

Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Winter Ecology Plant Guide



Flowers, Trees, & Shrubs



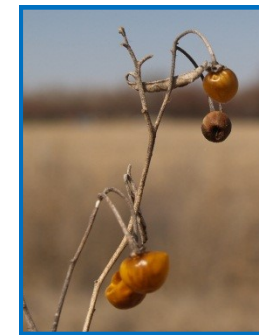
Prairie Bundleflower

A perennial plant that is native to the Rio Grande Bosque. The prairie bundleflower has many seed pods that form a bundle, visible when the flower dies. The seeds are an important food source because they are high in protein.



Salt Grass

At 12.9 acres Whitfield has the one of largest continuous expanses of salt grass meadow in the Rio Grande valley. Salt grass gets its name because it can tolerate salty soils where other plants usually cannot survive. In the winter salt grass provides important food for Sandhill cranes.



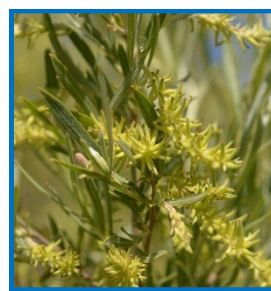
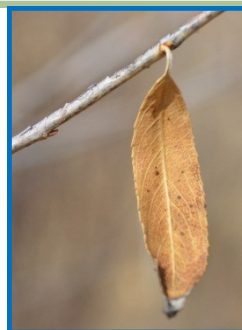
Silverleaf Nightshade

This plant is found in sandy soils that have been disturbed. The roots can grow almost 10 feet deep. This plant has seeds in yellow berries and is poisonous to cows, sheep, and other livestock.



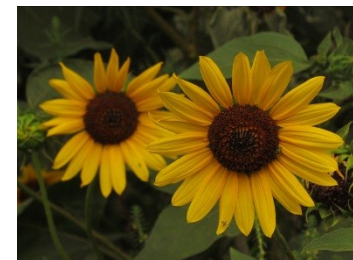
Yerba Mansa

A native plant found in the Bosque the roots have many medicinal uses. Grows under cottonwoods in salty soils.



Willow

There are three types of willows found at Whitfield: coyote, black, and seep. A native plant that helps prevent erosion along stream beds and are used by animals for food and shelter. Willows have long, thin leaves.



Sunflower

Sunflowers are common in many different ecosystems. Not only do people enjoy eating sunflower seeds, but they provide year round food for birds and small mammals.

Flowers, Trees, & Shrubs



Rio Grande Cottonwood

Cottonwoods are native to the Rio Grande bosque

and provide valuable food and shelter. At Whitfield a pair of owls nest in one of the cottonwoods and hawks, bald eagles, and northern harriers use them as perches while hunting. In the spring you can see the seeds of cottonwoods floating through the air.

Tornilla Mesquite (or Screw Bean Mesquite)

The mesquite is a native plant that is easily identified by its thorns and twisted seed pods. Its roots help return nitrogen to the soil—nitrogen is an important fertilizer.



Invasive Plants

Russian Olive

A non-native plant found in the bosque—it often grows underneath the cottonwoods and can out-compete native plants. The berries are eaten by birds.



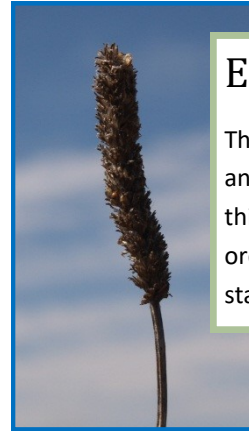
Salt Cedar

These invasive plants can out-compete native tree species found in the bosque. Salt Cedar's can use up to 200 gallons of water a day and drop their salty needles on the ground making it difficult for other plants to survive in the area. They have distinctive orange branches.



English Plantain

This plant was introduced from Europe and is considered invasive. Animals use this plant as food. They have light colored flowers that grow on long, slender stalks.



Siberian Elm

Siberian Elms were introduced to New Mexico in the early 1900's and is an invasive plant. These trees grow quickly and produce millions of seeds that are spread by wind.

