

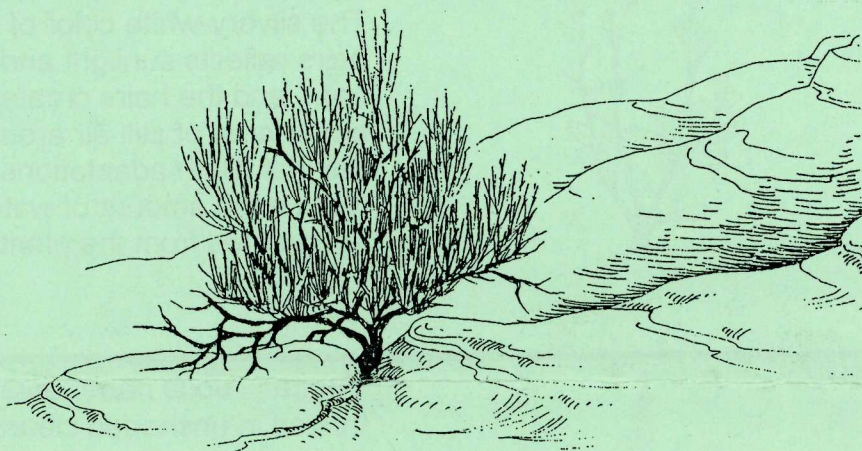
Colorado



National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

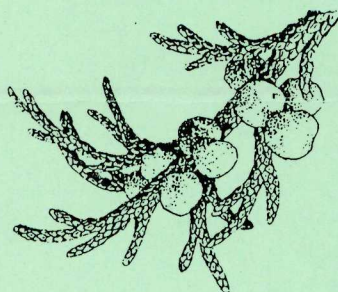
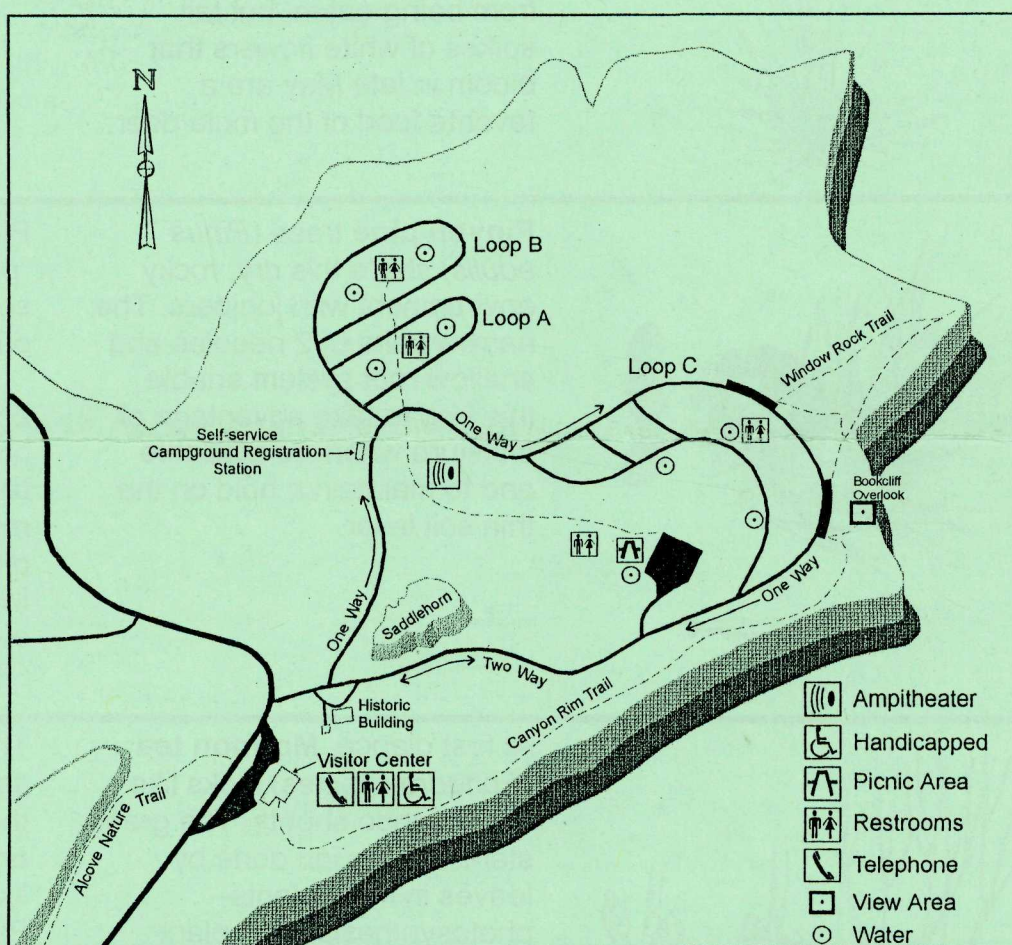
WINDOW ROCK TRAIL

Canyon Rim Trail
and the Book Cliffs Overlook



From the visitor center, hike along the Canyon Rim Trail to the Window Rock Trail. Both trails wind along the cliff edge with views of Sentinel Rock and Window Rock, and of the Book Cliffs in the distance. It takes 30-45 minutes to walk the entire loop back to the visitor center. There are no numbered posts along either trail, but this brochure will help you identify the dominant plants. The entire walk is through the pinyon-juniper zone--a plant community found within the Colorado Plateau between elevations of 4,500 and 6,500 feet (1372-1981 m).

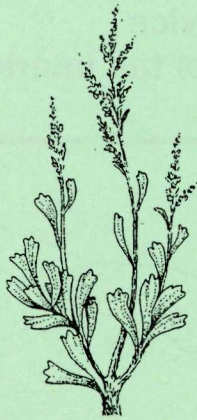
Saddlehorn Area



At the beginning of the trail, the **Utah juniper** (*Juniperus osteosperma*) tree dominates. Juniper "leaves" are actually tiny scales covered with a waxy coating to conserve water. During summer, the blue berries make the tree easy to identify.

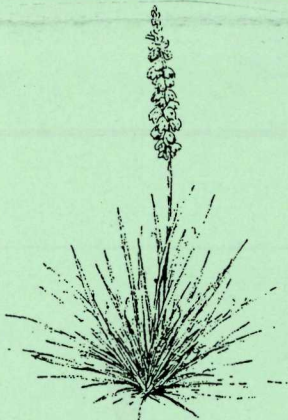
Rodents and birds eat these fruit. Humans have used the fruit, too. Ute people pounded the bark into a soft diaper for babies, and the fibrous bark--which smolders well--was used to transport fire.

Among the juniper branches, look for strange, blue cone-like growths. These are known as galls. A gall occurs when an insect lays eggs in a leaf. The gall forms to house and protect the eggs, providing the larvae with nourishment until they are ready to emerge into another phase of their life cycle.



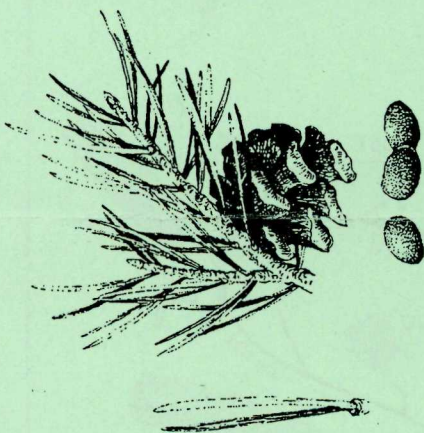
Like many plants that grow in the high desert, **dwarf sagebrush** (*Artemisia arbuscula*) has small, narrow leaves covered with tiny hairs. The silvery-white color of the hairs reflects sunlight and heat, and the hairs create a buffer area of still air around the leaf. Both adaptations reduce the amount of water evaporated from the plant.

American Indians have used sage leaves as an antibiotic for wounds, and as a strong tea to treat common ailments like colds, headache, and nausea. Sagebrush is a food source for mule deer in the spring and fall.



Yucca (*Yucca harrimaniae*) thrives in unshaded clearings. A close encounter with this plant explains its common name--Spanish bayonet! The sharp leaves protect the plant from being eaten, but tall spikes of white flowers that bloom in late May are a favorite food of the mule deer.

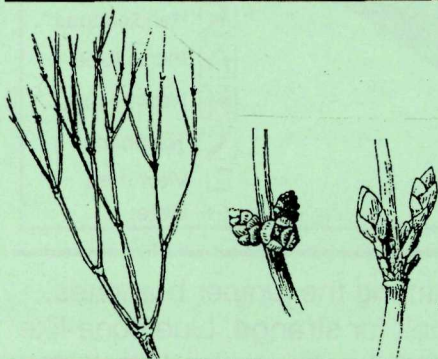
Wiry fibers in the yucca leaves provided Utes with a durable, multipurpose material for weaving items such as sandals.



Pinyon pine trees (*Pinus edulis*) share this dry, rocky environment with junipers. The narrow pairs of 2 needles and shallow root system enable this tree to take advantage of moisture when it's available and to maintain a hold on the thin soil layer.

Pinyons produce pinyon or "pine" nuts, favored as a food source by humans and many other animals.

Look among the pinyon branches for scaly, gold or brown clumps of **pinyon dwarf mistletoe** (*Arceuthobium divaricatum*), a parasite that lives on, and that will eventually kill, the pines.



At first glance, **Mormon tea** (*Ephedra* species) looks like tiny bamboo shoots. The green stems do the job done by leaves in most plants--photosynthesis. This plant actually has pairs of tiny scales instead of leaves.

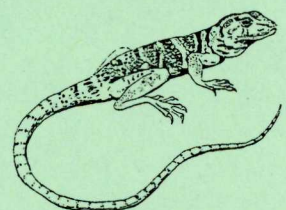
This unique modification serves the same purpose as the narrow leaves of the pine and sagebrush and the scale-like leaves of the juniper. Pioneers brewed a tea from the stems to use as a laxative.

Turn left on the spur trail to the overlook. Just below you is the window carved out of a crack in the rock.

The same erosional forces--water and wind--carved both this feature and the canyons and monoliths elsewhere in the monument.

Have you seen any animals along the trail? Feel the temperature of the sand in a sunny area, and then in a shaded area.

Does this give you a clue as to where the animals might be? Please refrain from chasing or attempting to catch any lizards or other animals!



yellow-headed collared lizard