Friends of SNOW CANYON

What's That Plant??

When in flower, Cliffrose fills the desert air with a sweet smelling perfume. The flowers resemble those of a Wild Rose and the plants often grow on rocky slopes and cliffs, hence the common name.

In Snow Canyon, you will see Cliffrose plants here and there, but they are much more prolific farther north. When driving to Pine Valley from Central, you pass through an area where they are very abundant. The U.S. Forest Service has put up an informational placard there about this plant.

Look For...

Foliage: Small, evergreen leaves with **five** lobes. Three lobes are at the apex and one more lobe is just below on either side. There are tiny, resinous gland dots on the leaves giving them a crusty white appearance.

Flowers and Fruit: Many flowers literally cover the plants in mid to late spring. They are creamy white to yellowish and ½ to 1" across. Their strong fragrance and nectar attracts bees and a wide array of other pollinators.
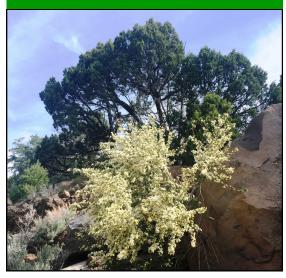
Long, showy seed plumes in white to pink tones occur in the fall. Rodents feed on the seeds and deer browse this plant during the winter.

Cliffrose
Purshia stansburyana
Rosaceae — Rose Family

So... What's *This* Plant??

Bitterbrush is a close relative of Cliffrose and can also be found in Snow Canyon.

Look for this plant along the northern part of West Canyon Road.

Bitterbrush
Purshia tridentata

These two plants look very similar but Bitterbrush can be distinguished from Cliffrose by its *three* lobed, wedge shaped leaves. It has a more spreading habit (up to 8 feet wide) and grows 2 to 6 feet in height. These two species may also hybridize.

With exceptional drought tolerance, Bitterbrush is well adapted to desert life and may live to be many decades old. Despite its name, it is eaten by wildlife and livestock, especially deer.

Habit: Cliffrose commonly grows 4 to 9 feet tall and tends to be upright. Its dark bark shreds easily and was used by Native Americans to make ropes, sandals, clothing and padding for cradle boards. The thin, straight branches were ideal for making arrows.