



# ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

## PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### **Turpentine Broom** *Thamnosma montana*

**DESCRIPTION:** Turpentine Broom, also known as Mojave Desert Rue, is in the citrus family. It is native to the deserts of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, where it grows in creosote scrub, juniper woodland, and other desert habitat. It is a low, mounding shrub with many straight, broomlike, gland-speckled branches. It is usually bare, without leaves, because the leaves are tiny and wither early. Tiny flowers occur at intervals along the stem. The petals are royal purple in color and, like most other parts of the plant, studded with visible resin glands. These glands emit a strong “turpentine” aroma when rubbed. The small fruit are leathery and are eaten by animals which then disperse the seeds. This plant was used by many Native American groups as a medicine, a ceremonial drug, and for pest control.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** Those who like the odor may wish to plant it where it can be touched. Otherwise, it can fit into any enhanced desert landscape or xeriscape. It is a larval host for the Giant Swallowtail butterfly.

#### **CULTURE:**



**Hardiness:** To 10°F.



**Sun tolerance:** Full sun is best



**Watering and feeding:** Low water use once established. Feeding is not necessary.



**Soil requirements:** Tolerates any soil, even caliche.



**Pruning:** None usually necessary.