

California Phenology Project: species profile for Mojave Yucca (*Yucca schidigera*)

USA **nph** National Phenology Network

UCSB



CPP site(s) where this species is monitored: Joshua Tree National Park

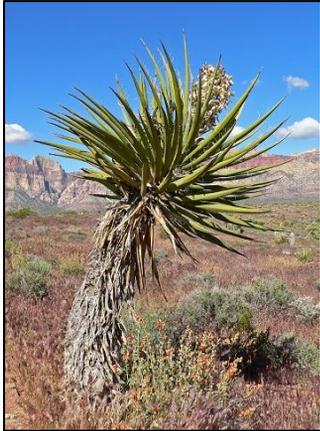


Photo credit: Stan Shebs

What does this species look like?

This is a small evergreen plant that grows up to 5 meters tall with a grayish-brown trunk. Its leaves are long, pointy, and very rigid. The leaves are arranged in a spiral on top of the basal trunk. They have coarse fibers that peel away from the leaf margins. The flowers are 3 to 5 centimeters long, white, and bell-shaped. They are arranged in dense clusters at the tip of a central stalk. The flowers are bisexual; meaning that each flower produces both male and female reproductive parts.

When monitoring this species, use the USA-NPN **broadleaf evergreen (no leaves)** datasheet.

Species facts!

- The CPP four letter code for this species is **YUSC**
- A monocot in the plant family Agavaceae
- Mojave Yucca was used extensively by Native Americans who prepared flour from the seeds, used the leaf fibers for rope and cloth, and prepared soap from the roots.
- This species is pollinated by the Yucca moth, which pollinates the flowers while laying its eggs inside the flowers. The larvae then hatch and feed on the seeds.
- Occasionally hybridizes with Banana Yucca.



Photo credit: Nyenyec (Wikipedia)



Photo credit: Comroques (Flickr)

Where is this species found?

- Distributed within the Mojave and Sonoran deserts.
- Typically found on well drained soil on rocky slopes and on Creosote flats.
- Found at elevations between 300 and 1200 meters.

For more information about phenology and the California Phenology Project (CPP), please visit the CPP website (www.usanpn.org/cpp) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org)

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**Flowers or
flower buds**

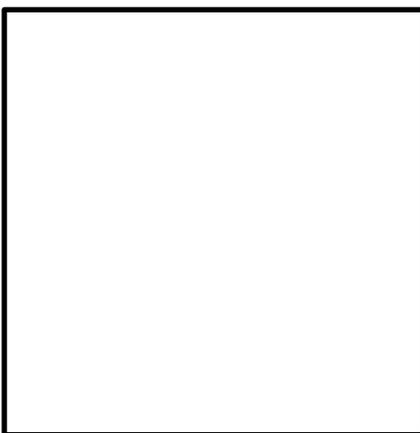


Open flowers
Yucca flowers
are bisexual.
Can you see
anthers or
stigma?

When monitoring **flower abundance** for this species, count each inflorescence as a flowering unit! For example, if there are two inflorescences with many flowers or buds each, then abundance should be recorded as <3.

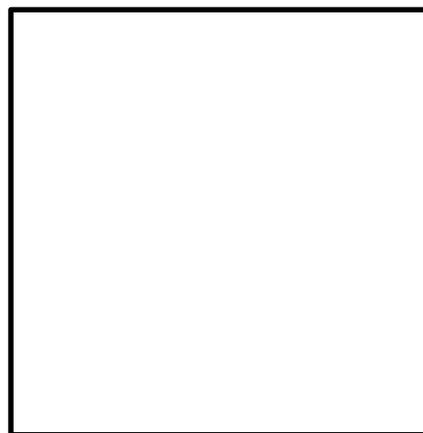
Proportion of open flowers should be recorded at the scale of individual flowers, not inflorescences (i.e. estimate the proportion of individual flowers that are open)!

Important Note: USA-NPN flower phenophases are nested; if you say “Y” to “open flowers” you should also have said “Y” to “flowers or flower buds”



Fruits

The fruit is a capsule, sometimes constricted, that changes from fleshy green to leathery tan, grayish-brown or brown, and drops from the plant when ripe.



Ripe fruits

The fruit is considered ripe when it is leathery tan, grayish-brown or brown.

Important Note: USA-NPN fruit phenophases are nested; if you say “Y” to “ripe fruits” you should also have said “Y” to “fruits”

Phenophases not pictured: **Recent fruit or seed drop**