

CAMPUS ARBORETUM



Focus on:
Cercidium microphyllum
"foothills paloverde"
Fabaceae



As we celebrate Feb. 14th, 2025 as the anniversary of Arizona's statehood we feature the lesser known but equally inspiring cousin of our state tree. The foothills paloverde, is native to the Tucson Basin of Southern Arizona where it grows in dry rocky hillsides and mesas at about 4000 feet elevation. Formerly known as *Parkinsonia microphylla*, it is less common in washes than the blue paloverde (*Parkinsonia florida*), Arizona's state tree. Foothills paloverde are clearly very drought tolerant, cold hardy to 15°F, and slow growing but long lived to 70 years of age.

To learn more, visit this Campus Arboretum Species Description Page found at: <https://apps.cals.arizona.edu/arboretum/taxon.aspx?id=67>



The foothills paloverde has a legume-type pod.



"microphylla" refers to the small leaves with a single vein.

Ecology and Ethnobotanical Value:

The foothills paloverde also supports wildlife with its seeds, nectar, and shady cover. The seeds of this species were a valued food source for many of the southwestern tribes who ground the seeds into a fine flour for soup or porridge and, ate the seeds raw, sun-dried or roasted.



Two key features of the foothills paloverde that distinguish it from other green-stemmed relatives are the terminal spine at the branch tips, and the white "banner" petal in the flower corolla.

Photo Credit: [Stan Shebs](#) CC BY-SA 3.0
via Wikimedia Commons



The foothills paloverde are multi-trunked with major branches arising low on the trunk.



Foothills paloverde also have a distinct yellow undertone to their green branches and stems.

Thanks for joining me on my journey to see and understand trees! The health of the planet and our fellow humans depends on respectful and understanding tree selection choices. I hope you're inspired to deepen the connection by visiting campus, and using the [interactive arboretum map](#) to find the tree featured in this spotlight for a more immersive education and sensory experience.

Enjoy!

Tanya

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