

Agave americana American century plant

Flowers for Bats

Why Observe?

This species is a critical source of nectar for the lesser-long nosed bats that migrate north from Mexico into Arizona every summer. Monitoring the flowering phenology of the century plant will help us understand the relationship between this species and the lesser-long nosed bat.

Data collected will be used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in conserving and protecting habitat for the lesser-long nosed bat.

Tips for Identification

Though they are known as century plants, this species does not live up to 100 years; they actually flower after 20-30 years. Century plants have a bluish-grey to a greyish-green color. Its succulent leaves are arranged in a rosette and reach up to 3-6 feet in height. The leaves are 3-6 feet long and 6-10 inches wide. The teeth on the edges of the leaves are 1 inch long. The flowering stalk can reach up to an astounding 40 feet. Yellow flowers emerge in the summer.

This species is found at an elevation of sea level to 1500 ft. They are most abundant in Arizona, California, Texas, Florida, and Mexico.

Be aware that there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a “?” for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.



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Agave americana
American century plant



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Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Agave americana*, the fruit is a capsule that changes from green to brown or blackish and splits open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty capsules that have already dropped all of their seeds.



Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Agave americana*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned brown or blackish and has split open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty capsules that have already dropped all of their seeds.

Phenophases not pictured: Recent fruit or seed drop