

Pariette Cactus

Sclerocactus brevispinus



Pariette Cactus / USFWS

What does the Pariette cactus look like?

Pariette cactus is a small barrel-shaped cactus. Its flowers are pink to violet, and are funnel-shaped. These cacti usually grow about 3 inches tall, although they can sometimes grow taller. The stems are ribbed and have whitish gray, 0.2 - 0.6 inch long spines radiating from clusters. The center of each cluster typically has at least one very short spine with a strongly hooked tip, and additional central spines are often lacking.

Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*), a closely related species, is typically larger than the Pariette cactus.

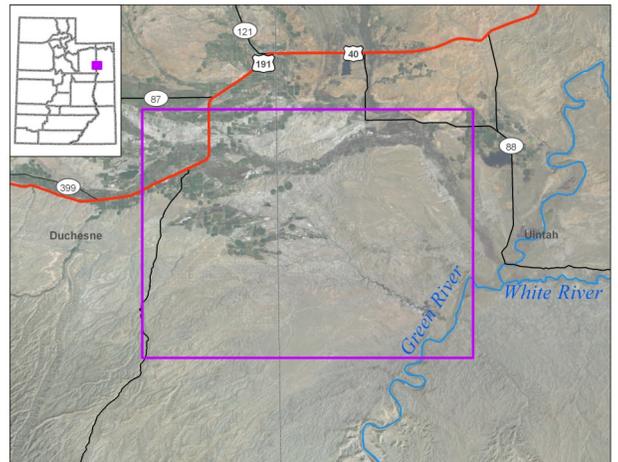


Close up of the spines / Bekee Hotze, USFWS

However, the ranges of these two species overlap, and where they overlap, the species hybridize. Thus, in the hybrid zone some individuals can have traits of both species.

Where does the Pariette cactus occur?

Populations of the endemic Pariette cactus are restricted to one area about 10 miles long by 5 miles wide astride the Duchesne-Uintah County boundary on Bureau of Land Management, Ute Tribe, State of Utah, and private land. This cactus is generally found on fine soils in clay badlands derived from the Uinta formation. This species is often associated with soils covered by flat, angular, varnished rocks (“desert pavement”), although it can be found growing on other soil types. It usually grows with other desert shrub species, including shadscale saltbush.



Species Range / USFWS

Legal Status under the Endangered Species Act

The Pariette cactus was listed as threatened on October 11, 1979 (44 FR 58868) as *Sclerocactus glaucus*. In 2007, we recognized that uplisting Pariette cactus from threatened to endangered was warranted but precluded by higher priority actions. In 2009, we recognized Pariette cactus as a distinct species, *Sclerocactus brevispinus*, and retained its threatened status (74 FR 47112).

Why does the Pariette cactus need protection?

At the time of listing, this species was threatened by oil and gas development, recreational off-road vehicle use, and illegal collection. Oil and gas development remains a substantial threat to the species because the entire known range of Pariette cactus occurs within approved energy field development projects. This species is still highly sought by cactus collectors because of its showy flowers. Climate change is another threat that is likely to drastically alter this species' habitat in the foreseeable future.

What have we done to recover the Pariette cactus?

We are revising the recovery plan for this species. In the interim, we published a recovery outline in April 2010 that lists necessary actions to recover the species. We are working with our Federal, Tribal, State, and private partners to implement these recovery efforts.

We are working with the BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Ute Tribe to develop core conservation areas and management guidelines for Pariette cactus. We are also developing a range-wide, long-term monitoring plan for Pariette cactus.



Pariette bud / Bekee Hotze, USFWS



Bekee Hotze / USFWS

Since 2006, we have participated in the public-private partnership of the Uinta Basin Rare Plant Forum. Members of this forum work to identify conservation actions for rare plants, including Pariette cactus. We are funding research to study the effects of oil and gas development on rare cactus species, including Pariette cactus.

What do we need to do to recover the Pariette cactus?

In the recovery outline (April 2010), we identified the following actions for species recovery:

- We recommend comprehensive surveys throughout the species' range be completed.
- We recommend accurately delineating the range of Pariette cactus in relationship to Uinta Basin hookless cactus
- We recommend that ongoing monitoring efforts continue and expand to include a larger and a more representative sample of occupied sites.
- We encourage land management agencies to establish formal land management designations to protect this species for the long-term.
- We recommend installing livestock enclosures to protect Pariette cactus.
- We must protect Pariette cactus from illegal collection.

More Information

To learn more about the Pariette cactus and conservation efforts on behalf of the species, please visit the following sites:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program's website contains Federal Register notices and recovery documents: www.fws.gov/endangered

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation (IPaC) System: ecos.fws.gov/ipac

The Mountain-Prairie Regional Office's website: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/plants/>

The Utah Field Office's website: www.fws.gov/utahfieldoffice

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
PO Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Utah Field Office
(801) 975 - 3330

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