



Mormon or Brigham Tea (*Ephedra viridis*)

"I can see the princess plume with its tall golden racemes; the green ephedra or Mormon tea, from which Indians and pioneers extracted a medicinal drink (contains ephedrine); the obnoxious Russian thistle, better known as thumbleweed, an exotic; pepperweed, bladderweed, snakeweed, matchweed, skeleton weed- the last-named so delicately formed as to be almost invincible."

– Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

Description: Reaching 3 feet tall, Mormon-tea produces yellow-green bamboo-like branches and small, yellow conical flowers. Flowers jointly grow along branches and do not grow every year. Blooming season takes place through spring and early summer. Leaves fall off in the early stages of blooming. Fruit is developed within a pod of 2 or 3 scales.

Location: Mormon tea grows plentiful in the western United States, specifically in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. These plants do well in semiarid desert climates and in well drained soil with exposure to sunshine. With age, Mormon tea is able to grow in lime soil and becomes drought resistant.

Uses: Historically, Mormon tea has been used for brewing tea and food consumption. Although bitter tasting, fruits and seeds can be ground up to make breads or a porridge-like meal. Leaves and twigs are brewed into a hot drink that is known to be an herbal remedy for multiple medical conditions.



Sources:

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