

Wingscale

Genus/species *Atriplex canescens*

Family **Chenopodiaceae**

Distribution **Western US** SW California northward to SE Washington
 SE Washington eastward to central North Dakota
 Central North Dakota southward to S Texas
 S Texas northwestward to SW California

Comments This species, also known as Fourwing Saltbush, is a very common grayish-white shrub found throughout most of the Southwest and northward, occurring from 2000' up to 8000' on a variety of sites, often sandy, ranging from hot creosote bush desert up to ponderosa pine forest. It typically grows to be four feet tall, but may reach twice that height. The narrow simple leaves, which may be up to two inches in length, appear smoky because of the dense covering of tiny hairs on both sides. Blooming usually occurs during July and August. The female flowers, pollinated by wind from male flowers on separate plants, give rise to the seeds; the latter are enclosed in a fruit having four papery bracts (giving the species its common names) and about a half inch in size. This and other species of saltbush are useful as food for both wild animals and livestock.



Sheep/Red Sorrel

Genus/species *Rumex acetosella*

Family **Polygonaceae**

Distribution **Throughout US; naturalized from Eurasia**

Comments This small plant makes its appearance in early spring, and is seldom much more than a foot in height. Its small leaves (generally less than 2 inches long except for those at the base of the plant) typically have a pair of distinct lobes at the base. The flowers (male and female on separate plants) are tiny and yellowish to reddish. Pollen is dispersed by the wind. Red Sorrel can grow in moist ditches or in dry gravelly areas.



Pasture Sagebrush

Genus/species	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Western US Northeastern Washington southward to N Arizona N Arizona eastward to N New Mexico and NW Texas NW Texas northeastward to NE North Dakota Alaska Naturalized in Lake States and New England

Comments This small “semi-shrub” is a perennial having a woody base, and it is also known as “fringed sagebrush” or “fringed sagewort”. It seldom grows to be more than a foot tall or wide, and is typically found in rather coarse soil in full sunlight, but is sometimes found along stream banks. It can be found from near sea level in Alaska up to 11,000 feet or more in the southern Rocky Mountains. Habitats range from dry short-grass prairies, open forests, and alpine areas. The small grayish-green leaves are pinnately-lobed, typically two or three times, resulting in many fine lobes on a leaf. The tiny flower heads occur along spikes that develop in the spring, blooming about August, and the seeds ripen in the fall. Pollination is by wind. This species is eaten by antelope, elk, deer and bighorn sheep as well as domestic livestock.



Common Sagebrush

Genus/species	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Western US North central Washington southward to S California S California eastward to E New Mexico E New Mexico northward to SW North Dakota SW North Dakota westward to north central Washington Lacking from central and southern Arizona

Comments This widespread shrub, also known as “big sagebrush” or “basin sagebrush”, is perhaps the most characteristic species covering the valleys of the Intermountain West. It typically grows to be three to five feet in height, but occasionally may reach as much as seven or ten feet where there is additional moisture. It is usually found from about 4000 feet up to as high as 10,000 feet. Where the climate is slightly cooler with additional moisture, junipers and pinyon pines may grow among the sagebrushes. Its grayish, strongly-scented leaves are broadest at the tip where two notches are typically found, giving the “three-toothed” margin that accounts for the specific name. The tiny flower heads occur along spikes that develop in the spring, and the seeds ripen in the fall. The woody trunk is gnarled and usually branched near the base. This species is eaten by antelope and sometimes by deer.



Coast Sagebrush

Genus/species *Artemisia californica*

Family **Asteraceae**

Distribution **California** Southwestern and west central California from San Diego County northward to Marin and Napa Counties

Comments This pleasantly-aromatic shrub, also known as California sagebrush or coastal sagebrush, is found between the coast and the coastal and peninsular mountain ranges, characteristic of areas known as coastal sage scrub consisting of low shrubs along with some herbaceous plants. In this region, summers escape the heat typical of the interior valleys but are still rainless. Although it may reach seven feet in height, it is usually much shorter, often being only two feet tall. It is usually found at low elevations but may occur as high as 2500 feet. Its greenish-gray, strongly-scented leaves are narrow and often simple but may have a few thin lobes. The tiny flower heads occur along spikes that develop in the spring, and the seeds ripen in the fall. The woody trunk is gnarled and usually branched near the base. This species provides food for quail.



Russian Thistle

Genus/species *Salsola kali*

Family **Chenopodiaceae**

Distribution **Central and western US, and coastal areas of eastern states**
 All areas west of a line from N Minnesota
 southward to S Texas
 Coastal areas of states east of Texas
 Scattered local areas of other eastern states

Comments This annual weed is also known as Tumbleweed because the dried plants, a symbol of the American West, typically break away at the base and get blown about by the wind, spreading their seeds. It was introduced as a contaminant in flax seed to America from its original home on the steppes along the Ural Mountains of Eurasia, and has spread to dry areas throughout most of the world. There may actually be a handful of closely-related species lumped within this name. Originally established in South Dakota, it is now a common weed throughout the western US, and can be found from near sea level to as high as 8500 feet. It is an annual plant reproducing from seeds, has a deep taproot, and grows to become a rounded bush ranging, depending upon growing conditions, from a foot in diameter to some 6 feet. During the early stages of growth, the leaves are about an inch in length, thin and fleshy while those produced on older plants are short, stiff and spine-tipped. The single, tiny flowers are produced at the bases of the leaves. Pollination is achieved by wind. The seeds are unusual in that they contain an embryo without stored food. In addition to inhalant allergy to the pollen, contact allergy to the foliage has been reported.



Western Ragweed

Genus/species	<i>Ambrosia psilostachya</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Most of United States although rare or lacking in Pacific Northwest and much of eastern third (although present in New England and southern coastal plains)

Comments This species, also known as Perennial Ragweed or Cuman Ragweed, is a native herbaceous species that spreads by rootstocks. It is common along roadsides and in disturbed soil. It produces enormous numbers of pollen grains that stay airborne. The leaves, typically alternate in mature plants, have pointed lobes. The plant blooms in late summer and early autumn. On each branch of the mature plant, the numerous greenish-yellow male flowers, which open downward to release their wind-distributed pollen, are arranged in clusters along the sides of the spikes above the inconspicuous female flowers, and the latter mature their seeds in the autumn. The plant usually is less than two feet in height.



Short Ragweed

Genus/species *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

Family **Asteraceae**

Distribution **Most of US** All states except California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona and some adjacent areas of Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming

Comments This species is the “king” of allergenic plants, being the most important for allergy in America and the most widespread among several species of ragweed. Sometimes called “common” ragweed, it is a native species that aggressively flourishes along roadsides and in disturbed soil. It produces enormous numbers of pollen grains that stay airborne. The leaves are bipinnately lobed, meaning that there are lobes on the lobes. They are opposite on young plants but leaves produced later are alternate. The plant blooms in late summer and early autumn. On each branch of the mature plant, the numerous greenish-yellow male flowers, which open downward to release their pollen, are arranged in clusters along the sides of the spikes above the inconspicuous female flowers. The plant may grow to be four feet tall but is usually smaller. It is an annual, developing each spring from seed that has matured the previous autumn.



Giant Ragweed

Genus/species	<i>Ambrosia trifida</i>	
Family	Asteraceae (Compositae)	
Distribution	Eastern two-thirds of US	Central Montana eastward to Maine Maine southward to NW Florida Florida westward to W Texas W Texas N to central Montana Additional population in SE Arizona

Comments This impressive native annual weed can grow to be over 4 m tall. It is especially abundant in wet areas such as sandbars along rivers. The larger leaves usually have 3 points, occasionally five. The plant blooms in late summer and early autumn. The numerous male flowers, which produce copious pollen, are along spikes found at the top of each branch. There are relatively few female flowers that are inconspicuous and found below the male. Allergenicity, it is highly cross-reactive with short ragweed.



False Ragweed

Genus/species	<i>Ambrosia acanthicarpa</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Western US W Texas northward to central North Dakota Central North Dakota westward to SE Washington SE Washington southward to S Nevada S Nevada eastward to W Texas with an extension into S California

Comments This native species is a common weedy plant. In addition to its aggressiveness in establishing itself along roadsides and the allergenicity of its pollen, the seeds are contained in prickly “burs” that detach easily from the plant and become attached to skin, clothing and fur. False ragweed can exceed three feet in height, sometimes becoming bushy, and its bipinnately lobed (*i. e.*, lobes on the lobes) leaves (rather similar to those of the short ragweed though usually smaller and less-developed) are somewhat grayish in color. It produces enormous numbers of pollen grains that stay airborne. They are opposite on young plants but leaves produced later are alternate. The plant blooms in late summer and early autumn. The numerous greenish-yellow male flowers are along spikes found at the top of each branch above the spiny female flowers.



Desert Ragweed

Genus/species	<i>Ambrosia dumosa</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Southwestern US SE California northward to S Nevada and SW Utah SW Utah southward to SE Arizona SE Arizona northwestward to SE California

Comments This species, also known as bursage or burrobrush, is a very common low-growing grayish-white shrub of the Mojave, Colorado and Arizona Deserts, usually occurring below elevations of 3000 feet on areas of low salinity (and often associated with the much-larger creosote bush). It rarely gets as tall as 24 inches in height. The leaves, up to an inch in length, are bipinnately lobed, meaning that there are lobes on the lobes, and they appear smoky because of the dense covering of tiny hairs that serve as protection from the desert sun. Blooming usually occurs in the spring, but may occur anytime from late March through November after rainfall. The female flowers, pollinated by wind, give rise to the seeds which have a spiny covering allowing them to spread by becoming attached to fur or clothing.



English Plantain

Genus/species	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	
Family	Plantaginaceae	
Distribution	Most of United States	Possibly lacking from some areas of the southcentral US, including S Texas; introduced from Eurasia

Comments This is a common weed of lawns and roadsides. The flowers are borne on heads (well-known to children as natural “bullets”!) whose supporting stalks protrude from the mass of swordlike leaves having distinct longitudinal veins. Blooming takes place throughout the growing season. The rather conspicuous stamens that ring the seed heads produce allergenic pollen that is sometimes collected by bumble bees that bounce from one seed head to another. However, this pollen becomes sufficiently airborne to result in allergy.



Rough/Redroot Pigweed

Genus/species	<i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i>
Family	Amaranthaceae
Distribution	Tropical America and introduced throughout the United States
Comments	This weed is an annual species that reproduces by seed and may establish itself aggressively in cultivated fields. It can get to be six feet tall with bristly-looking greenish flowers clustered along the sides and top of the plant during late summer and autumn. This pigweed gets one of its common names from the reddish color at the upper portion of the taproot. However, there are many species of amaranth, and they cross-react allergenically.



Nettle

Genus/species	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Family	Urticaceae
Distribution	Most of US except S Florida

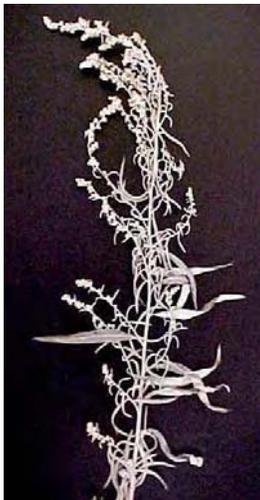
Comments Nettle is a perennial herbaceous plant that forms colonies on floodplains, riverbanks and other moist places, and introduced populations complement native ones. The plants may reach 6 feet in height but are usually shorter. It has opposite toothed leaves that range from about 2 to 6 inches in length and almost half as wide. Most parts of the plant bear hairs that release histamine, formic acid and other irritating compounds, causing an immediate but usually fairly brief stinging sensation upon contact with skin or mucus membranes. Nettle has found widespread use as an herbal medicine. As indicated by the species name, male and female flowers are found on different plants. Blooming may begin in late May and continue as late as October, depending upon strain and location. Pollination is by wind and reproduction is both by seed and underground rhizomes.



Darkleaved Mugwort/Prairie Sagebrush

Genus/species	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>	
Family	Asteraceae	
Distribution	Central and western US	Central Washington southward to S California S California eastward to S Texas S Teas northward to SE Wisconsin and central Minnesota Minnesota westward to Washington

Comments This native “subshrub” or perennial forb having a woody base is also known as white sagebrush in addition to dozens of other names, and there are several varieties found throughout its wide range. It is found in open areas in relatively dry soils and in prairies. It may grow as tall as 3 feet but is usually shorter, forming a spreading clump. The leaves may be dissected (lobed), especially on vigorous growth, but tend to be simple as a shoot matures. Leaves tend to have a whitish cast, especially underneath, and have a distinct sage scent. The rather nondescript yellowish flowers are borne along the stalks, and most plants bloom in the late summer or autumn, being pollinated by the wind.



Common Mugwort

Genus/species	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	
Family	Asteraceae	
Distribution	Eastern and Northwestern United States	Minnesota S to Missouri Missouri SE to Florida Florida N to Maine Maine W to Minnesota Introductions to Pacific NW and elsewhere

Comments This is a common introduced weed of roadsides and cultivated areas, and its range may be expanding. The leaves are usually dissected (somewhat resembling those of the cultivated chrysanthemum), of a lighter color underneath, and have a distinct sage scent. The rather nondescript flowers are borne along the stalks, which can get to be 3 or more feet in height. Most plants bloom in the late summer or autumn. However, the plants may form large colonies, spreading mainly by rhizomes.



Burweed Marsh Elder / Giant Poverty Weed

Genus/species	<i>Iva xanthifolia</i>	
Family	Asteraceae	
Distribution	Central, W and NE US	E Washington southward to NE California NE California southeastward to N Texas N Texas northeastward to central Illinois Central Illinois northwestward to E Washington New Jersey to Maine
Comments	This species is a common plant along roadsides, cultivated fields or along streams in much of the central part of the US. It may grow to be 6 feet tall. The specific name refers to the shape of the larger leaves, which are rather triangular or fan-shaped, resembling those of the Cocklebur. The undersides of the leaves are lighter in color than the upper surfaces. Young plants of Burweed Marsh Elder may resemble sunflower plants at a similar stage of development, but the rather inconspicuous greenish flowers depend upon wind-pollination.	



Lamb's Quarter

Genus/species *Chenopodium album*

Family **Chenopodiaceae**

Distribution **Throughout the United States including Alaska and Hawaii**

Comments This annual plant is regarded as an introduction from Europe (where it is called Fat Hen) although there may be native populations. Because it thrives in disturbed rich moist soils, it is often a weed of farms and gardens around temperate areas of the world and may grow to be some 4 feet tall. The alternate rather triangular leaves have a bluish cast to them, especially when immature; these leaves, when cooked, have been used as a vegetable like its relative spinach. Stems often have purplish stripes. The tiny green wind-pollinated flowers, which are found at in clusters at the ends of branches and growing from the bases of leaves, bloom from May to October. Reproduction is by seed.



Goldenrod

Genus/species	<i>Solidago canadensis</i> and other species of <i>Solidago</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Throughout most of US except hot desert areas of Southwest

Comments Goldenrod is a familiar wildflower of the late summer and autumn, and it lends its bright yellow color to many fields, pastures and roadsides. There are over 100 species in the genus *Solidago*, and most are native to North America. Some are widespread, such as the Canada Goldenrod, while others are restricted to smaller areas, even individual mountaintops. Almost all species have yellow composite flowers (but at least one has whitish flowers), and they are borne on flower stalks that vary in height from a few inches up to some 7 feet (although most species seldom exceed half this height). Goldenrods are perennial plants that spread by rhizomes. The leaves are usually straplike, with the largest ones near the base of the plant and smaller ones arranged along the flower stalks that develop in mid-summer and produce their flowers heads afterward, usually near the top. The tiny seeds ripen after blooming and are distributed by wind. Pollination is achieved by various bees, butterflies and other insects that visit in search of nectar, and goldenrod is blamed for much human misery actually caused by ragweed which blooms about the same time. However, goldenrod occasionally causes human allergy, and it is important for canine allergy.



Firebush/Kochia

Genus/species	<i>Kochia scoparia</i>
Family	Chenopodiaceae
Distribution	Widespread in central and western US, especially Plains states, and spreading both eastward and westward

Comments This species was introduced to America from Eurasia as an ornamental because of its bright red autumn coloration (and sometimes called “burning bush”), and it has found some use as a forage crop in dry areas of the Plains and the Southwest although it becomes toxic to livestock if it comprises too great a portion of the diet. It is most abundant as a weed in the northern half of the US. However, it has become a seriously invasive weed in much of the Plains, and can be found from near sea level to as high as 8500 feet. It is an annual plant reproducing from seeds, has a deep taproot, and may grow as tall as 7 feet but is usually shorter and bushy if grown in the open. The hairy dark green leaves are about an inch or two in length, narrow and pointed. The tiny flowers are produced from about July to September in clusters at the bases of the leaves, often on short side shoots along the sides of the large branches. Pollination is achieved by wind, and allergenic cross-reactivity with other chenopods is to be expected. The mature plant, after death and drying, often breaks from the ground to spread seeds as a tumbleweed.



Dog Fennel

Genus/species *Eupatorium capillifolium*

Family **Asteraceae**

Distribution **Southeastern US** Massachusetts southward to S Florida
 Florida westward to Texas
 Texas northeastward to Massachusetts

Comments This species reaches its best development on the coastal plains, and is most often found on disturbed sandy soils although it can grow on a variety of sites. Although typically 4 to 5 feet in height, it may become as tall as 9 feet. Dog Fennel sends new shoots each spring from a woody base. It has very finely-divided leaves whose lobes are very narrow; these are alternate (at least on the upper sections of mature plants). This plant blooms from late August to early November, depending upon location, and shaded plants typically bloom later than those receiving full sunlight. Pollination is achieved mainly by wind. Interestingly enough, many closely-related species in the same genus (such as Joe-Pye weed) are favorite sources of nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects.



Yellow/Curly Dock

Genus/species	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Family	Polygonaceae
Distribution	Throughout US except S Florida; naturalized from Europe

Comments This common perennial weed makes its appearance in early spring, and its typically **unbranched** flowering stem or stalk may grow to be over five feet tall. Its leaves, which may reach a foot in length and three inches wide at the bottom of the plant but usually smaller along the stem, typically have a crinkled or curled edge suggestive of cooking bacon. The leaves at the base of the plant have a petiole but those along the stem lack this. The flowers are in clusters on the stem, and are initially greenish but become reddish; the fruit ripen to a dark brown. The dried stems persist in fields where their dark color contrasts with the lighter color of dried grasses and other plants. Flowering is usually in mid-spring and the pollen is dispersed by the wind. Curly Dock usually grows in moist ditches or along streams. The plant is sometimes used as a folk medicine although it contains considerable quantities of oxalic acid.



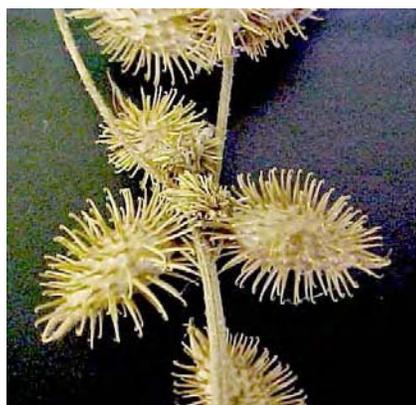
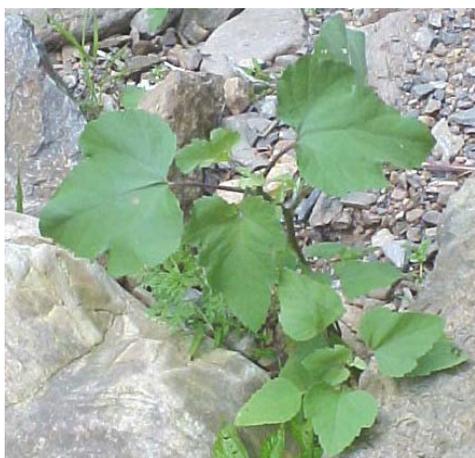
Cocklebur

Genus/species *Xanthium strumarium*

Family **Asteraceae**

Distribution **Throughout most of US**

Comments This species may grow to be over four feet tall in a variety of waste places and disturbed areas, especially those that are moist. It has large triangular leaves that may be six inches long. The male flowers are found in clusters near the top of the plant while the female flowers are located at the bases of leaves along much of the length of the plant. Pollination (by wind) occurs from July to September. The fruit is in the form of a bur covered with hooked spines, allowing it to be spread about by clinging to fur and other materials much as “Velcro” does.



Baccharis

Genus/species	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i> , <i>sarothroides</i> and others
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Southern US SE Massachusetts along coast southward to S Florida S Florida northwestward through S Texas to S California S California northeastward to S Nevada and S Utah S Utah southeastward through Texas to NW Mississippi Central Mississippi eastward to central North Carolina Central North Carolina northeastward to SE Massachusetts

Comments There are many species of *Baccharis*, and there are various common names for individual species such as “groundsel tree”, “desert broom” and “seepwillow”. Most are large shrubs rather than small trees. They are typically found in moist settings—the western species more closely follow watercourses and moist ditches than the eastern species, the latter being more widespread within their ranges, finding much of the coastal plain and lower Piedmont suitable habitat. The usually whitish male and female flowers are always found on separate plants (that is, the species in dioecious). Although various insects pollinate the flowers, considerable pollen may get into the air to affect allergic patients. Blooming generally takes place in the fall, and the female flowers ripen their seeds that are blown about with the aid of bristles. The white clusters of mature seeds may be very conspicuous on the male shrubs before dispersal.



Annual Wormwood

Genus/species	<i>Artemisia annua</i>
Family	Asteraceae
Distribution	Scattered throughout most of US in suitable habitats; introduced from Eurasia

Comments Annual Wormwood, also known as Sweet Wormwood or Sweet Annie, is a plant having fine lacy foliage growing to be as much as six feet tall. It has the scent characteristic of the genus *Artemisia* but lack the grayish color to its foliage found in many of its relatives. As the common name suggests, it is strictly annual, reproducing by seed produced after blooming in late summer and fall. Annual Wormwood has been cultivated in many areas, especially China (where it is called *qing bao*), for the compound artemisinin that shows promise as an antimalarial drug, and studies are underway to cultivate it in the US. The deeply-dissected, almost parsley-like leaves are generally an inch or two in length on the single upright stem. The tiny greenish-yellow flower heads (within which the central florets are hermaphroditic while the marginal are female or pistillate) are borne in loose panicles at the top of the plant, and pollination may be effected either by insects or by wind. At the end of the season, the plant turns reddish-purple before dying.

