

Mormon Tea

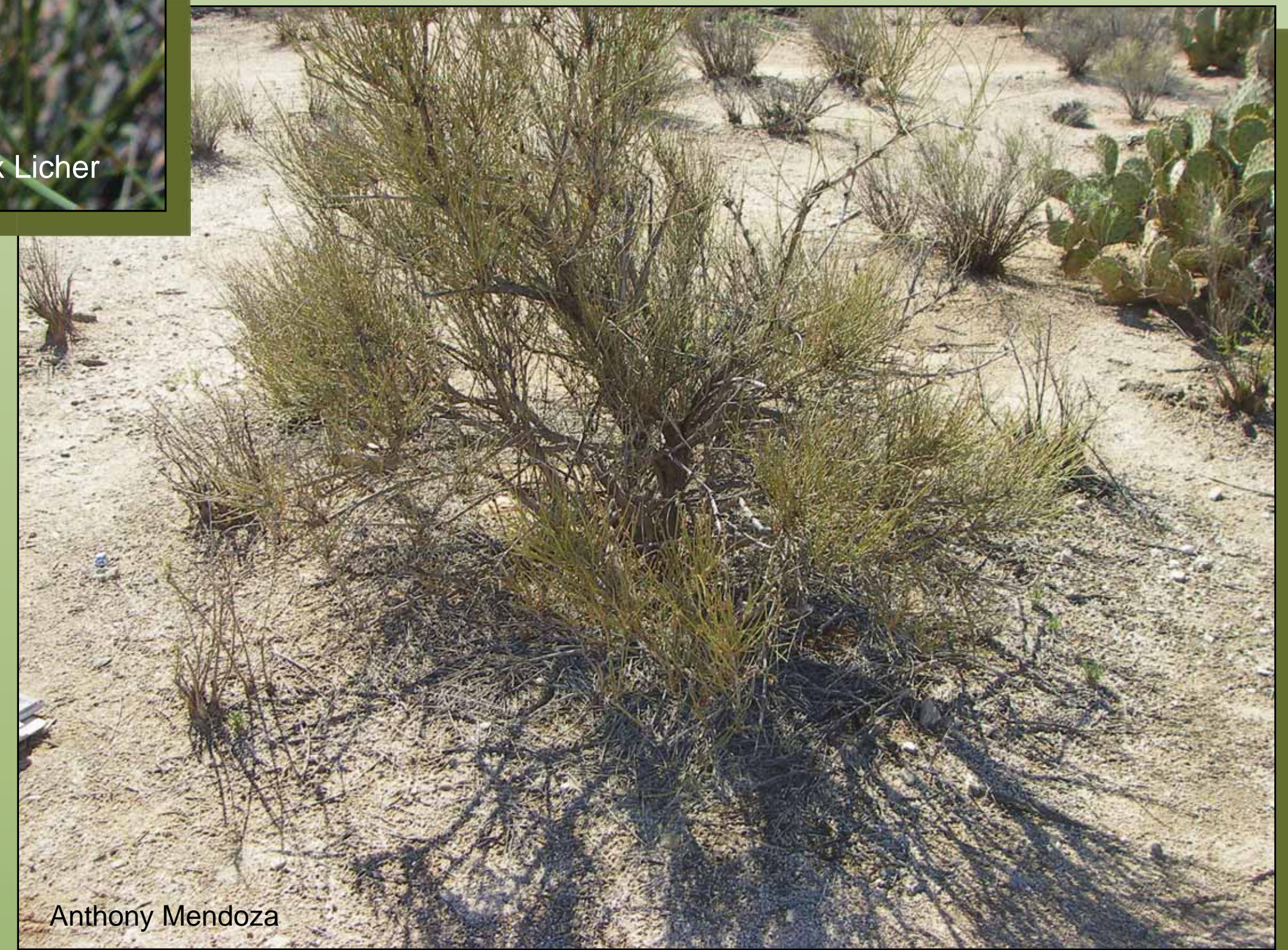
Ephedraceae, *Ephedra sp.*

Ephedra is often seen in deserts. It is an evergreen gymnosperm with photosynthetic stems and leaves reduced to scales at the nodes. The male and female cones are born on separate plants.

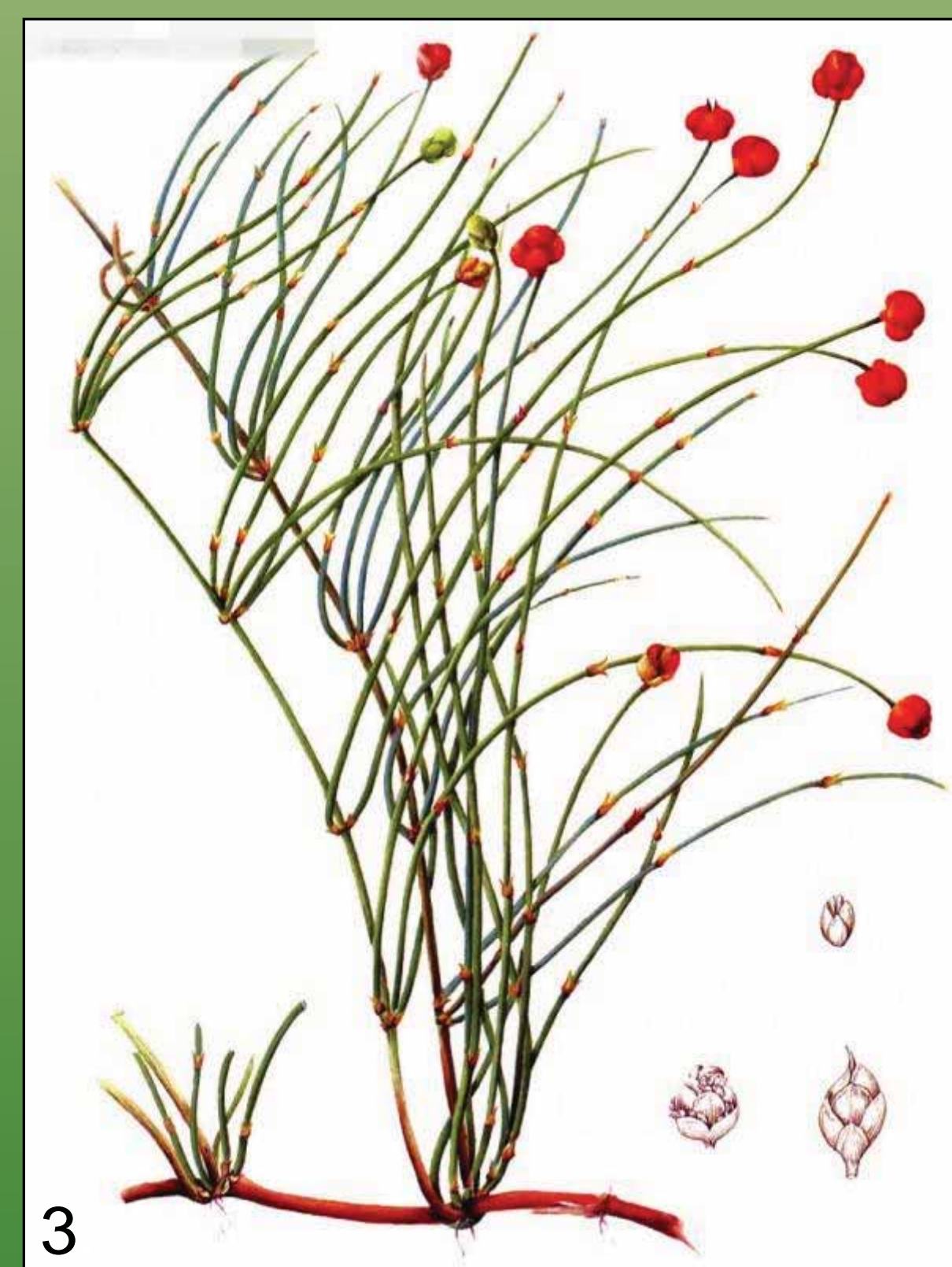


Ephedra trifurca (Longleaf jointfir) and *Ephedra torreyana* (Torrey's jointfir) are a common sight on the Jornada Plain.

As the name suggests, Mormon tea was used as a tea for both native Americans and early Mormon settlers. Concocting drinks from the Ephedra species' wasn't only a north American past time, but has been used medicinally by the Chinese for over 5,000 years for such common ailments as asthma, colds, and hay fever.¹



Ephedra contains the alkaloids ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which have stimulating effects for the brain, heart rate, constriction of blood vessels and opening of the bronchial passages. As a dietary supplement, ephedra increases metabolism by increasing body temperatures.¹ Ephedra dietary supplements were banned in 2004 for cardiovascular complications which could result in death.²



Ephedra sinica or ma huang, is found in Asia. This is the most popular Ephedra used for supplements

1. Abourashed E, El-Alfy A, Khan I, Walker L (2003). "Ephedra in perspective--a current review". *Phytother Res* 17 (7): 703–12.
2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Ephedra is often seen in deserts. It has evergreen photosynthetic stems and leaves reduced to scales, often used for identification. *Federal Register*. 2004;69(28):6788–6854.
3. <http://herbal.bf-1.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/%E8%8D%89%E9%BA%BB%E9%BB%84-4.jpg>