California Phenology Project: species profile for Catclaw Acacia (*Acacia greggii*)

CPP site(s) where this species is monitored: Joshua Tree National Park

Photo credit: Stan Shebs

What does this species look like?

This deciduous shrub or small tree has curved thorns on its stems. The grey-green leaves are made up of many small leaflets. The flowers are arranged in inflorescences made up of many small light yellow flowers. Inflorescences tend to be longer than the leaves and clustered with leaves on short-shoots. The fruit is a brown pod between 5 and 15 centimeters long. It can be curved, twisted, or flat in shape, narrowing between the seeds.

*When monitoring this species, use the USA-NPN **semi-deciduous trees and shrubs** datasheet.*

Species facts!

- The CPP four letter code for this species is **ACGR.**
- This species got its common name from hooked thorns that are the size and shape of a cats claw and tend to hook unsuspecting wanderers.
- The seeds require scarification to germinate. This often occurs when seeds travel across a landscape due to flash flooding.
- This species has extrafloral nectaries that provide a food and water source for ants.
- Native americans avoided mature fruit of this species because the tissue contains a potentially poisonous compound called prunasin. However, the young unripe fruit was eaten and the stems were used for making tools.

Photo credit: Stan Shebs

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Where is this species found?

- Found at elevations between 100 and 1400 meters.
- Occurs along flats and washes
- Found in desert regions from California to Texas and into Mexico.

For more information about phenology and the California Phenology Project (CPP), please visit the CPP website (www.usanpn.org/cpp) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org)

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Young leaves
Young leaves are generally thinner and lighter colored than mature leaves.

Leaves

Flowers or flower buds
*When monitoring **flower or flower bud abundance** for this species, count each inflorescence as a single flowering structure! For example, if there are two inflorescences with many flowers or buds each, then abundance should be recorded as <3.*

ACGR flowers and flower buds grow on inflorescence stalks. Before the flowers open they are stalks with many small buds on them (~2-3" long)

Open flowers
*You can see the pollen-producing anthers emerging from the flower in the photo to the left. **Proportion of open flowers** should be recorded at the scale of individual flowers, not inflorescences (i.e. estimate the proportion of individual flowers that are open)!*

***Note**: flower phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "open flowers" you should also record **Y** to "flowers and flower buds"*

Fruits
The fruit is a pod that changes from green to tan, red-brown or brown and splits open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty pods that have already dropped all of their seeds.

Ripe fruits
A fruit is considered ripe when it has turned tan, red-brown or brown. Do not include empty pods that have already dropped all of their seeds.

***Note**: fruit phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "ripe fruits" you should also record **Y** to "fruits"*

*Phenophases not pictured: **Recent fruit or seed drop***