

Our Mediterranean Ecosystem

The Mediterranean ecosystem at Cabrillo is made up of plants that have adapted to warm, dry summers and cool winters with a few storms lasting a few days at a time. To survive through the dry season, some plants found in the habitats have large roots, or bodies, where they store water to use when needed. Other plants have leaf adaptations that prevent the loss of water.



Cabrillo National Monument Native Plant Guide

Name: _____

Contact the [park](http://www.nps.gov/cabr) for more information: (<http://www.nps.gov/cabr>)



These adaptations include leaves that fall off during dry seasons, leaves that curl up and make a small moisture chamber within the leaf, leaves with a waxy coating that protects them from evaporation, leaves with hairs that reflect light penetrating the plant, or leaves that are small in size so there is not a lot of area for evaporation.



Our Role

The core mission of the National Park Service is to protect and preserve natural resources, processes, systems, and values of the parks they manage. Our philosophy is protect, and restore when necessary, native ecosystems and let natural processes play out. Park Rangers and Volunteers document their observations of flora and fauna. Scientists conduct research to try to understand the status and trends of the species and systems they protect. This information is vital to advising park management and philosophy.

Broom Baccharis (*Baccharis sarothroides*)
Flowers Present: August-December
Woody shrub <7', leaves often not evident, wiggly-broomlike in appearance, small white yellowish male flowers, small white fluffy female flowers



Bladder Pod
(*Pertonia arborea*)
Flowers Present: All Year With Rain
Spreading shrub <6'tall, 3 gray-green odorous leaflets, yellow tubular 4 petal flowers, bladder shaped seed pods



Cliff Spurge
(*Euphorbia misera*)

Flowers Present: January-August
Gray twiggy looking in drought <3'tall, small green leaves, tiny white with maroon center flowers after rain



Coast Cholla Cactus
(*Cylindropuntia prolifera*)
Flowers Present: April-June
<6' tall, 2" diameter <12" green segment with many spines, magenta flowers with green filaments

California Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*)
Flowers Present: August-December
Erect or spreading many branched <4' tall, soft aromatic gray-blue linear leaves, small discoid yellow-green flowers



California Flattop Buckwheat
(*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)
Flowers Present: All Year With Rain
Woody brittle shrub <5' tall, small slender bundled leaves, white pom-pom like flowers dry rust colored flower heads retained



California Sunflower
(*Encelia californica*)

Flowers Present: February-June
Branched <4'tall, ovate gray-green smooth edged alternate leaves, yellow ray petals surrounding brown-black disk flowers



Chalk Dudleya
(*Dudleya pulverulenta*)
Flowers Present: May-July
Basal rosette of wide fleshy green leaves with white "chalk", tall branched stalks with many red flowers <3' tall

Woody gray barked bush < 15' tall, dark green leathery serrated leaves, flowers white or pink, red waxy berries

Lemonade Berry

(*Rhus integrifolia*)



Basal rosette of gray-green fleshy cylindrical "finger" leaves, cream-white 5 petal star shaped flowers at top branched stalks > 18" tall

Lady's Fingers
(*Dudleya edulis*)



Green fading to brown long wide erect leafed grass > 8' tall, spiked slender noded flower (seeds)

Giant Wild Rye

(*Elymus condensatus*)



Gray-green twigs > 4' tall, 3-6 inch turning to orange flowers with "deer's ears"

Deer Weed
(*Acemispson glaber*)



Woody shrub > 7' tall, small narrow toothed ovate light green leaves, small yellowish male flowers, small white fluffy female flowers

Coyote Brush

(*Baccharis pilularis*)



Shrub > 6' tall, softly lobed feltly leaves, pink with orangish center flowers bundled along stalk

Coastal Bushmallow
(*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*)



Green flat rounded pads (nopaltos) with 4-10 spines from areole, yellow flowers and red fruits (tuna)

Coast Prickly Pear

(*Opuntia littoralis*)



gray-green with 15-39 leaflets, cream-white flower heads, rounded seed pods

Coast Loco Weed
(*Astragalus trichopodus*)



Mojave Yucca

(*Yucca schidigera*)

Flowers Present: April-May

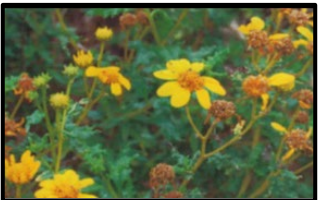
Large rosette of pointed stiff gray-green leaves with "threads" along edge, < 8' tall stalk with white waxy flowers



Shaw's Agave (*Agave shawii*)

Flowers Present: September-May

Basal rosette of sharp pointed toothed thick stiff leaves, golden flowers on thick branched stalk to 8' tall (only flowers once, every 20-40 years)



San Diego Sunflower

(*Bahiopsis laciniata*)

Flowers Present: March-July

Gray green thick puckered lance shaped leaves, yellow ray and disk flowers



Wart-stem Ceanothus

(*Ceanothus verrucosus*)

Flowers Present: January-April

Brown woody "warted" stems, shrub < 8' tall, small thick rounded ribbed toothed evergreen leaves, tiny white clumped flowers

Native Plant Communities



The power of sunlight plays a huge role in the plant communities here at Cabrillo National Monument. The park can be divided into two main plant communities.

The first community, called Coastal Sage Scrub, is populated by small plants only growing to a height of three (3) feet. The plants tend to be spread out and brown dirt is often seen in these areas. This community is usually found on southern facing slopes. Here the sun shines directly on everything for most of the day.

Chaparral, the second community, is categorized by woody shrubs that can grow to eight (8) feet. These shrubs grow close together with little bare ground between plants. This community is usually found on northern facing slopes where the sun does not shine directly and there is more shade.

As you look around the park try to notice the differences. Where the plants are tall and it would be close to impossible to walk through them, this is the Chaparral.



The Coastal Sage Scrub is our most sensitive habitat. The plants here are fighting to stay alive and you can help them most, by staying on the paths and letting these special plants have a chance of survival.