

# EPHREDALES

(Ephedras)

## Ephedras





# EPHREDRACEAE

## (Ephedras)

### Green Ephedra

#### (*Ephedra viridis*)



**erect stems**

Potosi Mtn; Clark Co.; NV



**male**

**pollen cone**

Dolan Springs, AZ



**May**

Potosi Mountain; Spring Mountain Range; Clark Co.; NV



**scaly**

**vestigial leaves**

Dolan Springs, AZ



**female**

**seed cone**

Dolan Springs, AZ

- Flowers:** cones; dioecious; nodal; **yellow**; .5"
- Stems:** erect; branched; photosynthetic; woody at base; dense clusters of parallel twigs; **green**; to ~10"
- Leaves:** connate; entire; opposite; scaly, semi-persistent, vestigial, 2 per node; **reddish brown**; <.25"
- Blooms:** April to June
- Range:** interior western US
- Habitat:** arid; sandy to rocky; desert scrublands, canyons, slopes, etc.; Lower to Upper Sonoran LZs

#### Notes:

common; evergreen, perennial shrub; grows to 4' in the w US from e CA/e OR east to w CO/nw NM at elevations of 3,000-7,500'; (**m**) oval pollen cones with protruding **sporangiophores** (enclosures with spores); (**f**) obovoid seed cones (2-6/node; 2 seeds ea.) enclosed by **bracts** (modified leaves); aka **Mormon Tea**, **Indian Tea**, **Mountain Ephedra**; winter forage for wildlife; traditionally used to treat various respiratory ailments (e.g. colds, asthma, and sinusitis)

Mojave presence: native

#### Comments:

This common family of plants is the original source of the drug **ephedrine**, and thus has been traditionally used to treat a variety of ailments. Steeped in hot water, the twigs (they don't even have to be spring fresh) produce a tea that is known for its antidepressant and decongestant properties--and it's just plain delicious! Caution should be taken to determine how your body responds to the effects, which are not pronounced, but can cause adverse reactions in those who are sensitive. Regardless, it should not be consumed regularly.



# EPHREDRACEAE

## (Ephedras)

### Boundary Ephedra

#### (*Ephedra aspera*)



Dolan Springs, AZ



Pierce Ferry Road; Dolan Springs, AZ



Dolan Springs, AZ



Dolan Springs, AZ



Dolan Springs, AZ

- Flowers:** cones; dioecious; nodal to apical; (m) yellow to brown; (f) red to brown; .3 -.4"
- Stems:** erect; opposite to whorled, branched at ~30°; rigid, rough; green (young) to golden (aged); 6-8"
- Leaves:** connate; entire; opposite; scaly, semi-persistent, vestigial, 2 per node; gray (brown base); <.25"
- Blooms:** February to April
- Range:** southwestern US
- Habitat:** gravelly to rocky; slopes, ravines, etc.; desert scrub to woodlands; Lower to Upper Sonoran LZs

#### Notes:

common locally; evergreen, perennial shrub; grows to 4' in the sw US from w TX west to CA, south into MEX at elevations of 1,500-5,500'; (m) obovoid pollen cones (2/node), usually sessile, with protruding **sporangiophores**; (f) ovoid seed cones (usually 2/node; 1 ellipsoid seed ea.) enclosed by brownish **bracts**; aka **Rough Jointfir**, **Rough Ephedra**, **Pitamoreal**; winter forage for wildlife; tea used to treat various ailments (respiratory, STDs, etc.)

Mojave presence: native

#### Comments:

Though not as common as the green ephedra, this species seems to be the more prevalent variety in the eastern region of the Mojave, especially in Arizona. While there are numerous subtle differences, in the field *E. aspera* can be distinguished from *E. viridis* by its less vivid green stems, angular branching at about 30 degrees, and more tangled appearance of the twig clusters.