

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Plant Abstract

Element Code: PMARE0G010

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Washingtonia filifera*

COMMON NAME: California Fan Palm

SYNONYMS:

FAMILY: Palmae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Linden, L. 1879. Bot. Zeit. 37:lxii.

TYPE LOCALITY: Near Palm Springs, California.

TYPE SPECIMEN:

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:

DESCRIPTION: A stout palm with the trunk to 1.0 m (3.3 ft.) in diameter and 15 meters tall, not flaring markedly at base. Leaf petioles 1.5-2.2 m (4.5-7.0 ft.) long and 10.0-15.0 cm (4.0-6.0 in.) wide at the base, with curved spines 1.0 cm (0.4 in.) long near the base and progressively smaller teeth toward the upper end. Leaf blades 1.5-2.3 m (4.5-7.0 ft.) wide, slightly longer, with 50-60 long, narrow lobes. Leaves and old spadices drooping vertically when dead. Petiole bases not forming distinctive criss-cross pattern around trunk. Upper flowering branches 30.0-40.0 cm (12.0-16.0 in.) long. Fruit elliptic-oval, dark brown or black, 7.0-10.0 mm (0.28-0.04 in.) long.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Differs from *W. robusta* by having a stouter trunk, *W. robusta* flares abruptly at the trunk and has a criss-cross pattern around the trunk.

ILLUSTRATIONS: B&W photos (Brown, 1976: p.164).

Line drawing of leaf, fruit, and flower (Wiggins, 1980: p.848).

TOTAL RANGE: Southwestern Arizona, southeastern California, and Baja California.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: Yuma County: Kofa Mountains: Palm Canyon and Yavapai County: Alkali Springs, near Castle Creek.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

GROWTH FORM: Woody perennial

PHENOLOGY: May-June

BIOLOGY: These are the only native palms in the continental United States west of the "boscaje de palmas" in Cameron County, Texas. Based upon the associated species, it seems that these palms grow in areas where it seldom, if ever, freezes.

HABITAT: In seep areas in canyons on the desert. Alkaline springs that are highly mineralized so that the adjacent soil and rocks are encrusted with salts.

ELEVATION: 2,000-2,170 feet.

EXPOSURE: South to southwest facing canyons.

SUBSTRATE: Moist soil along streams or canyons.

PLANT COMMUNITY: Lower Colorado Subdivision of the Sonoran Desert, southern margin of the Mohave Desertscrub region, and Arizona Upland Subdivision of the Sonoran Desert (at Castle Creek, Arizona)

POPULATION TRENDS: Apparently stable

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:

STATE STATUS:

Salvage Restricted (ARS, ANPL 1993)

OTHER STATUS:

MANAGEMENT FACTORS:

CONSERVATION MEASURES TAKEN:

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Survey for additional Arizona populations.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management, Private.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

LITERATURE CITATIONS:

Brown, D.E. et al. 1976. A second locality for native California fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) in Arizona. *Journal of the Arizona Academy of Science*. 11:37-41.

- Munz, P.A.. 1974. A flora of southern California. University of California Press. Berkeley, CA.
Shreve, F. and I.L. Wiggins. 1964. Vegetation and flora of the Sonoran desert. Vol. 2. Stanford University Press. Stanford, CA.
Wiggins, I.L. 1980. Flora of Baja California, Stanford University Press. Stanford, CA.

MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- Brown, et al. 1976: It is unlikely that the Alkali Springs population was introduced around 1900 from a nearby ranch or hotel, but rather it is a native population.

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