

The Sonoran Desert

Land of Tall Cacti and Small Trees



Sonoran Desert

Lowest (elevation) and warmest of the North American deserts

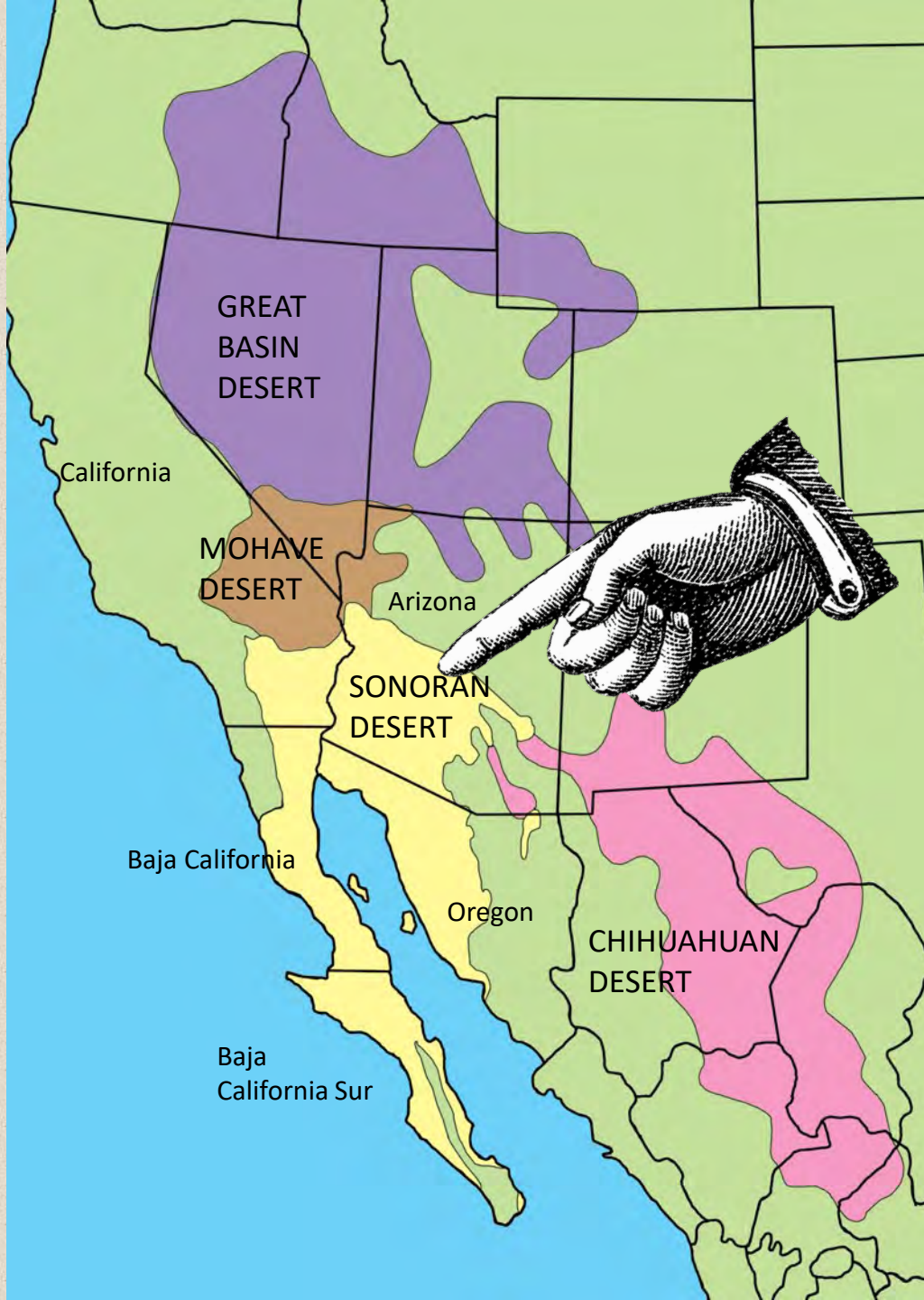
Two rainfall seasons—winter rains off the Pacific and summer Monsoon storms from moisture pulled up largely from the Gulf of California (aka Sea of Cortez)

Greatest biodiversity due to:

- Dual rainfall seasons
- Variations in topography
- Influence of Rocky Mountains/ Sierra Madre Occidental, Great Plains, Tropical Deciduous Forest, etc.

Covers parts of two states in the US and three in Mexico

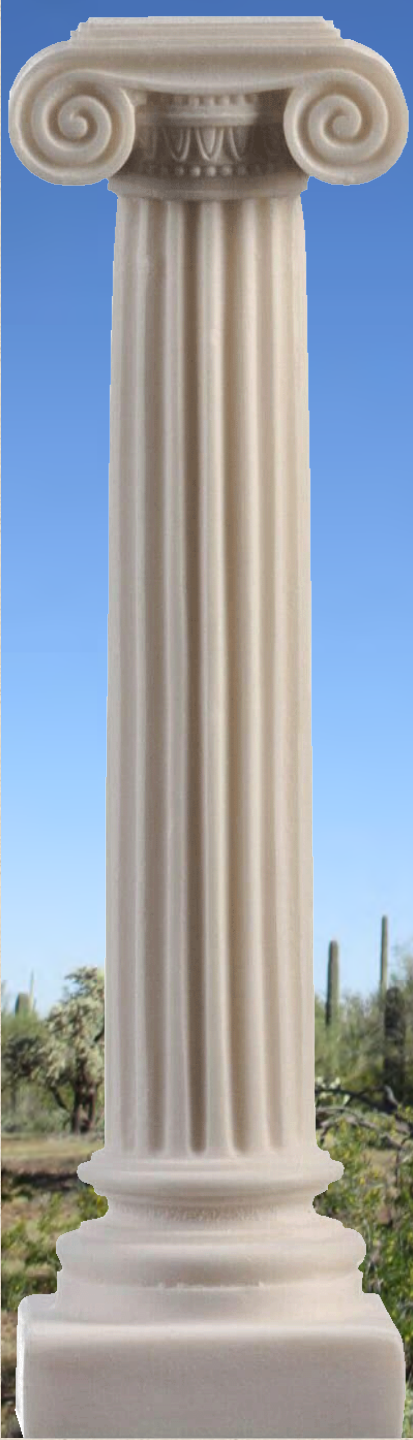
More than 2,000 described plant species!



Arizona Upland

Highest, coolest, and one of the wettest subdivisions





Saguaro

Carnegiea gigantea

“Columnar” Cactus

- 30 to 50 feet tall
- Can reach ages over 200 years

Arizona’s State Flower!



Tohono O'odham



Organ Pipe Cactus

Stenocereus thurberi

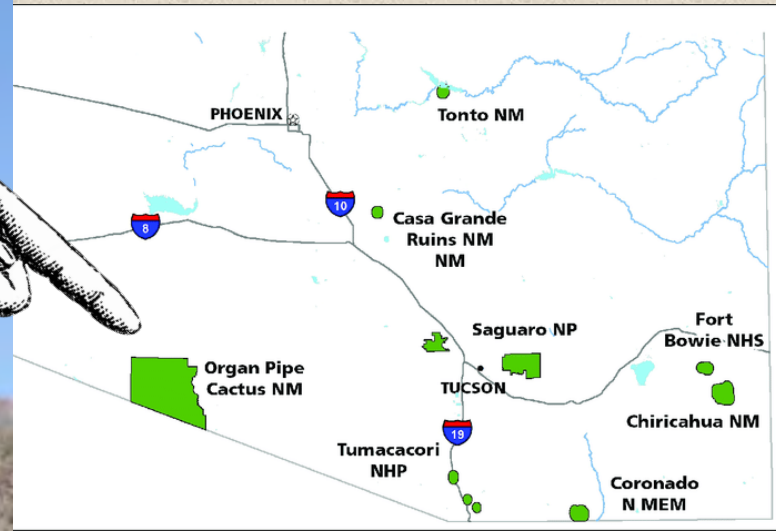


Senita Cactus

Lophocereus schottii



Senita Moth
Upiga
virescens



Arizona or Fishhook Barrel Cactus

Ferocactus wislizenii

8 to 12 feet tall



May lean to the
southwest



Prickly Pear

Opuntia spp.



**Sprawling
Prickly Pear**
O. phaeacantha



**Engelmann
Prickly Pear**
O. engelmannii

**Santa Rita
Prickly Pear**
O. santa-rita



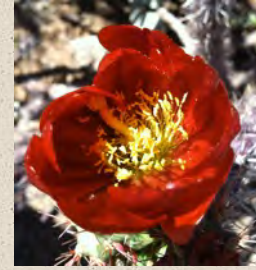
Cholla

Cylindropuntia spp.



Teddy Bear Cholla

C. bigelovii



**Chainfruit or
"Jumping"
Cholla**

C. fulgida

Cane Cholla

C. spinosior



Legumes: The Pea/Bean Family

Fabaceae

Contain symbiotic bacteria within nodules in their root systems

- The bacteria produces nitrogen compounds that help the plant to grow and compete with other plants

- When the plant dies, the “fixed” nitrogen is released making it available to other plants; this helps fertilize the soil

- Seed pods (beans) are an important food source for animals and desert people!



Palo Verde

Parkinsonia spp.

Arizona's State Tree!



Blue Palo Verde
P. florida



Foothills Palo Verde
P. microphylla



Uam Masad: The “Yellow” Month (April)





Whitethorn Acacia
Vachellia constricta

Catclaw Acacia
Senegalia greggii

Velvet Mesquite
Prosopis velutina

Desert Ironwood
Olneya tesota



Baby Bonnets
Coursettia glandulosa

Fairy Duster
Calliandra eriophylla



Ocotillo

Fouquieria splendens



Yucca



Arizona Yucca

Y. Arizona
(formerly considered
A variety of the
Banana Yucca, *Y.*
baccata var.
brevifolia)

Soaptree Yucca

Y. elata



Jojoba

Simmondsia chinensis



Male



Female





Creosote Bush

Larrea tridentata

- Found in three of the North American Deserts
- Most drought-tolerant plant in North America





Bursage *Ambrosia* spp.

Triangle-leaf Bursage *A. deltoidea*



White Bursage *A. dumosa*





“Nurse Plants”



2,000
- 25

1,975

THANK
YOU!

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