

Comparative Seed Manual: ASPARAGACEAE

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This seed manual consists of photos and relevant information on plant species housed in the Integrative Subsistence Laboratory at the Anthropology Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. The impetus for the creation of this manual was to enable UCSB graduate students to have access to comparative materials when making in-field identifications. Most of the plant species included in the manual come from New World locales with an emphasis on Eastern North America, California, Mexico, Central America, and the South American Andes.

Published references consulted¹:

1998. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American ethnobotany*. Vol. 879. Portland, OR: Timber press.

2009. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American medicinal plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.

2010. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American food plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.

Species included herein:

Agave chrysantha

Agave spp.

Agave utahensis spp.

Chlorogalum pomeridianum

Hesperoyucca whipplei

¹ **Disclaimer:** Information on relevant edible and medicinal uses comes from a variety of sources, both published and internet-based; this manual does **NOT** recommend using any plants as food or medicine without first consulting a medical professional.

Agave chrysantha



Family: Asparagaceae

Common Names: Golden flowered agave, *Agave chrysantha*, Hardy century plant, Goldenflower century plant

Habitat and Growth Habit: This plant is a native to Arizona. This species is usually found in sand, gravel, volcanic soil, grasslands, and oak woodlands.

Human Uses: Uses include landscaping as it has hardy growing ability. Some evidence may indicate that it could have been used for food. There is limited research indicating this concept, however.

Sources Consulted:

http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=1&taxon_id=242101302, accessed February 8, 2019.

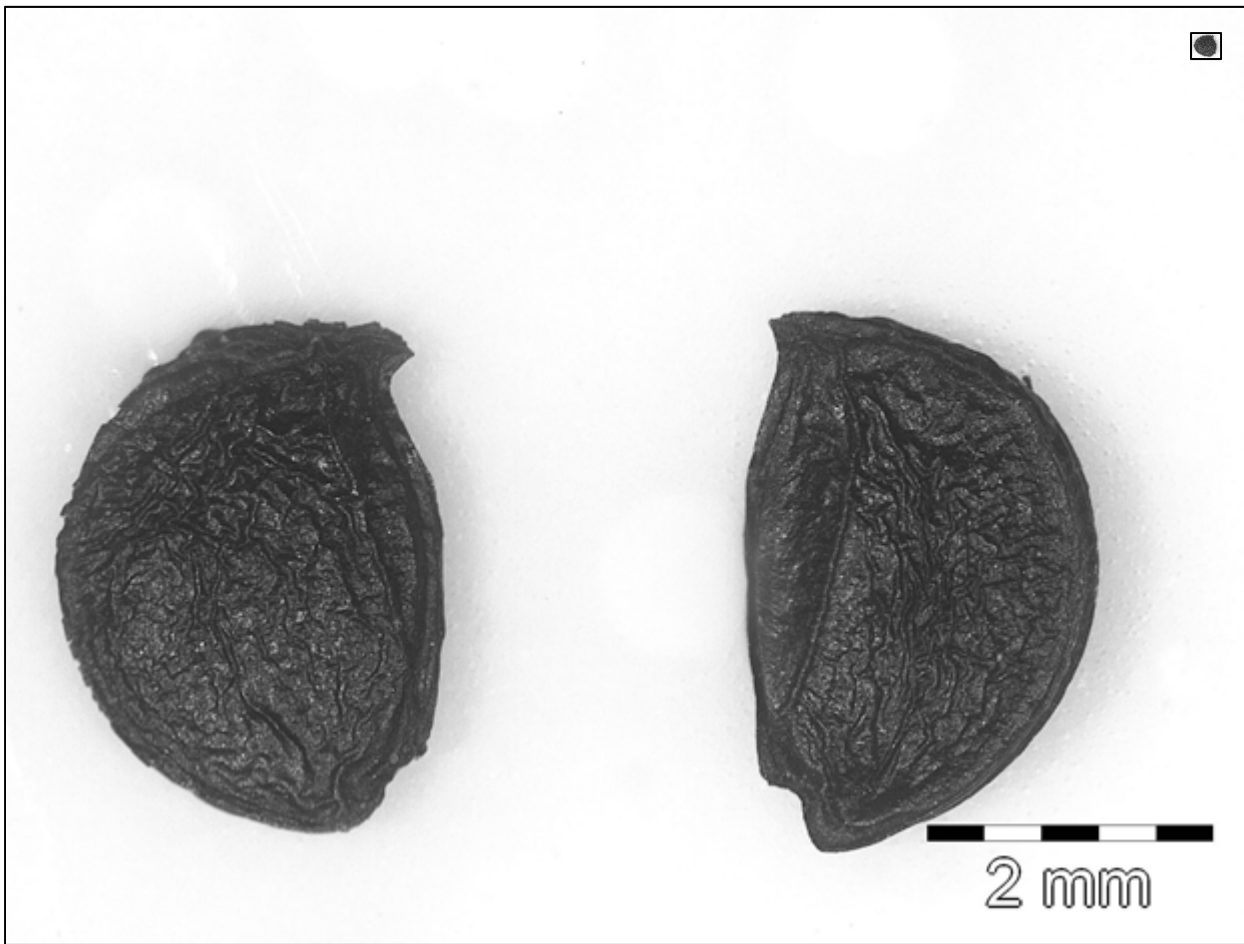
<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/60579/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://www.plantdelights.com/products/agave-chrysantha>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.fireflyforest.com/flowers/68/agave-chrysantha-goldenflower-century-plant/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://worldofsucculents.com/agave-chrysantha-golden-flowered-century-plant/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Agave spp.



Family: Asparagaceae

Common Names: Century plant

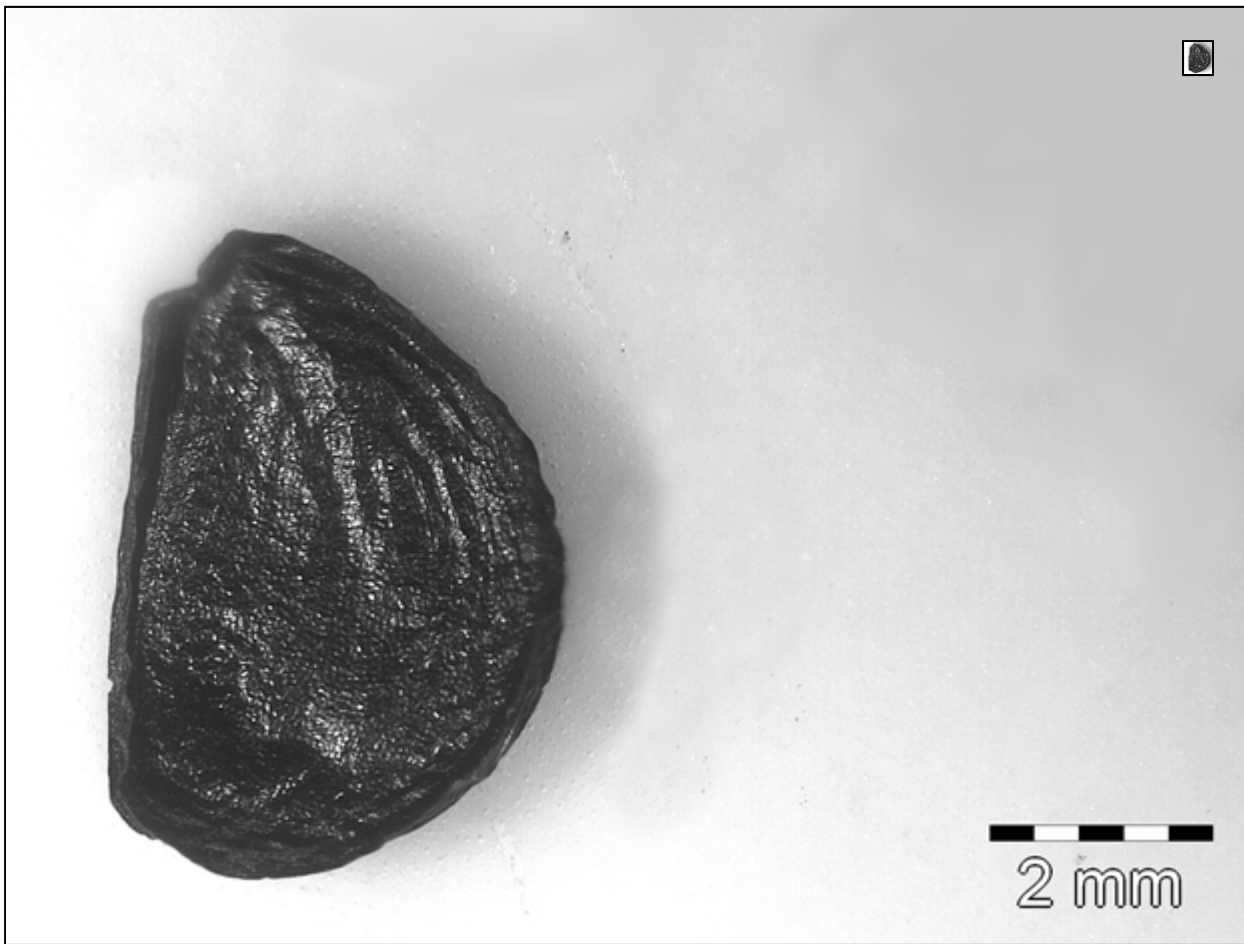
Habitat and Growth Habit: Varieties of the *Agave spp.* can be found in Southern and Western United States as well as Central and tropical South America, notably Mexico.

Human Uses: Records dating back over 8,000 years ago in Tehuacan, Mexico indicate that agave species could have been an essential food source. As well, some past historical records of the Aztecs demonstrate that the agave species was used to make a liquor called pulque. Pulque was used in rituals and during sacrificial celebrations. It was often drunk by the individuals being sacrificed as a way to put them at ease. In addition, in the Sierra Madre region of Mexico, natives of the area would use agave spirits in shamanic rituals. In addition to Mesoamerican medicinal and religious use, the species can also be used for weaving, needles, tea, ornamental uses, and soap. Recent uses of this species include tequila production.

Sources Consulted:

<http://entheology.com/plants/agave-americana-agave/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Agave utahensis spp.



Family: Asparagaceae

Common Names: Utah Agave, Agave, Utah century plant

Habitat and Growth Habit: This desert species is found in California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona.

Human Uses: Relatively similar to the other agave species, this variety is often used for fermentation to create an alcoholic beverage, Mescal. The leaves can be broken down and used as a soap as well. Current uses include landscaping.

Sources Consulted:

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/60916/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=AGUT>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://pfaf.org/user/Default.aspx>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.naturalmedicinalherbs.net/herbs/a/agave-utahensis-discreta=century-plant.php>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Chlorogalum pomeridianum



Family: Asparagaceae

Common Names: Amole, Soaproot, Soap lily, Soap plant, Wavyleafed soap plant

Habitat and Growth Habit: Native to California, it can also be found in Oregon but confined to western North America. It grows in grassy road banks, open meadows, and slopes in southern Oregon and California. They can also be found in valley grasslands, coastal sage scrubs, woodlands, pine forests, and chaparral. They can also grow on rock bluffs.

Human Uses: The bulbs are also used by native people to stun fish. Pounded bulbs were mixed with water and used as a hair wash. The same mixture can also be used to treat skin irritations caused by poison oak. A roasted bulb may be eaten. Rough fibers surrounding the bulb are used for scrubbing. A glue can be made from the sap that is expressed from baking bulbs. Starch extracted from the bulb is also used to twine baskets to close gaps. This plant is used medically as an antiseptic, consumed as a laxative, and against stomach ache.

Sources Consulted:

<http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/Chlorogalum> , accessed February 8, 2019.

http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=2003 , accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.laspilitas.com/nature-of-california/plants/196--chlorogalum-pomeridianum> , accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.watershednursery.com/nursery/plant-finder/chlorogalum-pomeridianum/> , accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://calscape.org/Chlorogalum-pomeridianum-0> , accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=CHPO3> , accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://www.calfloranursery.com/plants/chlorogalum-pomeridianum-v-pomeridianum> , accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://www.pfaf.org/user/plant.aspx?LatinName=Chlorogalum+pomeridianum> , accessed February 8, 2019.

https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/chlorogalum_pomeridianum.shtml, accessed February 8, 2019.

Hesperoyucca whipplei



Family: Asparagaceae

Common Names: Chaparral yucca, Common yucca, Foothill yucca, Our Lord's candle, Quixote plant, Spanish bayonet, Spanish dagger

Habitat and Growth Habit: This species can be found in Southern California and Arizona in habitats such as chaparral regions, near coastal sage scrub, woodlands, and pine forests.

Human Uses: Fiber from leaves was used for clothing and rope. Native Americans used the leaves for sandals, cloth, and rope. Kumeyaay of San Diego County boil the young flowers in water and discard the water three times before eating them. Native Americans sometimes roasted the very young flower stalks to produce a food. Seeds were roasted and eaten whole or ground into a flour. This plant maintains a symbiotic relationship with the yucca moth, *Tegeticula maculata*.

Sources Consulted:

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2110/>, accessed February 8, 2019.

http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=HEWH, accessed February 8, 2019.

http://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=9995, accessed February 8, 2019.

[http://calscape.org/Hesperoyucca-whipplei-\(Chaparral-Yucca\)](http://calscape.org/Hesperoyucca-whipplei-(Chaparral-Yucca)), accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=HEWH>, accessed February 8, 2019.

https://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant_id=3053, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.goldrushnursery.com/plant/Hesperoyucca-whipplei>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/heswhi/all.html>, accessed February 8, 2019.