

Coast to Cactus Glossary

Chaparral

Adaptation: Physical structures, characteristics or behaviors that allow an organism to survive and reproduce in its environment.

Arid: Having little or no rain; too dry or barren to support vegetation.

Burl: Rounded knotty growth on a tree.

Chaparral: A vegetation type dominated by shrubs and small trees, especially evergreen species with small, thick leaves such as chamise.

Chamise: An evergreen shrub with small narrow leaves.

Drought: A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.

Ecology: Branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environment.

Ecosystem: Everything that exists in a habitat.

Endemic: Plant or animal native to a particular region.

Fire Beetle: Beetles that have sensors called pit organs that can detect radiation from a forest fire. They can sense fire fifty miles away. These beetles mate and lay eggs in burnt branches and stems.

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Chaparral

Fire ecology: A scientific discipline concerned with natural processes involving fire in an ecosystem and the ecological effects.

Geophytes: A plant that grows from an underground plant bud like a bulb or tuber.

Germinate: Begin to grow and put out shoots after a period of dormancy - a time of rest or sleep.

Habitat: The natural area where an animal lives.

Invasive: A non-native which has usually arrived by human activity and which causes harm or poses a threat to the native organisms.

Native: Plants and animals endemic or naturalized to a given area or region.

Non-Native Plants: A species living outside its native range.

Manzanita: an evergreen dwarf shrub, native to California.

Perennial: A plant that lasts or existing for a long time; enduring or continually recurring.

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Chaparral

Predator: An animal that hunts and kills other animals for food.

Prescribed fire: Fires set to help control the wildfires. The problem with prescribed fires is there is already too much fire in the chaparral areas.

Prey: An animal hunted or caught for food.

Pyrogenie habitat : A habitat in which fire plays an important part.

Root cambium: Secondary growth that occurs in many roots and usually results in the thickening of the root diameter by the addition of vascular tissue.

Serotiny: An adaptation occurring in some plants in which seeds are released due to a specific event in the environment. (e.g. some pinecones only release their seeds during a fire.)

Scrub: Vegetation consisting mainly of brushwood or stunted forest growth.

Shrubland: A plant community characterized by vegetation dominated by shrubs, often also including grasses and herbs.

Urbanization: To change from rural to city-like.

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Chaparral

Wildfire: A large, destructive fire that spreads quickly over woodland or brush.

Yucca: A plant of the agave family with stiff swordlike leaves and spikes of white bell-shaped flowers that are dependent upon the yucca moth for fertilization.