**Medicinal Desert Plants**

**Creosote Bush: Larrea tridentata**

uses: antioxidant, antiseptic, anti-microbial, hair tonic, arthritis, blood, skin, tumors, cysts  
used by: Pima, Papago, Seri, Cahuilla

**Mesquite: Prosopis julifera, glandulosa, pubescens**

uses: anti-microbial, astringent, demulcent, nutritive, eye wash, fuel, chewing gum, dye  
used by: Pima, Papago, Seri

**Prickly Pear: Opuntia phaeacantha**

uses: nutritive, demulcent, first aid, anti-inflammatory  
used by: Aztex, Pima, Papago, Seri, Navajo

**Ocotillo: Fouquiera splendens**

uses: pelvic lymphatic, benign cysts & tumors, shelter, fencing  
used by: Pima, Papago, Cahuilla, Apache

**Globe Mallow: Sphaeralcea ambigua**

uses: demulcent, colitis, ulcers, sore throats, mild urinary tract irritations  
used by: Seri, Pueblo, Navajo

**Mormon Tea: Ephedra spp.**

uses: bronchial dilator, decongestant, coffee replacement, stimulant  
used by: Pima, Papago, Navajo, Zuni

**Jojoba: Simmodia chinensis**

uses: astringent, sore throats, colitis, vaginitis, ulcers, hemorrhoids, coffee replacement  
      nuts are high in oil, great for skin, scalp & hair  
used by: Seri, Pima, Papago

**Brittlebush: Encelia farinosa**

uses: analgesic, expectorant, incense  
used by: Cahuilla, Mojave, Pima, Papago, Seri

**Buckwheat Bush: Eriogonum**

uses: colds, coughs, sore throats  
used by: Hopi, Zuni, Pima, Papago, Navajo, Seri

**Bursage: Ambrosia deltoidea**

uses: cramps, allergies  
used by: Seri

**Desert Mistletoe: Phoradendron californicum**

uses: nervine, anti-spasmodic, tonic  
used by: Seri, Pima, Papago, Zuni, Navajo

**Juniper: Juniperus monosperma**

uses: urinary tract infections, cystitis, saunas, incense  
used by: Tewa, Zuni, Navajo, Seri
**Medicinal Desert Plants** (cont’d.)

**Desert Barberry:** *Mahonia trifoliata*
uses: edible berries, stem, & root bark as a bitter tonic, anti-microbial for skin & intestinal tract, liver tonic, yellow dye.
used by: Navajo, Seri

**Crucifixion Thorn:** *Castela emoryi*
uses: inhibits intestinal protozoa
used by: Seri

**Yucca:** *Yucca spp.*
uses: anti-inflammatory, urethra, bladder, prostate, shampoo, nutritive, basket crafts
used by: Navajo, Zuni, Seri

**Sagebrush:** *Artemisia tridentata*
uses: flu, diaphoretic, fevers, disinfectant, smudging incense
used by: Paiute, Zuni, Navajo

**Agave:** *Agave spp.*
uses: indigestion, chronic constipation, gas
used by: Papago, Pima, Seri

**Catclaw:** *Acacia greggii*
uses: dystentery, diarrhea, astringent
used by: widely used by all Native Americans

**Ratany:** *Krameria lanceolata, grayii, parviflora*
uses: astringent, topical hemostat, sore gums, abscesses, mouth sores, sore throat, diarrhea
used by: Papago, Pima

**Larkspur:** *Delphinium amabile*
uses: kills body lice
used by: the entire Western world for a hundred years!

**Jimsonweed, Thornapple:** *Datura stramonium*
uses: leaves smoked for bronchial spasms (mix with desert sage) Not for internal use.
used by: Pima & Papago

**Desert Sage:** *Salvia spp.*
uses: anti-microbial, astringent, disinfectant, sore throats, sweat baths
used by: Cahuilla, Comanche, Navajo
**Manzanita:** Arctostaphylus spp.
*uses:* urinary tract infections, emetic
*used by:* Navajo

**Desert Willow:** Chilopsis linearis
*uses:* antifungal, first aid, sore throats
*used by:* Navajo, Seri

**Saguaro:** Carnegiea gigantea
*uses:* poultice for muscle pain
*used by:* Seri, Papago, Pima
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HERBAL PREPARATIONS

INFUSIONS:

Commonly called “teas” or tisanes, these are easily prepared by steeping the herb, either fresh or dried, in 8 oz. of boiling water. The vessel should be covered for 5-15 minutes to preserve the volatile oils. The usual ratio is 1 teaspoon of dried herb to 8 oz. Hot water, however that varies with the herb being prepared and the intended use. Most measures are made with fingers. Herbs prepared in this fashion are usually aromatic leaves. Mild and flavorful.

DECOCTIONS:

These preparations are made from the stems or roots of herbs. Preparation involves boiling in a glass or ceramic pot of water until half of the water, used to cover the herbs, is gone. A very strong liquid is obtained which is used primarily for external conditions or with great care for internal circumstances. This preparation can last for several days if refrigerated. May be strong and bitter. Use sparingly.

TINCTURES:

Alcohol based preparations using leaves, stems or roots in an effort to extract all soluble phytochemicals. The alcohol used should be 40 proof vodka due to its lack of taste and color. A ‘handful’, or an ounce of dried herb to 4 or 5 ounces of vodka is the recommended ratio. All of the herb MUST be covered by the liquid even if it changes the ratio. The covered herb should remain in a dark cupboard for 30-60 days before being removed. When removed, decant the liquid off of the herb through a coffee filter if necessary. Keep the filtered liquid in a dark colored bottle with a plastic cap and use as needed. Dropper bottles are the best way to preserve and use a tincture. Extremely strong and concentrated. Lasts indefinitely.

Infusions were used most frequently by the indigenous peoples of the Southwest. A few herbs were prepared as decoctions when a stronger concentration was desired. Tinctures were almost never used.