

Biotic Communities of Arizona



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The beauty and diversity of Arizona's plantlife is remarkable. Where else in the country can one see stands of giant saguaro cactus and lush groves of quaking aspen, all in a single day's walk? Scientists studying the state's flora have categorized the region's plants into a number of major biotic communities. Several factors influence which communities are found at any given location, whether it be a lowland valley or a high mountain slope. The most important factors are precipitation (rain and/or snowfall) and temperature. As one moves upward in elevation, precipitation generally increases and temperature decreases. Thus one finds common Sonoran Desert plants such as saguaro and cholla growing outside of Phoenix, while to the north, but more importantly 5000 feet higher, cool forests of ponderosa pine and gambel oak thrive along the Mogollon Rim near Flagstaff. Other factors affecting plant distribution are sun exposure, fire history, and soil type.

Click on the biotic communities highlighted below to find out more about Arizona's varied plant and animal life.

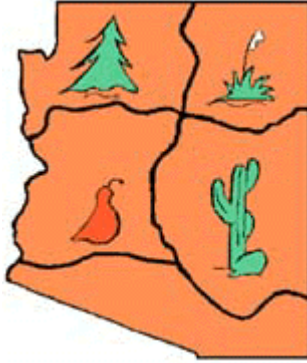
- [Alpine Tundra](#)
- [Subalpine Spruce-Fir Forest](#)
- [Montane Mixed-Conifer Forest](#)
- [Montane Ponderosa Pine Forest](#)
- [Pinyon Pine-Juniper Woodland](#)
- [Madrean Evergreen Woodland](#)
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- [Chihuahuan Desertscrub](#)
- [Northern Arizona Riparian Woodland](#)
- [Southern Arizona Riparian Woodland](#)

Related Links

- [Native Plants of Arizona](#)

Back to [Biogeographic Region](#) information.

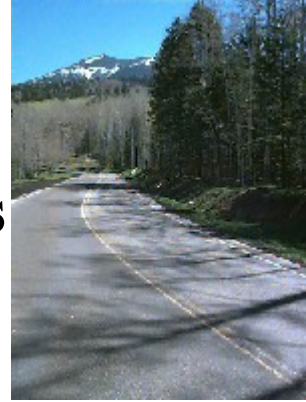
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Welcome to

Arizona Roadside Environments

An Online Guide to
Arizona's Natural
Environment



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Arizona Roadside Environments is an Internet site dedicated to learning about Arizona's exceptionally beautiful and diverse natural environment. From cactus-covered lowlands to high forested peaks and plateaus to the spectacular Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, the state's landscape is unparalleled. Online, this site is organized like a guidebook and is oriented towards whole ecosystems, including plant communities, wildlife, and regional geology. The [ROADMAP](#) page is a good place to start, providing an overview map of the state, a diagram showing Arizona's major geographic regions, and links to specific information on each area.

A.R.E. News

Congratulations to those educators who completed the MRESI workshop. Thank you for your enthusiasm and hard work! View their completed science projects on the MRESI web pages.

Educators, if you are interested in becoming involved and learning how you can utilize the Arizona Roadside Environments web site in your classroom visit the

Project History and Goals

Arizona Roadside Environments (A.R.E.) is a cooperative project between professional researchers at Northern Arizona University and secondary school classes. Information describing natural phenomena seen on or near Arizona highways or roads is placed online in a readable format of interest to the general public. Results from specific scientific studies, conducted throughout different regions of the state, are shared via this A.R.E. site. A.R.E. not only explores the nature of Arizona, providing an abundance of information on the ecology and geology of the state, but it also looks at human interactions with the natural world, including topics such as management of our national forests that can have far-reaching effects on residents and visitors to our state.

Schools and MRESI pages. We can connect you with a participating university researcher for in-class correspondence and help you set up a research design for your own scientific inquiry.

Housed at: [The Northern Arizona Environmental Education Resource Center](#)

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