



Friends of SNOW CANYON

What's That Plant... a Holly??

One of the “Core Plants” in Snow Canyon can easily be mistaken for a Holly with its holly-like leaves... but it is actually an Oak that bears acorns.

Called either Shrub Live Oak or Turbinella Oak, ***Quercus turbinella*** can be found extensively throughout Snow Canyon. The name *turbinella*, meaning "like a little top", refers to the acorn.

Shrub Live Oak often grows in cracks, drainages and slick rock depressions. This species occurs in only three Utah counties: Washington, San Juan and Kane.

Look For...

Foliage: Gray-green, evergreen leaves that are about 1" long. They are prickly, edged with large, spine-tipped teeth. The new foliage is tinged red.

Flowers: Non showy, yellowish-green catkins appear in early spring at about the same time of the new growth.

Fruit: Acorns smaller than an inch appear in summer and are eaten by birds and mammals.



Habit: Much branched, thicket forming shrub around 6-12 feet tall with a spreading crown. It may become tree-like, reaching up to 15-20 feet in height. They spread by sprouting from underground rhizomes, often forming dense groves. These plants provide shelter for many birds and animals. Early settlers used the limbs and trunks for fence posts.

Shrub Live Oak

Quercus turbinella

Fagaceae — Beech Family



More Oaks...

Another type of Oak that may be found at high elevations in the park (above 4,500 feet) is ***Quercus gambelii* or Gambel Oak.**

Gambel Oak has a typical oak leaf about 4" long with rounded lobes. It is not evergreen and loses its leaves in the winter. It is a clump forming shrub or small tree with an average height of 20-30 feet.



Quercus gambelii

Many Oaks easily hybridize as do these two species resulting in a hybrid named ***Quercus gambelii* x *turbinella* — Hybrid Oak.** The hybrids are only partially evergreen and are most easily detected in the winter when Gambel Oak is without leaves.