

20. *Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa* - *Vachellia constricta* / *Calliandra eriophylla* - *Cottisia gracilis* Shrubland Association (P)

Buckhorn cholla - Whitethorn acacia / Fairyduster - Slender janusia Shrubland Association (P)

This shrubland association is characterized by an open (<10% cover) canopy (>2 m) of yellow paloverde (*Parkinsonia microphylla*) and a variable (5–20% cover) understory defined by a unique suite of microphyllus shrubs, most commonly dominated by whitethorn acacia (*Vachellia constricta*) and buckhorn cholla (*Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa*). Yellow paloverde (*P. microphylla*) is present in all examples of this association, typically growing as 2–3 meter tall trees, with cover of 1–3%. Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*) and ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) are consistent (>0.9), low-cover (<1%) associates. Buckhorn cholla (*C. acanthocarpa*) and whitethorn acacia (*V. constricta*) are consistent (>0.95) dominants that, when present, provide average cover of around 3% each, with some dense inclusions up to 10%. Berlandier's wolfberry (*Lycium berlandieri*), catclaw acacia (*Senegalia greggii*), creosote (*Larrea tridentata*), and prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.) are low-cover (1%) associates that may appear locally dominant over small or topographically complex areas. Fairyduster (*Calliandra eriophylla*) and slender janusia (*Cottisia gracilis*) are the two most abundant and consistent species, with average cover of 2% and 1%, respectively. Arizona spikemoss (*Selaginella arizonica*) is a patchy (0.60) associate that, when present, can provide dense inclusions of dominance, with extreme examples reaching up to 60% cover.

Common species

- *Parkinsonia microphylla*
- *Vachellia constricta*
- *Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa*
- *Calliandra eriophylla*
- *Cottisia gracilis*

This community covers 7.6% (762 ha/1,883 ac) of the Tucson Mountain District and is common along the north side of the Hugh Norris Trail ridgeline, surrounding Golden Gate Road, on both the higher backslopes and lower hillslopes. It occurs on generally north-trending backslopes of hills and mountain slopes from 792 to 1,127 meters (2,600–3,700 ft). The surface cover is characterized by a dominant layer of gravel, with some scattered rock and exposed bedrock.



