



Wildlife Field Guide

Edible and dangerous species from the Phoenix desert to the Flagstaff pines.

Generated October 11, 2026. General education only, not professional advice. In an emergency, call 911 and follow official instructions. Sources are linked throughout; the web version at the site has live links.

Inside:

1. Wildlife: Edible & Dangerous

2. Photo credits





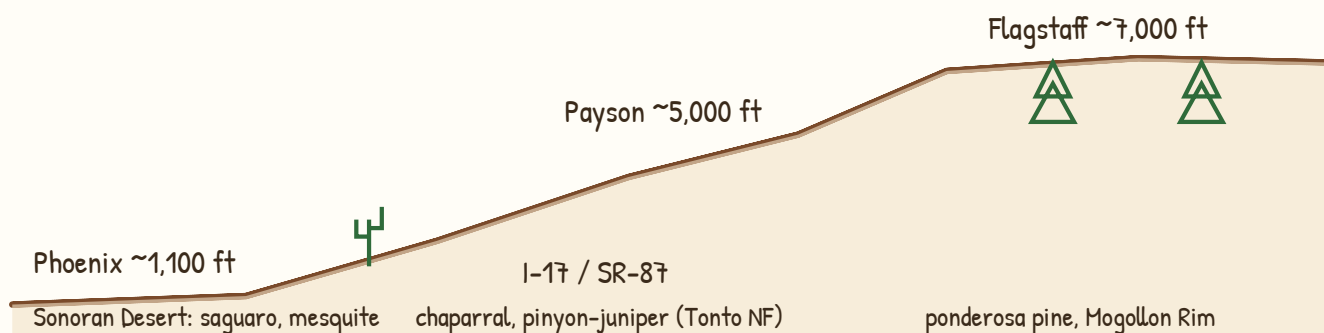
Wildlife Field Guide: Edible & Dangerous

What can hurt you, what you can eat, and how to tell them apart, from the Phoenix desert up the I-17 and SR-87 corridors to Payson and Flagstaff. 33 dangerous species, 16 edible animals, and 24 edible plants, with photos and first aid.

Golden rules

1. **Water before food.** In Arizona heat you can die of dehydration in a day; you can go weeks without food. Digesting protein uses water. Don't forage when water is short (water skills).
2. **If in doubt, don't eat it.** Identify with certainty: at least two features plus the look-alike check. One mistake with death camas, water hemlock, or a mushroom can kill.
3. **The "universal edibility test" is not reliable** for the plants that matter most here. Deadly plants such as death camas, water hemlock, poison hemlock, and amatoxin mushrooms may taste fine and cause no symptoms until hours or days later (US Army FM 21-76 itself warns it isn't for every plant). Use positive ID instead.
4. **No wild mushrooms.** Low calories, deadly risk.
5. **Respect the law.** Hunting and fishing need AZGFD licenses, seasons, and limits. **Tribal lands are off-limits** without tribal permits. Never take protected species (Gila monster, desert tortoise, native fish, eagles and most birds). Many native plants are protected (A.R.S. 3-908). National parks and monuments prohibit collecting.
6. **Normal times vs. emergencies:** foraging is not a plan to feed a family. Pack food and water (bug-out bag) and use food banks and shelters first. The law does not stop applying in an emergency.
7. **Leave dangerous animals alone.** Most bites happen when people try to catch, kill, or move snakes and lizards. Walk around them.
8. **Save the numbers:** 911 · Poison Control **1-800-222-1222** (Banner Poison & Drug Information Center, Phoenix, 24/7: 602-253-3334) · AZGFD to report wildlife issues.

Emergency first: for any bite, sting, or plant/mushroom ingestion call **911** if the person is very sick, otherwise **Poison Control 1-800-222-1222** (free, 24/7). For rattlesnake bites go straight to a hospital: **no cutting, suction, tourniquet, or ice** (AZ Poison Center, Banner).



Species change with elevation. Each card shows where it lives: **Desert** (Phoenix metro, Sonoran Desert), **Corridor** (I-17 and SR-87 through the Tonto NF, chaparral, and pinyon-juniper), **High country** (Payson, the Mogollon Rim, and Flagstaff's ponderosa pine).

Kid-friendly forage

What the badge means. We give it only to plants that meet *all* of these:

- Easy to recognize with no **dangerous** look-alike in these regions (or one an adult can rule out by checking the tree or plant itself).
- The edible part needs no risky preparation (no leaching, no toxins to cook out, no knives beyond an adult's).
- Common, legal to gather in small amounts with permission, and not protected as "highly safeguarded".
- Hazards (spines, glochids, mold) are things an adult handles.

Adult supervision always. An adult confirms the plant, does the cutting, peeling, and mold checks, and decides what is eaten. Only four plants earned it: prickly pear fruit, mesquite pods (from the tree, before monsoon), pinyon nuts, and dandelion.

Dangerous animals

Snakes & lizards

Western diamondback rattlesnake

Crotalus atrox · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Desert

Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: Daderot, CC0



Coiled diamondback
Photo: Peter Paplanus, CC BY 2.0



Look-alike: harmless gopher snake
Photo: The original uploader was Dawson at English Wikipedia., CC BY-SA 2.5

IDENTIFY

Arizona's largest rattlesnake (to about 5.5 ft). Gray-tan with dark-edged diamond blotches peppered with dark specks; **black and white tail bands of equal width** ("coon tail"); light eye stripe runs down to the lip.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert to about 5,300 ft below the Mogollon Rim: desert flats, washes, hillsides, and neighborhoods at the desert edge. Active spring through fall; at night in summer heat.

DANGER

Responsible for many of Arizona's venomous snakebites. Pain, swelling, bleeding problems; can be life-threatening.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Harmless gopher snake (no rattle, round pupils, narrow head) mimics rattlesnakes by hissing and shaking its tail. Mojave rattlesnake has narrower black tail bands.

LEGAL STATUS

Nongame reptile. Some rattlesnakes can be taken only with a valid AZ hunting license under Commission Order 43, and several Arizona species are closed. Killing snakes is unnecessary: walk around them.

Sources: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · Poison Control (poison.org): Rattlesnake bites · CDC/NIOSH: Venomous snakes · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org)

Mojave rattlesnake

Crotalus scutulatus · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Desert

Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: Lvthn13 at English Wikipedia (Original text: Self-Created), Public domain



Head and eye stripe
Photo: Claudio Cantú Muñiz, CC BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

Greenish-gray to tan with diamonds; **white tail bands wider than the black ones**; eye stripe passes above the corner of the mouth. Often confused with the diamondback.

WHERE & WHEN

Open desert flats and grassland, mostly below 5,000 ft; along I-17 north of Phoenix and open desert around the metro.

DANGER

Venom can be strongly neurotoxic in some populations (trouble breathing, weakness) as well as causing tissue damage. Treat every bite as serious, even if it looks mild at first.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Western diamondback (equal tail bands, more speckled blotches).

LEGAL STATUS

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Sidewinder

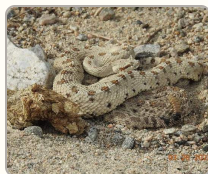
Crotalus cerastes · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Desert



Whole animal
Photo: derivative work:
Victorrocha (talk · contribs)
Crotalus_cera, CC BY-SA 3.0



Sidewinder
Photo: Diana, CC BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

Small (under 2.5 ft), pale sandy color, **raised hornlike scale above each eye**; moves sideways, leaving J-shaped tracks.

WHERE & WHEN

Sandy flats and dunes of the low desert, mainly west and southwest of Phoenix (e.g., toward Buckeye and Gila Bend). Mostly nocturnal.

DANGER

Painful, swelling bite; less venom than larger species but still a medical emergency.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LEGAL STATUS

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Sources: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · Poison Control (poison.org): Rattlesnake bites · CDC/NIOSH: Venomous snakes · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org)

Black-tailed rattlesnake

Crotalus molossus · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

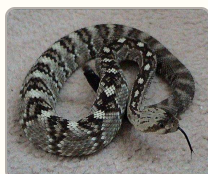
Desert

Corridor

High country



Black-tailed rattlesnake
Photo: Juan Carlos Fonseca
Mata, CC BY-SA 4.0



Solid black tail
Photo: LA Dawson, CC BY
2.5

IDENTIFY

Yellow-olive to greenish with dark crossbands; **solid black tail** and usually a dark snout.

WHERE & WHEN

Rocky slopes, canyons, and woodland from desert mountains up through chaparral and pine-oak; common along SR-87 and in the Tonto NF.

DANGER

Venomous; bites are medical emergencies.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Arizona black rattlesnake (darker overall, higher elevations).

LEGAL STATUS

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Sources: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · Poison Control (poison.org): Rattlesnake bites · CDC/NIOSH: Venomous snakes · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org)

Tiger rattlesnake

Crotalus tigris · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Desert



Whole animal
Photo: Ltshears, CC BY-SA
3.0



Tiger rattlesnake,
Paradise Valley
Photo: Richard N Horne, CC
BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

Small head for its body, gray to pinkish with **narrow dark crossbands** (tiger stripes) rather than diamonds.

WHERE & WHEN

Rocky Sonoran Desert foothills and canyons around the Phoenix area mountains (South Mountain, McDowells, Superstitions).

DANGER

Small venom yield but very potent venom. Medical emergency.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LEGAL STATUS

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Southwestern speckled rattlesnake

Crotalus pyrrhus (formerly *C. mitchellii*) · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Desert



Whole animal
Photo: Athene cunicularia
(talk) 16:54, 28 March 2008
(UTC). Orig., CC BY-SA 3.0



Speckled pattern
Photo: Joshua Tree National
Park, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Color matches local rock (pinkish, tan, gray) with **speckled, salt-and-pepper bands**; rough-looking scales.

WHERE & WHEN

Rocky desert mountains, especially west of Phoenix (e.g., White Tank and Sierra Estrella areas) and western Arizona.

DANGER

Venomous; medical emergency.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LEGAL STATUS

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Arizona black rattlesnake

Crotalus cerberus · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

Corridor

High country



Dark adult
Photo: TheLoneStarState, CC
BY-SA 4.0



Arizona black
rattlesnake
Photo: RatioTile, CC BY-SA
4.0

IDENTIFY

Adults very dark: black to dark brown or gray, often with lighter crossbars; young are lighter and blotched. Can darken and lighten.

WHERE & WHEN

Mountains of central Arizona along the Mogollon Rim, Tonto NF, Payson area, Mazatzal and Sierra Ancha; chaparral, pine-oak, and ponderosa forest.

DANGER

Venomous; medical emergency. Often found near trails and rock outcrops in the high country.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Grand Canyon rattlesnake (pinkish, Grand Canyon only, not on the route).

LEGAL STATUS

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Sources: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · Poison Control (poison.org): Rattlesnake bites · CDC/NIOSH: Venomous snakes · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org) · AZ Poison Center: Rattlesnakes of Arizona

Prairie rattlesnake (incl. Hopi rattlesnake)

Crotalus viridis · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous

High country



Whole animal
Photo: Unknown (see source
page), CC BY-SA 2.5



Hopi rattlesnake form
Photo: Gary M. Stolz, U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service,
Public domain

IDENTIFY

Greenish-tan to brown with dark blotches that become bands near the tail; light stripes on the face.

WHERE & WHEN

Grasslands and open pinyon-juniper of northern Arizona, including the Flagstaff area's open country and prairie-dog towns.

DANGER

Venomous; medical emergency.

FIRST AID

Call 911 and get to a hospital with antivenom; car keys and phone are the best snakebite kit. Keep still and calm, remove rings, watches, and tight clothing, and keep the limb near heart level. **No** cutting, suction or "extractors", tourniquets or tight bands, ice, electric shock, or alcohol. Don't try to catch or kill the snake; treatment is the same for every Arizona rattlesnake. Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Gopher snake (round pupils, no rattle).

LEGAL STATUS

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Sonoran (Arizona) coral snake

Micruroides euryxanthus · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: David Jahn, CC BY-SA 2.0



Look-alike: harmless mountain kingsnake
Photo: Holger Krisp, CC BY 3.0

IDENTIFY

Small (usually under 2 ft), slim, with **red, yellow (or white), and black rings that go all the way around the body**; black head. Red touches yellow.

WHERE & WHEN

Rocky desert and grassland, often under rocks; mostly active at night or after summer rains.

DANGER

Neurotoxic venom, but bites are rare and no deaths have been attributed to the Arizona species. Symptoms can be delayed 1–7 hours.

FIRST AID

Don't handle it. If bitten, go to a medical facility without delay even if you feel fine, and call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Sonoran mountain kingsnake and shovel-nosed snakes are harmless look-alikes. The color rhyme is a rough guide only; never handle banded snakes.

LEGAL STATUS

Nongame reptile; leave it alone.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Arizona coral snake · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org)

Gila monster

Heloderma suspectum · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: Theo Kruse / Burgers' Zoo, CC BY-SA 4.0



Beaded skin
Photo: MonsterDoc, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Heavy lizard (to about 22 in) with **beadlike skin** in black and pink, orange, or yellow patterns; fat tail; slow-moving.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert foothills, washes, and rocky slopes; mostly underground, active on spring mornings and after summer rains.

DANGER

Venomous bite that holds on; extremely painful, with swelling, nausea, and sometimes breathing trouble. There is no antivenom.

FIRST AID

Remove the lizard quickly (pry the jaws open with a strong stick while it keeps its feet on the ground). Irrigate the wound with water, keep the limb at heart level, call 1-800-222-1222, and go to a medical facility (broken teeth may be in the wound; check tetanus).

LEGAL STATUS

Legally protected in Arizona. Never capture, harass, kill, or eat a Gila monster. Watch from a distance; it will walk away.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Gila monster · The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org) · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations

Spiders, scorpions & insects

Arizona bark scorpion

Centruroides sculpturatus · Spiders, scorpions & insects

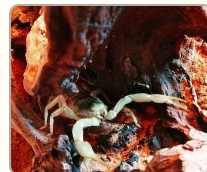
Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: Matt Berger, CC BY 4.0



Scorpions glow under UV light (European species shown)
Photo: Erinaceus, CC0



Look-alike: giant desert hairy scorpion (thick pincers)
Photo: BertaDasNashorn, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Small (to about 1.5 in), straw-yellow to tan, with **slender pincers and a thin tail**. Climbs walls and ceilings; glows under UV light.

WHERE & WHEN

Throughout the Phoenix metro in homes and yards, under bark, rocks, and debris; lower desert canyons. Active on warm nights.

DANGER

The only scorpion in Arizona regarded as life-threatening. Intense pain, numbness, and tingling; small children are at highest risk of severe reactions (jerky movements, wild eye movements).

FIRST AID

Wash with soap and water, apply a cool compress, keep the limb comfortable, and use over-the-counter pain relief. Call 1-800-222-1222 to decide if a hospital visit is needed; go immediately for young children or severe symptoms.

LOOK-ALIKES

Giant desert hairy scorpion (large, thick pincers) and stripe-tailed scorpion: painful but not considered dangerous.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Scorpions · Banner Poison Center: Bark scorpions

Western black widow

Latrodectus hesperus · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor High country



Female
Photo: Dllu, CC BY-SA 4.0



Red hourglass underneath
Photo: en:User:Jengod, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Female glossy black, round abdomen with a **red or orange hourglass underneath**. Messy, strong, irregular web low to the ground. Males are small and brown.

WHERE & WHEN

Woodpiles, sheds, rock walls, outdoor furniture, and utility boxes everywhere along the route.

DANGER

Painful bite followed by cramping and stiffness in the back, chest, or belly; nausea, headache, high blood pressure. Worse for small children.

FIRST AID

Wash with soap and water, cool compress, keep the limb near heart level, OTC pain relief. Call 1-800-222-1222; children under 5 and adults with severe symptoms may need hospital care.

LOOK-ALIKES

Brown widow (non-native, brown with orange hourglass) also occurs in Phoenix.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs

FIRST AID

Keep the bite clean with soap and water and get medical treatment; call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Many harmless brown spiders look similar; most "spider bites" are actually other skin infections.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs

Africanized honey bees

Apis mellifera (Africanized) · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor High country



Bee
Photo: Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Public domain



Swarm: keep away
Photo: Хомелка, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Look the same as ordinary honey bees; only behavior tells: they defend a wide area around the hive and chase people for a long distance.

WHERE & WHEN

Common throughout southern and central Arizona. Hives in walls, meter boxes, rock crevices, old tires, and tree hollows.

DANGER

Mass stinging attacks can be fatal; one sting can kill a person with a bee allergy.

FIRST AID

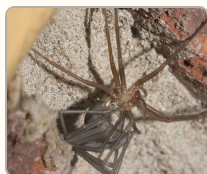
Run to a car or building, covering your face; don't swat or stop, and don't jump into water (bees wait). Remove stingers within seconds by any means. Call 911 for many stings or any allergy signs (welts, trouble breathing); otherwise 1-800-222-1222.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs · UA Cooperative Extension: Africanized honey bees (AZ1846)

Arizona brown spider (recluse relative)

Loxosceles arizonica · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Violin mark on a recluse spider (brown recluse shown; Arizona has related species)
Photo: Robert Webster, CC BY-SA 4.0



Related desert recluse
Photo: DesertTrip, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Light tan to brown, about nickel-to-quarter size with legs; **violin-shaped mark** on the front body; six eyes in pairs. Shy.

WHERE & WHEN

Dry, undisturbed places: packrat nests, woodpiles, closets, under rocks. The true brown recluse lives in the Midwest, not Arizona.

DANGER

Bites may become a slow-healing "bull's-eye" sore with dead skin, sometimes with flu-like symptoms.

Kissing bugs (conenose bugs)

Triatoma rubida and relatives · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Kissing bug feeding (South American species shown)
Photo: Photo Credit: Content Providers(s): CDC/World Health Organiz, Public domain



Kissing bugs: cone-shaped heads, orange edge marks
Photo: Curtis-Robles et al., CC BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

About 1/2–1 in, dark with orange-red marks along the edge of a flat body; **long cone-shaped head**.

WHERE & WHEN

Packrat nests; drawn to lights on summer nights and bite sleeping people and pets.

DANGER

Bites are painless at first, then itchy swelling; repeat bites can cause severe allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. They can carry the parasite that causes Chagas disease, but human infection from Arizona bugs is rare.

FIRST AID

Wash with soap and water. Seek care for allergic signs; people with severe reactions may be prescribed an epinephrine kit. Call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Harmless leaf-footed and assassin bugs look similar.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs · CDC: Chagas disease

DANGER

Painful bite with local swelling, usually short-lived.

FIRST AID

Most bites can be handled at home: clean the bite. If pain is severe or lasts more than 12 hours, seek care. Call 1-800-222-1222.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs

Giant desert centipede

Scolopendra heros / *S. polymorpha* · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: John, CC BY 2.0



Desert centipede
Photo: Unknown (see source page), CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Long, flat, segmented, one pair of legs per segment; up to 6–8 in. Often orange or red with a dark head and tail.

WHERE & WHEN

Under rocks and logs; active on warm, wet nights.

Tarantula hawk wasp

Pepsis spp. · Spiders, scorpions & insects

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole insect
Photo: Alicia Di Rado, CC BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

Large (to 2 in) blue-black wasp with **bright orange wings**; seen on milkweed and mesquite flowers in summer.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert and grassland, summer days.

DANGER

One of the most painful insect stings, but rarely dangerous unless allergic. Not aggressive; leave it alone.

FIRST AID

Clean the sting, cool compress; seek care for allergic signs. Call 1-800-222-1222.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs

Amphibians

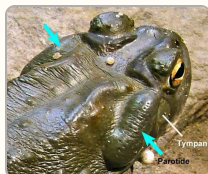
Sonoran Desert toad (Colorado River toad)

Incilius alvarius · Amphibians

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Whole animal
Photo: Holger Krisp, CC BY 3.0



Large poison glands behind the eyes
Photo: 2009-02-26Bufo_alvarius184.jpg; Wildfeuer derivative work: H, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Very large toad (to 7 in), smooth olive skin, **big kidney-shaped glands behind the eyes** and white warts at the corners of the mouth.

WHERE & WHEN

Near water, irrigated yards, and canals during and after the summer monsoon; active at night.

DANGER

Its skin and gland toxins are poisonous. Dogs that mouth one can collapse, seize, or die. Never lick it or try to use its secretions: they can cause seizures and heart problems, and they contain a controlled substance (5-MeO-DMT).

FIRST AID

Dog exposure: rinse the mouth sideways with a hose (nose pointed down so it doesn't swallow), wipe the gums, and go to a vet immediately. Human exposure: wash skin, rinse eyes, call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Smaller Great Plains and red-spotted toads; still wash hands after touching any toad.

LEGAL STATUS

Not edible. Do not collect.

Sources: The Reptiles and Amphibians of Arizona (reptilesfaz.org) · AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs

Mammals

Mountain lion (cougar)

Puma concolor · Mammals

Dangerous **Desert** **Corridor** **High country**



Whole animal
Photo: Saguaro National Park, CC BY 2.0



Track (no claw marks)
Photo: Gionorossi, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Large tawny cat, long thick tail with a dark tip; tracks show four toes and no claw marks.

WHERE & WHEN

Statewide where deer live: desert mountains edging Phoenix, the Tonto NF, the Rim, and Flagstaff forests. Most active dawn and dusk.

DANGER

Attacks on people are very rare but serious; small children and running people are most at risk.

FIRST AID

Don't run. Pick up small children, face the lion, look big, back away slowly, and shout. If attacked, fight back hard (rocks, sticks, fists). Report to AZGFD; call 911 for injuries.

LEGAL STATUS

Big-game species: hunting only by AZGFD license and season.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Living with wildlife · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations

LEGAL STATUS

Big-game species: AZGFD license and season only. Bear meat often carries *Trichinella*; it must be cooked to at least 160°F (CDC).

PREPARATION

Legal hunters must cook bear meat thoroughly (160°F) because of trichinellosis; freezing does not reliably kill the parasite in wild game.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Living with wildlife · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · CDC: Trichinellosis

Javelina (collared peccary)

Pecari tajacu · Mammals

Dangerous **Edible** **Desert** **Corridor**



Herd
Photo: ALAN SCHMIERER, CC0



Pale collar
Photo: Giles Laurent, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Pig-like, grizzled gray-black with a pale "collar"; travels in herds; strong musky smell. Not a pig (a separate family).

WHERE & WHEN

Desert, chaparral, and edges of Phoenix-area neighborhoods, Payson's lower edges. Often in yards where people feed them.

DANGER

Usually avoid people but will defend themselves and attack dogs; sharp tusks.

FIRST AID

Give them an escape route; keep dogs leashed. Never feed them (feeding wildlife other than birds and tree squirrels is illegal in Maricopa County, A.R.S. 13-2927). Clean bites well and seek care (infection, rabies risk).

LOOK-ALIKES

Feral hogs (rare in this area) are larger, with a straight tail.

LEGAL STATUS

Big-game species: hunting only with an AZGFD javelina tag in season (draw).

PREPARATION

Field dress promptly. Remove the **scent gland on the lower back** carefully without cutting into it, and keep hair off the meat. Cook to 160°F; slow braising suits the lean meat.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Living with wildlife · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · Penn State Extension: Proper processing of wild game and fish · A.R.S. 13-2927: Unlawful feeding of wildlife

Black bear

Ursus americanus · Mammals

Dangerous **Edible** **Corridor** **High country**



Whole animal
Photo: NPS, Public domain



Cinnamon color phase
Photo: Charles J. Sharp, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Black, brown, or cinnamon (color doesn't tell the species); no shoulder hump; tall ears. Grizzlies do not live in Arizona.

WHERE & WHEN

Chaparral, Mogollon Rim, Payson area, and ponderosa and mixed-conifer forest. Drawn to trash, coolers, and pet food, especially in drought years.

DANGER

Rare but real attacks in Arizona; food-conditioned bears are the biggest risk.

FIRST AID

Never feed bears; store food and trash in your car or bear boxes. If you meet one, give it space, stand tall, make noise, back away; don't run. **Fight back** if a black bear attacks.

Report to AZGFD.

Coyote

Canis latrans · Mammals

Dangerous Desert Corridor High country



Whole animal
Photo: Henry from Arizona, United States, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Gray-tan dog-like animal, bushy tail held low, large pointed ears.

WHERE & WHEN

Everywhere, including city parks and neighborhoods.

DANGER

Rarely bite people; may take small pets. **Bold** or sick animals can carry rabies.

FIRST AID

Haze them: make noise, wave arms, throw objects near (not at) them. Keep pets inside at night. Any bite: wash 15 minutes with soap and water and get medical care for rabies shots.

LEGAL STATUS

Nongame predator under AZGFD regulations; not recommended as food.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Living with wildlife · CDC: Rabies

Toxic plants & mushrooms

Don't eat, don't burn, learn the look-alikes

Death camas

Toxicoscordion (Zigadenus) spp. · Toxic plants

Dangerous Corridor High country



Flower spike
Photo: Jason Hollinger, CC BY 2.0



Plant
Photo: Scott, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Grass-like leaves from an onion-like bulb; spike of small cream-white six-petaled flowers with a greenish spot at the base of each petal. **No onion smell.**

WHERE & WHEN

Meadows and open pine forest in the high country, spring to early summer.

DANGER

All parts are highly toxic; a few bulbs can kill. Easily mistaken for wild onion when not in flower.

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222 or 911 immediately after any suspected ingestion.

LOOK-ALIKES

Wild onion (always smells of onion). If it doesn't smell like onion, don't eat it; and onion smell on your hands can fool you after handling real onions.

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

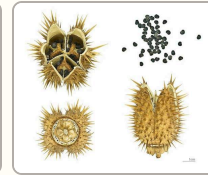
Sacred datura / jimsonweed

Datura wrightii, D. stramonium · Toxic plants

Dangerous Desert Corridor High country



Flowers
Photo: Dlarsen, Public domain



Spiny seed pod
Photo: Didier Descouens, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Sprawling plant with large gray-green leaves, big white trumpet flowers that open at dusk, and **spiny round seed pods**. Foul smell.

WHERE & WHEN

Roadsides, washes, and disturbed ground from the desert to Flagstaff.

DANGER

All parts poisonous (anticholinergic): hallucinations, very high heart rate, fever, seizures, death. People are poisoned trying to use it as a drug or mistaking it for edible plants.

FIRST AID

Call 911 or 1-800-222-1222 right away.

LOOK-ALIKES

Moonflower (cultivated, also toxic).

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Water hemlock

Cicuta douglasii · Toxic plants

Dangerous

Corridor

High country



Plant and flowers

Photo: Unknown (see source page), Public domain



Spotted water hemlock (close relative, same danger)

Photo: Williammehlhorn at English Wikipedia, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Tall plant in wet ground with umbrella-shaped white flower clusters; leaflets with veins ending in the notches; **chambered, hollow base** that may ooze yellow oily liquid.

WHERE & WHEN

Stream banks, wet meadows, and ditches in the Rim country and around Flagstaff.

DANGER

Considered the most toxic plant in North America; a small piece of root can cause violent seizures and death within hours.

FIRST AID

Call 911 immediately.

LOOK-ALIKES

Wild carrot, wild parsnip, water parsley, and cow parsnip. **Don't eat any wild plant in the carrot family** (white umbrella flowers).

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

Poison hemlock

Conium maculatum · Toxic plants

Dangerous

Corridor

High country



Plant

Photo: Krzysztof Ziarniak, Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0



Purple-blotched stem

Photo: Mathieu Menand, CC BY-SA 2.0 fr



Look-alike: wild carrot flower

Photo: Petro Stelte, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Tall (to 8 ft) with fern-like leaves, white umbrella flowers, and **smooth stems with purple blotches**; musty "mousy" smell.

WHERE & WHEN

Moist, disturbed ground, roadsides, and stream banks; naturalized in Arizona.

DANGER

All parts deadly (paralysis, respiratory failure).

FIRST AID

Call 911 immediately.

LOOK-ALIKES

Wild carrot / Queen Anne's lace (hairy stem, no purple blotches), fennel. Avoid the whole carrot family.

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Oleander

Nerium oleander · Toxic plants

Dangerous

Desert



Shrub in flower

Photo: Joaquim Alves Gaspar, CC BY 2.5

IDENTIFY

Common Phoenix hedge shrub with narrow leathery leaves and white, pink, or red flowers.

WHERE & WHEN

Yards, freeway landscaping, and parks throughout the metro.

DANGER

All parts contain heart toxins. Don't eat any part, use the stems as skewers, or burn it (smoke is irritating).

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222 or 911 for any ingestion.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Castor bean

Ricinus communis · Toxic plants

Dangerous

Desert



Plant

Photo: Filo gén', CC BY-SA 4.0



Mottled seeds

Photo: Drlectin, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Large shrub with big star-shaped (palmate) leaves, often reddish; **spiny seed capsules** holding mottled brown seeds.

WHERE & WHEN

Escaped along canals, washes, and vacant lots in the Phoenix area.

DANGER

Seeds contain ricin; chewed seeds can be deadly.

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222 or 911.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Tree tobacco & desert tobacco

Nicotiana glauca, *N. obtusifolia* · Toxic plants

Dangerous Desert Corridor



Tree tobacco

Photo: Miwasatoshi, CC BY-SA 4.0



Desert tobacco

Photo: Adbar, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Tree tobacco: lanky shrub with smooth blue-green oval leaves and tubular yellow flowers. Desert tobacco: low, sticky plant with small white tubular flowers.

WHERE & WHEN

Washes, roadsides, and disturbed ground below about 3,000–5,000 ft.

DANGER

Tree tobacco contains anabasine; people have died after cooking its leaves as greens.

FIRST AID

Call 911 or 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Some people mistake young tree tobacco leaves for edible greens.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Texas mountain laurel

Dermatophyllum secundiflorum · Toxic plants

Dangerous Desert



Flowers

Photo: Kretyen at Flickr, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Landscape shrub with glossy dark leaflets, grape-scented purple flowers in spring, and gray woody pods holding **bright red seeds**.

WHERE & WHEN

Common in Phoenix yards and parks.

DANGER

Seeds are highly toxic if chewed. A reason not to eat "bean pods" from landscape plants you can't name.

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Palo verde and mesquite pods (edible) grow on very different trees; know the tree, not just the pod.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Silverleaf nightshade & other nightshades

Solanum elaeagnifolium and relatives · Toxic plants

Dangerous Desert Corridor High country



Flowers and leaves

Photo: Nikolai Bulykin, CC BY-SA 4.0



Berries

Photo: Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Silvery, wavy-edged leaves, purple star-shaped flowers with yellow centers, and yellow-orange round berries that look like tiny tomatoes.

WHERE & WHEN

Roadsides, fields, and vacant lots up to about 5,000 ft.

DANGER

Berries and leaves are poisonous, especially to children.

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

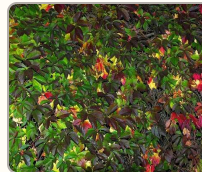
Wolfberry (also in the nightshade family): learn both before picking any red or yellow berry.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Virginia creeper

Parthenocissus spp. · Toxic plants

Dangerous Corridor High country



Five-leaflet leaves

Photo: Bff, CC BY-SA 4.0



Berries

Photo: Beastswaite, CC0

IDENTIFY

Climbing vine with **five leaflets** radiating from one point; small blue-black berries on red stems.

WHERE & WHEN

Moist canyons and roadsides at about 3,000–7,000 ft.

DANGER

Berries are toxic (oxalates).

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222.

LOOK-ALIKES

Wild grape (single, heart-shaped toothed leaf, tendrils, juicy grapes).

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Wild mushrooms (Amanita and others)

Amanita phalloides group, *A. muscaria*, and many others · Toxic plants

Dangerous

Corridor

High country



Fly agaric

Photo: Katja Schulz from Washington, D. C., USA, CC BY 2.0



Death cap type

Photo: George Chernilevsky, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Many deadly mushrooms look ordinary: white gills, a ring on the stem, a cup at the base. Fly agaric (red with white spots) grows under Flagstaff pines.

WHERE & WHEN

Ponderosa pine and oak forest after summer monsoon rains.

DANGER

Amatoxin mushrooms cause liver failure days after eating; symptoms start late, after damage is done.

FIRST AID

Call 1-800-222-1222 immediately after eating any wild mushroom, even if you feel fine. Keep a sample.

LOOK-ALIKES

Every edible mushroom has a toxic look-alike.

LEGAL STATUS

Don't forage mushrooms at all for this guide's purposes. They are low in calories and the risk is deadly.

Sources: AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

Disease risks from wildlife

Disease	Where it comes from	Prevention & what to do	Source
Rabies	Bats, skunks, foxes (also bobcats, coyotes). A bat found in a room with a sleeping person counts as an exposure.	Never handle wild animals or bats. Wash any bite or scratch 15 minutes with soap and water and get medical care the same day; rabies shots work if given in time.	CDC: Rabies
Plague	Fleas from prairie dogs, rock squirrels, and other rodents; endemic in northern Arizona including the Flagstaff area (Coconino County reported a prairie-dog die-off and a pneumonic plague death in July 2025).	Avoid rodent burrows and sick or dead animals; use repellent and tuck pants into socks; treat pets for fleas and keep them leashed. Fever and swollen glands after exposure: see a doctor immediately (antibiotics work). Report die-offs: Coconino County 928-679-8756.	CDC: Plague · Coconino County HHS: Prairie dog die-off & plague alert (2025) · CDC MMWR: Fatal pneumonic plague, Coconino County, July 2025

Disease	Where it comes from	Prevention & what to do	Source
Hantavirus	Deer mouse droppings and urine in cabins, sheds, and vehicles, especially in the high country.	Don't sweep or vacuum droppings. Ventilate 30 minutes, soak with bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water), wait, then wipe up with gloves.	CDC: Hantavirus
Tularemia	Rabbits, hares, rodents; ticks and deer flies; untreated water.	Wear gloves to skin rabbits and rodents; never handle animals found dead; cook game thoroughly (freezing doesn't kill the bacteria). Many hunters discard any rabbit with white or yellow spots on the liver, but a clean liver is not a guarantee.	CDC: Preventing tularemia
Valley fever	A fungus in desert soil (Coccidioides). Maricopa County has some of the highest rates in the U.S. Spread by breathing dust after digging or dust storms.	Wet soil before digging; wear an N95 in dust; see a doctor for cough, fever, and fatigue lasting more than a week and ask about Valley fever.	CDC: Valley fever
Trichinellosis	Undercooked bear, wild boar, and other wild carnivores or omnivores.	Cook to 160°F and check with a thermometer. Freezing does not reliably kill wild-game Trichinella.	CDC: Trichinellosis

Edible animals

Every animal here requires an AZGFD license, season, and limits. They're listed so you can identify them, handle them safely, and know the rules, not as permission.

Game, fish & others

Desert cottontail

Sylvilagus audubonii · Small game

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Whole animal
Photo: Holly Cheng, CC BY-SA 3.0



In habitat
Photo: VJAnderson, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Small gray-brown rabbit with a white fluffy tail and medium ears; freezes, then zigzags.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert scrub, washes, golf-course edges, and brushy areas statewide; most active dawn and dusk.

LEGAL STATUS

Small game. Requires a valid AZGFD hunting license (and tags or permits where required), legal season, legal methods, and bag limits. Seasons change every year: check the current AZGFD regulations.

PREPARATION

Tularemia precautions: never take a rabbit that acts sick or is found dead. Wear gloves, keep hands away from your face, and wash hands, knives, and boards afterward. Skin it, remove the guts, and inspect the liver: many hunters discard any rabbit with white or yellow spots. Rinse, chill quickly, and cook to **160°F** (USDA). Good stewed or braised.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · CDC: Preventing tularemia · USDA FSIS: Rabbit from farm to table · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

Black-tailed jackrabbit

Lepus californicus · Small game

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Whole animal
Photo: Chuck Homler d/b/a Focus On Wildlife, CC BY-SA 4.0



Long black-tipped ears
Photo: Jessie Eastland, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Large hare with very long black-tipped ears and a black stripe on top of the tail; long powerful legs.

WHERE & WHEN

Open desert, grassland, and farm edges statewide.

LEGAL STATUS

Jackrabbits are regulated by AZGFD; a valid hunting license and current season and limits apply.

PREPARATION

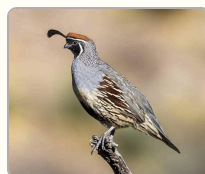
Same tularemia precautions as cottontail (gloves; discard sick animals; inspect the liver). Meat is darker and tougher: braise or stew, cook to **160°F**. Summer jackrabbits may carry botfly larvae (warbles) under the skin; trim the area.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · CDC: Preventing tularemia · USDA FSIS: Rabbit from farm to table

Gambel's quail

Callipepla gambelii · Game birds

Edible Desert Corridor



Male
Photo: Polinova, CC BY-SA 4.0



Female
Photo: SearchNet Media from Tucson, Arizona, USA, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Plump gray bird with a **forward-curling black head plume**; males have a rusty cap and black face. Travels in coveys.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert scrub and washes, including Phoenix neighborhoods; lower edges of the corridors.

LEGAL STATUS

Upland game bird. Requires a valid AZGFD hunting license (and tags or permits where required), legal season, legal methods, and bag limits. Seasons change every year: check the current AZGFD regulations.

PREPARATION

Pluck or skin, remove the crop and guts, rinse. Cook to **165°F** (all poultry and game birds). Roast whole or split and grill.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · USDA FSIS: Wild game handling ("Roasting those other holiday meats")

Mourning dove & white-winged dove

Zenaida macroura, *Z. asiatica* · Game birds

Edible Desert Corridor



Mourning dove
Photo: Rhododendrites, CC BY-SA 4.0



White-winged dove
Photo: SearchNet Media, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Mourning: slim, tan, pointed tail, black wing spots. White-winged: stockier with a **white stripe along the wing edge**, blue eye-ring; arrives in summer to feed on saguaro fruit.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert, farms, and neighborhoods; white-wings mainly April–September.

LEGAL STATUS

Migratory game birds: AZGFD license **plus** the federal migratory bird (HIP) requirement; specific dove seasons only.

PREPARATION

Breast out the bird, rinse, cook to **165°F**; grill wrapped or pan-fry.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

DANGER

Collisions with elk on I-17 and SR-87 are a serious crash risk at dawn, dusk, and night. Cows with calves and rutting bulls can charge.

LEGAL STATUS

Big game: limited-entry draw tags only.

PREPARATION

Large animal: field dress immediately and cool quickly (quarter if needed). Cook like venison: ground meat to 160°F.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · Penn State Extension: Proper processing of wild game and fish

Mule deer & Coues white-tailed deer

Odocoileus hemionus, *O. virginianus couesi* · Big game

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Mule deer
Photo: NPS, Public domain



Coues whitetail
Photo: USDA photo by Scott Bauer, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Mule deer: big ears, black-tipped rope-like tail, bounding gait. Coues whitetail: small, with a broad tail that flashes white; brushy mountains.

WHERE & WHEN

Mule deer statewide (desert to forest); Coues whitetail in chaparral and oak woodland along the Rim and Tonto NF.

LEGAL STATUS

Big game: hunting only with an AZGFD tag in the hunt unit and season you drew.

PREPARATION

Field dress quickly (open the belly without puncturing guts, remove organs, prop open to cool), keep the meat below 40°F, and keep it clean. Cook venison and ground venison to **160°F** (USDA). In Arizona, check AZGFD guidance on chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing if hunting near state borders.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · USDA FSIS: Wild game handling ("Roasting those other holiday meats") · Penn State Extension: Proper processing of wild game and fish

Merriam's wild turkey

Meleagris gallopavo merriami · Game birds

Edible High country Corridor



Male turkey
Photo: Frank Schulenburg, CC BY-SA 4.0



In ponderosa forest
Photo: Don Faulkner, CC BY-SA 2.0

IDENTIFY

Large dark bronze bird; males have a bare red-blue head and a beard; tail feathers tipped white.

WHERE & WHEN

Ponderosa pine forest around Payson, the Rim, and Flagstaff.

LEGAL STATUS

Spring and fall seasons by AZGFD permit-tag only.

PREPARATION

Pluck or skin, remove guts and crop, chill. Cook to **165°F** in the innermost thigh and thickest breast.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · USDA FSIS: Wild game handling ("Roasting those other holiday meats")

Elk

Cervus canadensis · Big game

Dangerous Edible High country



Bull elk
Photo: Spencer-Nägy, CC BY-SA 4.0



Young elk
Photo: Charles J. Sharp, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Very large deer, tan body with a dark brown neck and pale rump patch; bulls bugle in fall.

WHERE & WHEN

Ponderosa and meadows around Flagstaff and the Mogollon Rim; often on roads at night (major collision risk on I-17 and SR-87).

Tree squirrels (Abert's) & rock squirrels

Sciurus aberti, *Otospermophilus variegatus* · Small game

Edible Corridor High country



Abert's squirrel
Photo: Alejandro Gómez Nisino, CC BY-SA 4.0



Rock squirrel
Photo: Toffel, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Abert's: gray with **tall ear tufts**, lives in ponderosa pines. Rock squirrel: large mottled gray-brown ground squirrel among rocks.

WHERE & WHEN

Abert's in ponderosa forest (Flagstaff, Payson). Rock squirrels on rocky slopes from desert to forest.

LEGAL STATUS

Tree squirrels are small game with a set season; rock squirrels are regulated separately. Check current AZGFD regulations.

PREPARATION

Plague and tularemia carriers: rock squirrels and other ground squirrels carry plague fleas in northern Arizona, so avoid handling them; in an emergency, gloves on, kill fleas (bag the carcass briefly), skin, and cook to 160°F. Never take a squirrel found dead or acting sick.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · CDC: Plague · CDC: Preventing tularemia · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

Channel & flathead catfish

Ictalurus punctatus, Pylodictis olivaris · Fish & crayfish

Edible Desert Corridor



Channel catfish
Photo: Fishes of Texas team, CC BY-SA 4.0



Flathead catfish
Photo: Engbretson, Eric / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Scaleless with whiskers (barbels). Channel: forked tail, spots when young. Flathead: flat head, jutting lower jaw, square tail.

WHERE & WHEN

Salt and Verde rivers, Saguaro, Canyon, Apache, Roosevelt, and Bartlett lakes, and Phoenix-area community fishing waters.

LEGAL STATUS

Requires a valid AZGFD fishing license; follow statewide and water-specific limits. Fish may not be transported alive from the water where caught.

PREPARATION

Careful of the sharp spines on the back and side fins. Kill, cut around the head, skin with pliers, gut, rinse. Cook fish to **145°F** or until flesh is opaque and flakes. Check ADEQ fish consumption advisories for the lake you're fishing: Roosevelt and Apache lakes are among the waters with current mercury advisories (ADEQ, revised June 2026).

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · AZ Dept. of Environmental Quality: Fish consumption advisories

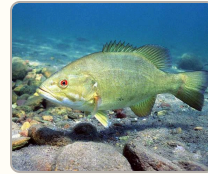
Largemouth & smallmouth bass

Micropterus salmoides, M. dolomieu · Fish & crayfish

Edible Desert Corridor



Largemouth bass
Photo: USFWS Mountain Prairie, Public domain



Smallmouth bass
Photo: Eric Engbretson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Largemouth: green with a dark side stripe; jaw reaches past the eye. Smallmouth: bronze-brown with vertical bars.

WHERE & WHEN

Salt River lakes, Bartlett, Horseshoe, Roosevelt, and the Verde.

LEGAL STATUS

Requires a valid AZGFD fishing license; follow statewide and water-specific limits. Fish may not be transported alive from the water where caught.

PREPARATION

Scale or fillet, remove the guts and gills, rinse. Cook to **145°F**. Check ADEQ advisories: Roosevelt and Apache lakes currently have mercury advisories.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · AZ Dept. of Environmental Quality: Fish consumption advisories

Sunfish (bluegill, green sunfish)

Lepomis spp. · Fish & crayfish

Edible Desert Corridor



Bluegill
Photo: Fredlyfish4, CC BY-SA 3.0



Green sunfish
Photo: USFWS Mountain Prairie, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Small, deep-bodied panfish; bluegill has a dark ear flap and blue cheek; green sunfish has a bigger mouth and blue-green lines on the face.

WHERE & WHEN

Canals (where fishing is allowed), community ponds, lakes, and rivers; easy to catch from shore.

LEGAL STATUS

Requires a valid AZGFD fishing license; follow statewide and water-specific limits. Fish may not be transported alive from the water where caught.

PREPARATION

Scale and gut, or fillet; pan-fry whole. Cook to 145°F.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

Rainbow trout (and other stocked trout)

Oncorhynchus mykiss · Fish & crayfish

Edible Corridor High country



Rainbow trout
Photo: USFWS, Public domain



Protected: Gila trout (release)
Photo: Melanie Dabovich, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Silvery with small black spots and a pink stripe along the side.

WHERE & WHEN

Rim lakes and streams (e.g., East Verde, Tonto Creek, Woods Canyon and Willow Springs lakes), Oak Creek, and winter community waters in Phoenix.

LEGAL STATUS

Requires a valid AZGFD fishing license; follow statewide and water-specific limits. Fish may not be transported alive from the water where caught. **Native Gila trout and Apache trout are protected or under special rules;** learn to tell them apart and release them unless regulations allow take.

PREPARATION

Gut and rinse; cook whole over coals or in a pan to 145°F.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · Ariz. Admin. Code R12-4-316 (live crayfish) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

American bullfrog (invasive)

Lithobates catesbeianus · Fish & crayfish

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Bullfrog
Photo: Cephas, CC BY-SA 3.0



Protected: Chiricahua leopard frog
Photo: Jim Rorabaugh/USFWS, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Large green-brown frog with a big round eardrum and no ridges down the back; deep "jug-o-rum" call.

WHERE & WHEN

Ponds, stock tanks, and slow rivers; invasive and harmful to native leopard frogs and garter snakes.

LEGAL STATUS

Take with a valid fishing license per AZGFD Commission Order 41. Native leopard frogs (e.g., Chiricahua leopard frog) are protected; learn the difference.

PREPARATION

Kill humanely, skin the hind legs, rinse, cook to 145°F or until opaque. Wash hands; amphibians can carry Salmonella.

Sources: AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures

Crayfish (invasive)

Faxonius virilis, *Procambarus clarkii* · Fish & crayfish

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Northern (virile) crayfish
Photo: D. Gordon E. Robertson, CC BY-SA 3.0



Red swamp crayfish
Photo: No machine-readable author provided. MikeMurphy assumed (bas, Public domain)

IDENTIFY

Small lobster-like crustaceans, 3–5 in, in streams, lakes, and canals. Not native to Arizona; they damage native fish and frogs, and removing them is encouraged.

WHERE & WHEN

Salt and Verde rivers, Rim streams and lakes, Oak Creek, canals.

LEGAL STATUS

A valid AZGFD fishing license is required. You may keep them, but **it's illegal to transport live crayfish away from the water where caught** (kill them on site) or move them to other waters.

PREPARATION

Kill on site, keep cool, rinse well. Boil 5–10 minutes until shells turn red and meat is opaque; eat the tail meat. Discard any that smell bad.

Grasshoppers & other edible insects

Orthoptera and others · Insects

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Grasshopper
Photo: Bill Bouton from San Luis Obispo, CA, USA, CC BY-SA 2.0

IDENTIFY

Grasshoppers are the most practical: catch them in cool mornings when they're slow. Skip brightly colored or bad-smelling insects, hairy caterpillars, and anything that stings or bites.

WHERE & WHEN

Grassy areas and roadsides in summer and fall.

LEGAL STATUS

No license needed, but avoid insects from sprayed lawns, golf courses, roadsides, and farm fields (pesticides).

PREPARATION

Remove legs and wings (spiny legs can scratch the throat). **Always cook** (roast or boil) to kill parasites; never eat raw.

Sources: US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

Rattlesnake as food (not recommended)

Crotalus spp. · Snakes & lizards

Dangerous Edible Desert Corridor High country

IDENTIFY

See the rattlesnake cards above.

DANGER

Killing a snake is when many bites happen, and a severed head can still bite by reflex for hours. The meat is small for the risk.

LEGAL STATUS

Rattlesnakes are regulated reptiles (license, open species, and limits only). Several species are closed.

PREPARATION

Eating rattlesnake is possible, but **killing snakes is dangerous and unnecessary; prefer walking away**. If a legally taken snake is used, bury the head deep without touching it, skin and gut with gloves, and cook thoroughly (Salmonella and parasites).

Sources: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations

Edible plants

Positive ID, the right season, the right preparation, and permission to gather. Check every look-alike note.

Fruits, seeds, nuts & greens

Prickly pear (pads and fruit)

Opuntia engelmannii and others · Cacti & succulents

Edible Kid-friendly forage Desert Corridor



Ripe fruit
Photo: H. Zell, CC BY 3.0



Whole plant
Photo: H. Zell, CC BY-SA 3.0



Glochids up close
Photo: Rosser1954, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Flat, paddle-shaped pads with spines and **tiny hair-like glochids**; fruit (tunas) ripen deep red-purple.

SEASON

Young pads (nopalitos) in spring; fruit in late summer to fall (Aug-Oct).

WHERE & WHEN

Desert and grassland, and many yards (landscape plants are the easiest legal source with permission).

LOOK-ALIKES

No toxic look-alikes among Arizona prickly pears, but cholla and other spiny cacti have worse spines.

LEGAL STATUS

Cacti are protected native plants; fruit and seeds of non-highly-safeguarded plants may be collected under A.R.S. 3-908, but taking living pads from state or public land needs a permit. On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Use tongs and thick gloves. Glochids are the hazard: burn them off over a flame or scrub under running water, then peel.

Fruit: halve and scoop, or simmer and strain through cloth to make juice (strain twice to remove seeds and stray glochids).

Pads: pick young ones, cut off the edge and spine bumps, slice, boil or grill (they're slimy like okra).

KIDS

Adult supervision always. Adults remove the glochids and peel the fruit; kids help spot ripe fruit and strain juice.

Sources: UA Extension: Prickly pear cactus, food of the desert · Arizona Revised Statutes 3-908 (protected native plants) · UA Extension: Arizona

Native Plant Law (AZ1506)

Cholla buds

Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa, *C. versicolor* · Cacti & succulents

Edible Desert Corridor



Buckhorn cholla
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Flower buds
Photo: SaguaroNPS, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Branching, jointed cylinder cacti. Buckhorn and staghorn cholla flower buds are the traditional food (Tohono O'odham ciolim).

SEASON

Flower buds, about April-May, before they open.

WHERE & WHEN

Sonoran Desert flats and slopes.

LOOK-ALIKES

Teddy-bear cholla is not used (dense spines). Avoid jumping-cholla injuries: use a comb to flick joints off skin.

LEGAL STATUS

Protected native plant group; get permission (private land) or follow land-manager rules. On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Use tongs. Roll buds in gravel or screen to knock off spines, then boil or steam about 15 minutes and rinse; can be dried for storage.

Sources: UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · Arizona Revised Statutes 3-908 (protected native plants) · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Mesquite pods

Prosopis velutina and relatives · Trees & shrubs

Edible

Kid-friendly forage

Desert

Corridor



Tree

Photo: Adbar, CC BY-SA 3.0



Ripe pods

Photo: Sue in az, Public domain



Look-alike: Texas mountain laurel pods (toxic)

Photo: Cecilemckee, CC BY 4.0

IDENTIFY

Thorny tree with feathery, twice-divided leaves; long bean pods that turn tan, yellow, or red-striped and **snap** when ripe.

SEASON

Late May–early July, **before the summer monsoon rains**.

WHERE & WHEN

Washes, desert flats, and Phoenix streets and parks.

LOOK-ALIKES

Texas mountain laurel and other landscape trees also have pods (toxic seeds). Know the tree first.

LEGAL STATUS

Mesquite is a protected (salvage-assessed / harvest-restricted) native tree, but pods are fruit; pick with permission or per land-manager rules.

PREPARATION

Pick dry, brittle pods **from the tree, never from the ground**, before rains; don't wash or wet them. Taste one: it should be sweet; skip bitter or chalky trees. Discard moldy, damp, or insect-damaged pods (aflatoxin risk: even invisible mold can be harmful). Dry further (low oven) and grind into flour, or simmer pods for a sweet syrup.

KIDS

Adult supervision always. Kids pick dry pods off a known mesquite tree with an adult; adults check every pod for mold and decide what's kept.

Sources: UA Extension: Mesquite (AZ1644) · UA Southwest Center: Mesquite training manual (aflatoxin, harvest timing) · Savor the Southwest / Desert Harvesters: Harvest mesquite safely · UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506)

WHERE & WHEN

Sonoran Desert, including Phoenix-area mountain parks.

LEGAL STATUS

Highly safeguarded plant. Fruit and seeds can't be collected from state or public land without a permit (A.R.S. 3-908); state trust and state park land generally prohibit it. Saguaro National Park allows small amounts for immediate eating only. On private land, get written permission. Tohono O'odham harvest traditions take precedence on tribal land.

PREPARATION

Traditionally knocked down with a long saguaro-rib pole.

Scoop the pulp; eat fresh or simmer and strain into syrup.

Sources: Arizona Revised Statutes 3-908 (protected native plants) · UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · NPS Saguaro National Park

Palo verde seeds

Parkinsonia florida, *P. microphylla* · Trees & shrubs

Edible

Desert



Foothill palo verde

Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Blue palo verde in bloom

Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Green-barked trees with tiny leaves and yellow spring flowers; pods bulge over the seeds.

SEASON

Young green pods in late spring (May–June); dry seeds after.

WHERE & WHEN

Desert washes and slopes; very common in Phoenix landscaping.

LOOK-ALIKES

Texas mountain laurel and other landscape legume trees (toxic red seeds). Be sure the tree is a palo verde (green bark).

LEGAL STATUS

Protected (salvage-assessed) native tree; seeds are fruit, gather with permission or per land rules.

PREPARATION

Eat young green seeds raw or blanched like peas. Dry seeds are hard: sprout, or boil until soft, or roast and grind.

Sources: UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Saguaro fruit

Carnegiea gigantea · Cacti & succulents

Edible

Desert



Ripe fruit

Photo: Quinn Dombrowski, CC BY-SA 2.0



Saguaro

Photo: Tomascastelazo, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

The giant columnar cactus; green fruit ripen to split open and show red pulp with black seeds.

SEASON

June–July.

Desert ironwood seeds

Olneya tesota · Trees & shrubs

Edible Desert



Tree in bloom
Photo: Rufous-crowned Sparrow, CC BY-SA 4.0



Ironwood in flower
Photo: Ken Bosma from Tucson, Arizona, USA, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Gray-barked, thorny tree with small leaflets and lavender pea flowers in late spring; short pods with a few seeds.

SEASON

Early summer.

WHERE & WHEN

Washes in the low desert, mostly south and west of Phoenix.

LOOK-ALIKES

Other legume pods (see palo verde).

LEGAL STATUS

Protected (salvage-assessed and harvest-restricted) native tree; don't cut wood.

PREPARATION

Traditionally roasted or parched; boiling or roasting is recommended over eating raw. Small harvest only.

Sources: UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Agave (roasted hearts)

Agave spp. · Cacti & succulents

Edible Desert Corridor



Agave rosette
Photo: Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 3.0



Golden-flowered agave
Photo: Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Rosette of thick, spine-tipped leaves; flowers once on a tall stalk, then dies.

SEASON

Traditionally harvested just before the stalk shoots up.

WHERE & WHEN

Rocky slopes from the desert into the chaparral.

LOOK-ALIKES

Century plants in landscaping are also agaves (same irritant sap).

LEGAL STATUS

Agaves are protected native plants and some species are highly safeguarded; removal needs a permit and landowner permission (A.R.S. 3-908). Don't harvest wild agave.

PREPARATION

The heart must be **roasted for one to several days** in a pit to become edible and sweet. Raw agave sap irritates skin and mouth (calcium oxalate and saponins). Not a realistic emergency food.

Sources: Arizona Revised Statutes 3-908 (protected native plants) · UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Banana yucca (fruit and flowers)

Yucca baccata · Cacti & succulents

Edible Corridor High country



Plant
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Fruit
Photo: Marcus Tamura
https://www.inaturalist.org/people/marcus_t, CC0

IDENTIFY

Clump of stiff, sharp blue-green leaves with curly fibers on the edges; thick, banana-shaped green fruit.

SEASON

Flowers in spring; fruit late summer.

WHERE & WHEN

Grassland, chaparral, and pinyon-juniper along I-17 and SR-87.

LOOK-ALIKES

Soaptree yucca has thin leaves and dry fruit; roots of all yuccas are soapy (saponins) and not food.

LEGAL STATUS

Harvest-restricted native plant (fiber); fruit for personal use with permission or per land rules.

PREPARATION

Roast or bake the fruit, then peel and remove seeds. Flower petals can be eaten after a short boil (bitter raw); remove the inner parts.

Sources: UA Extension: Arizona Native Plant Law (AZ1506) · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Desert chia

Salvia columbariae · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert



Flower heads
Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Small annual sage with lobed leaves at the base and stacked spiny purple-blue flower balls on the stem.

SEASON

Spring after wet winters (seeds in late spring).

WHERE & WHEN

Open desert and slopes.

LOOK-ALIKES

Other mints and sages; chia's stacked spiny whorls are distinctive.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Shake dry flower heads into a bag; winnow. Soak seeds in water to make a gel drink, or toast and grind.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

WHERE & WHEN

Desert washes (desert hackberry) and canyon bottoms up into the corridors (netleaf).

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Eat ripe berries fresh (thin sweet pulp over a big seed) or crush whole and dry into cakes.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

Wolfberry (desert thorn)

Lycium spp. · Trees & shrubs

Edible Desert Corridor



Shrub with berries
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Berries
Photo: Mike, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Thorny shrub with small fleshy leaves, tubular purple-white flowers, and **small red-orange berries** like tiny tomatoes.

SEASON

Spring (after winter rains).

WHERE & WHEN

Desert washes and flats.

LOOK-ALIKES

Nightshade berries (yellow-orange, on non-thorny plants with purple star flowers) are toxic. Learn both before eating any red berry.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Eat ripe berries fresh, or dry them. Eat only fully ripe berries.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

Acorns (Emory & Gambel oak)

Quercus emoryi, *Q. gambelii* · Nuts & seeds

Edible Corridor High country



Emory oak leaves
Photo: User:pomplid, CC BY-SA 3.0



Gambel oak leaves
Photo: Unknown (see source page), CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Oak trees: Emory oak (evergreen, pointed shiny leaves, sweet acorns) in the Rim country; Gambel oak (deeply lobed leaves) in pine forest.

SEASON

Late summer to fall.

WHERE & WHEN

Chaparral, oak woodland, and ponderosa forest; Payson and Flagstaff.

LOOK-ALIKES

Buckeyes (not common here) are toxic; acorns have a cap.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Shell, then **leach the tannins**: grind and soak in many changes of cold water (or boil in changes of water) until no longer bitter. Emory acorns are sweet and need little leaching. Dry and use as flour or roast.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

Hackberry

Celtis pallida, *C. reticulata* · Trees & shrubs

Edible Desert Corridor



Desert hackberry
Photo: Arianza1, CC BY-SA 4.0



Netleaf hackberry
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Desert hackberry: thorny, zigzag branches, small leaves, orange berries. Netleaf hackberry: small tree with rough netted leaves and orange-brown berries along streams.

SEASON

Fall.

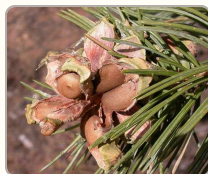
Pinyon pine nuts

Pinus edulis · Nuts & seeds

Edible Kid-friendly forage Corridor High country



Tree
Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnik,
Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0



Cone and nuts
Photo: Copyright by Curtis
Clark, licensed as noted, CC
BY-SA 2.5

IDENTIFY

Short, bushy pine with needles in pairs and small round cones that open to show wingless brown seeds.

SEASON

September–October (crops vary a lot by year).

WHERE & WHEN

Pinyon-juniper woodland along I-17 and around Flagstaff.

LOOK-ALIKES

Ponderosa pine seeds are small and winged; juniper is not a pine. No dangerous look-alike nuts.

LEGAL STATUS

Small personal-use gathering on national forests is generally allowed; commercial collecting needs a permit. Check the Coconino or Tonto ranger district.

PREPARATION

Collect fallen nuts or open cones (pitchy, wear gloves). Roast in the shell, then crack. Discard empty or moldy nuts.

KIDS

Adult supervision always. Kids collect fallen nuts with an adult; adults roast and crack them. Pine pitch is sticky; bring gloves.

Sources: USDA Forest Service: Coconino National Forest · USDA Forest Service: Tonto National Forest · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

PREPARATION

Use only a few as seasoning or tea; they're strong and resinous. Not a staple food. Avoid if pregnant or with kidney problems.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

Wild onion

Allium spp. · Seeds & greens

Edible Corridor High country



Nodding onion
flowers
Photo:
Fritzflohreynolds, CC
BY-SA 3.0



Bulb
Photo: NPS Photo,
Public domain



Look-alike: death camas (deadly)
Photo: Patrick Alexander
<https://www.inaturalist.org/people/aspidos>,
CC0

IDENTIFY

Grass-like leaves from a small bulb, umbrella of pink or white flowers, and a **strong onion or garlic smell** when crushed.

SEASON

Spring to early summer.

WHERE & WHEN

Meadows and pine forest in the high country.

LOOK-ALIKES

Death camas is deadly and grows in the same places. It has no onion smell. Crush each plant and smell it; if your hands already smell of onion, you can be fooled. When in doubt, don't.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

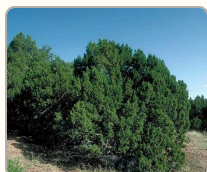
Eat bulbs and leaves raw or cooked, like scallions.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

Juniper berries (caution)

Juniperus monosperma, *J. osteosperma* · Nuts & seeds

Edible Corridor High country



One-seed juniper
Photo: Dave Powell, USDA
Forest Service, Bugwood.org,
Public domain



Utah juniper
Photo: Fcb981, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Shrubby trees with scale-like leaves and blue, waxy, berry-like cones.

SEASON

Fall into winter.

WHERE & WHEN

Pinyon-juniper woodland.

LOOK-ALIKES

Some juniper species are more toxic; when unsure, skip.

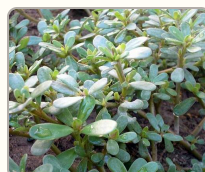
LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

Purslane

Portulaca oleracea · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Purslane
Photo: ZooFari, CC BY-SA
3.0



Look-alike: spotted
spurge (milky sap)
Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnik,
Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Low, sprawling plant with **thick, juicy paddle-shaped leaves** and reddish stems; tiny yellow flowers. Clear (not milky) sap.

SEASON

Summer monsoon season.

WHERE & WHEN

Gardens, sidewalk cracks, fields.

LOOK-ALIKES

Spurge (Euphorbia) grows flat in the same places but has **milky white sap** and is toxic. Break a stem: milky = spurge.

LEGAL STATUS

Avoid sprayed areas.

PREPARATION

Rinse well; eat raw or cooked. High in oxalates, so eat in moderation.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

LEGAL STATUS

Avoid sprayed areas.

PREPARATION

Cook like spinach; boil and drain to reduce oxalates.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

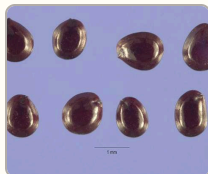
Amaranth (pigweed)

Amaranthus palmeri and others · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert Corridor



Plant
Photo: Yercaud-elango, CC BY-SA 4.0



Seeds (magnified)
Photo: Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, Public domain

IDENTIFY

Upright weed with oval leaves and dense bristly flower spikes; tiny shiny black seeds.

SEASON

Greens in summer; seeds in fall.

WHERE & WHEN

Fields, vacant lots, and roadsides, especially after monsoon.

LEGAL STATUS

Avoid farm fields and sprayed lots.

PREPARATION

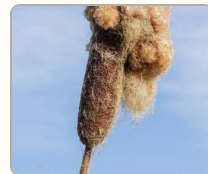
Boil young leaves (discard water; they can hold nitrates and oxalates, especially in fertilized fields). Thresh and winnow seeds; toast or cook as porridge.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

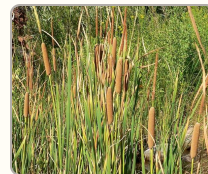
Cattail

Typha spp. · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Plant with seed heads
Photo: Dominicus Johannes Bergsma, CC BY-SA 4.0



Southern cattail
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Tall marsh plant with long flat leaves and a brown sausage-shaped seed head.

SEASON

Shoots in spring; pollen early summer; roots all year.

WHERE & WHEN

Canals, ponds, and stream edges.

LOOK-ALIKES

Young iris leaves (toxic) look similar before flowering; iris leaves are flat and fan-shaped without cattail's spongy core. Without the brown seed head nearby, skip it.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Peel young shoots and eat the tender core cooked. Pollen can be mixed into flour. Rhizomes: crush in water to release starch.

Collect only from clean water (cattails take up pollutants); cook everything.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test)

Lamb's quarters

Chenopodium album and relatives · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Plant
Photo: Rasbak, CC BY-SA 3.0

IDENTIFY

Diamond-shaped, toothed leaves with a **whitish mealy coating**, especially on young growth.

SEASON

Spring through summer.

WHERE & WHEN

Gardens, disturbed ground, and fields.

Manzanita berries

Arctostaphylos pungens · Trees & shrubs

Edible Corridor High country



Shrub and bark
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Berries
Photo: Dick Culbert from Gibsons, B.C., Canada, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Shrub with **smooth, red-mahogany bark**, upright oval leaves, and small apple-like berries.

SEASON

Summer to fall.

WHERE & WHEN

Chaparral along SR-87 and below the Rim.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

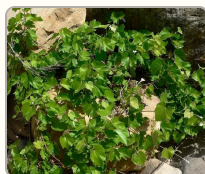
Berries are dry and mealy: crush and soak in cold water for a tart cider, or grind. Eat only a few raw (they can be constipating).

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · USDA PLANTS Database

Canyon grape (Arizona grape)

Vitis arizonica · Trees & shrubs

Edible Corridor High country



Vine and leaves
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Grapes
Photo: Stan Shebs, CC BY-SA 3.0



Look-alike: Virginia creeper
Photo: Bff, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Climbing vine with tendrils, **single heart-shaped toothed leaves**, and clusters of small dark grapes.

SEASON

Late summer to fall.

WHERE & WHEN

Canyon bottoms and streamsides from about 2,000 to 7,500 ft.

LOOK-ALIKES

Virginia creeper (five leaflets, toxic berries). Check the leaf: one leaf = grape, five leaflets = creeper.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Eat ripe grapes fresh or cook into juice. Young leaves can be cooked.

Sources: SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas · AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants

WHERE & WHEN

Lawns, meadows, and roadsides, especially in Payson and Flagstaff.

LOOK-ALIKES

Look-alikes (cat's ear, chicory) are not dangerous. Avoid sprayed lawns and roadsides.

LEGAL STATUS

Avoid sprayed lawns and roadsides.

PREPARATION

Young leaves raw or cooked (older ones are bitter: boil). Flowers can be eaten or fried.

KIDS

Adult supervision always. Pick from an unsprayed place an adult knows is safe; wash before eating.

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

Cheeseweed / common mallow

Malva parviflora, *M. neglecta* · Seeds & greens

Edible Desert Corridor High country



Plant
Photo: Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata, CC BY-SA 4.0



"Cheese wheel" seed pods
Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnek, Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Round, scalloped leaves on long stems, small pale pink-white flowers, and **flat "cheese wheel" seed pods**.

SEASON

Winter and spring in Phoenix.

WHERE & WHEN

Yards, vacant lots, and disturbed ground.

LEGAL STATUS

Avoid sprayed areas.

PREPARATION

Leaves cooked as greens or in soups (thickening); seed wheels eaten raw or cooked. Can accumulate nitrates in heavily fertilized soil.

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · SEINet Arizona-New Mexico plant atlas

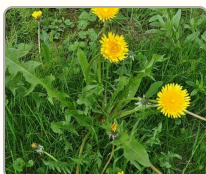
Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale · Seeds & greens

Edible Kid-friendly forage High country Corridor



Flower and seed head
Photo: Kitten Goes Meow, CCO



Leaf rosette
Photo: NY State IPM Program at Cornell University from New York, U, CC BY 2.0

IDENTIFY

Rosette of toothed leaves, hollow stem with one yellow flower, puffball seed head; milky sap.

SEASON

Spring through fall.

Watercress

Nasturtium officinale · Seeds & greens

Edible Corridor High country



Plant in water
Photo: Krzysztof Ziarnek, Kenraiz, CC BY-SA 4.0

IDENTIFY

Floating or creeping plant in cold flowing water with compound leaves of round leaflets; peppery taste; small white flowers.

SEASON

Most of the year in spring-fed streams.

WHERE & WHEN

Spring-fed creeks along the Rim and Oak Creek.

LOOK-ALIKES

Water hemlock and water parsley grow in the same streams (see toxic plants); watercress has round leaflets and no umbrella flowers.

LEGAL STATUS

On public land, follow the land manager's rules (national parks and monuments generally ban collecting). On private land, get permission.

PREPARATION

Cook it. Wild watercress can carry liver flukes and Giardia from livestock water; don't eat it raw.

Sources: USDA PLANTS Database · CDC: Water treatment for hiking and camping

Protected: never take

- **Gila monster:** Closed season: never take, kill, possess, or eat.
- **Desert tortoise (Sonoran):** Closed; don't pick up (they can lose water stores and die). Captives require AZGFD adoption.
- **Native fish: Gila trout, Apache trout, razorback sucker, Gila topminnow, spokedace, loach minnow, roundtail and Gila chub:** Protected or special regulations; release unharmed.
- **Chiricahua leopard frog and other native frogs:** Protected or closed; don't confuse with bullfrogs.
- **Bald and golden eagles, owls, hawks, songbirds:** Federally protected (Migratory Bird Treaty Act); never take.
- **Twin-spotted, ridge-nosed, and other closed rattlesnakes; Mexican wolf:** Closed or federally listed.
- **Saguaro, some agaves, and other highly safeguarded plants:** Fruit and seeds can't be collected on state or public land without permits (A.R.S. 3-908).

See AZGFD Commission Orders in the current hunting and fishing regulations, and A.R.S. 3-908.

Processing & cooking safely

Field dressing basics (legally taken game)

1. Gloves on. Don't take animals that look sick or that you find dead (CDC).
2. Dress right away: open the belly skin shallowly without cutting the gut, remove the organs, and keep hair and dirt off the meat.
3. Cool fast: prop the cavity open, keep meat in shade and **below 40°F** as soon as possible (ice chest) (USDA FSIS). Arizona heat spoils meat within hours.
4. Wash hands, knives, and boards with soap and hot water. Bury or bag the waste away from camp and water.
5. Follow AZGFD rules on evidence of sex/species and transport.

Cleaning fish

1. Kill fish before leaving the water (live transport is illegal).
2. Scale or skin, cut from vent to gills, remove guts and gills, rinse in clean water.
3. Keep on ice; leave a patch of skin so species can be identified (AZGFD rule).

Cook to a safe internal temperature

Food	Minimum internal temp
Rabbit and venison (deer, elk), wild or farmed	160°F (71°C)
Ground game meat and sausage	160°F (71°C)
Game birds and wild turkey (whole, parts, ground)	165°F (74°C)
Bear, javelina, and other omnivores (Trichinella)	160°F (71°C) , measured
Fish	145°F (63°C) or opaque and flakes
Crayfish, frogs	Shells red, meat opaque; 145°F
Leftovers, soups, stews	165°F (74°C)

Sources: FoodSafety.gov, USDA FSIS rabbit, Penn State Extension, CDC trichinellosis. Use a thermometer; color isn't reliable. Freezing does not reliably kill wild-game parasites or tularemia bacteria.

Cooking without a kitchen

- **Boil or stew** small game: safest and stretches food with greens and seeds.
- **Roast on coals** in foil or on a green-stick spit, turning often; check the thickest part.
- Cook in the cool of the day and follow fire restrictions (AZ DFFM).

Related: Bushcraft skills · Resource map (public lands, fishing waters, tribal lands) · After you arrive.

Sources: all safety, legal, and preparation statements cite the sources on each card: AZ Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnakes · Banner Poison & Drug Info Center: Rattlesnake bites · AZ Poison Center: Bees, spiders & other bugs · AZ Poison Center: Poisonous plants · AZ Game & Fish: Hunting regulations · AZ Game & Fish: Statewide fishing regulations (eRegulations) · FoodSafety.gov (USDA/FDA): Safe minimum internal temperatures · CDC: Preventing tularemia · CDC: Plague · UA Extension: Prickly pear cactus, food of the desert · UA Extension: Mesquite (AZ1644) · Arizona Revised Statutes 3-908 (protected native plants) · US Army FM 21-76 Survival, Ch. 9 (plants; edibility test). Range notes follow reptilesfaz.org and the AZ Poison Center species list. Photos: Wikimedia Commons under CC0, CC BY, CC BY-SA, or public domain; see photo credits. Checked October 10, 2026.



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	Acorns (Emory & Gambel oak) Gambel oak leaves	Unknown (see source page)	CC BY-SA 3.0	Gambel oak 1.jp
	Acorns (Emory & Gambel oak) Emory oak leaves	User:pompilid	CC BY-SA 3.0	Quercus emory
	Africanized honey bees Bee	Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service	Public domain	Apis mellifera s 1355021.jpg
	Africanized honey bees Swarm: keep away	Хомелка	CC BY-SA 3.0	Apis mellifera s Belarus 05.JPG

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	Agave (roasted hearts) Agave rosette	Diego Delso	CC BY-SA 3.0	Mezcal (Agave Conservatorio l Fort Wayne, Inc
	Agave (roasted hearts) Golden-flowered agave	Krzysztof Golik	CC BY-SA 4.0	Agave chrysan Christchurch B Gardens.jpg
	Amaranth (pigweed) Plant	Yercaud-elango	CC BY-SA 4.0	Amaranthus pa yercaud-salem
	Amaranth (pigweed) Seeds (magnified)	Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database	Public domain	Amaranthus hy seeds, amhy 0f
	American bullfrog (invasive) Bullfrog	Cephas	CC BY-SA 3.0	Lithobates cate PP.jpg
	American bullfrog (invasive) Protected: Chiricahua leopard frog	Jim Rorabaugh/USFWS	CC BY 2.0	Chiricahua leop 01.jpg
	Arizona bark scorpion Whole animal	Matt Berger	CC BY 4.0	Centruroides s 53067283.jpg

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	Arizona bark scorpion Look-alike: giant desert hairy scorpion (thick pincers)	BertaDasNashorn	CC BY-SA 4.0	Hadrurus Arizo
	Arizona bark scorpion Scorpions glow under UV light (European species shown)	Erinacaeus	CC0	Scorpion euscc carpathicus vis
	Arizona black rattlesnake Dark adult	TheLoneStarState	CC BY-SA 4.0	Arizona Black F Beauty Shot.jp
	Arizona black rattlesnake Arizona black rattlesnake	RatioTile	CC BY-SA 4.0	Arizona black rattlesnake.jpg
	Arizona brown spider (recluse relative) Related desert recluse	DesertTrip	CC BY-SA 4.0	Desert Recluse deserta).jpg

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	Arizona brown spider (recluse relative) Violin mark on a recluse spider (brown recluse shown; Arizona has related species)	Robert Webster	CC BY-SA 4.0	Loxosceles rec 214279848.jpg
	Banana yucca (fruit and flowers) Plant	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Yucca baccata
	Banana yucca (fruit and flowers) Fruit	Marcus Tamura https://www.inaturalist.org/people/marcus_t	CC0	Yucca baccata Tamura 01.jpg
	Black bear Whole animal	NPS	Public domain	Black bear (Ursus americanus) ca remote wildlife durin
	Black bear Cinnamon color phase	Charles J. Sharp	CC BY-SA 4.0	Cinnamon black (Ursus americanus cinnamomum)
	Black-tailed jackrabbit Whole animal	Chuck Homler d/b/a Focus On Wildlife	CC BY-SA 4.0	Black-tailed Jack (Lepus californicus)

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	Black-tailed jackrabbit Long black-tipped ears	Jessie Eastland	CC BY-SA 4.0	Big Ears Sitting
	Black-tailed rattlesnake Black-tailed rattlesnake	Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata	CC BY-SA 4.0	Hormiga Liome junto a Crotalus ssp. nigrescens
	Black-tailed rattlesnake Solid black tail	LA Dawson	CC BY 2.5	Northern black rattlesnake.jpg
	Canyon grape (Arizona grape) Vine and leaves	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Vitis arizonica
	Canyon grape (Arizona grape) Grapes	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Vitis arizonica
	Canyon grape (Arizona grape) Look-alike: Virginia creeper	Bff	CC BY-SA 4.0	Parthenocissus quinquefolia2016476.jpg
	Castor bean Plant	Filo gèn'	CC BY-SA 4.0	Ricin commun.j

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	Castor bean Mottled seeds	Drlectin	CC BY-SA 4.0	Blomstrende Ri communis med frø.jpg
	Cattail Plant with seed heads	Dominicus Johannes Bergsma	CC BY-SA 4.0	Zaadpluizen gr (Typha latifolia)
	Cattail Southern cattail	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Typha dominge
	Channel & flathead catfish Channel catfish	Fishes of Texas team	CC BY-SA 4.0	Ictalurus punct 453179941.jpg
	Channel & flathead catfish Flathead catfish	Engbretson, Eric / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Public domain	Pyloodictis oliva
	Cheeseweed / common mallow Plant	Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata	CC BY-SA 4.0	Malva parviflor 00008443367:
	Cheeseweed / common mallow "Cheese wheel" seed pods	Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Malva neglecta

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	Cholla buds Buckhorn cholla	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa \ coloradensis 4.
	Cholla buds Flower buds	SaguaroNPS	Public domain	Chainfruit choll opening IMG P5 (50618096868,
	Coyote Whole animal	Henry from Arizona, United States	CC BY 2.0	Canis latrans 052820200000 (49946046987
	Crayfish (invasive) Red swamp crayfish	No machine-readable author provided. MikeMurphy assumed (based on copyright claims).	Public domain	Procambarus c
	Crayfish (invasive) Northern (virile) crayfish	D. Gordon E. Robertson	CC BY-SA 3.0	Northern Crayf River 1.jpg
	Dandelion Leaf rosette	NY State IPM Program at Cornell University from New York, USA	CC BY 2.0	Taraxacum offi whole plant, flic (18444031003)
	Dandelion Flower and seed head	Kitten Goes Meow	CC0	Two stages in t of a dandelion officinale) – f
	Death camas Flower spike	Jason Hollinger	CC BY 2.0	Toxicoscordion var. venenosun pellaea (1).jpg
	Death camas Plant	Scott	CC BY 2.0	Anticlea elegar

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	Desert chia Flower heads	Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Salvia columba
	Desert cottontail Whole animal	Holly Cheng	CC BY-SA 3.0	Sylvilagus audt
	Desert cottontail In habitat	VJAnderson	CC BY-SA 4.0	Desert Cottontail DSC8375vv.jpg
	Desert ironwood seeds Tree in bloom	Rufous-crowned Sparrow	CC BY-SA 4.0	Olneya tesota.j
	Desert ironwood seeds Ironwood in flower	Ken Bosma from Tucson, Arizona, USA	CC BY 2.0	Olneya tesota i
	Elk Bull elk	Spencer-Nägy	CC BY-SA 4.0	Elk (wapiti) in tl Mountains.jpg
	Elk Young elk	Charles J. Sharp	CC BY-SA 4.0	Rocky Mountai canadensis nel Banff.jpg
	Gambel's quail Male	Polinova	CC BY-SA 4.0	Gambel's Quail State Park.jpg
	Gambel's quail Female	SearchNet Media from Tucson, Arizona, USA	CC BY 2.0	Callipepla gaml 1.jpg

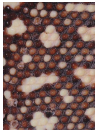
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	Giant desert centipede Whole animal	John	CC BY 2.0	Scolopendra he
	Giant desert centipede Desert centipede	Unknown (see source page)	CC BY 2.0	Scolopendra pe 1.jpg
	Gila monster Whole animal	Theo Kruse / Burgers' Zoo	CC BY-SA 4.0	Gila monster (H suspectum).jpg
	Gila monster Beaded skin	MonsterDoc	CC BY-SA 4.0	Heloderma Skin
	Grasshoppers & other edible insects Grasshopper	Bill Bouton from San Luis Obispo, CA, USA	CC BY-SA 2.0	White-lined Bir Grasshopper, S albolineata.jpg
	Hackberry Desert hackberry	Arianza1	CC BY-SA 4.0	Celtis ehrenber arbol.jpg
	Hackberry Netleaf hackberry	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Celtis reticulata
	Javelina (collared peccary) Herd	ALAN SCHMIERER	CC0	JAVELINA (Pec (3-23-14) pataç creek preserve
	Javelina (collared peccary) Pale collar	Giles Laurent	CC BY-SA 4.0	069 Collared pe Encontro das Á Park Photo by (

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	Juniper berries (caution) Utah juniper	Fcb981	CC BY-SA 3.0	Juniperus osteosperma 1.jpg
	Juniper berries (caution) One-seed juniper	Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org	Public domain	Juniperus monosperma UGA.jpg
	Kissing bugs (conenose bugs) Kissing bug feeding (South American species shown)	Photo Credit: Content Providers(s): CDC/World Health Organization	Public domain	Triatoma infestans
	Kissing bugs (conenose bugs) Kissing bugs: cone-shaped heads, orange edge marks	Curtis-Robles et al.	CC BY 4.0	Three species of kissing bugs.PNG
	Lamb's quarters Plant	Rasbak	CC BY-SA 3.0	Melganzenvoet Chenopodium album

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	Largemouth & smallmouth bass Largemouth bass	USFWS Mountain Prairie	Public domain	Largemouth Ba (Micropterus s June 2023.jpg
	Largemouth & smallmouth bass Smallmouth bass	Eric Engbretson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Public domain	Micropterus do
	Manzanita berries Shrub and bark	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Arctostaphylos 1.jpg
	Manzanita berries Berries	Dick Culbert from Gibsons, B.C., Canada	CC BY 2.0	Arctostaphylos fruit (27681103
	Merriam's wild turkey Male turkey	Frank Schulenburg	CC BY-SA 4.0	Male wild turke gallopavo) stru
	Merriam's wild turkey In ponderosa forest	Don Faulkner	CC BY-SA 2.0	Wild Turkey (18375380489)
	Mesquite pods Tree	Adbar	CC BY-SA 3.0	Prosopis veluti Borrego.jpg
	Mesquite pods Ripe pods	Sue in az	Public domain	Velvet mesquit

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	Mesquite pods Look-alike: Texas mountain laurel pods (toxic)	Cecilemckee	CC BY 4.0	TX mtn laurel s
	Mojave rattlesnake Whole animal	Lvthn13 at English Wikipedia (Original text: Self-Created)	Public domain	Crotalus scutul
	Mojave rattlesnake Head and eye stripe	Claudio Cantú Muñiz	CC BY 4.0	Crotalus scutul 22637508.jpg
	Mountain lion (cougar) Whole animal	Saguaro National Park	CC BY 2.0	Puma concolor Arizona 2.jpg
	Mountain lion (cougar) Track (no claw marks)	Gionorossi	CC BY-SA 4.0	Molde em gess de onça parda concolor).jpg
	Mourning dove & white-winged dove Mourning dove	Rhododendrites	CC BY-SA 4.0	Mourning dove (61179).jpg
	Mourning dove & white-winged dove White-winged dove	SearchNet Media	CC BY 2.0	Zenaida asiatic Arizona -USA -

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	Mule deer & Coues white-tailed deer Mule deer	NPS	Public domain	Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus) cap remote wildlife
	Mule deer & Coues white-tailed deer Coues whitetail	USDA photo by Scott Bauer	Public domain	White-tailed deer
	Oleander Shrub in flower	Joaquim Alves Gaspar	CC BY 2.5	Purity.jpg
	Palo verde seeds Foothill palo verde	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Parkinsonia microcarpa.jpg
	Palo verde seeds Blue palo verde in bloom	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Cercidium floridanum whole.jpg
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	Pinyon pine nuts Cone and nuts	Copyright by Curtis Clark, licensed as noted	CC BY-SA 2.5	Pinus edulis cone seeds 2005-10
	Poison hemlock Plant	Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Conium maculatum 2021-06-23 Ró

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	Poison hemlock Purple-blotched stem	Mathieu Menand	CC BY-SA 2.0 fr	Conium macula (01).jpg
	Poison hemlock Look-alike: wild carrot flower	Petro Stelte	CC BY-SA 4.0	Daucus-carota Greece.jpg
	Prairie rattlesnake (incl. Hopi rattlesnake) Whole animal	Unknown (see source page)	CC BY-SA 2.5	Crotalus viridis
	Prairie rattlesnake (incl. Hopi rattlesnake) Hopi rattlesnake form	Gary M. Stolz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Public domain	Crotalus viridis
	Prickly pear (pads and fruit) Ripe fruit	H. Zell	CC BY 3.0	Opuntia littoralis engelmannii OC
	Prickly pear (pads and fruit) Whole plant	H. Zell	CC BY-SA 3.0	Opuntia littoralis engelmannii OC

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	Prickly pear (pads and fruit) Glochids up close	Rosser1954	CC BY-SA 4.0	Opuntia (Prickly) glochids & spin
	Purslane Purslane	ZooFari	CC BY-SA 3.0	Portulaca olera
	Purslane Look-alike: spotted spurge (milky sap)	Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Euphorbia mac kz07.jpg
	Rainbow trout (and other stocked trout) Rainbow trout	USFWS	Public domain	Steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss).png
	Rainbow trout (and other stocked trout) Protected: Gila trout (release)	Melanie Dabovich, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Public domain	Oncorhynchus net.jpg
	Sacred datura / jimsonweed Flowers	Dlarsen	Public domain	Datura wrightii
	Sacred datura / jimsonweed Spiny seed pod	Didier Descouens	CC BY-SA 3.0	Datura stramonium MHNT.BOT.2006
	Saguaro fruit Ripe fruit	Quinn Dombrowski	CC BY-SA 2.0	Saguaro cactus bird.jpg

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	Saguaro fruit Saguaro	Tomascastelazo	CC BY-SA 4.0	Carnegiea giga Sahuaro or Saç
	Sidewinder Whole animal	derivative work: Victorrocha (talk · contribs) Crotalus_cerastes_mesquite_springs_CA.JPG: Tigerhawkvok (talk · contribs)	CC BY-SA 3.0	Crotalus cerast springs CA-2.jp
	Sidewinder Sidewinder	Diana	CC BY 4.0	Crotalus cerast 184743765.jpg
	Silverleaf nightshade & other nightshades Flowers and leaves	Nikolai Bulykin	CC BY-SA 4.0	Аиос Василиос лохолистный у Корония (2).jpg
	Silverleaf nightshade & other nightshades Berries	Juan Carlos Fonseca Mata	CC BY-SA 4.0	Solanum elaeag (berries) 001.jp
	Sonoran (Arizona) coral snake Whole animal	David Jahn	CC BY-SA 2.0	Micruroides euryxanthus.jp
	Sonoran (Arizona) coral snake Look-alike: harmless mountain kingsnake	Holger Krisp	CC BY 3.0	Berg-Königsna Lampropeltis pyromelana.jpg

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	Sonoran Desert toad (Colorado River toad) Whole animal	Holger Krisp	CC BY 3.0	Bufo-alvarius-coloradokröte.j
	Sonoran Desert toad (Colorado River toad) Large poison glands behind the eyes	2009-02-26Bufo_alvarius184.jpg: Wildfeuer derivative work: Haplochromis (talk)	CC BY-SA 3.0	Bufo alvarius O
	Southwestern speckled rattlesnake Whole animal	Athene cunicularia (talk) 16:54, 28 March 2008 (UTC). Original uploader was Athene cunicularia at en.wikipedia	CC BY-SA 3.0	Crotalus-mitch
	Southwestern speckled rattlesnake Speckled pattern	Joshua Tree National Park	CC BY 2.0	Speckled Rattle (Crotalus mitch (21271440183).
	Sunfish (bluegill, green sunfish) Bluegill	Fredlyfish4	CC BY-SA 3.0	Lepomis macrc 2014 2.JPG
	Sunfish (bluegill, green sunfish) Green sunfish	USFWS Mountain Prairie	Public domain	Green Sunfish cyanellus).jpg

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	Tarantula hawk wasp Whole insect	Alicia Di Rado	CC BY 4.0	Pepsis thisbe 389182646.jpg
	Texas mountain laurel Flowers	Kretyen at Flickr	CC BY 2.0	Calia secundiflora flowers.jpg
	Tiger rattlesnake Whole animal	Ltshears	CC BY-SA 3.0	Tiger Rattlesnake
	Tiger rattlesnake Tiger rattlesnake, Paradise Valley	Richard N Horne	CC BY 4.0	Tiger Rattlesnake Mountain, Paradise Valley, Arizona.jpg
	Tree squirrels (Abert's) & rock squirrels Abert's squirrel	Alejandro Gómez Nísino	CC BY-SA 4.0	Sciurus aberti
	Tree squirrels (Abert's) & rock squirrels Rock squirrel	Toffel	Public domain	Otospermophilus Grand Canyon
	Tree tobacco & desert tobacco Tree tobacco	Miwasatoshi	CC BY-SA 4.0	Nicotiana-glauca 20080330.JPG

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	Tree tobacco & desert tobacco Desert tobacco	Adbar	CC BY-SA 3.0	Nicotiana obtusa Borrego.jpg
	Virginia creeper Five-leaflet leaves	Bff	CC BY-SA 4.0	Parthenocissus quinquefolia2017059.jpg
	Virginia creeper Berries	Beasthwaite	CC0	Parthenocissus berries in mid-summer
	Water hemlock Plant and flowers	Unknown (see source page)	Public domain	Cicuta douglasii
	Water hemlock Spotted water hemlock (close relative, same danger)	Williammehlhorn at English Wikipedia	Public domain	Cicuta maculata
	Watercress Plant in water	Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz	CC BY-SA 4.0	Nasturtium officinale kz02.jpg
	Western black widow Female	Dllu	CC BY-SA 4.0	Western Black Widow San Jose dllu.jpg

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	Western black widow Red hourglass underneath	en:User:Jengod	CC BY-SA 3.0	Black-widow-h eggsac-flower.jpg
	Western diamondback rattlesnake Whole animal	Daderot	CC0	Crotalus atrox - State University, AZ - DSC0590.jpg
	Western diamondback rattlesnake Look-alike: harmless gopher snake	The original uploader was Dawson at English Wikipedia.	CC BY-SA 2.5	Pituophis cater affinis.jpg
	Western diamondback rattlesnake Coiled diamondback	Peter Paplanus	CC BY 2.0	Western Diamo Rattlesnake (Cr atrox).jpg
	Wild mushrooms (Amanita and others) Fly agaric	Katja Schulz from Washington, D. C., USA	CC BY 2.0	Fly Agaric - Flickr treegrow.jpg
	Wild mushrooms (Amanita and others) Death cap type	George Chernilevsky	Public domain	Amanita phalloi G3.jpg

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	Wild onion Bulb	NPS Photo	Public domain	Wild Onion (Alli (5519cf21-155d8bbbf6d8a26c
	Wild onion Look-alike: death camas (deadly)	Patrick Alexander https://www.inaturalist.org/people/aspidoscelis	CC0	Toxicoscordion - Patrick Alexar
	Wild onion Nodding onion flowers	Fritzflohrrreynolds	CC BY-SA 3.0	Allium cernuum Onion 3.jpg
	Wolfberry (desert thorn) Shrub with berries	Stan Shebs	CC BY-SA 3.0	Lycium andersc
	Wolfberry (desert thorn) Berries	Mike	CC BY-SA 4.0	Lycium fremont

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Emergency numbers

- **911:** emergencies (heart stroke, fire, crime in progress). Text 911 where supported if you can't call.
- **211:** Arizona community resources, cooling and shelter info
- **988:** Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text)
- **1-800-222-1222:** Poison Control (scorpions, snakebites, toxic plants)
- **511:** Arizona road conditions (az511.gov)
- **APS outages:** 602-371-3680 (metro) / 855-688-2437 · downed lines: 911, then 602-371-7171
- **SRP outages:** 602-236-8888 / 800-258-4777 · power emergencies 602-236-8811 (911 first for medical)
- **Gila County Emergency Mgmt (Payson):** 928-402-8789 · **Coconino County (Flagstaff):** 928-679-8311
- **Red Cross shelters:** 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

People to call

Name	Relationship	Phone

Out-of-state contact (everyone checks in here):

Medications & medical needs

Person	Medication / device	Dose / settings	Pharmacy / doctor

Person	Medication / device	Dose / settings	Pharmacy / doctor

Allergies:

Meeting points

Near home (e.g., a neighbor's door):

In the neighborhood (e.g., library, school):

Out of town (e.g., a relative in Payson or Flagstaff):

Home & utilities

Electric utility (APS outage 602-371-3680 (metro) / 855-688-2437 (other areas); SRP outage 602-236-8888 / 800-258-4777; other):

Water shutoff location:

Neighbors I check on / who check on me:

Pets (vet, microchip #):