Plants of New Mexico

Trees, shrubs, and grasses

**Ponderosa pine forests**

**A** Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) • Tree up to 120’ tall, 40’ wide; much smaller in thickets. Bark black, turning yellow with age, smells like vanilla. 2–3 needles per cluster, cones 3–6” long.

**B** Gambel oak (Quercus gambelii) • Small tree to 8–50’ tall, crown 5–30’ wide. Leaves lobed. Acorns 1” long. Bark gray, checkered to flakey.


**D** Barberry (Mahonia repens) • Shrub up to 1’ tall and 1’ wide. Leaves 2½–3½” long and 1½–2½” wide, often matted, red serrated edges, evergreen. Flowers yellow, maturing to blue berries.

**E** Buckbrush (Ceanothus fendleri) • Shrub 6–13’ tall, 3’ wide. Branches have small spines. Leaves dark green, ⅜” long. Flowers white, in tiny clusters. Grows vigorously after fire.

**F** Woods’ rose (Rosa woodsii) • Shrub 1–6’ tall and 3–6’ wide. Leaves 2” long, compound with 5–9 leaflets, serrated edges. Flowers pink, 2” wide, five petals, maturing to red rosehips, ½” long. Thorns ½–1½” long.

**G** Skunkbush sumac (Rhus trilobata) • Shrub to 7’ tall. Leaves 1–2½” long. Leaves yellow-white in small clusters, maturing to sticky red berries.

**H** Cliffrose (Purshia mexicana) • Shrub to 12’, 8’ wide, much smaller in harsh conditions. Bark gray, shreddy. Leaves ½–¾” long, deeply lobed, white underneath. Flowers cream colored, 1’ wide. Fruits feather-tailed, clustered.


**J** Mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus) • Shrub to 9’. Leaves dark green, leathery, to ½” long. Flowers yellow and red, trumpet-shape, 2” long.

**K** Wax currant (Ribes cereum) • Shrub to 4’ tall. Red or tan twigs. Leaves lobed, ¼–1½” long. Berries red, waxy.

**L** Arizona fescue (Festuca arizonica) • Bunchgrass, 1–3’ tall. Leaves (blades) tightly rolled, appear cylindrical. Seed heads golden.

**M** Pine dropseed (Blepharoneuron tricholepis) • Bunchgrass, 6–8”, leaf blades abundant, slender, erect. Seed heads blue-gray.

**N** Mountain muhly (Muhlenbergia montana) • Bunchgrass 10–30” tall. Dead blades curl like wood shavings. Seed heads blue-gray.

**O** Squirreltail (Elymus elymoides) • Perennial grass up to 20” tall and 15” wide. Leaf blades come from base of plant, generally smooth. Seed heads resemble a “bottlebrush”, seeds 1–3” long.

**P** Cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum) • Grass to 2’. Blades emerge in fall. Seedheads red-purple, drooping. Rapid spring growth, matures before other grasses; invasive species.
**Purple geranium** (Geranium caespitosum) • Pink or purple flowers; up to 10” tall; few flowers per plant. Thin creeping stems, often red. Leaves five-lobed, smelly when crushed, red in autumn.

**Mountain parsley** (Pseudocymopterus montanus) • Up to 30” tall. Yellow flowers in flat-topped clusters. Leaves green, broad, feathery, with many pointed lobes. Strong scent.