Nature's Notebook
Phenophase Photo Guide

Pachycereus pringlei
cardon cactus

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 cardon cactus will help us understand the relationship between this species and the lesser-long nosed bat.

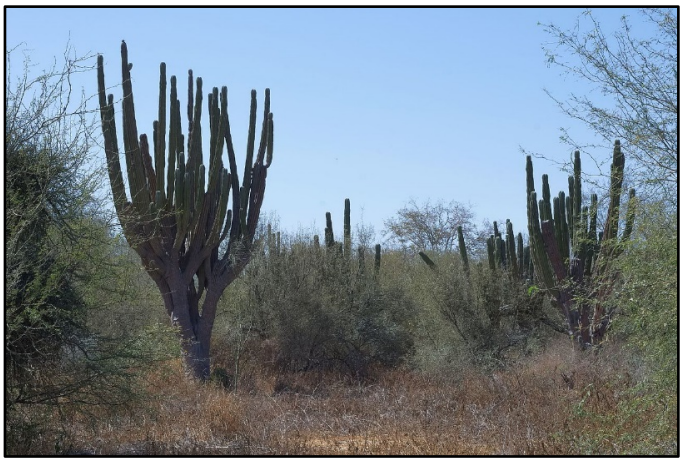
Data collected will be used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in conserving and protecting habitat for the lesser-long nosed bat.

Tips for Identification
The cardon is a green, columnar cactus that can reach up to a height of 60 feet. This species is not to be confused with the saguaro, which is similar in physiology. Unlike the saguaro, where there are branches stemming from the center, the cardon has branches stemming from the base, near the ground. As an individual matures, the clustered spines are lost and only the areoles are seen. During the late-Spring/early-Summer, individuals will produce milky-white flowers along the stem. The fruits are particularly spiny.

This species is found at an elevation of sea level to 3200 ft. They are most abundant in Baja California, Mexico; they are not found in Arizona.

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.

Stephen Marlett via Wikimedia Commons. Public domain



Carlos Valenzuela via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 4.0

This Phenophase Photo Guide has been vetted by the USA-NPN NCO. It is appropriate for use as a supplement to the Nature's Notebook *phenophase definition sheet for this species.*

Last updated: June 2019

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Winifred Frick

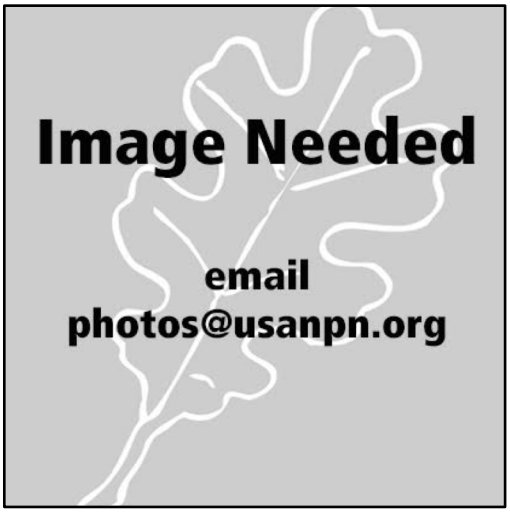
Flowers or flower buds

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.

Richard Bonnett via Wikimedia Commons. CC BY 2.0

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.



Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Pachycereus pringlei*, the fruit is a fleshy, juicy, very large berry covered in short tan spines that changes from green to reddish and splits open to expose red, pinkish or white pulp filled with seeds. Do not include empty fruits that no longer have any pulp or seeds.

Deborah Small

Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant.
For *Pachycereus pringlei*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned reddish and has split open to expose red, pinkish or white pulp filled with seeds. Do not include empty fruits that no longer have any pulp or seeds.

Phenophases not pictured: Recent fruit or seed drop