



Desert Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)

Desert Globemallow is a brilliant wildflower that is a vital resource to desert life. A member of the Malvaceae (or Mallow) family, Desert Globemallow is related to hibiscus, okra, cotton, cacao and durian plants.

Description: Growing 1 to 3 feet tall, Desert Globemallows sprout clusters of large brilliant colored orange flowers. Tall stems and crinkle edged leaves are grey-green in color. These plants have the capacity to grow over one hundred stems growing from one root. Fruit is brown and can break into several parts. Desert Globemallow grows densely in the springtime, but will grow throughout the year given optimal annual precipitation.



Location: Desert Globemallow plants grow throughout southwestern Utah, southern California and southern Nevada. The wildflower is found in desert regions below 3,500 ft on dry slopes, near sandy washes and on roadsides. Known as a xerophyte (a plant species that adapted to survive in drought environments) these plants are able to withstand harsh desert droughts.

Uses: Desert Globemallow plants are used to mitigate revegetation areas that have been damaged by fires, erosion, and barren or abandoned areas. The bright orange wildflower is well adapted and suitable for desert xeroscape decoration. A critical pollination resource in the desert, Desert Globemallow provides an essential food source to native bees and butterflies. Desert tortoises and big horned sheep benefit from Desert Globemallow forage. The wildflower was also used to treat cuts, stomach aches, infections and colds.

Sources:

"Desert Globemallow." *United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service*. 30 Jan. 2019. https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_spam2.pdf

"*Sphaeralcea ambigua*." *The University of Texas at Austin*. 30 Jan. 2019. https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=spam2