

# Printout

Wednesday, July 26, 2017 5:14 PM

search

# ARIZONA SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

[VISIT](#) [ABOUT](#) [ARTS](#) [MEMBERSHIP](#) [CONSERVATION](#) [EDUCATION](#) [SUPPORT](#) [SHOP](#) [KIDS](#) [BLOG](#)
connect: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [y](#) [s](#) [v](#)

Especially for Kids

Kid Activities at the Museum

Junior Docents

Events and Camps

Camps

Preschool Programs

Earth Day Poetry Contest

Coati Kids Club

Membership in the Club

Coati Club Events

Coati Club News

How the Club began

Archives

Fun Facts

Saguaro Cactus Seek &amp; Find

Sonoran Desert Seek &amp; Find

Sonoran Desert Fact Sheets

Bat Fact Sheets

Children's Birthday Parties

## Plant Fact Sheet: Foothill Palo Verde

### Identifying Features

The Foothill Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia microphylla*) is sometimes called the littleleaf palo verde or the yellow palo verde. This is because it has very little leaves and when in blossom the flowers are bright yellow. The green branches are spine-tipped, stiff and upright giving the tree its name. Palo Verde is Spanish for green stick referring to the tree's green bark.



### Habitat

The foothill species of palo verde requires less water than the blue palo verde. Because of this, it is found in the upland areas of the desert where the soil is more coarse.

### Range

These trees occur throughout the Sonoran Desert except in the driest regions.

### Wild Status

The palo verde is doing well in its range.

### Life Span

These trees can live to be more than 100 years old, possibly as old as 400 years.

### Size

It is considered a large shrub or a small tree standing about 15 feet tall on average, occasionally reaching as tall as 30 feet.

### Quick Facts

- The palo verde is the primary nurse plant for young saguaro cactus.
- Humans have used the seeds of the palo verde for hundreds of years. Seri Indians eat the seeds fresh, toasted, or ground as flour. The Tohono O'odham prefer to eat the seeds fresh from the pods.

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