



## Creosote Bush *Larrea tridentata* Greasewood

### Description:

**Height:** 3-13'

**Flowers:** 2" wide, 5-6 petals, Bumble Bee yellow

**Leaves:** .25" - 7/10" long, 1/10 - 3/10" wide, oval/football shaped, waxy leaves, with flowers on the branches.

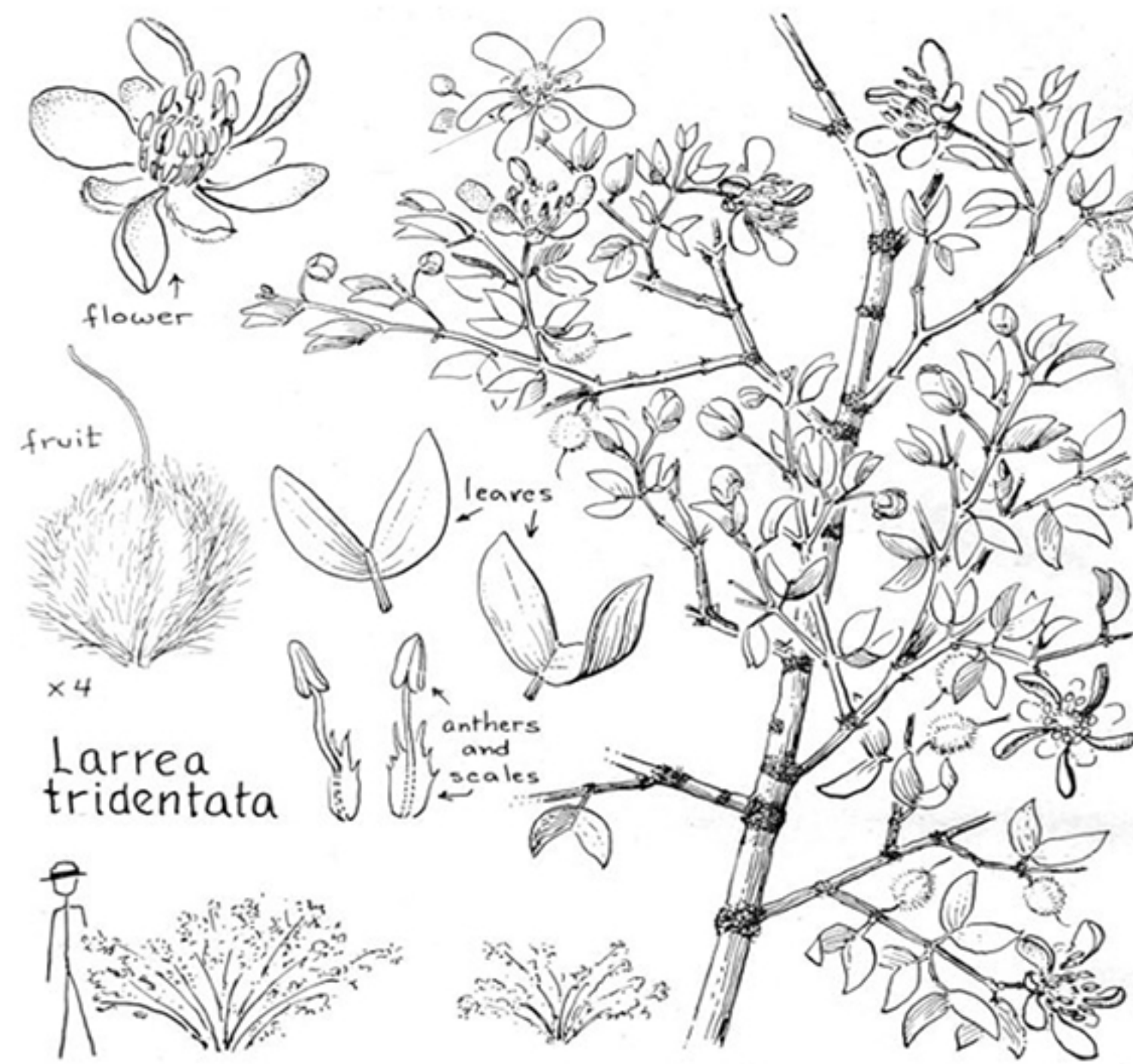
**Fruit:** 1" long capsule, white

**Flowering:** April-May

**Habitat:** Desert lands

### Uses:

The Creosote bush is best known for its oils. The oil has been used since ancient times to preserve meats and other oils. The oil is the reason for Arizona's very distinct and different rain smell which is released into the air when the raindrops hit the leaves and bark. The bushes oils have also been used as a wood preservative since the 1800s and has been used for other remedies for



even longer by natives and other curious travelers. Most commonly it is used in the cosmetic industry as an ingredient in shampoos, conditioners, and other hair products. Because of its properties, it can protect the wood when applied from termites and other insects. The plant had many medicinal purposes. Records indicate that tribes would chew on the boiled plant or just the plant

raw to alleviate thirst. This plant has also been used to treat tuberculosis, snake bites, menstrual cramps, and as poultice on wounds. Tribes from years ago would swallow small pieces of the branch to cure diarrhea which is much more of a crucial aid than a person now might think. A tea of its dried leaves and hot water can treat urinary tract infections, kidney problems, frigidity, and also works as a blood purifier.

### Native Cultures:

The Creosote bush was used by many southwestern Native cultures, including the Coahuilla, Pima, and Tohono O'odham.

**Habitat:** The bush will often grow at elevations around 5,000 feet above sea level or lower. It also flourishes in the desert and in dry environments and has become one of



the most common and important plants in the deserts of North America.

### Pollinators:

Over 20 regional bee species pollinate the Creosote bush.

### Flowering:

The creosote bush is one of the many plants that can flower numerous times a year. The bush flowers most profusely during spring and lasts for about two months.

### Resources:

Illustration: Janish, J. R. (n.d.). Flowers of the Southwest Deserts, by Natt N. Dodge: a Project Gutenberg eBook. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53432/53432-h/53432-h.htm>  
Photographs: Jackson Martins