



## Blackbrush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*)

*“Around us the Green River Desert rolls away to the north, south and east, an absolutely treeless plain, not even a juniper in sight, nothing but sand, blackbrush, prickly pear, a few sunflowers. Directly eastward we can see the blue and hazy La Sal Mountains, only sixty miles away by line of sight but twice that far by road, with nothing whatever to suggest the fantastic, complex and impassable gulf that falls between here and there. “*

*- Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire*

**Location:** Blackbrush successfully grows in the Mojave Desert and Colorado Plateau at elevations ranging from 2,500 to 7,000 feet. The ability to grow in such elevations enables the plant to withstand extreme temperatures from -11 degrees to 116 degrees Fahrenheit. Incredibly, blackbrush may hold water in by going dormant and shedding old parts during the summertime.

**Description:** A member of the rose family, blackbrush grows to be 12 feet tall and up to 20 feet in width. Rare flowers are leathery and yellow to reddish-brown in coloration. It is a slow growing plant that depicts a large shrub or small tree.

**Uses:** Although blackbrush is not the best feed for all wildlife and livestock, it has developed an excellent relationship with rodents, especially the kangaroo rat. The shrub developed masting mechanisms which occur when plants produce excess seeds during alternative years to ensure all seeds aren't being consumed. During masting times, kangaroo rats will bury and germinate the left over seeds they've collected. Small rodents benefit from blackbrush as it provides shelter and nutritional resources.

### Sources:

Abbey, Edward, and Robert Macfarlane. *Desert Solitaire: a Season in the Wilderness /Edward Abbey ; with an Introduction by Robert Macfarlane*. William Collins, 2018.

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