Tamarix ramosissima, **20**
Teddybear cholla, **30**
Torrey ephedra, **22**
Tumbleweed, **63**
Washingtonia filifera, **5**
Washingtonia robusta, **5**
White bursage, **23**
Wire lettuce, **24**
Wooly plantain, **64**
Xylorhiza tortifolia, **39**
Yucca brevifolia, **9**
Yucca schidigera, **18**

Note:
A complete list of plants of Lake Mead NRA is available upon request from Libby Powell (702-293-8759) or can be found on the LAME NPS computer network at S:\Plant checklist. In this folder are a number of lists of plants in Word format and a searchable database of all plants recorded from Lake Mead NRA in Access format. Resource Management also maintains a study herbarium of plant specimens that covers about 75% of the flora of the park.

60 Common and Conspicuous Plants of Lake Mead National Recreation Area

By
Elizabeth Powell

Introduction

This booklet is intended to give an introduction to and aid identification of the most common and conspicuous plants of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Plants in the booklet are arranged by life form: Trees, Shrubs, Cacti, Grasses, and Wildflowers. Within each life form category, plants were arranged by alphabetical order of common names. Each plant has the common name, scientific name in italics, and whether the plant is native or alien to the region. A brief text is given for each plant to help identify habitat, relative size of plant, or a diagnostic feature. Not all plants one may encounter in Lake Mead NRA are included in this booklet. An index is given that includes scientific and common names.

Table of Contents

	Page
Trees	3
Shrubs	11
Cacti	25
Grasses	31
Wildflowers	37
Index	65

Opuntia acanthocarpa, **27**
Opuntia basilaris, **26**
Opuntia bigelovii, ***30***
Opuntia echinocarpa, **29**
Phacelia crenulata, **54**
Perityle emoryi, **55**
Phoradendron californicum, **52**
Phragmites australis, **32**
Pima rhatany, **19**
Plantago ovata, **64**
Pleuraphis rigida, **31**
Pluchea sericea, **11**
Populus fremontii, **4**
Prosopis glandulosa, **8**
Prosopis pubescens, **10**
Psorothamnus fremontii, **17**
Purple threeawn, **35**
Pygmy barrel cactus, **28**
Red Brome, **36**
Rockdaisy, **55**
Rocknettle, **56**
Sacred datura, **57**
Salix gooddingii, **7**
Salsola paulsenii, **63**
Salsola tragus, **63**
Saltcedar, **20**
Schismus arabicus, **34**
Schismus barbatus, **34**
Screwbean mesquite, **10**
Silver cholla, **29**
Sisymbrium irio, **51**
Skeleton buckwheat, **58**
Smallseed sandmat, **59**
Sphaeralcea ambigua, **49**
Spiny herb, **60**
Stephanomeria pauciflora, **24**
Suncups, **61**
Sunray, **62**
Sweetbush, **21**
Tamarix aphylla, **3**

Desert tobacco, **40**
Desert trumpet, **45**
Desert willow, **6**
Dodder, **46**
Encelia farinosa, **12**
Enceliopsis argophylla, **62**
Ephedra torreyana, **22**
Eriogonum deflexum, **58**
Eriogonum inflatum, **45**
Erioneuron pulchellum, **33**
Erodium cicutarium, **47**
Eschscholzia glyptosperma, **42**
Eucnide urens, **56**
Ferocactus cylindraceus, **25**
Filaree, **47**
Fluffgrass, **33**
Fremont pincushion, **48**
Geraea canescens, **44**
Globemallow, **49**
Gooddings willow, **7**
Heliotrope, **50**
Heliotropium curassavicum, **50**
Honey mesquite, **8**
Hymenoclea salsola, **14**
Indigobush, **17**
Joshua tree, **9**
Krameria erecta, **19**
Larrea tridentata, **15**
London rocket, **51**
Lupinus arizonicus, **37**
Lupinus sparsiflorus, **53**
Malacothrix glabrata, **41**
Mediterranean grass, **34**
Mentzelia tricuspis, **38**
Mistletoe, **52**
Mohave yucca, **18**
Mojave lupine, **53**
Neolloydia johnsonii, **28**
Nicotiana obtusifolia, **40**
Notchleaf phacelia, **54**

Trees

Athel

Tamarix aphylla

ALIEN





This relative of saltcedar in the tamarix family has become a nuisance at Lake Mead NRA.

This tree was planted as a shade tree in our campgrounds and now has spread to the shoreline. Trees are evergreen and can grow to 60 feet tall. They have also been found to hybridize with saltcedar at Lake Mead. Look for gray-green drooping leaves and spirals of pink flowers in late summer and fall. These trees are not deciduous, that is, they do not drop their leaves in the winter.

Trees

Cottonwood

Populus fremontii

Native



The mighty cottonwood, a tree in the willow family, once lined the Colorado River, but now is confined to a few places at springs and as a planted tree in campgrounds and developed areas. It can no longer establish along the shoreline of Lake Mead where water levels rise and fall rapidly in a pattern contrary to the natural regeneration cycle of the cottonwood. Look for triangular leaves. This tree is deciduous.

Index

Acacia greggii, **13**
Ambrosia dumosa, **23**
Aristida purpurea, **35**
Arrowweed, **11**
Arizona lupine, **37**
Athel, **3**
Atriplex hymenelytra, **16**
Baileya multiradiata, **43**
Barrel cactus, **25**
Beavertail, **26**
Bebbia juncea, **21**
Big galleta grass, **31**
Blazingstar, **38**
Brittlebush, **12**
Bromus madritensis ssp. *rubens,* ***36***
Buckhorn cholla, **27**
Camissonia brevipes, **61**
Catclaw acacia, **13**
Chaenactis fremontii, **48**
Chamaesyce polycarpa, ***59***
Cheesebush, **14**
Chilopsis linearis, **6**
Chorizanthe rigida, **60**
Common reed, **32**
Cottonwood, **4**
Creosotebush, **15**
Cuscuta californica, **46**
Datura wrightii, **57**
Desert aster, **39**
Desert dandelion, **41**
Desert fan palm, **5**
Desert gold poppy, **42**
Desert holly, **16**
Desert marigold, **43**
Desert sunflower, **44**

Wildflowers

Wooly plantain

Plantago ovata

Native



This plant in the plantain family is very common almost every spring. It has the appearance of a grass, but is not. It has little white flowers along the upright inflorescences. The leaves are narrow and grass-like and usually fuzzy with hairs. It is unknown whether this plant is actually native to the Mojave Desert or was brought in by native peoples early on.

Trees

Desert fan palm

Washingtonia filifera

Washingtonia robusta

ALIEN



Contrary to popular belief, these trees in the palm family are not native to Lake Mead NRA. They were planted at Rogers and Blue Point springs to give the springs the feel of a desert oasis. Unfortunately, the trees harm the natural springs by using water and overwhelming native vegetation. The trees produce thousands of seeds that are carried by birds to other springs. Consequently, we consider the fan palms invasive at Lake Mead NRA.

Trees

Desert willow

Chilopsis linearis

Native





This small tree or a large shrub in the bignonia family is typically found in washes. The desert willow flowers in late spring with an abundance of pink orchid-like flowers. Trees drop their long, willow-like leaves in the winter.

Wildflowers

Tumbleweed

Salsola paulsenii

Salsola tragus

ALIEN



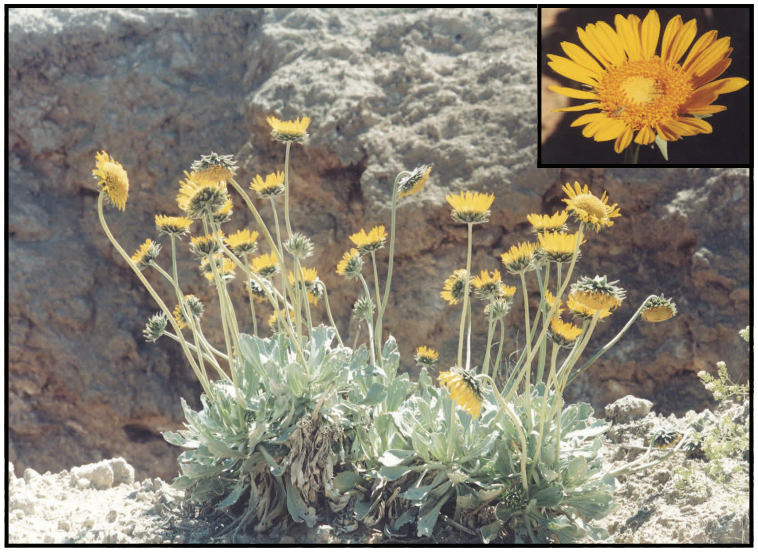
Tumbleweed is an annual in the goosefoot family that is alien to our region. Most of our plants may be a hybrid between two species. The plants invade the drawdown zone along the shoreline in large numbers and also invade sand dunes. Plants are named for their ability to break off and tumble in the wind. Each leaf has a short spine at its tip.

Wildflowers

Sunray

Enceliopsis argophylla

Native



This perennial plant in the sunflower family is found on gypsum soils in many parts of the park. They are particularly obvious on Lakeshore Drive in the stretch between Las Vegas Bay and the entrance station and on Northshore Drive in spring. The daisy flowers are large and yellow-orange. The wide leaves are grey-green and form a tuft or rosette of leaves.

Trees

Gooddings willow

Salix gooddingii

Native



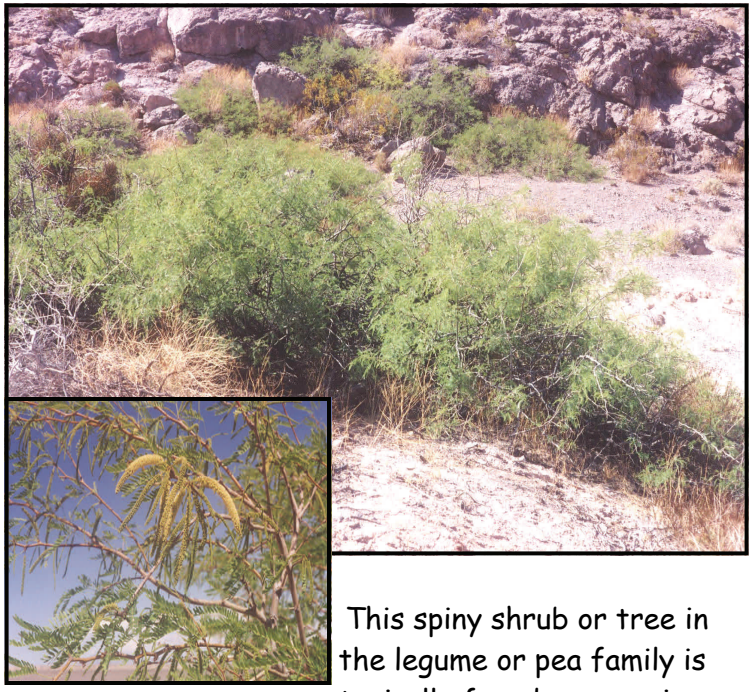
These trees in the willow family can become very large in areas where they have been growing for a long time. Fruits are tiny, fluffy, and blow in the wind. Seeds typically germinated in spring on the shore of the Colorado River as water levels began to decline after winter floods. Now, because of irregular fluctuations of the water, they rarely establish for long.

Trees

Honey mesquite

Prosopis glandulosa

Native



This spiny shrub or tree in the legume or pea family is typically found near springs, or where there is ground water. You can also find nice trees along the shoreline on Lake Mohave. The seed pods of this species are flat as compared to those of the screwbean mesquite, which are twisted. Leaves are made up of a series of little leaflets on a petiole or stem.

Wildflowers

Suncups

Camissonia brevipes

Native



Fields of yellow suncups in wet spring seasons are a sight to behold at Lake Mead, but even the driest springs has some of these hardy annuals in the evening primrose family along roadsides, in washes, or in open desert. Look for bright yellow flowers with four petals and a ball-like stigma. The basal leaves are lobed and often are speckled.

Wildflowers

Spiny herb

Chorizanthe rigida

Native





Spiny herb is a small annual in the buckwheat family that is mostly found on desert pavement– sometimes in large numbers. The flowers are minute and greenish. The dried skeletons look like little brown cactuses. Watch where you sit down with this plant around.

Trees

Joshua tree

Yucca brevifolia

Native



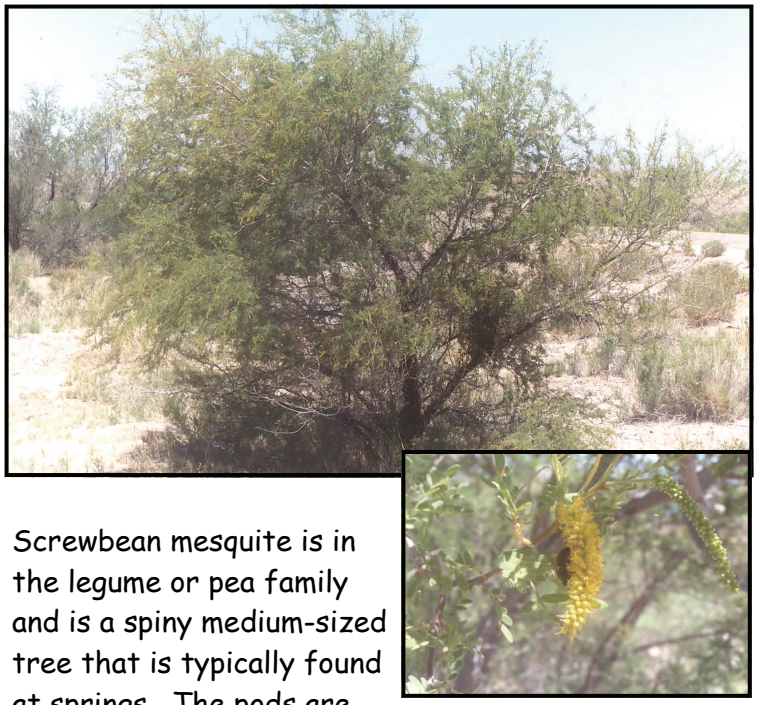
The Joshua tree defines the Mojave Desert and is one of the most obvious and conspicuous plants at higher elevations in the park. Look for these trees in the lily family in the Newberry Mountains, and in the Meadview area of the park. This tree was found south of Temple Bar along road 134.

Trees

Screwbean Mesquite

Prosopis pubescens

Native



Screwbean mesquite is in the legume or pea family and is a spiny medium-sized tree that is typically found at springs. The pods are twisted and look like drill bits. The flowers are yellow and attract bees. Like honey mesquite and catclaw acacia, the flowers are many, small and born in racemes. The leaves are divided into little leaflets that are fewer and shorter than those of honey mesquite.

Wildflowers

Smallseed sandmat

Chamaesyce polycarpa

Native



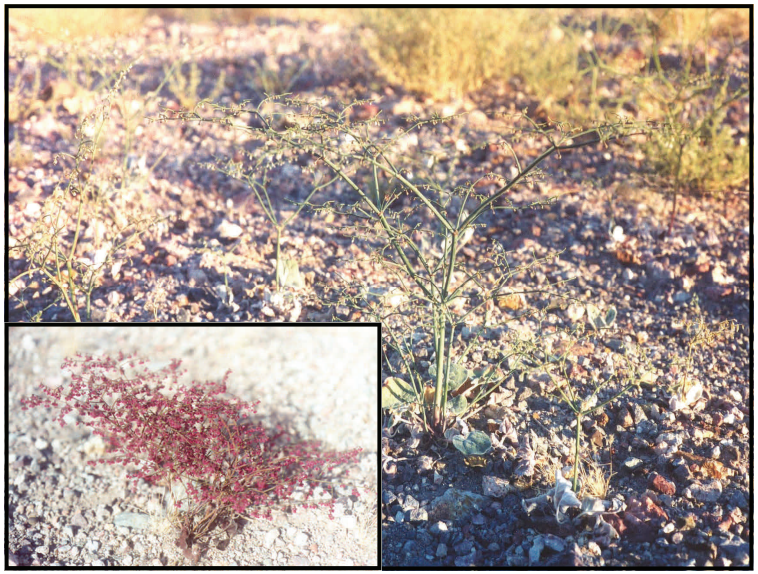
This little mat forming perennial plant in the spurge family can be found most times of the year in open desert areas and in disturbed habitats. There are several other related plants that one can also find. Look for milky sap when you break off a leaf or stem. What looks like flowers are actually glands that have white appendages, but they serve the same function as flowers, that is, to attract insects for pollination.

Wildflowers

Skeleton buckwheat

Eriogonum deflexum

Native



Skeleton buckwheat is an early successional native plant in the buckwheat family that is common along roadsides and in disturbed areas, including shorelines, from early summer to late fall. It produces flat topped inflorescences with abundant white or pink flowers. The rust-brown dried inflorescences can persist on site for long periods of time.

Shrubs

Arrowweed

Pluchea sericea

Native



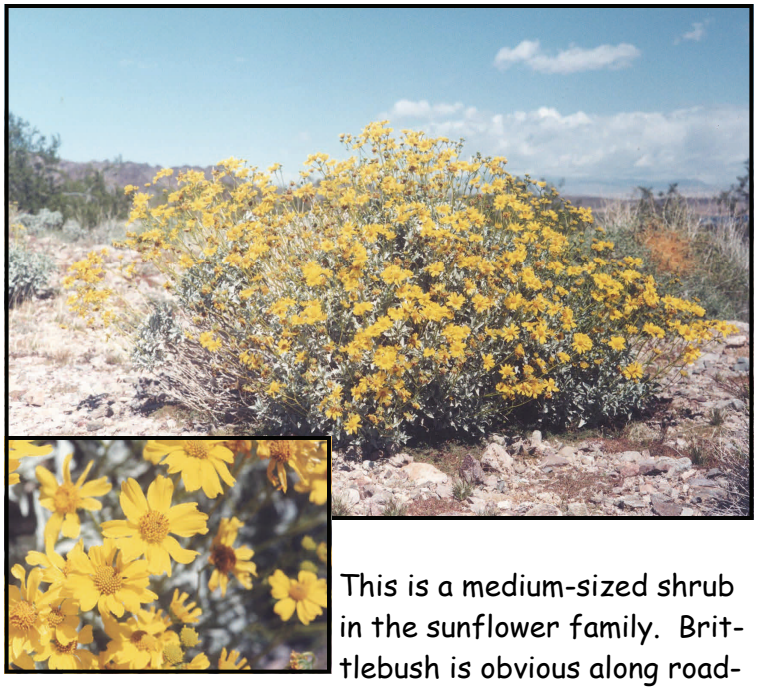
This is a tall shrub in the sunflower family. Arrowweed is not a weed, but a native plant found on the shoreline, in riparian areas, and at springs. In places it can form thick and impenetrable stands. The flowers are small and pink or magenta. It is said the Indians made arrows from the straight stems

Shrubs

Brittlebush

Encelia farinosa

Native



This is a medium-sized shrub in the sunflower family. Brittlebush is obvious along roadsides, washes and shoreline in the spring, when it produces a beautiful display of yellow daisies on stems that stand out from the leaves. The rest of the year, this plant looks silvery or may even be almost leafless until it rains again in the winter.

Wildflowers

Sacred datura

Datura wrightii

Native



This annual in the nightshade family is found in washes, along the shoreline, and in disturbed habitats. It has large white trumpet-shaped flowers that open in the evening and fade late in the next day. Flowers are probably pollinated by hawk moths. All parts of this plant are poisonous.

Wildflowers

Rocknettle

Eucnide urens

Native



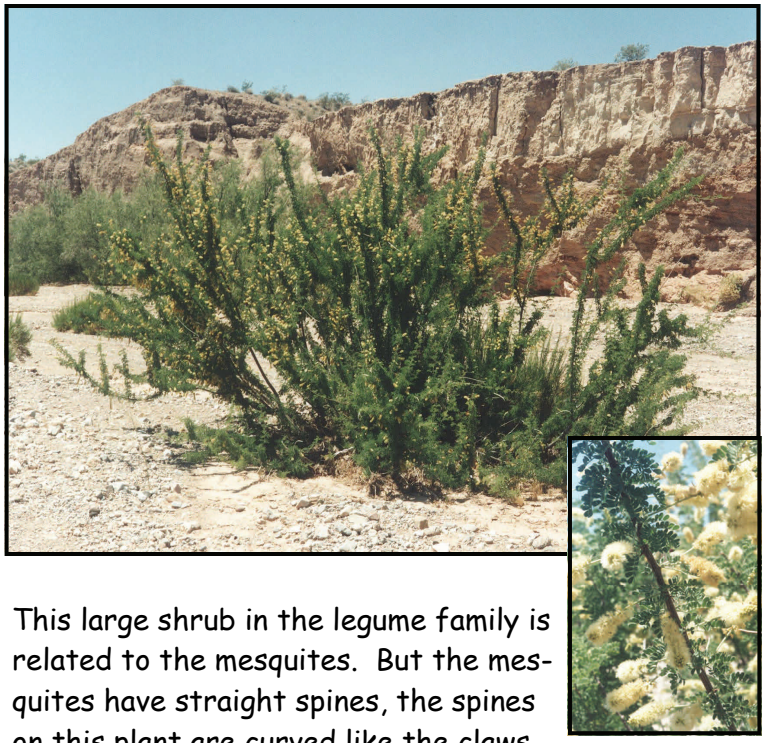
Rocknettle is one of our most conspicuous wildflowers in rocky areas and along the shoreline in early spring. This plant is in the stickleaf family, so watch out for the leaves and stems, they are covered with sharp hairs, and not only can sting you, but can also stick to everything, like clothing and beach towels.

Shrubs

Catclaw acacia

Acacia greggii

Native



This large shrub in the legume family is related to the mesquites. But the mesquites have straight spines, the spines on this plant are curved like the claws of a cat, hence its name. Catclaws are usually found in washes and can grow to be tall trees. Some large specimens can be found along the Temple Bar Road in Detrital Valley.

Shrubs

Cheesebush

Hymenoclea salsola

Native



This is a common small to medium-sized shrub in the sunflower family. The flowers of cheesebush are not particularly showy, but fruits can turn bright pink in late spring. The leaves of cheesebush are said to smell like cheese. Plants are typically found in washes and disturbed areas of the park.

Wildflowers

Rockdaisy

Perityle emoryi

Native



Look for the little white and yellow daisies of the rockdaisy in spring in rocky, sheltered, or shady places. It is also often found on the shoreline near water at almost any time of the year. This annual is in the sunflower family.

Wildflowers

Notchleaf phacelia

Phacelia crenulata

Native



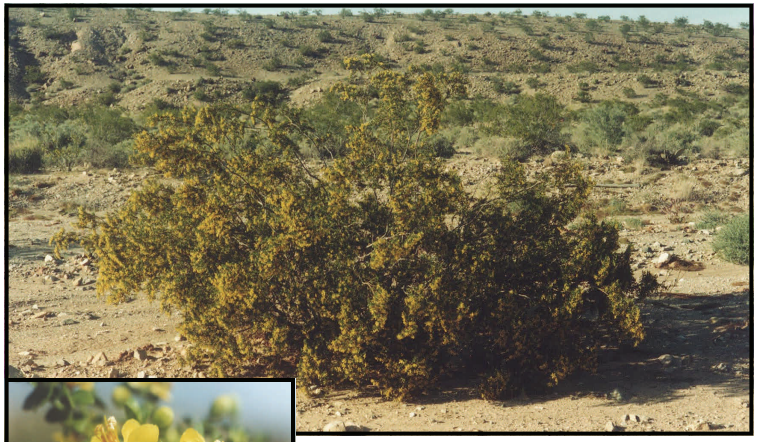
The purple or blue flowers of the notchleaf phacelia grace the roadsides and medians of Lakeshore Drive almost every spring and can be seen as a part of the patchwork of colors in good wildflower springs. Look for flowers in a coiled inflorescence, a character of the waterleaf family. The leaves are foul smelling and sticky with glands. Some people get contact dermatitis from handling or walking through fields of this plant.

Shrubs

Creosotebush

Larrea tridentata

Native





The creosotebush is probably the most conspicuous plant of the Mojave Desert. It is the abundant large shrub of the low elevation desert areas, often growing lush along roadsides and in washes, sometimes looking very brown or nearly dead during dry years. In good rainfall years, it can produce masses of yellow flowers and fuzzy white fruits. When it rains in the desert, a distinctive odor is produced by the resins on the leaves of the creosotebush. This shrub is in the tree-of-life family.

Shrubs

Desert holly

Atriplex hymenelytra

Native



This is a common small to medium-sized shrub in the goosefoot family. The leaves are shaped somewhat like those on holly, hence its name. This shrub is usually found on gypsum , alkaline, or badland soils. The leaves are white or silvery and coated with salt.

Wildflowers

Mojave lupine

Lupinus sparsiflorus

Native



This lupine in the legume family has deep blue flowers, and is mostly found on the Nevada side of the Colorado River and in the Newberry Mountains. Like the Arizona lupine, it has leaves shaped like a wheel with radiating spokes and flowers that look like little sweet peas.

Wildflowers

Mistletoe

Phoradendron californicum

Native



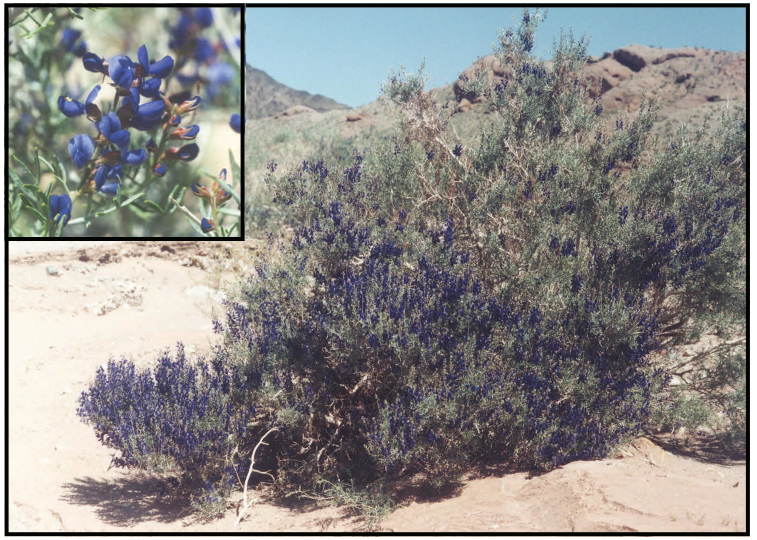
This parasitic plant in the mistletoe family grows on large shrubs and trees, particularly catclaw acacia. The berries are eaten by birds, which transfer the sticky seeds to new trees. When shrubs with mistletoe are leafless in the winter, the mistletoe stands out.

Shrubs

Indigobush

Psorothamnus fremontii

Native



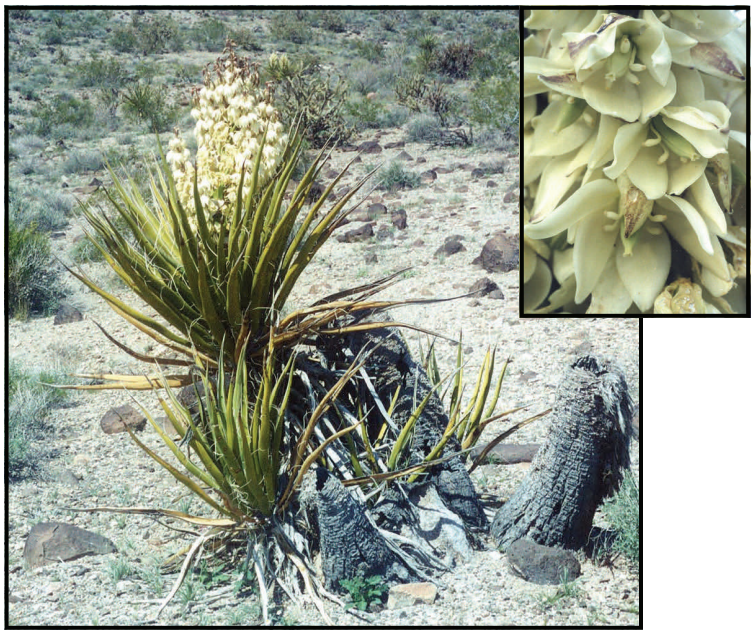
This is a medium-sized shrub in the legume family. This shrub is found particularly along Northshore Road area on gypsum soils. It produces masses of deep blue flowers in spring, but may look leafless or even dead for the fall and winter months.

Shrubs

Mohave yucca

Yucca schidigera

Native



This upright medium to large shrub in the lily family is most common in the Newberry Mountains and on the Arizona side of the park. In good rainfall years plants can produce masses of thick white flowers. The leaves of this yucca have a sharp point and this plant also has the common name of Spanish bayonet or Spanish dagger.

Wildflowers

London rocket

Sisymbrium irio

ALIEN



This is an alien plant that is found in most developed areas and is becoming more common along the shoreline at Boulder Beach. It can also be found in wet waste places in the park. Note that the yellow flowers have four petals in the shape of an X, this is a diagnostic feature of plants in the mustard family. Also note its spicy, pepper or radish-like smell.

Wildflowers

Heliotrope

Heliotropium curassavicum

Native



Look for fleshy, almost succulent leaves on low growing plants near the shoreline or in moist areas. Also look for white flowers with a yellow center on coiled inflorescences. This plant is a perennial in the forget-me-not family and some plants can become quite large where water is available.

Shrubs

Pima rhatany

Krameria erecta

Native



This is a common small-sized shrub in the rhatany family that is found in upland areas, but unless it is flowering, it may not be conspicuous. The flowers are magenta and yellow and are produced in large masses in good rainfall years. The fruits are little round balls with spines. The shrub sits low to the ground and the leaves and stems tend to be grey or dark red.

Shrubs

Saltcedar

Tamarix ramosissima

ALIEN



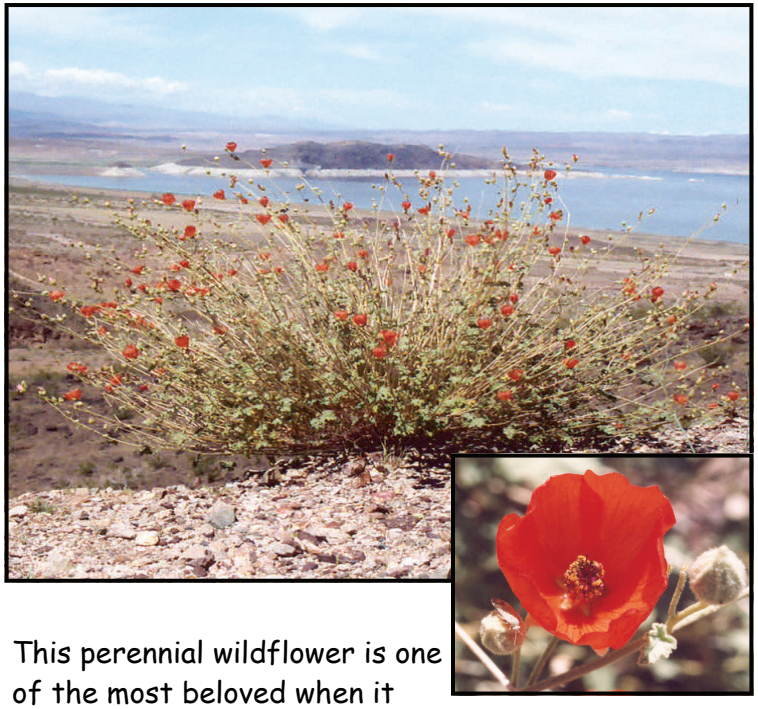
Small to large shrub in the tamarix family. Look for pink, magenta, or white flowers on wispy stems. This shrub is found everywhere there is water: washes, springs, streams, and shoreline. Saltcedar is considered a noxious weed in the state of Nevada and can rightly be considered one of the world's worst weeds. It is deciduous.

Wildflowers

Globemallow

Sphaeralcea ambigua

Native



This perennial wildflower is one of the most beloved when it comes into flower with its masses of salmon or coral colored blossoms. The plant is in the mallow family and is related to hibiscus. Beautiful displays can be seen along Lakeshore Road and the Railroad Tunnel trail. The hairs on the leaves can be irritating.

Wildflowers

Fremont pincushion

Chaenactis fremontii

Native



What would spring be without our annual and ubiquitous pincushions? We actually have 5 species of pincushions at Lake Mead NRA, and this is the most common one. Look for heads of white disk flowers. The outermost flowers in the head tend to be ray-like, whereas on some of our other pincushions, the disk flowers in the head seem to be all the same.

Shrubs

Sweetbush

Bebbia juncea

Native



Sweetbush is a medium sized shrub in the sunflower family, and is mainly found in washes and along roadsides. Sweetbush looks leafless because it has very small leaves. The flower heads do not have ray flowers, the structures that look like petals on the typical daisy flower. Daisies are clusters or "heads" of flowers, usually of two types, rays and disks. This daisy only has disk flowers. The stems and flowers are nicely fragrant.

Shrubs

Torrey ephedra

Ephedra torreyana

Native





This medium-sized shrub in the ephedra family is often found on gypsum. Although they look like flowers, the colorful yellow structures are actually cones. This plant is a gymnosperm: more related to pine trees than to most of our other desert shrubs, which are angiosperms, or flowering plants. There are at least three species of ephedra in low elevation Lake Mead NRA.

Wildflowers

Filaree

Erodium cicutarium

ALIEN



Filaree is one of our most widespread annual aliens. It is in the geranium family and produces masses of pink flowers early in the day in spring. By afternoon the flowers drop their petals. This plant is also sometimes called storksbill for the long pointed seed pods.

Wildflowers

Dodder

Cuscuta californica

Native



This is such an odd looking plant that it always attracts attention. Dodder is a parasitic plant that gets its nutrients from its host plant and therefore, does not need to produce chlorophyll. Look for strings of orange on the ground or on shrubs in the spring.

Shrubs

White bursage

Ambrosia dumosa

Native



Small shrub in the sunflower family. This shrub is the most common plant in the low elevation Mojave Desert of Lake Mead NRA. It is considered co-dominant with creosotebush, but is usually far more abundant. The plants leaf out in spring, but are dormant in late summer and winter months and may appear dead. The flowers are small and inconspicuous. Fruits are a spiny burr that may be dispersed by animals.

Shrubs

Wire lettuce

Stephanomeria pauciflora

Native





This small shrub in the sunflower family, is common along roadsides and in disturbed areas. Look for a ball of mostly leafless stems and little pink or lavender flowers.

Wildflowers

Desert trumpet

Eriogonum inflatum

Native



This perennial plant in the buckwheat family is common along roadsides and washes. It produces tiny yellow-green flowers late in the spring or early summer. Look for the flowering stems with an inflation about 1/2 way up the stem. The flowering stems come up from a basal leaf rosette.

Wildflowers

Desert sunflower

Geraea canescens

Native



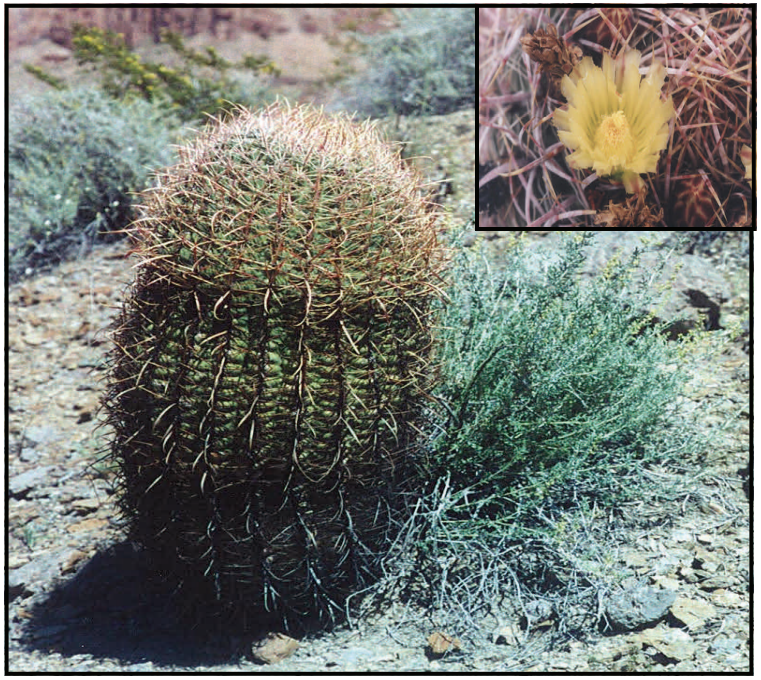
This spring wildflower in the sunflower family almost always makes a nice spring display. Nice stands can be seen along Northshore Road in many places and also along Callville Bay Road in good rainfall years. Look for yellow daisies with ray and disk flowers on upright stems and hairy leaves.

Cacti

Barrel cactus

Ferocactus cylindraceus

Native



This is our largest cactus and where it occurs, it is obvious. Because this cactus is sought for landscaping, it is monitored for poaching at Lake Mead NRA. Yellow flowers are formed in late spring or early summer.

Cacti

Beavertail

Opuntia basilaris

Native



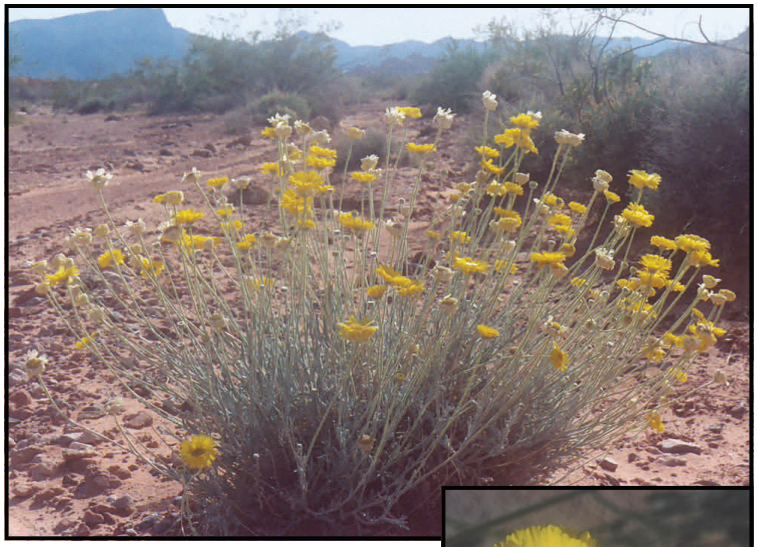
This common cactus could also be considered our most beautiful. Bright magenta flowers are formed in April, after our usual spring wildflower display. Look for large numbers of these along Lakeshore and Northshore Roads. This beavertail does not appear to have long spines, but it has glochids, which are tiny spines that can work their way into your skin and make you miserable. Do not touch these plants without protection.

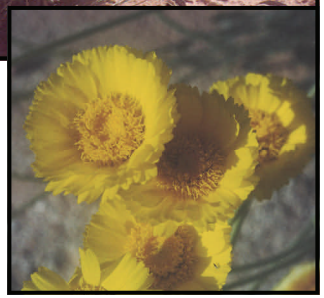
Wildflowers

Desert marigold

Baileya multiradiata

Native





This perennial wildflower in the sunflower family can be found flowering in many times of the year, if it rains. It has formed a nice stand along Northshore Road near the Echo Bay turnoff. It also can also be found in washes. It can make a hardy garden plant and spreads as it seeds in suitable habitats.

Wildflowers

Desert gold poppy

Eschscholzia glyptosperma

Native



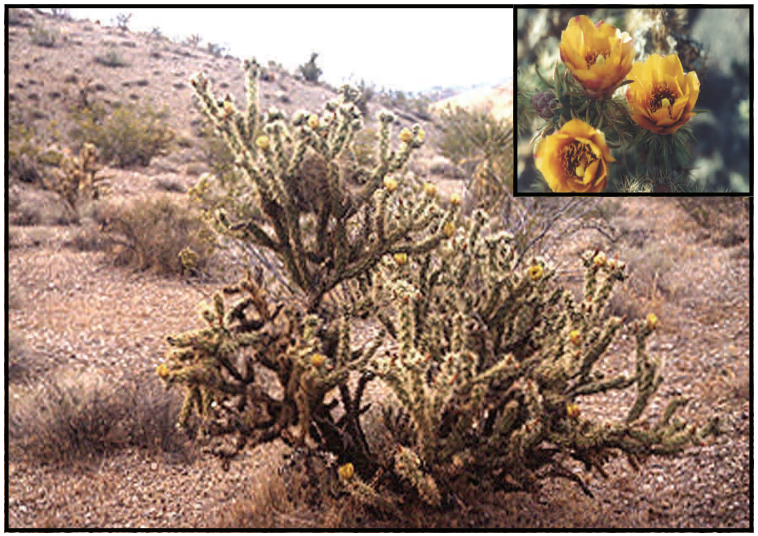
In good rainfall years, this spring wildflower in the poppy family can make a beautiful showing by covering the ground with gold. Look for delicate flowers with four bright yellow petals and long pods. The leaves are finely divided and this feature will distinguish this plant from suncups, which is superficially similar.

Cacti

Buckhorn cholla

Opuntia acanthocarpa

Native



This upright cylindrical cactus can be seen in abundance along the road to Cottonwood Cove and in other places in the Newberry Mountains and on the Arizona side of the park. The branching pattern is reminiscent of horns on a buck. The flowers, which are formed in late spring are a golden color with a dark red center.

Cacti

Pygmy barrel cactus

Neolloydia johnsonii

Native



It would be easy to miss this little cactus, which can be found in open desert just about anywhere in the park. The magenta flowers make the plants more conspicuous in late spring.

Wildflowers

Desert dandelion

Malacothrix glabrata

Native





This common spring wildflower in the sunflower family can be found in many parts of Lake Mead NRA. In good rainfall years, large displays of yellow, or multi-colored displays with other wildflowers can be seen. This daisy has only ray flowers and no disk flowers.

Wildflowers

Desert tobacco

Nicotiana obtusifolia

Native





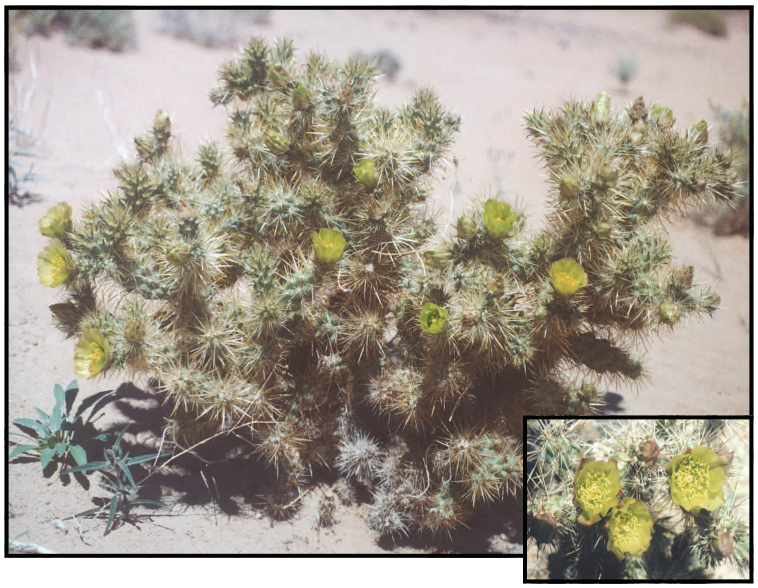
This little wildflower in the nightshade family can be found almost any time of year in disturbed places or along the shoreline. Look for cream colored trumpet-shaped flowers.

Cacti

Silver cholla

Opuntia echinocarpa

Native



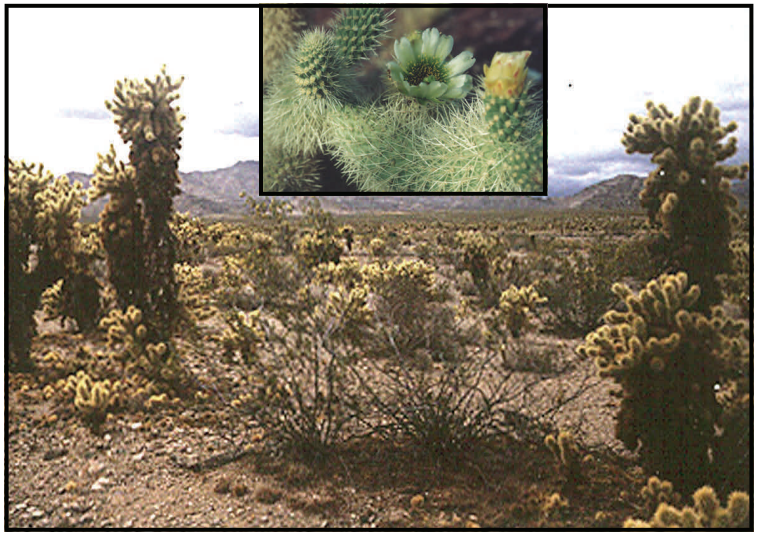
The silver cholla is a small version of the buckhorn cholla, but the dense spines look either silver or golden in the sunlight. The flowers on this cactus are chartreuse, a bright yellow-green, and appear in late spring. The spines on chollas are hooked at the tip and so when they penetrate your skin they are painful to remove. Avoid touching this plant or sitting on the ground where there may be spines.

Cacti

Teddybear cholla

Opuntia bigelovii

Native



This large cholla forms little forests of cactus in certain areas of the southern portion of the park. Look for a large stand along the road to Cottonwood Cove, and in the Nelson area If you get out and walk in the teddybear cholla forest, you are likely to pick up loose pieces of the cactus on your shoes, clothes or anything you touch. The plant reproduces by pieces that break off and establish on the ground.

Wildflowers

Desert aster

Xylorhiza tortifolia

Native





This is a perennial wildflower in the sunflower family that is common in certain places along Northshore Road. The daisies have white or light lavender ray flowers and yellow disk flowers in the center.

Wildflowers

Blazingstar

Mentzelia tricuspis

Native



This is a spring wildflower in the stickleaf family that is common along Northshore Road and in washes and upland areas all over the park. The flowers are a creamy white and have five petals. The leaves have a sandpaper-like texture and if you pinch a bit off (which you shouldn't do), you can stick it to your shirt for an instant boutonnière.

Grasses

Big galleta grass

Pleuraphis rigida

Native



Big galleta grass is commonly found on sandy areas and dunes. It is a perennial bunchgrass and may look dead in the summer and fall, but will resprout in the spring with green leaves and stems. Some large specimens may be decades old. The inflorescence has a wavy stem, which is a good diagnostic character for this grass in the field. Unfortunately, big galleta grass is a favorite of burros and so, may be disappearing in areas that sustain heavy browsing.

Grasses

Common reed

Phragmites australis

Native



This perennial plant in the grass family grows from a slender underground rhizome and is associated with water: ponds, springs, and streams. This plant can form thickets. The fluffy tops when flowering are obvious. The plant looks a lot like the alien and weedy giant reed, *Arundo donax*, and is related, but giant reed has a thick woody rhizome.

Wildflowers

Arizona lupine

Lupinus arizonicus

Native



This spring wildflower in the legume family is the pink-flowered lupine that you often see along the roadside on the way to Willow Beach and in the Katherine area. The flowers look like typical pea flowers, produce little pea-like pods. The leaves are divided from the center like spokes of a wheel.

Grasses

Red Brome

Bromus madritensis ssp. rubens

ALIEN



One of our widespread alien annual grasses, which probably increases fuel loads in wet springs that may contribute to wildfires. What native wildflowers has this grass replaced in our open desert? Look for tuffs of red or red tips on the ends of the inflores-cences.

Grasses

Fluffgrass

Erioneuron pulchellum

Native



This little perennial grass is most obvious when it flowers and fruits, producing little tufts that give it its name. It is found commonly in rocky areas and on desert pavement.

Grasses

Mediterranean grass

Schismus arabicus

Schismus barbatus

ALIEN



This alien grass is widespread in all parts of the park. In some years it is, unfortunately, the most abundant annual plant. It is thought that Mediterranean grass can create fuel loads that can support fire in the desert. There are actually two species of *Schismus* at Lake Mead NRA and it appears that *S. arabicus*, may be just as common or more so than *S. barbatus*, or they may be a hybrid swarm. It is very common under creosotebush in spring.

Grasses

Purple threeawn

Aristida purpurea

Native



This perennial bunchgrass can be see along roadsides and in washes in certain areas of the park. The seeds of this grass have three tails or awns, the stiff projections that aid dispersal of the seeds. This grass potentially could be a native substitute for the alien bunchgrasses like fountaingrass and other alien grasses that are commonly used in drought tolerant landscaping in the southwest.