

Botanical Name: *Carnegiea gigantea*

Common Name: Saguaro



Family: Cactaceae

Native Distribution: Desert slopes and flats, especially rocky bajadas, from SW Arizona to SE California into Sonora, Mexico

Plant Size: Up to 50' tall, 18-24" diameter columnar tree, branching after 50 years

Flowers: Sweetly scented creamy white, 3" wide flowers with yellow centers cluster around the crown, blooming May and June on a cool desert night and closing by midday the next day

Foliage: Waxy grayish-green skin with numerous areoles and clusters of 2" gray to blackish spines

Site Preferences: Full sun, but often begins as a nurse plant under the shade of a desert tree

Landscape Uses: Use as specimen or focal point or to attract birds for fruit and nesting sites

Other Stuff:

- Classically "Western" plant, the dominant plant of the Sonoran Desert, and the Arizona state flower.
- Prefers 0 – 3,500 ft and are hardy to 14° F.
- Very difficult to transplant successfully.
- Bats and doves are the main pollinators.
- Flowers turn into an edible greenish fruit that ripens and, when opened, looks like a red flower.
- Very slow grower but, in cultivation, can grow 8" a year or more.
- Tolerates natural rainfall but can supplement during the growing season (January and July).
- Can expand like an accordion during the rainy seasons and shrink back down during the dry.
- Shallow roots radiating out to over 40' to absorb up to 200 gallons/week during the rainy season.