gravelly hillsides-throughout the Mojave desert – their seeds won't sprout unless tumbled about.

Desert Senna *Senna armata*

Many-branched shrub up to 3-4' tall with numerous yellow-green stems that are leafless much of the year. Leaves are linear in shape, 3-5" long, and have thin, opposite leaflets. Showy clusters of bright yellow pea-shaped flowers appear at the top of the branches in April and May and are followed by green pea pods 1-1.5" long. Flowers are very fragrant.

Indigo Bush *Psoralethamnus arborescens*

Intricately branched, woody shrub with purplish stems and tiny, pinnately-compound, green leaves. Clusters of deep indigo- purple, pea-shaped flowers appear at the tips of the branches April to May, followed by sticky, spotted pods.

Cheesebush *Hymenoclea salsola*

Rounded, sometimes straggly shrub with gray-green leaves 1-2" long. Flower heads are small, petal-less and numerous, and are surrounded by papery bracts. They appear March to June and the seeds form in a whorl or in cheesehead-shaped pods. The name comes from these pods and the strong, "Limberger" smell of the plant.

Note that flower/shrub size and abundance depends upon rainfall and temperature.

*Please do not pick the flowers;
leave them for others to enjoy.*



This brochure was produced by the Creosote Ring Subchapter (Bristlecone Chapter), California Native Plant Society with the cooperation of the Ridgecrest Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.