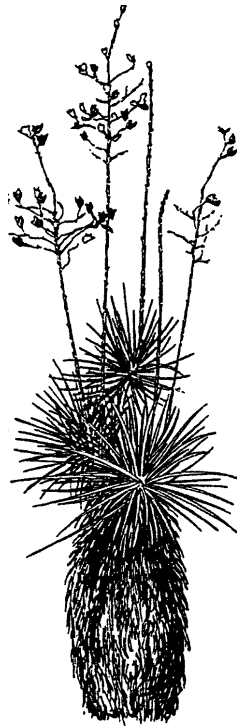


NATIVE PLANTS
FOR
LAWNS AND GARDENS
OF
SOUTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO



NATIVE PLANTS FOR LAWNS AND GARDENS
OF
SOUTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO

This booklet was prepared by the Gila Native Plant Society to assist those who reside in southwestern New Mexico in selecting native trees, shrubs and woody vines that are ecologically appropriate for their lawns and gardens. The limited number of plants described here were selected because they have survived over millions of years in this region and, once established, require little or no additional water. We hope to encourage those who have lived in this area for many years, as well as newcomers to this arid region, to learn to live with and appreciate our diverse native flora.

The limiting factor in the survival of most plants and animals, including humankind, in the Southwest is water. This region is unique in the native plants and animals that have evolved and flourished with limited water. However, the massive intrusion of *Homo sapiens* into the region over the past 50 years is already placing a tremendous burden on the available water supply. At the same time, a conservative estimate for the doubling time of the human population in the four or five counties that form southwestern New Mexico is 25 years. This will undoubtedly exacerbate the problem. Only if we now recognize our relationship to this arid region and start to plan for the future will continued growth in human populations be possible and desirable.

One of the best ways to plan for the future is to learn to live with the natural history of the region, rather than to continue to live at odds with the biota. As humankind moves into a new and different ecosystem they tend to try to reproduce the ecosystem from whence they came. This human flaw is today producing a tremendous burden on the natural water supply in the Southwest. Planting bluegrass, northern maples, lilacs, basswoods, etc., that require and receive 30 or 40 inches of moisture annually in the eastern half of the United States and Europe simply will not work in this dry region. One only needs to travel 50 miles any direction from Silver City to observe the local flora and to get a feel for the kinds of plants that form our native flora. The plants suggested in this booklet form an important part of this flora.

Although this publication includes only 68 species for your consideration, there are several hundred native woody plants that can survive in our lawns and gardens with little or no additional water. By becoming familiar with the included plants and carrying this booklet with you on field excursions throughout this area, it should be possible to start to recognize these and other species you would like to add to your garden. Also, you may wish to ask local greenhouses to order several of these species for you. Planting native plants not only will provide a natural visual experience for those who visit the area and at the same time reduce water consumption, but it will make sound economic sense for many years to come.

We have not included native herbaceous plants and grasses in this publication, however we encourage the use of these species whenever possible, especially in and around new homes and in landscaping where water is a high priority issue. Those species of native grasses that can tolerate drought and dry periods include Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), Buffalo Grass (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and Galleta Grass (*Hilaria jamesii*).

A major objective of the Gila Native Plant Society is to inform and educate the citizens of the region of our native flora, and to help them become familiar with plants they may wish to select for their property. Through field trips and lectures every effort is made to encourage the larger community to appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds us and to better understand the need to conserve this ephemeral ecosystem.

This publication is the result of the continued efforts of several individuals, and a number of members and friends who aided in finalizing the included material. Martha Carter and Chuck Huff were largely responsible for selecting the content and illustrations, the layout and proof reading all the early drafts. The illustrations were produced by Beth Dennis, Marjorie Leggitt and William Underwood. Marian Zimmerman assisted in the final reading of the page proofs. Richard Johnson took time from a busy schedule to teach us how to use the scanner and the desktop system and Western New Mexico University allowed us to use their high quality printer for the final draft. We wish to thank all who gave of their time and talent to the production of this document. We only hope our efforts will meet the needs of those who live and work in southwestern New Mexico and who are as interested in the conservation of this small portion of planet Earth as are we.

Jack L. Carter, President
Gila Native Plant Society
1994

LOCAL SOURCES FOR NATIVE PLANTS

Tricia Hurley
Lone Mountain Natives
lonemtn@g.com
575-538-4345
Silver City, New Mexico

Gabriel Feldman
Honey Hawk Homestead
www.Honeyhawkhomestead.com
575-519-9986

Country Girls Nursery
1950 Hwy 180 East
Silver City, New Mexico
[Facebook@Countrygirlsnursery](https://www.facebook.com/Countrygirlsnursery)
575-313-1507

Plants of the Southwest
3095 Agua Fria
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507
www.plantsofthesouthwest.com
505-438-8888

Plants of the Southwest
6680 Fourth Street NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
505-344-8830

Peter Gierlach
Spadefoot Nursery
2831 East Broadway Boulevard
Tucson, Arizona 85716
sales@spadefootnursery.com
520-909-3619

Marcy Scott
Robledo Vista Nursery
Las Cruces, New Mexico
575-541-8083
<http://www.robledovista.com/>
Robledovista@gmail.com

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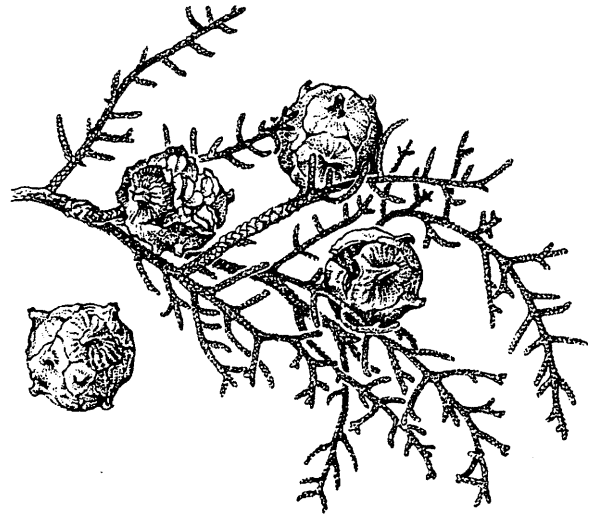
Trees

Cupressaceae (Cypress Family)

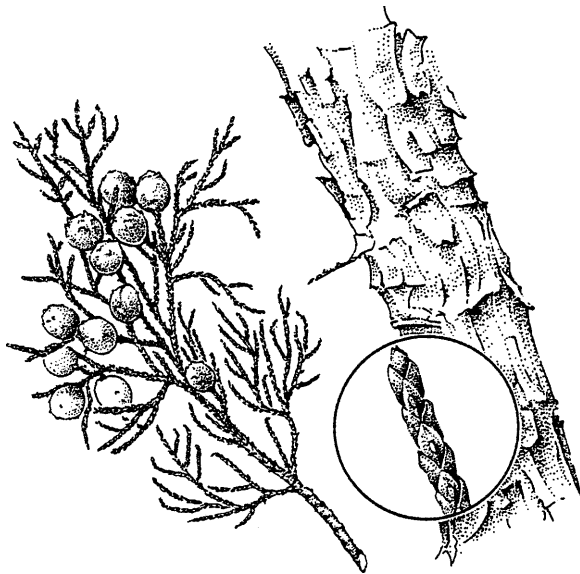
Arizona Cypress

Hesperocyparis arizonica

This handsome tree, with a pyramidal growth habit, is often planted as an ornamental in our region. Both male and female cones are produced on the same tree, with the male cones triggering spring allergies for some folks, while the attractive, globose, woody cones may persist for several years. Young seedlings can be transplanted with some success if ample soil is transferred with the plant. It grows to 40 or 50 ft. in height at maturity and grows at 4,000- 7,000 ft. in elevation. In a large lawn or garden it may, in time become the centerpiece for outdoor activities.



Hesperocyparis arizonica



Juniperus deppeana

Alligator Juniper

Juniperus deppeana

This large, attractive tree is common throughout the area on dry, often rocky slopes. The checkered, alligator bark is the key identifying factor of this juniper. Mature trees may reach 60ft in height and five feet in diameter. It commonly is found at 5,000-8,000 ft. in elevation and it shares its range with the One-seeded Juniper. Transplanting is difficult unless begun with a very young plant. However, if planting this tree as a seedling allow for a 12 to 13 ft. spread from the trunk.

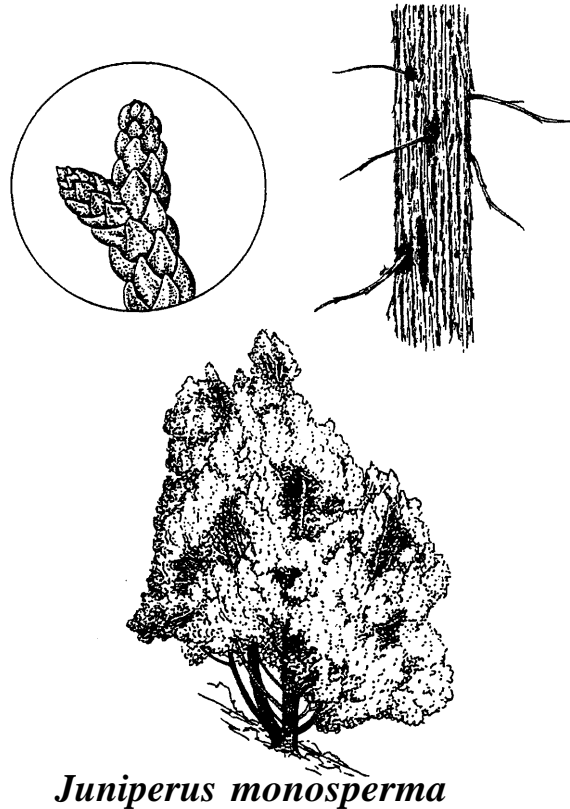
Trees

Cupressaceae (Cypress Family)

One-seeded Juniper

Juniperus monosperma

The One-seeded Juniper grows as a small tree or shrub to about 15 or 20 ft. in height. Like the Alligator Juniper, the One-seeded Juniper is common throughout the area over dry plains and hills intermixed with the Ponderosa Pine. As the bark matures it splits vertically from the branches. The seeds, bark and wood have been used for centuries by the Navajo for sandals, fence posts, prayer sticks, necklaces and medicinal uses. As the name implies, the fruit usually has one seed. The range of elevation is from 4,000- 6,500 ft. Several nurseries have this tree available for planting in cool weather.

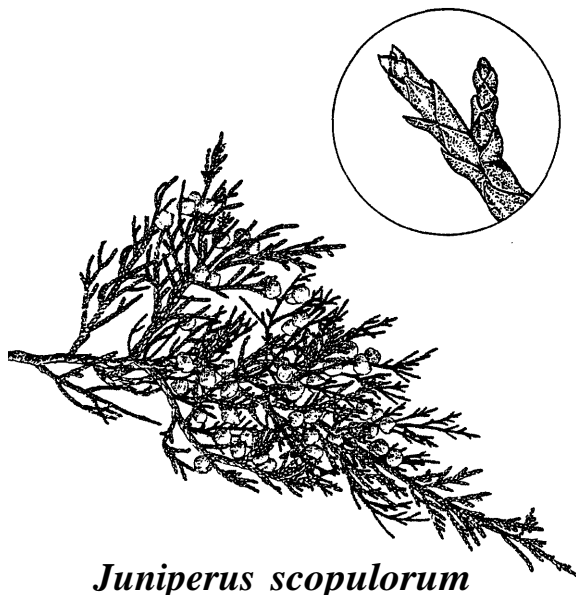


Juniperus monosperma

Rocky Mountain Juniper

Juniperus scopulorum

This abundant, but uncommon, juniper grows over dry, rocky, mountain slopes at slightly higher elevations and may require more moisture than the One-seeded Juniper. However, both species will require far less water than most introduced species. This juniper rarely exceeds 30 ft. in height. It is common at elevations from 6,500 - 9,000 ft. The tips of the branches are somewhat flaccid and droop at the tips in comparison to the One-seeded Juniper. It is commonly available in nurseries.

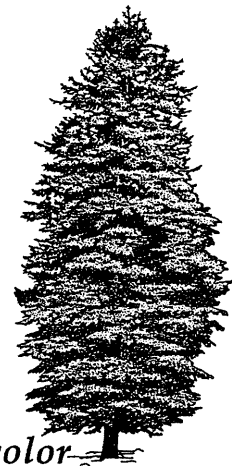
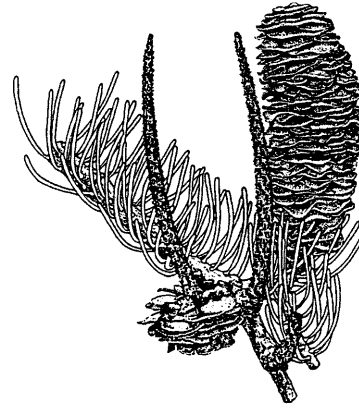


Juniperus scopulorum

White Fir

Abies concolor

Although not common to the immediate area, this handsome tree does well in well-drained, moist soil. The attractive cones may become 3 to 5 in. in length and stand upright on the tree. Nurseries in the northern part of New Mexico are more likely to carry this species. It will require some additional water in dry years. It may reach a height of 80 ft. and 5 ft. in radius from the trunk. Found at elevations from 6,500 - 9,000 ft.



Abies concolor



Pinus edulis

Pinon Pine

Pinus edulis

This attractive tree is the State tree of New Mexico and should be considered for local lawns. It grows to more than 35 ft. in height and can reach to 4 ft. in radius from the trunk. It is an important plant for humans and animals alike. The needles are usually in clusters of 2, with 1 or 3 per cluster not uncommon. It is widespread over the area at 5,000 - 7,500 ft. in elevation. The small female cones may not produce the wingless fruit and tasty nuts consistently but in good years the supply can be ubiquitous. Commonly available in nurseries.

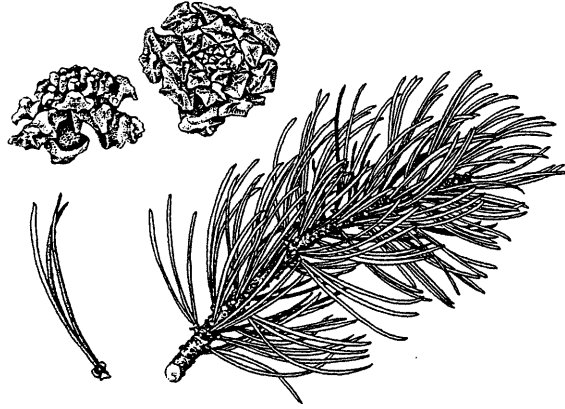
Trees

Pinaceae (Pine Family)

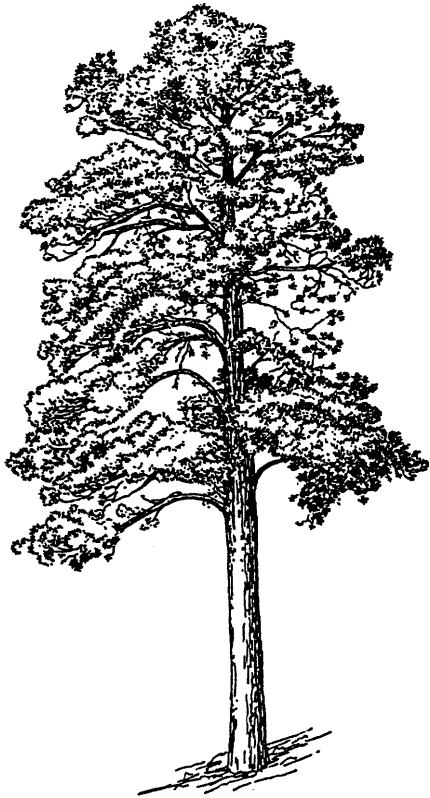
Mexican Pinon

Pinus cembroides

Although more restricted to the southern portion of the State, the Mexican Pinon does well in this area. It grows slowly to 30 or 40 ft. and resembles the Pinon Pine in growth habit. It ranges in elevation from 5,000-7,500 ft. It requires extremely small amounts of water and once successfully transplanted will require little or no care. Will probably not be available in local nurseries, but if small seedlings are transplanted to a 3 to 5 gallon can for 1 or 2 years it will usually survive in relatively dry, well-drained soil.



Pinus cembroides

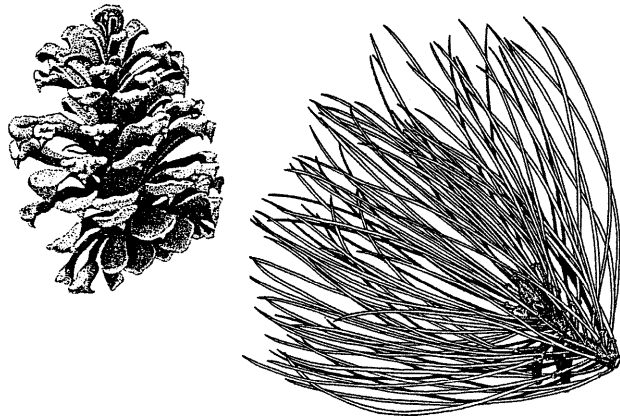


Pinus ponderosa

Ponderosa Pine

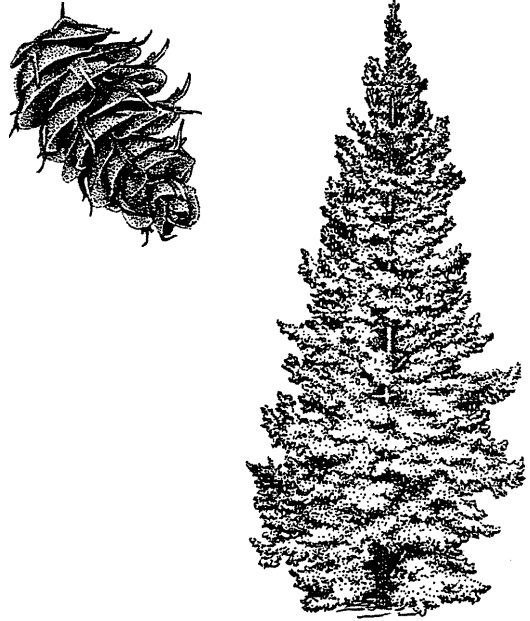
Pinus ponderosa

This common and attractive tree is widespread above 7,000 ft. in elevation. We normally have adequate moisture for survival in this region after it becomes established. Mature trees may reach over 100 ft. in height at higher elevations. Available in local nurseries. If not on your property you will want to try it.

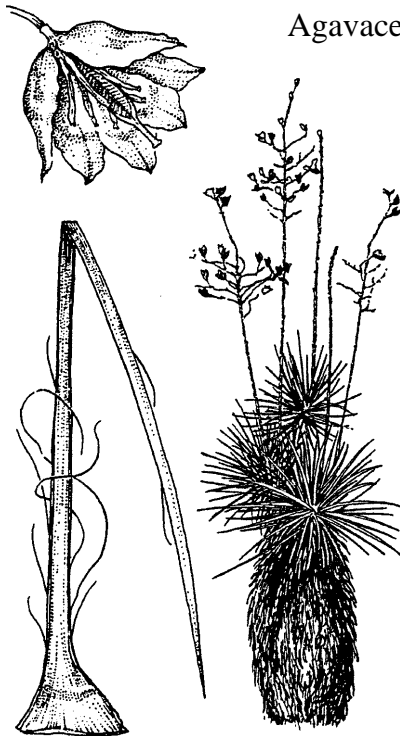


Douglas Fir*Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Douglas firs are large, beautiful trees with roughly pyramidal crowns. In our area they can reach a height of 130 ft. with an 8 to 10ft spread. The cone bracts are unique with three points, similar to a trident. The lumber is prized and the young trees are sought for Christmas trees which we would rather not encourage. The trees are usually found above 6,000 ft. in elevation but will do well above 5,500 ft. with some additional watering in the dry years. Since it commonly occurs in wooded areas you may wish to plant it on the shady side of the house.

*Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Agavaceae (Agave Family)

*Yucca elata***Soaptree / Palmilla***Yucca elata*

This tall yucca with a tree-like trunk grows from 6 to 15 ft. in height. It does well in dry, sandy places and is the State flower of New Mexico. It is common in the southern third of the State often producing 2 to 3 branches. If you introduce this species to your property be certain it is the plant you want. Spreading by rhizomes it quickly goes from a most desirable flowering species to a nuisance. They survive well up to 6,000 ft. in elevation. The Pima and Papago Indians use the leaves for basket making.

Trees

Desert Willow

Chilopsis linearis

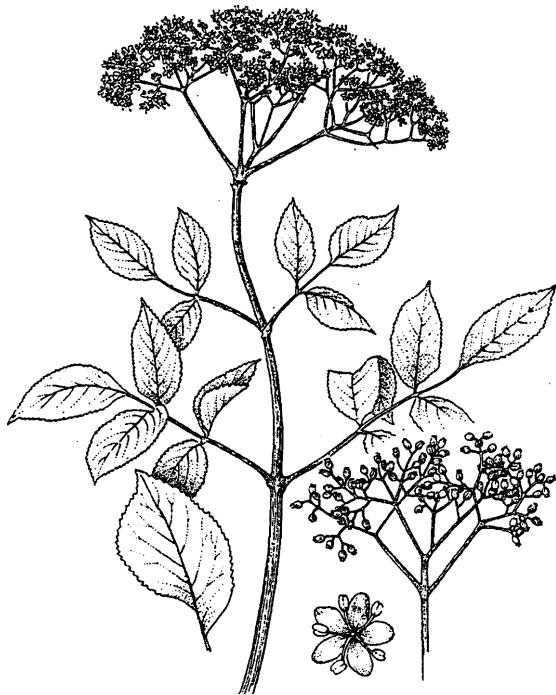
This large shrub or small tree is not a willow, but the linear leaves resemble the willows. The clusters of flowers are quite attractive and range from white to pink to purple in color. The fruit is a long, slender pod-like capsule that is characteristic of the Catalpa family. The tree can reach 25 ft. in height and does quite well in the area, but not above about 5,800 ft. in elevation. The flowers attract hummingbirds while large mammals often browse the stems. It is available at local and regional nurseries and can best be transplanted in the wet season.

Bignoniaceae (Catalpa Family)



Chilopsis linearis

Viburnaceae (Viburnum Family)



Sambucus mexicana

Mexican Elder

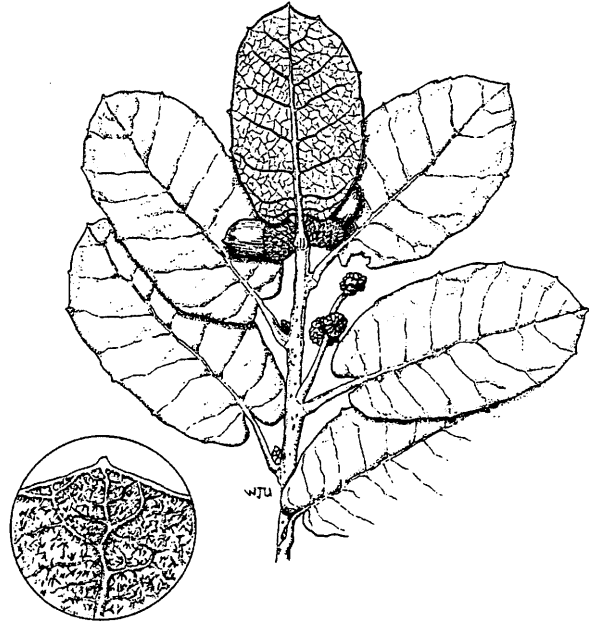
Sambucus mexicana

This small tree or large shrub will reach 20 ft. in height and tends to grow from several branches at the base. The fruit is black and is used by wildlife and humans alike, making good jelly and pies. The trees are used for ornamentals from Albuquerque southward and in the Gila River drainage. It does well in our area, ranging in elevation from 4,000 - 6,000 ft. When selecting this species for your lawn be especially careful that the species you purchase is *Sambucus mexicana* as Eastern substitutes require much more water.

Arizona White Oak

Quercus arizonica

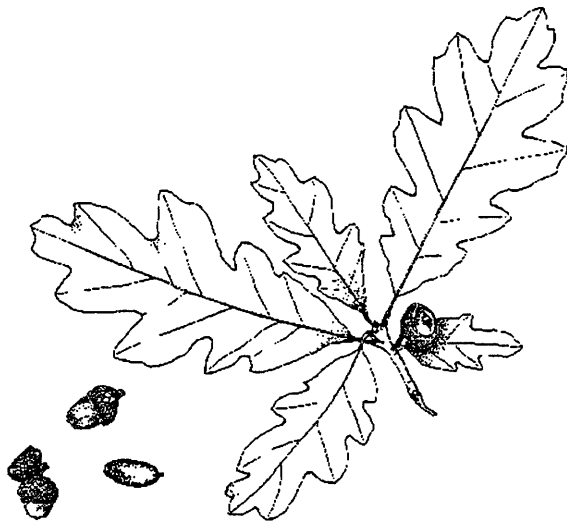
The oaks are considered a most important tree for wildlife. All parts of the tree are eaten by many animals. They tend to hybridize easily, producing various leaf shapes on the same tree. This species is a small tree growing to 30 ft. in height. It is evergreen until just before new leaves emerge in the spring. The leaf shape is generally oblong with the edges smooth or slightly toothed. The upper surface is dull, glabrous and bluish-green. The lower surfaces are brownish-pubescent. The trees are common from 5,000 - 6,000 ft. in elevation. Although this oak occurs in this part of New Mexico, it is not common. It can be transplanted with some success.



Quercus arizonica

Gambel Oak

Quercus gambelii



Quercus gambelii

This wide ranging, attractive and fully deciduous oak of the West reaches a height of 40 ft. and grows well in this area. The leaves are lobed with a general oblong outline and are lustrous green on the upper surface. The trees are common from 6,000- 8,500 ft. Although the species is more common over the extension of the Rocky Mountains in New Mexico, it occurs in abundance in the Gila National Forest. A permit is required to collect in the Forest. Small seedlings will transplant to shaded areas with adequate soil and water. Some nurseries carry this small tree.

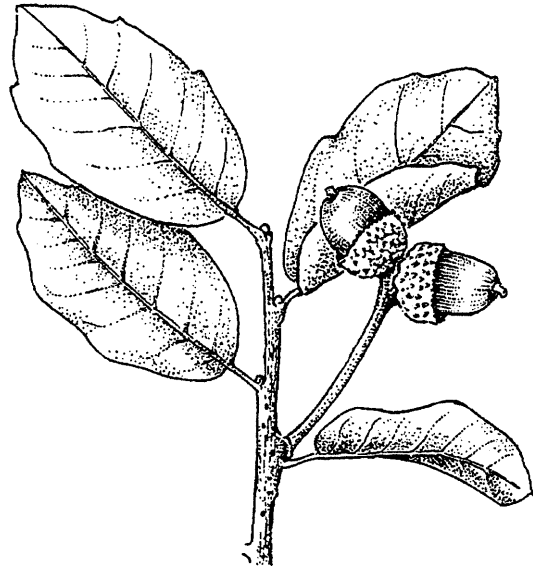
Trees

Fagaceae (Oak Family)

Gray Oak

Quercus grisea

Gray Oak is quite common in our area. Many folks consider it a weed, however it can be trimmed and shaped to form a nice lawn tree or shrub. The leaves are small and grayish to green in color. The trees can reach 30 ft. in height and do well in rocky areas. They are abundant at elevations from 4,500 - 7,500 ft. Seedlings are abundant and can be transplanted. Also, fertile acorns produce many seedlings. All of the oaks support a wide variety of animals with practically all parts edible.



Quercus grisea



Quercus hypoleucoides

Silverleaf Oak

Quercus hypoleucoides

At first glance this oak looks quite similar to a willow and may grow as a shrub or tree. When the acorns are formed there is no mistaking it for anything but an oak. The leaves have smooth margins, are dark green and lustrous above and silvery to whitish beneath, thus the specific name *hypoleucoides*. The trees are attractive and grow to 25 ft. in height at elevations of 5,500 - 8,000 ft. This oak, like so many others that could be included in this publication require limited water, are native and should be encouraged throughout this region.

Arizona Walnut

Juglans major

Everyone knows what an English Walnut looks like and the fruits of this tree are quite similar, though smaller. The separate male and female flowers are found on the same tree and they hang in long catkins. The tree can reach 50 ft. in height in our area with a trunk diameter of up to 4ft. The compound leaves are 8- 12 in. long with 9 - 13 leaflets. It would do well to plant this tree near water if possible, or plan to provide some additional water in dry years. May range from 2,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. Although the fruit is nothing like the black walnut of the eastern United States it does attract small mammals.



Juglans major

Littleleaf Mulberry, Texas Mulberry

Morus microphylla



Morus microphylla

This plant is often more shrubby than tree-like, reaching only 15 - 20 ft. in height but it can be trimmed to form a small tree. The fruit is a multiple that is blackberry-like and can be used for pies with enough added sugar. Animals devour the fruit as well. The leaves are sandpaper rough on the upper surface and are characterized by a wide range of shapes. This tree should do well in dry areas to about 3,500- 6,000 ft. in elevation, making it suitable for our area. Although this species is uncommon throughout the region and is probably not available from nurseries, it should reproduce by cuttings. It would be worth a try if you wish to attract birds.

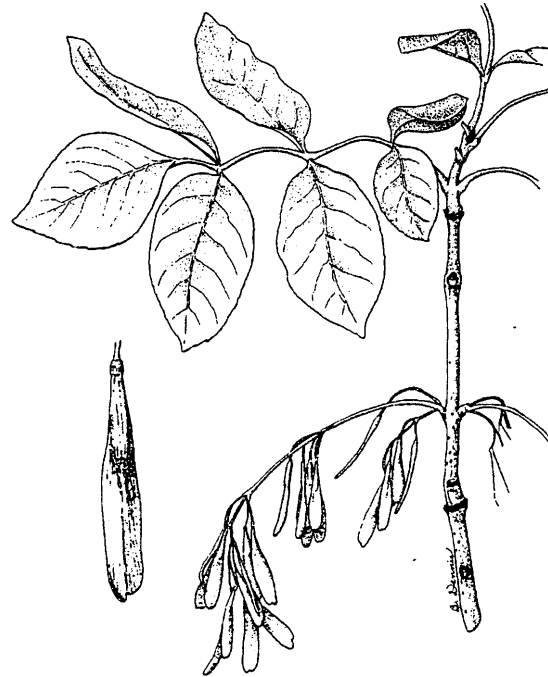
Trees

Oleaceae (Olive Family)

Velvet Ash

Fraxinus velutina

This is an attractive tree reaching 40ft. in height and is our largest native ash. The flowers appear before the compound leaves in spring. Birds make use of the winged fruits which are similar to maple fruits. The tree grows at elevations from 5,000 -8,000 ft. and requires an abundant supply of water. Some authorities consider the Velvet Ash a subspecies of the eastern *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*. It is relatively easy to transplant young seedlings and it is usually available in local nurseries.



Fraxinus velutina

Platanaceae (Plane-Tree Family)



Platanus wrightii

Arizona Sycamore

Platanus wrightii

These handsome trees require additional water and can be found along waterways in our area. They grow to 70 ft. in height and 4ft. in diameter. The younger bark is scaly while the older bark is white and smooth. The leaves are large, appearing somewhat maple-like. Common at 4,000 -6,000 ft. in elevation they would, with time, become a centerpiece of a large lawn. If you purchase this tree be certain you aren't sold the Eastern Sycamore which demands considerably more water than our native species.

Hop Tree*Ptelea trifoliata*

This is an attractive, small tree that grows to 20 ft. in height. The fruits are quite similar to elm fruits but have an aroma similar to true hops. The tree belongs to the same family as grapefruit, lemon and orange. It should be noted that some people develop dermatitis after contact with this plant. Commonly occurs at elevations from 3,500-8,000 ft. These trees are widely distributed throughout the area with the trifoliate leaves, fruit and aroma being key characteristics.

*Ptelea trifoliata**Populus angustifolia***Narrowleaf Cottonwood***Populus angustifolia*

The leaves of this common and most attractive tree are willow-like, being long and narrow. The trees reach to 60 ft. in height or more. They make good shade trees but require some additional water. They grow well at 5,000 - 8,000 ft. in elevation and are relatively common throughout New Mexico. Local nurseries carry this tree, but if you have the patience you can make cuttings to start your own tree.

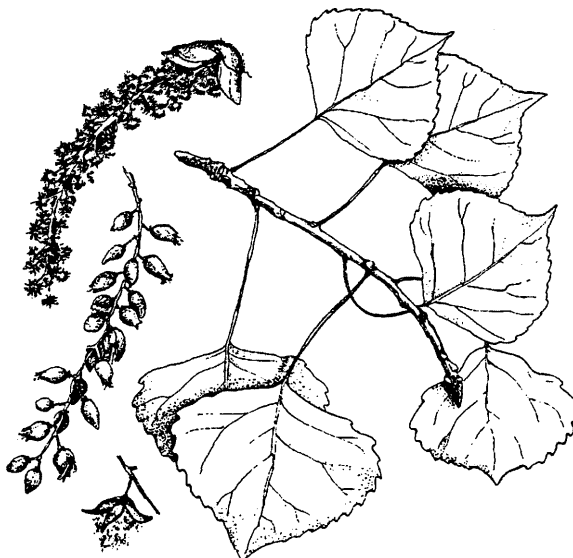
Trees

Salicaceae (Willow Family)

Fremont's Cottonwood

Populus deltoides

This common cottonwood grows to about 70 ft. in height. The leaves are deltoid in shape, toothed and bright green on both surfaces. It requires some additional water when young but forms an excellent shade tree with time. Be careful not to plant this tree near water or sewer lines as it will crush them in time. It is common at 3,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. The female tree produces the fuzzy, white, cotton-like material with the seeds in the spring, which some folks enjoy and others dislike. The species is usually available in nurseries but it also transplants successfully as a seedling.



Populus deltoides

Sapindaceae (Soapberry Family)

Soapberry

Sapindus drummondii

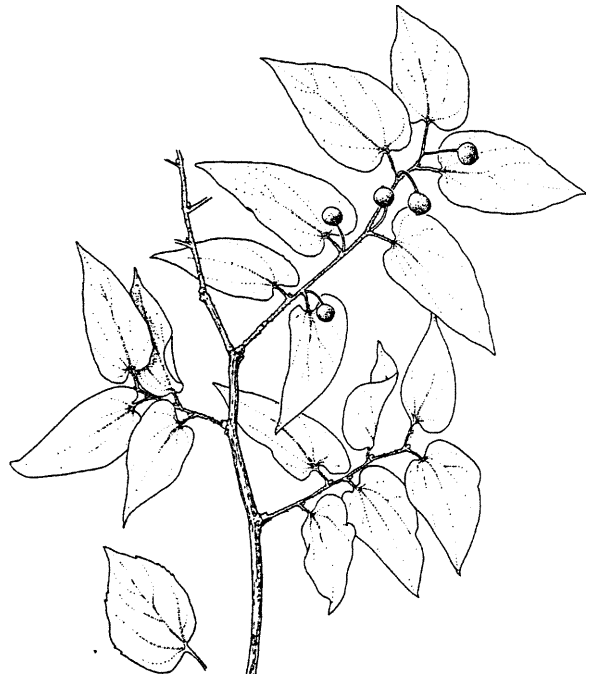
This is an attractive tree that grows to 30 ft. in height and several inches in diameter and would probably do better in protected areas. Many small, white flowers appear in early summer. The fruits are small, yellow berries, becoming black with age. They remain on the tree all winter and are quite poisonous. Common in our area from 3,500 - 5,500 ft. in elevation. Once started it grows in large clumps and sometimes forms hedge rows. Probably not in local nurseries, you would need to locate and transplant to your property which should not be too difficult. Small seedlings are common among the large clumps.



Sapindus drummondii

Netleaf Hackberry*Celtis reticulata*

Netleaf Hackberry leaves look like Elm leaves. The tree grows to about 30 ft. in height. The leaves are bright green with an oblique base and three main veins from near the base. The fruit is a red drupe, and is edible but quite sour. Birds feed on them and those fruits that are missed will stay on the tree all winter. Common at 3,000-6,000 ft. in elevation, it will transplant easily and may be trimmed to the desirable shape. It should be available in local nurseries, but be careful not to purchase *Celtis occidentalis* of the eastern United States. It requires considerably more water than our native species.

*Celtis reticulata*

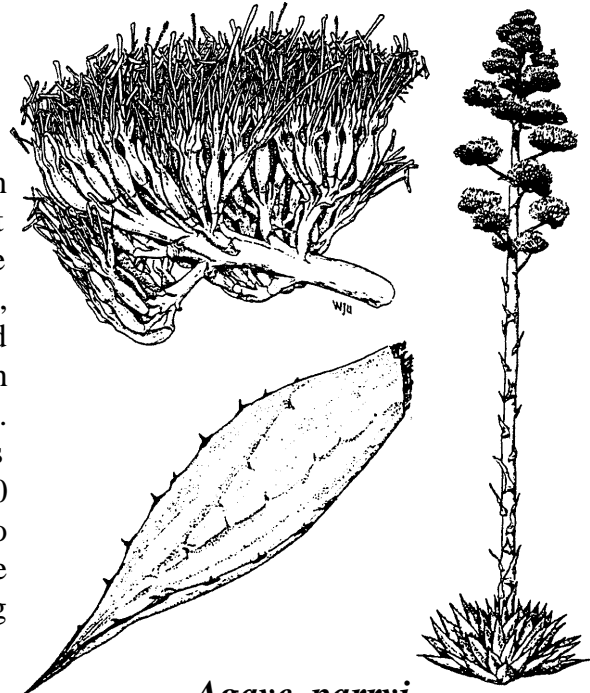
Shrubs

Agavaceae (Agave Family)

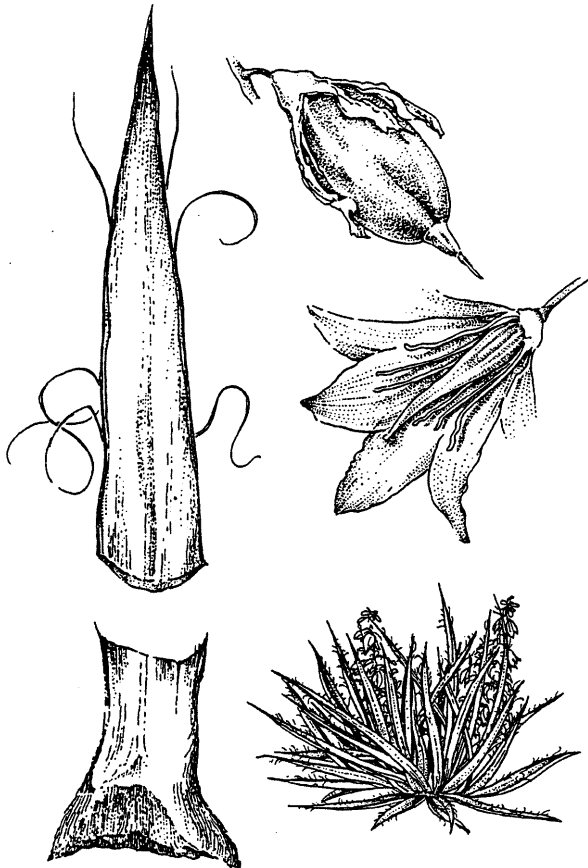
Parry's Agave

Agave parryi

Parry's Agave are long-lived perennials with thick, heavy leaves forming a basal rosette that you may wish to try in your yard. They are spine tipped and the margins have short, curved spines. The plants become large and robust but die after flowering, which normally occurs when they are quite old. Common on south-facing slopes on dry hills in the southern part of the State from 4,000- 6,500 ft. in elevation. Once a small colony starts to grow and reproduce it doesn't take long before one or two plants will flower each growing season.



Agave parryi



Yucca Baccata

Banana Yucca

Yucca baccata

The leaves of this plant are clustered at the base. They are wide and long with the margins bearing strands of fibers that droop downward. The large white, pendulous flowers are produced from April to July. The fruits are fleshy and banana-like in shape but more closely resemble a cucumber when opened. The plants are widespread throughout the State from 4,000-7,000 ft. in elevation, but older plants are difficult to transplant once established. Your best possibility for growing this plant is to collect the seeds and germinate them in flats.

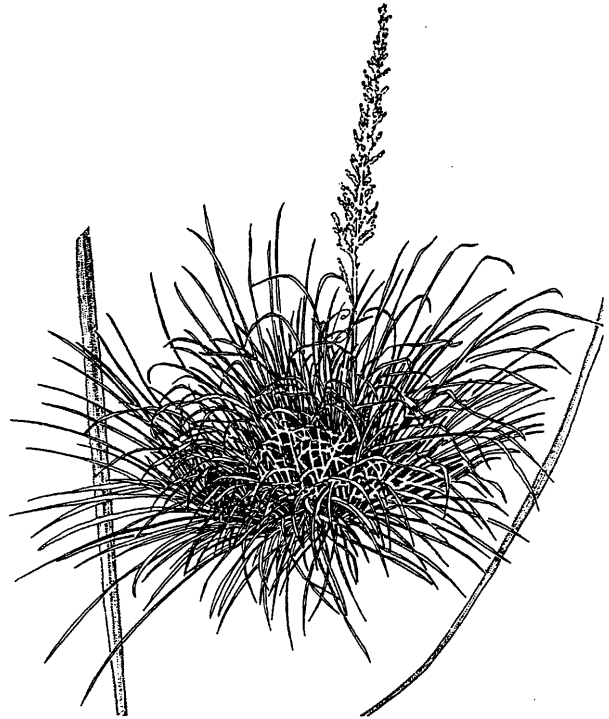
Shrubs

Ruscaceae (Butcher's Broom Family)

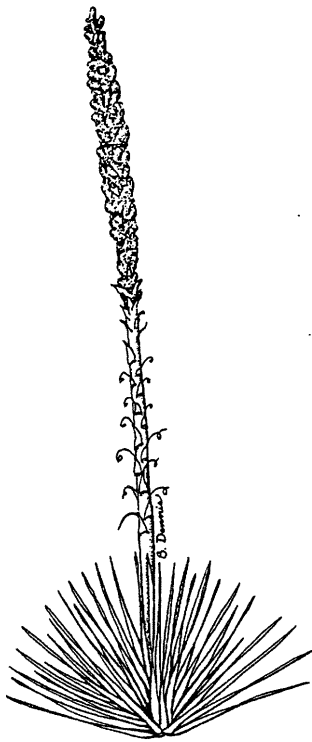
Beargrass

Nolina microcarpa

The leaves of this plant are long and very narrow. The margins are minutely serrate and sharp. The distinguishing feature of the plant is the white plume produced in fruit. There are many flowering stalks from May to June and the plumes of fruits wave in the breeze like white flags. Found in dry plains and hills throughout New Mexico up to 8,000 ft. in elevation. Beargrass is not a grass, thus the common name plays a trick on us. This hardy, drought tolerant species is excellent for local landscaping.



Nolina microcarpa



Dasyllirion wheeleri

Sotol

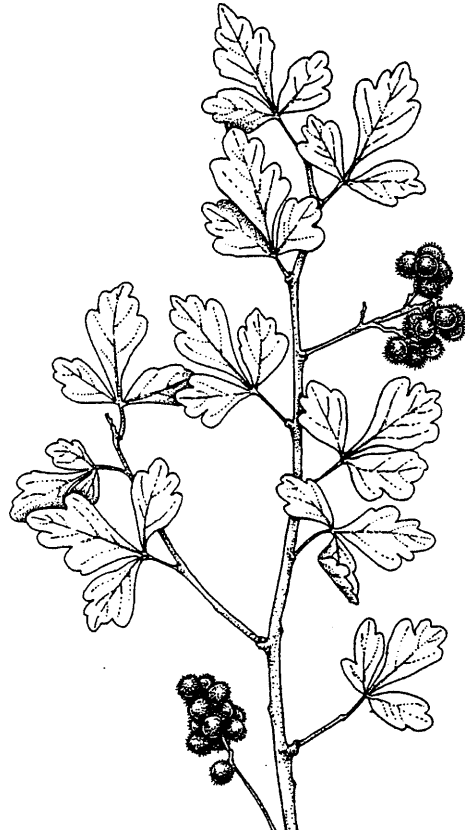
Dasyllirion wheeleri

These statuesque perennials grow from thick rootstocks and produce long, narrow, monocotyledonous leaves in basal rosettes. The spines on the margins are curved. The cream colored flowers are numerous on stalks 3-4ft. in height and are produced from May to August. Found in dry hills in southern to west-central New Mexico from 3,500- 6,500 ft. in elevation, it becomes an impressive plant that describes the life-zone in which we live. Sotol is difficult to transplant, but it does well in dry, rocky soil.

Skunkbrush, Three-leaf Sumac

Rhus trilobata

The members of this family are widespread throughout New Mexico. This species grows from 2-6ft. in height and produces tiny clusters of yellow flowers before the leaves appear in the spring. The leaves are three-lobed. The fruits are small, red, sticky berries with hairs, which make a refreshing "lemonade" type drink. Birds and small animals also like the fruit and most of the berries are gone soon after they appear. The range in elevation is 4,000- 9,000 ft., occurring in a wide range of habitats. Common to the high plains it can be transplanted, but is also available in nurseries.



Rhus trilobata



Rhus microphylla

Little Leaf Sumac

Rhus microphylla

The smaller branches of this widely branched, drought resistant shrub are sometimes spiny, the shrub growing to about 6ft. in height. The compound leaves are small and attractive with 5 - 9 leaflets. The whitish flowers are in crowded clusters on the branches of the previous year. The fruits are round, red, sticky berries and are commonly eaten by birds. Found in east-central to southern New Mexico from 4,500 - 6,000 ft. in elevation, it can be transplanted with ease if a ball of soil is retained around the root.

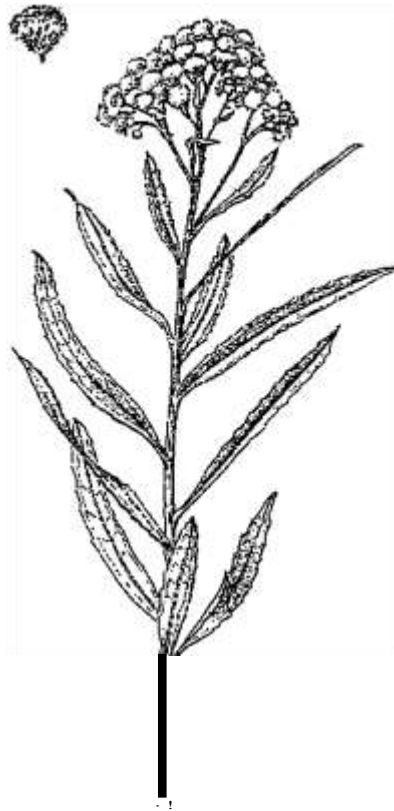
Shrubs

Asteraceae (Sunflower Family)

Seep Willow

Baccharis salicifolia

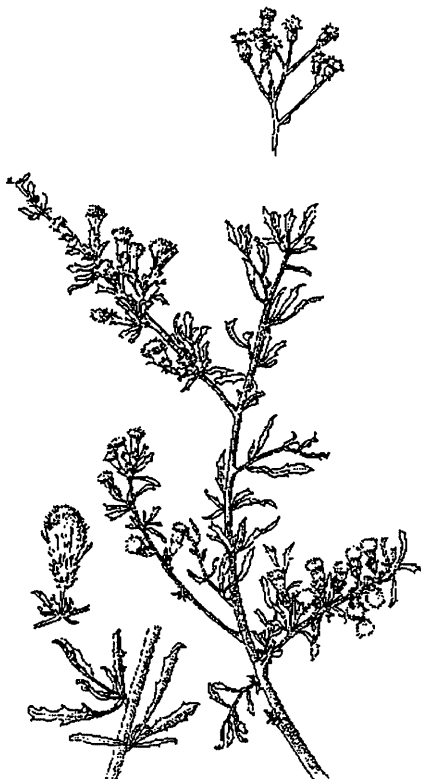
The willow-like leaves of this shrub along with its habit of growing along waterways give it its name. The leaves are bright, lustrous green, slightly sticky and toothed along the margins. The tiny flowers appear in dense clusters at the ends of the wand-like branches. The plants can be found throughout the State, to 12 ft. in height where there is sufficient water. The range in elevation is from 3,500 to 6,500 ft. and it should probably be located where it receives some additional water.



Baccharis salicifolia

Yerba-de-pasmo

Baccharis pteronioides



Baccharis pteronioides

The leaves on the upper ends of the branches of this small, attractive and unique shrub are fascicled, or in bundles. There are many leaves and their shapes are varied in outline which immediately draws ones attention to the species. The small, whitish flowers appear from May through July. Found throughout New Mexico in dry hills and plains, often in alkaline soils and occurring at elevations from 4,500 - 6,500 ft. you may need to look twice to appreciate this particular *Baccharis*. They are extremely drought resistant and may be trimmed to the shape desired.

Asteraceae (Sunflower Family)

Shrubs

Golden Rabbitbrush

Ericameria nauseosus

This shrub, which will grow rapidly to 5 ft. in height, is common throughout the State. The blue-green leaves are long and narrow with smooth margins. The flowers are very small and are in dense clusters which are golden in color. The whole plant exudes a heavy, aromatic scent and rabbits and browsers feed on the twigs and bark. Found on dry slopes, mesas and roadsides from 3,000-8,000 ft. in elevation, this plant will do well in our area. Native plant nurseries stock this species and it transplants well with some additional watering. Excellent in tolerating our extended dry season, Rabbitbrush has evolved to climatic conditions in the southwest.



Ericameria nauseosus

Berberidaceae (Barberry Family)

Red Barberry

Berberis haematocarpa



Berberis haematocarpa

This is an attractive plant that grows to 6 ft. in height. The compound, evergreen leaves are holly-like with sharp spines on the lobes. The flowers are light yellow, small and in clusters about 3 in. in length, blooming from May to June. The bright red berries, ripening in August, attract birds and make excellent jelly. The plants are found on dry slopes and plains in southern and central New Mexico from 4,500 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. Although not normally found in local nurseries it can be transplanted and will usually survive if first allowed to grow one season in a large container.

Shrubs

Berberidaceae (Barberry Family)

Creeping Barberry, Oregon Grape

Berberis repens

This plant is an attractive, low growing shrub. The leaves are similar to those of Red Barberry as are the flowers, although the clusters are smaller. The leaves turn orange-red to russet in autumn. The berries are about the size and color of wild grapes and they make good jelly. The plants are excellent for ground cover plantings. Found throughout New Mexico on shaded slopes but usually limited to 6,000-10,000 ft. in elevation. Spreading by stolons it grows slowly at first, but spreads more rapidly once established.



Berberis repens



Berberis trifoliolata

Three-leaved Barberry

Berberis trifoliolata

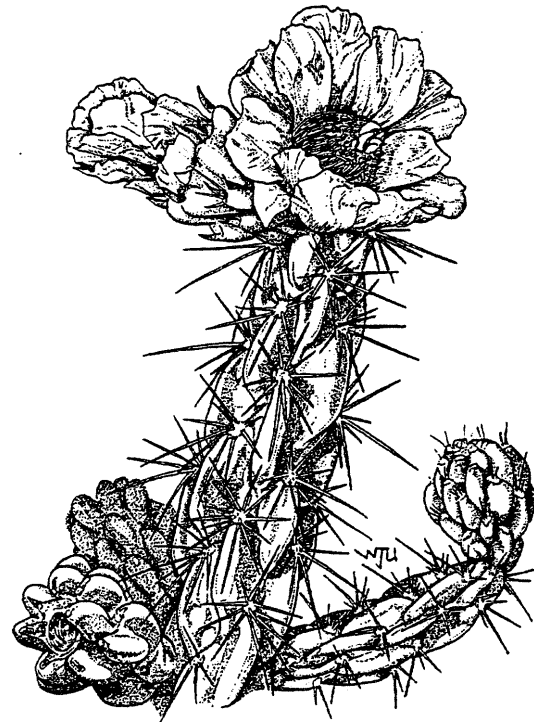
This large shrub is similar to Red Barberry, but the compound leaves are composed of only 3 leaflets instead of 5-7. Flowers are produced in April and May. The berries are blood-red and juicy and provide excellent food for birds. The range of the plant is southern to central occurring between 5,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. Nurseries may not carry this species but as you become familiar with several native species of Barberries it will be easy to select a specimen for your lawn.

Cactaceae (Cactus Family)

Cane Cholla

Cylindropuntia imbricata

In general, the members of this family are protected by law and should not be collected or transplanted. This common cactus usually grows to about 5 ft. in height, but can reach 12 ft. The flowers are reddish-purple, or occasionally pink, about 2- 3 in. across, appearing in early summer. The yellow fruits remain on the plant all winter and are often mistaken for flowers at a distance. Found throughout the State in dry plains and hills from 4,000-7,500 ft. in elevation. This is not a rare and endangered species and it is common and easy to propagate. Actually a fallen branch can be placed in the soil and watered a few times, and they will continue to grow.

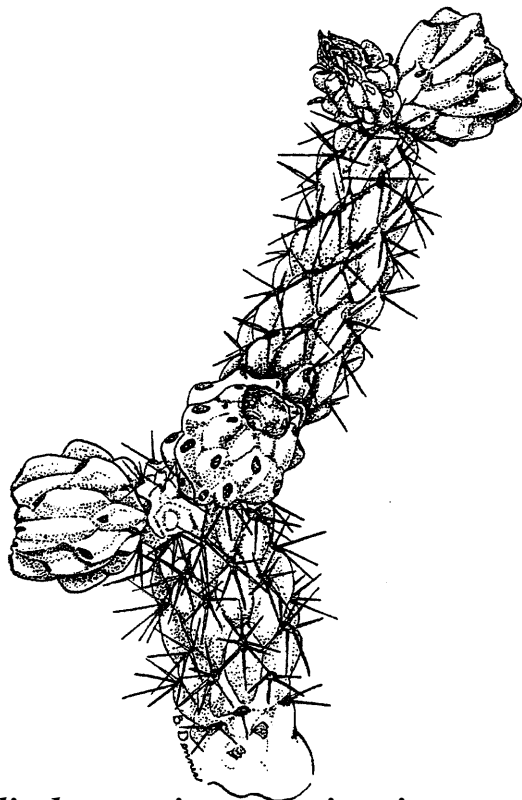


Cylindropuntia imbricata

Cane Cholla

Cylindropuntia var. spinosior

This plant is similar to the previous Cactus, the difference mainly in the length of the spines. In this species the spines will average less than 12 mm in length, while in the Cane Cholla the spines will average 15 mm or more in length. It flowers from May to June and grows on dry plains, slopes and valleys of western and southern New Mexico ranging from 4,000- 6,500 ft. in elevation. These species are seldom found in local nurseries and I would question purchasing them when they are so easy to start from a branch.



Cylindropuntia var. spinosior

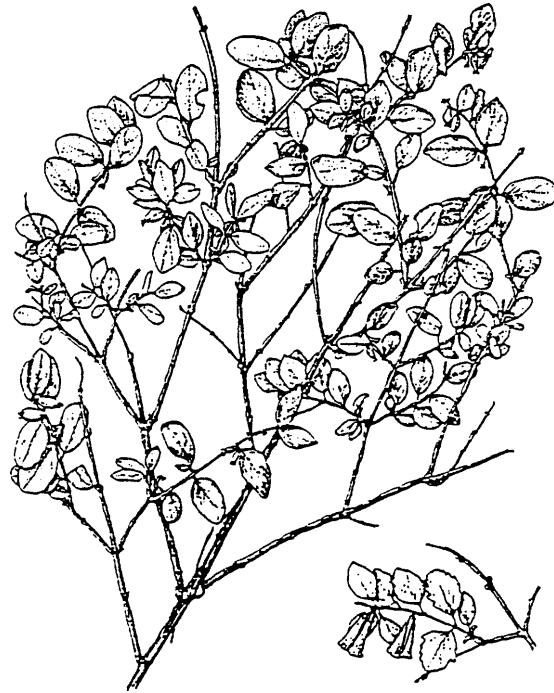
Shrubs

Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle Family)

Roundleaf Snowberry

Symphoricarpos rotundifolius

This is a well-shaped shrub that grows from 2 - 7 ft. in height. The young twigs are smooth but the older branches become exfoliating or shreddy. The leaves are thin, oval and smooth and light gray-green on the upper side. The white to pink berries are attractive but not very tasty and often remain on the plant until the next growing season. The plants are found throughout New Mexico on wooded mountain slopes, in valleys and on stream banks ranging from 5,500 - 9,000 ft. in elevation. Once established this species is drought tolerant and will not only survive, but spread. There are several sub-species that also do well in our area.



Symphoricarpos rotundifolius

Amaranthaceae (Amaranth or Pigweed Family)



Atriplex canescens

Fourwinged Saltbush

Atriplex canescens

Saltbush is found throughout New Mexico in waste ground and disturbed habitats. It is tolerant of alkali and salty soils, and is a rather attractive plant. The young shoots and leaves are used as greens and added to soups. The seeds, borne in a four winged fruit, are used by birds and other wildlife. This species has flowers of the two sexes on different plants, thus requiring one plant of each sex to produce fruits and seeds. Usually found from 2,500 - 8,000 ft. in elevation, it is extremely drought tolerant. Available in native plant nurseries, young plants can be transplanted with some success.

Cornaceae (Dogwood Family)

Shrubs

Red-osier Dogwood

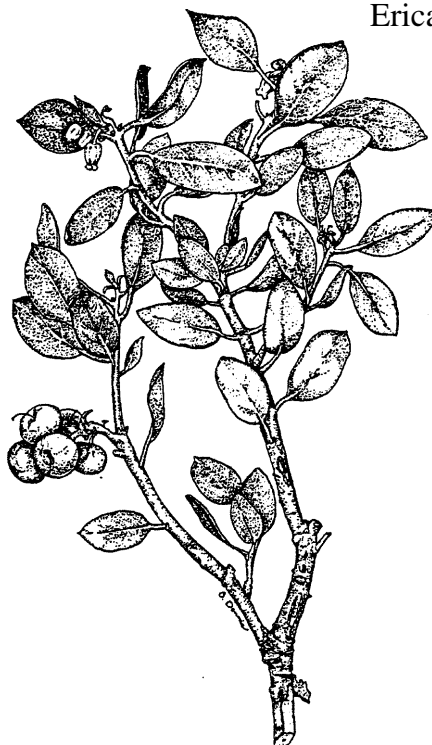
Cornus stolonifera

This Dogwood is easily recognized by its dark red bark. It is a medium-sized shrub growing from 3 - 6 ft. in height. The tiny, dull, white, pea-sized fruits are lead colored at maturity. A hardy and attractive plant, it should make a good addition to the yard. Found on slopes, river banks and marshy areas from 6,000 - 9,000 ft. in elevation it will require some additional moisture during the dry season. Several species of Dogwoods are available in nurseries, but this species is by far the most successful native species in this area.



Cornus Stolonifera

Ericaceae (Heath Family)



Arctostaphylos pungens

Manzanita

Arctostaphylos pungens

The Manzanita grows in large, erect, spreading clumps 3 - 8 ft. in height. The dark red or mahogany colored, drooping branches sometimes take root where they touch the ground. The attractive flowers are bell-shaped, pink and white, and clustered. It is an extremely attractive shrub which produces chestnut-brown fruits that make excellent jelly. Found on dry, sunny and rocky slopes from 5,500-8,000 ft. in elevation it will require little or no extra water once it is established. The small rooting branches are ideal to remove, pot and then transplant in your yard the following growing season.

Shrubs

Fabaceae (Legume Family)

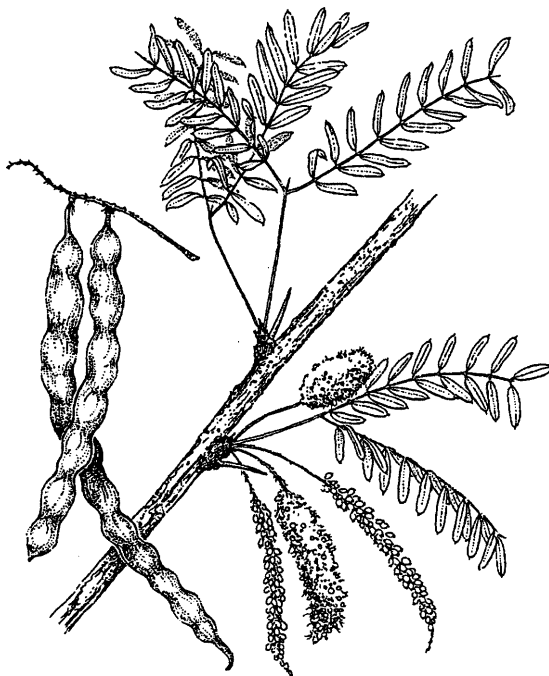
Feather Indigobush

Dalea formosa

This plant is a highly attractive shrub which grows to about 3 ft. in height. The flowers are sweet pea-like and rose-purple in color, appearing in clusters of 2 - 6 from March to as late as October. The compound leaves have mostly 7- 9 leaflets. The plant may have to be protected from deer and kangaroo rats as they like to feed on the tender branches and seeds. This species is common on dry plains and low hills from 3,500 -6,500 ft. in elevation and extremely drought resistant. It transplants easily and is available in some native plant nurseries.



Dalea formosa



Prosopis glandulosa

Honey Mesquite

Prosopis glandulosa

This is a rigid, drought tolerant shrub which grows to 6ft. in height. It is armed with sharp spines throughout and is considered an invader on range lands. The yellow flowers that develop from May through August are quite attractive. The fruits have been used for survival food by humans. This plant is found over the southern two-thirds of the State from 3,000-6,000 ft. in elevation. Here we have a true species of the arid Southwest that sends the message of a limited water supply.

Fabaceae (Legume Family)

Shrubs

New Mexico Locust

Robinia neomexicana

The New Mexico Locust may grow to 20 ft. in height and become the centerpiece of your yard. The flowers are showy, pale pink to rose colored, and appear in dense, drooping clusters from early summer. The fruits are long, hairy, brown legumes. Quail and squirrels eat the seeds and deer browse the stems. This attractive plant commonly occurs at between 4,000- 8,500 ft. in elevation, and may be started from seeds or cuttings. The hard seeds may require soaking in weak acid or boiling water to speed germination.



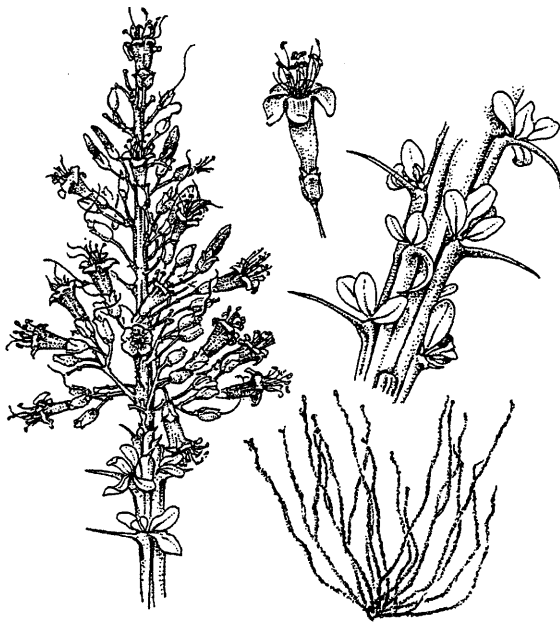
Robinia neomexicana

Fouquieriaceae (Ocotillo Family)

Ocotillo

Fouquieria splendens

Ocotillo is a unique shrub which can grow 15- 20ft. in height. The cane-like stems are spiny from top to bottom with small leaves in the axils of the spines in the wet season. The brilliant, red flowers, which appear from late March to June, attract hummingbirds that are a delight to observe. Ocotillo grows on mesas and rocky slopes in southern New Mexico at elevations from 4,000 - 6,500 ft. Success rates in transplanting are limited and even purchased specimens in pots often don't survive. Planting below 6,000 ft. on a south-facing slope in well-drained soil should improve your chances for success.



Fouquieria splendens

Shrubs

Garryaceae (Silktassel Family)

Wright Silktassel

Garrya wrightii

This is an evergreen shrub with tough, leathery, opposite leaves. The few flowers are borne in clusters at the ends of branches that droop and develop into hard, bluish-purple fruits. The shrub can grow to 6 or 7 ft. in height, occasionally becoming tree like and growing to 18 ft. Found on dry slopes in wooded areas from 3,000 - 8,000 ft. in elevation, it is extremely drought resistant. Some folks may not find this shrub to their liking and I doubt it is ever considered a nursery species, however it is a common shrub most appropriate to the region.



Garrya wrightii

Grossulariaceae (Gooseberry Family)

Golden Currant

Ribes aureum

This is a very attractive shrub that produces clusters of long, trumpet-shaped flowers which are golden yellow in color. They are also spicy fragrant and gourmets eat the raw flowers. The fruits are marble size and are red to yellow when young, turning purple to black at maturity, and make excellent jelly. The shrubs are not armed, as are most members of the family, and may grow to 4 or 5 ft. at maturity. Common in moist areas on the plains, along creeks and on wooded hillsides it may require some additional water. Found throughout the State from 3,500- 8,000 ft. in elevation. It has fall colors that make it an eye-catching plant. It can be transplanted if a large amount of soil remains on the roots.



Ribes aureum

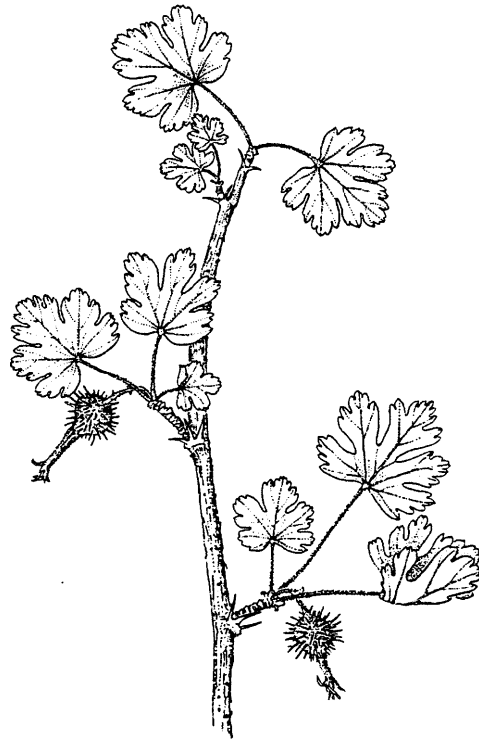
Grossulariaceae (Gooseberry Family)

Shrub

Orange Gooseberry

Ribes pinetorum

These are attractive shrubs with reddish-yellow to orange flowers. The berries are very spiny and red when young but turn purplish at maturity. They are edible but are hard to prepare because of the spines. They make good preserves and pies and are delicious fresh. The stems are also well armed. This species is common in well drained soils in coniferous forests from 6,500- 10,000 ft. in elevation and does well with limited water. However, it may require some additional water in the dry season. It will be difficult to locate in a nursery but is relatively easy to transplant.



Ribes pinetorum

Hydrangeaceae (Hydrangea Family)



Fendlera rupicola

Cliff Fendlerbush

Fendlera rupicola

This is an extremely attractive shrub that produces large, white, 4-petaled flowers from April to October. The plants normally grow to about 3 ft., but may reach 6 ft. under good growing conditions. The species is found throughout the State on dry, rocky slopes at elevations from 4,000 - 7,500 ft. Although probably not in most nurseries it can be-transplanted and also grows well from cuttings. If you are fortunate enough to get this species started you will enjoy the full seasonal beauty.

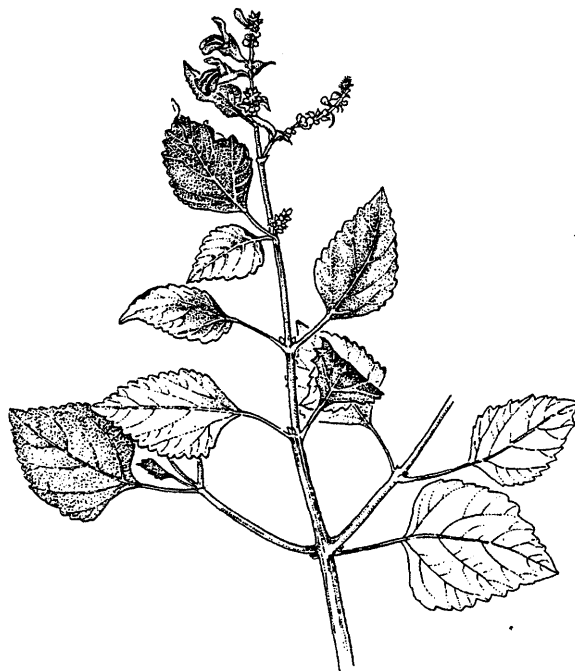
Shrubs

Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

Blue Sage

Salvia pinguifolia

This attractive shrub, belonging to the mint family, normally grows to about 2 ft. in height, however it may occasionally reach 4ft. The younger branches are 4-sided. The leaves are roundish and toothed on the margins. The bluish-purple flowers first appear in June and may continue to be produced until September. The plant is aromatic and is found in southern New Mexico on dry, rocky slopes at elevations from 4,000-8,000 ft. The attractive flowers and vegetation make this plant suitable for planting close to foundations and as a border plant. It requires little or no additional water.



Salvia pinguifolia

Oleaceae (Olive Family)

New Mexico Olive

Forestiera pubescens

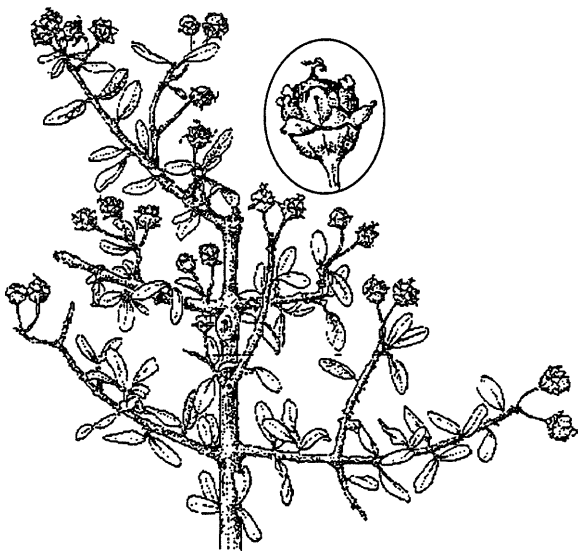
This common and attractive shrub often grows to 6 ft. or more in height but it can be shaped to fit the space available. The male flowers are small, sessile and inconspicuous, while the female flowers are stalked and more obvious. The small, opposite leaves appear after flowering while the fruits develop into bluish-black olive-like drupes. Found throughout the State in river valleys and cliff bases at elevations from 3,500 -7,000 ft. it normally requires no additional water. Nurseries carrying native plants will have the New Mexico Olive for sale.



Forestiera pubescens

Fendler Buckbrush*Ceanothus fendleri*

This is the only *Ceanothus* that has spines, with the stems appearing spine tipped. The shrub normally reaches about 3 ft. or more in height. The leaves are alternate with three main veins. The flowers are profuse and white, covering the entire plant at one time, and developing from as early as April to as late as October. It is a favorite browse plant for deer and is found throughout New Mexico ranging in elevation from 5,000 - 9,000 ft. Again we have a native plant that is appropriate to this region. Normal available moisture will provide all the water required for growth and development.

*Ceanothus fendleri***Desert Buckbrush***Ceanothus pauciflorus**Ceanothus pauciflorus*

Similar to Fendler Buckthorn but without spines, this plant may reach to about 3 - 4 ft. in height. The white flowers are fragrant and numerous and appear from spring to fall. The plant is found throughout the State in sandy soils from 4,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. These two members of the Buckthorn Family will probably not be available in local nurseries but can be transplanted successfully if they are first potted for a growing season, then transplanted into your yard.

Shrubs

Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Smith's Buckthorn

Endotropis smithii

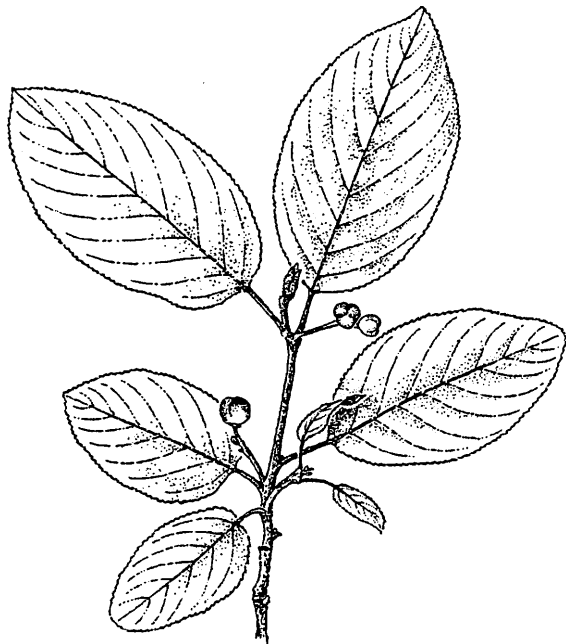
This handsome unarmed shrub would make a welcome addition to any yard. It usually grows to between 6 and 12 ft. in height in the wild and may become even larger with a plentiful water supply. The leaves are yellowish-green above and yellow below. The flowers are tiny, white and grow solitary or in 2 or 3 flowered fascicles or clumps. It is found in open hills of northern New Mexico from 6,000- 7,500 ft. in elevation, but will do extremely well in this area. Some native plant nurseries stock this plant, but you are more likely to find it on hikes into the hills in this vicinity.



Endotropis smithii

Birch-leaved Buckthorn

Frangula betulifolia



Frangula betulifolia

This shrub commonly grows to between 4 and 6 ft. in height, however it may reach to 12 ft. and have a trunk up to 4 in. in diameter. The flowers are tiny and greenish and the fruits are shiny and attractive purple to black in color. Several species of birds are attracted to the fruit. The leaves are deciduous, minutely toothed and thin, with bright green upper surfaces. This plant is one of the non-thorny buckthorns, usually occurring in valleys and the alluvium along streams. It is relatively common and found throughout New Mexico at 4,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. The Rhamnaceae all do well with normal rainfall and additional water is seldom necessary.

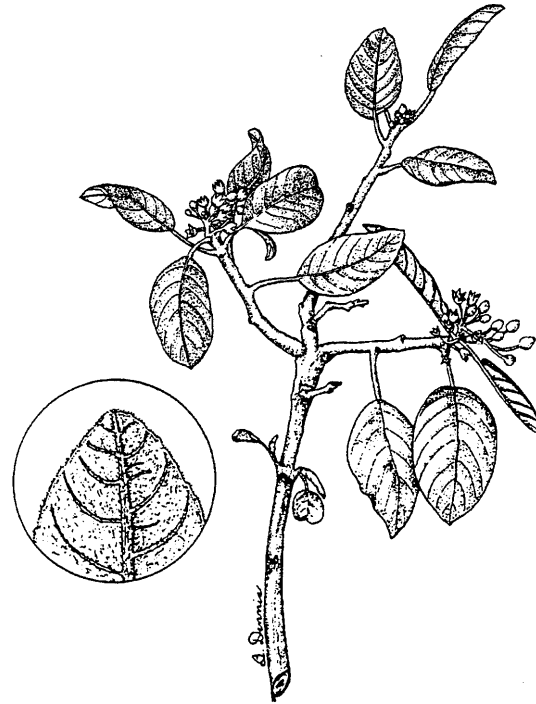
Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Shrubs

California Buckthorn

Frangula californica

This common shrub, which may reach 9 ft. in height, usually grows to 5 or 6 ft. The twigs are purplish and the leaves are glossy green and remain on the plant all year. The flowers are small, greenish and inconspicuous, appearing in May and June. However, at maturity the fruit is bright red to dark purple. Several species of birds are attracted to the fruit. Found in sheltered canyons, hills and mountain slopes, it is relatively abundant from 4,000 - 7,000 ft. in elevation. Although only species of *Ceanothus* may be available in local nurseries we are drawing reader's attention to the Buckthorn Family because it is attractive, relatively abundant and should be used in horticulture.



Frangula californica

Rosaceae (Rose Family)

Mountain Mahogany

Cercocarpus breviflorus



Cercocarpus breviflorus

This is a hardy, common shrub with small, wedge-shaped leaves that are toothed on the ends. The tiny flowers sometimes bloom from May to October. The fruits are adorned with long, spirally, twisted tails which give the plant a unique look. Deer and elk like to browse the twigs of this shrub, so it may need some protection while young if you have these animals in your area. The mature plants normally reach from 3- 6 ft. in height and have a spread of up to 3 ft. Mountain Mahogany is widely distributed over the State from 3,500 - 9,500 ft. in elevation and grows extremely well with our normal moisture.

Shrubs

Rosaceae (Rose Family)

Apache Plume

Fallugia paradoxa

This is an attractive plant with large, white, 5-petaled flowers similar in size and shape to single rose blossoms. It flowers from June to August followed by continuous fruit formation. The attractive fruits have feathery tails that become tinged with red and remain on the plant for some time. It is common throughout the State on dry, rocky slopes and washes, where it can grow to 8 to 10ft. in height and ranges in elevation from 3,500-8,000 ft. This species transplants easily and you will enjoy its native beauty from early spring until and after winter arrives. It is usually available in local nurseries.



Fallugia paradoxa

Shrubby Cinquefoil

Dasiphora fruticosa

This is another highly attractive plant for lawns and gardens. The leaves are covered with fine, silky hairs. The flowers are showy and bright, golden-yellow in color, with 5 petals. Flowers continuously appear from June to September on plants that grow to about 3 ft. in height. Easy to grow and to trim to fit the available space, it is found virtually everywhere in the State, usually in moist sites, but also in dry, shady places from 6,500- 11,500 ft. in elevation. In our area it may, under extremely dry conditions, require a small amount of additional water. Local nurseries will have it available.



Dasiphora fruticosa

Rosaceae (Rose Family)

Shrubs

Cliffrose

Purshia stansburyana

This shrub is closely related to Apache Plume. The flowers are yellow to cream colored and the number of plumes on the fruits is usually 5. Cliffrose only grows to a maximum 6 ft. in height, while Apache Plume will commonly reach 8-10ft. and may take the shape of a small tree and grow to 25 ft. in height. The dissected, revolute leaves are glandular dotted, especially on the lower surface. It is found throughout the State on dry slopes from 3,500- 8,000 ft. in elevation. This is truly a plant of the Southwest and deserves your attention. It will flourish on average precipitation and a small amount of additional water in the dry months will stimulate additional flowers. It may be available in local nurseries but it is regularly stocked in native plant nurseries.



Purshia stansburyana

Solanaceae (Nightshade, or Potato Family)

Pale Wolfberry

Lycium pallidum



Lycium pallidum

This spiny, yet attractive shrub grows to about 3ft. in height at maturity. The flowers are trumpet-shaped and range from greenish to purplish in color. Wildlife of all kinds use the flowers, fruit and foliage for food. The berries are tomato-shaped and bright red at maturity. The plant is common throughout the State and occurs in open sunny, dry areas from 3,500- 7,000 ft. in elevation. This may be the native member of the Potato Family you wish to seek out for your property.

Woody Vines

Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle Family)

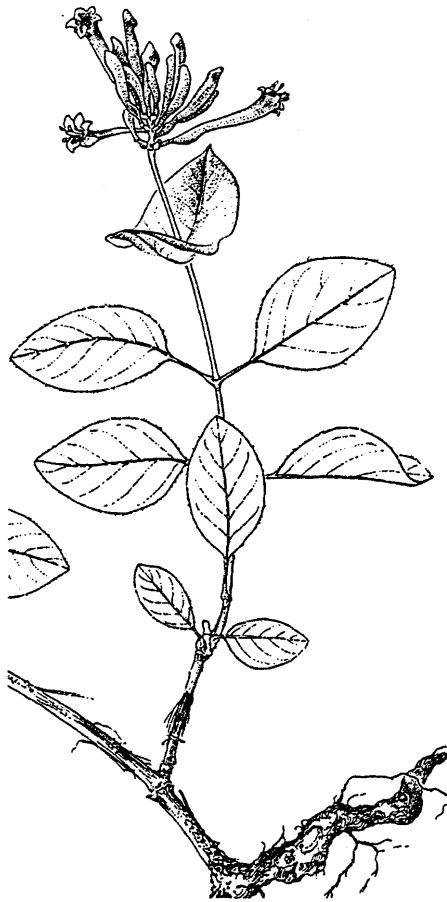
White-flowered Honeysuckle

Lonicera albiflora

The bark on this shrubby vine attractively shreds with age. The flowers are cream colored to white and funnel-shaped. The leaves are oval and light green and the vines grow to about 3 ft. long, although they may spread over a large area. It is more common in the southern part of the state from 6,000 - 9,000 ft. in elevation. Once you see it in flower you will want it in your yard.



Lonicera albiflora



Lonicera arizonica

Arizona Honeysuckle

Lonicera arizonica

The brilliant, red flowers make this plant extremely attractive to hummingbirds. The abundance of nectar has resulted in the common name of "honeysuckle." The round, red fruits are eaten by many bird species. Common to open pine forests from 6,000 - 9,000 ft. in elevation this vine spreads rapidly in moist, shady areas and should make a great addition to most yards. Local nurseries may not have our native honeysuckles available, but they should. The problem with purchasing eastern species is that they will require considerable additional water.

Woody Vines

Virgin's Bower

Clematis ligusticifolia

This vine requires both male and female plants to produce fruit, but usually both sexes are available in one area. The sepals are white and rather showy but the fruit is actually more attractive with its long, white plumes. The clusters of carpels show up as large white balls on the female plant in fall. It normally occurs on brushy hillsides and stream banks where it requires another shrub or tree for support. This species is common throughout the State ranging from 3,500 - 8,500 ft. in elevation. If not available in local nurseries this species roots and grows well from cuttings. A young stem, with 1 or 2 nodes below the soil line in a pot will, if kept moist, root and flourish.

Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family)



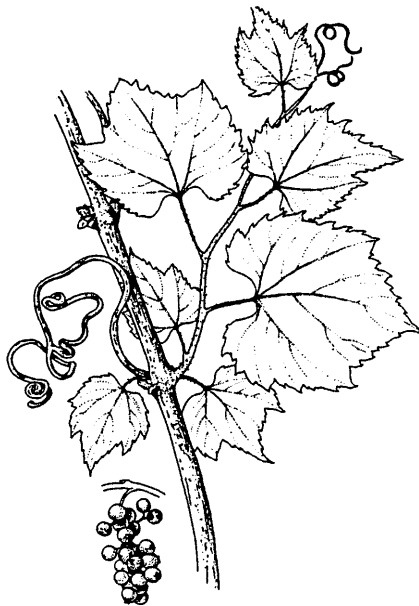
Clematis ligusticifolia

Vitaceae (Grape Family)

Canyon or Arizona Grape

Vitis arizonica

This plant is easily recognized as a grape. The large leaves are maple-like and the tendrils can be seen winding around everything in sight to support the vines that may become extremely heavy. The flowers are small and white, appearing in clusters throughout the spring. The fruit is juicy and purplish-black and attractive to several bird species. This and associated species have a long history of cultivation. It is common near streams and in canyons from 3,500-7,500 ft. in elevation.



Vitis arizonica

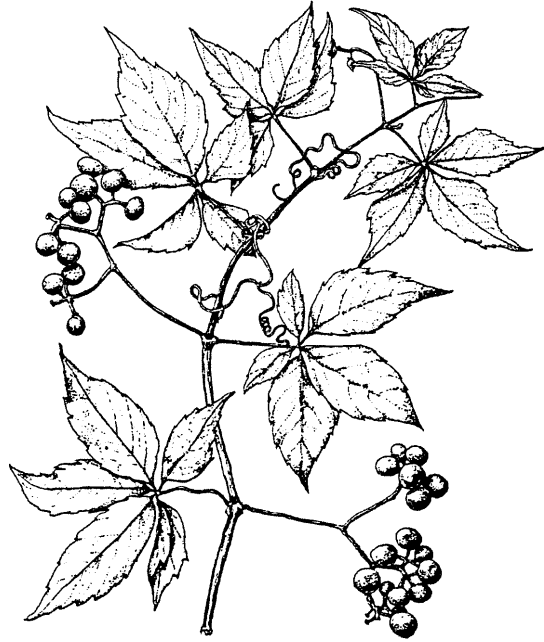
Vitaceae (Grape Family)

Woody Vines

Virginia Creeper

Parthenocissus vitacea

This ivy looks very much like a grape vine, except the leaves are palmately compound or deeply divided into five leaflets. The flowers are small and greenish, occurring in cymes similar to grapes. The fruits are similar to grapes, dark purple to black in color. It is important to note that this species produces tendrils that wrap around other branches, rather than having disks on the tendrils that attach to flat surfaces as in introduced species of ivy. The plant can be found throughout the State from 4,500 - 7,500 ft. in elevation. Commonly available in local nurseries, this species is ideal for covering fence rows and other trees and shrubs. It spreads rapidly, is easy to trim and control, at the same time it provides cover, shade and food for animal species. It does require additional water in dry periods.



Parthenocissus vitacea

Addendum

The families and scientific names have been updated from the original 1994 publishing date following Allred's Flora Neomexicana. In addition, the section on local sources for native plants has been updated. We have updated the recommended readings below. All resources listed below are available for purchase at <http://gilanps.org/books/>.

COMMON SOUTHWESTERN NATIVE PLANTS: AN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

By Jack L. Carter, Martha A. Carter, Donna J. Stevens, and Jennifer M. Boussetot. 2018. Trade paperback 278p., map, illustrations, photos.

TREES AND SHRUBS OF NEW MEXICO

3rd Edition. *by Jack L. Carter. Revised and Expanded, 2020. Trade paperback 524 p., photos, maps. Fully updated nomenclature.*

COMMON GRASSES OF GRANT AND CATRON COUNTIES

By S.O. MacDonald. 2006. Paperback 62p., illustrations, map.

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO PLANTING NATIVE PERENNIALS OF THE GILA REGION

By the Gila Native Plant Society., 2020. Pamphlet, 59 p. illustrations.