



Bottlebrush or Desert Trumpet (*Erigonum inflatum*)

The term *Eriogonum* stems from the Greek words *erion*, meaning “wool” and *gonu*, meaning “knee or joint.” This refers to the furry joints of the species. Its flowers do not bloom unless the plant absorbs enough water during high rainfall seasons. When bottlebrush is hydrated, it will produce a high amount of flowers on almost all of its branches.

Description: Growing up to a foot and a half tall, common paintbrush produces small, brilliant orange to red petals. The bracts are so vibrant that they portray a freshly painted flower. Leaves are linear and show three parallel veins. Interestingly, the bright red color of this plant protects it from solar radiation. Petals lose color due to the high elevation sunlight.

Uses: Native bees are attracted to bottlebrush as it provides a sufficient amount of pollen to sustain a food source for desert insects. Native American tribes utilized the stem by cutting its inflated area in half to produce a tobacco or mistletoe smoke pipe.



Location: Growing across the southwestern United States in California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico, bottlebrush prefers areas with dry sand or rocky soil. Most bottlebrush is found in desert washes and on plateaus below 6,000 feet. This plant is extremely drought tolerant and requires dry soil to thrive.

Sources:

“Desert Trumpet.” *National Park Service, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, AZ, NV.* 17 Jan. 2019. <https://www.nps.gov/lake/learn/nature/desert-trumpet.htm>

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“Range Plants of Utah, Desert Trumpet.” *Utah State University.* 17 Jan. 2019. <https://extension.usu.edu/rangeplants/forbs/herbaceous/desert-trumpet>