

# CELASTRALES

(Celastrids)

## Staff-Trees



## Lepidobotryids



(not native to North America)



# Family CELASTRACEAE (Bittersweets)

## Utah Mortonia (*Mortonia utahensis*)



loves the sand

Valley of Fire SP; NV



tiny flowers

Valley of Fire SP; NV



March

Valley of Fire State Park; Clark County; NV



curled leaves, white margins

Valley of Fire SP; NV



post bloom panicle

Valley of Fire SP; NV

- Flowers:** narrow paniculate inflorescence; bisexual; 5 petals, 5 sepals; white with yellow throat; .12"
- Stems:** upright; broom like, branched, thorny; gray woody bark; greenish white; 5'
- Leaves:** ovate; margins entire, white; alternate/opposite; sessile; convex, fleshy, coarsely hairy; .5"
- Blooms:** May to June
- Range:** sw US, n MEX
- Habitat:** dry sandy to rocky soils; bajadas, canyons, desert scrub, woodlands; Upper Sonoran Life Zone

### Notes:

rare; scabrous, evergreen perennial; grows to 5' in limey to sandy environments from s CA east to w AZ and sw UT, south into nw MEX at elevations of 3,000-7,000'; clusters of five, small, light brown **nutlets** bearing one straw-colored seed each; aka **Sandpaper Bush**, **Saddlebush**

Mojave presence: native

### Comments:

This is a rare and unusual plant that I've only encountered in the White Dunes section of the **Valley of Fire State Park** in Nevada, about 45 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Once you see it, it's immediately recognizable by its unusual curled-in leaves with distinctly white margins. Another population has been observed along the Old Spanish Trail near Tecopa Hot Springs.