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## Vascular plants of a desert oasis: flora and ethnobotany of Quitobaquito, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona

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### Abstract

The vascular plant flora includes 271 species in 198 genera and 63 families. The Quitobaquito region supports c45% of the total flora of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, although the area constitutes only about 3.5% of the total area of the monument. Thirty-five are wetland plants; 33 species are not native to the region. Major vegetational and floristic changes have been due to human influences, which continue today. -from Authors

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Ethnobotany

Cactus

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 Oasis EARTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	 Vascular plant EARTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
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In addition to organ-pipe cacti, numerous other desert plants are found in the monument, including desert ironwoods, ocotillos (flowering spiny shrubs), saguaros (large candelabra-shaped cacti), creosote bushes, and the rare elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*). In years when there is adequate rainfall during the winter and early spring, wildflowers bloom profusely between February and April. Scorpions, tarantulas and other desert spiders, and the endangered Quitobaquito pupfish (*Cyprinodon eremus*) are among the smaller creatures found there. Saguaros (*Carnegiea gigantea*) in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, southwestern Arizona, U.S. © Corbis. Avian Use of Quitobaquito Springs Oasis, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona (Classic Reprint) Paperback – 17 October 2018. by R Roy Johnson (Author). See all formats and editions Hide other formats and editions. As a result of historic disturbances, Quitobaquito Springs passed to National Park Service management in a highly disturbed condition. Photographs of the area from the first half of the twentieth century show a shallow and broad expanse of water surrounded by a largely open area with little woody vegetation. Shortly after National Park Service acquisition, the open water area was drained, bulldozed, and diked into a discrete pond. Today, Quitobaquito Springs is near the southwest corner of the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, a 333,688-acre (133,825 hectares) biosphere reserve that shares the international border with the Mexican state of Sonora. In fact, Quitobaquito Springs is only 200 yards (182 meters) north of the international border. Over 270 species of plants, over a hundred species of birds and uncountable numbers of insect species count on Quitobaquito Springs as the only source of life-giving water in this vast sea of endless deserts. The pond's most famous residents are the Quitobaquito pupfish, *Cyprinodon macularius ememus*, shown here.