

# Coast to Cactus Glossary

## *Chaparral*

**Adaptation:** Physical structures, characteristics or behaviors that allow an organism to survive and reproduce in its environment.

**Arid:** Having little or no rain; too dry or barren to support vegetation.

**Burl:** Rounded knotty growth on a tree.

**Chaparral:** A vegetation type dominated by shrubs and small trees, especially evergreen species with small, thick leaves such as chamise.

**Chamise:** An evergreen shrub with small narrow leaves.

**Drought:** A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.

**Ecology:** Branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environment.

**Ecosystem:** Everything that exists in a habitat.

**Endemic:** Plant or animal native to a particular region.

**Fire Beetle:** Beetles that have sensors called pit organs that can detect radiation from a forest fire. They can sense fire fifty miles away. These beetles mate and lay eggs in burnt branches and stems.

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**Fire ecology:** A scientific discipline concerned with natural processes involving fire in an ecosystem and the ecological effects.

**Geophytes:** A plant that grows from an underground plant bud like a bulb or tuber.

**Germinate:** Begin to grow and put out shoots after a period of dormancy - a time of rest or sleep.

**Habitat:** The natural area where an animal lives.

**Invasive:** A non-native which has usually arrived by human activity and which causes harm or poses a threat to the native organisms.

**Native:** Plants and animals endemic or naturalized to a given area or region.

**Non-Native Plants:** A species living outside its native range.

**Manzanita:** an evergreen dwarf shrub, native to California.

**Perennial:** A plant that lasts or existing for a long time; enduring or continually recurring.

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**Predator:** An animal that hunts and kills other animals for food.

**Prescribed fire:** Fires set to help control the wildfires. The problem with prescribed fires is there is already too much fire in the chaparral areas.

**Prey:** An animal hunted or caught for food.

**Pyrogenie habitat :** A habitat in which fire plays an important part.

**Root cambium:** Secondary growth that occurs in many roots and usually results in the thickening of the root diameter by the addition of vascular tissue.

**Serotiny:** An adaptation occurring in some plants in which seeds are released due to a specific event in the environment. (e.g. some pinecones only release their seeds during a fire.)

**Scrub:** Vegetation consisting mainly of brushwood or stunted forest growth.

**Shrubland:** A plant community characterized by vegetation dominated by shrubs, often also including grasses and herbs.

**Urbanization:** To change from rural to city-like.

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**Wildfire:** A large, destructive fire that spreads quickly over woodland or brush.

**Yucca:** A plant of the agave family with stiff swordlike leaves and spikes of white bell-shaped flowers that are dependent upon the yucca moth for fertilization.