

REGULATIONS OF THE PARK

- Do not disturb or damage animals and plants.
- Do not collect or damage rocks, minerals or geological features and archaeological evidences.
- Do not drive off of market tracks.
- Do not write, paint or carve graffiti.
- Do not leave any garbage, toilet paper or body waste.
- Do not use wild plants for firewood.
- Camp only in designated areas.

Offenders are subject to prosecution according to the terms of Law n. 102 of 1983

TAKE NOTHING WITH YOU LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND



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Prickly Acacia

Acacia nilotica

A pioneer species with large thorns that, unlike the umbrella thorn acacia, has long, rather straight pods, the prickly acacia was probably the first source of gum arabic, which comes from its sap



and which in ancient times was used in mummification procedures or as an adhesive for the pigments used in ink and paintings.

To this day the gum is

used in popular medicinal practices as a remedy for skin burns.

The wood of this tree, which is twice as hard as teak, is utilized for building, furniture making, as props in mines and as material for the production of tools and carts. Thanks to its elevated calorific properties, it also makes for excellent firewood.



Umbrella Thorn Acacia

Acacia tortilis

This acacia tree, whose scientific name derives from the spiral shape of its pods, has very robust and sharp thorns that can even puncture a tire.

A very similar species, which also grows in the park, is the *Acacia ehrebergiana*, but this latter is more like a shrub and has leaves that at most consist of two or three pairs of leaflets called "fins".



Due to the extreme climatic conditions of its environment, the *Acacia tortilis* grows quite slowly, and a tree about ten meters high may be as much as 100 years old. The Bedouin greatly respect this tree and consider it sacred, because according to the Bible the Israelites made the Ark of the Covenant with its wood.

There is a small acacia wood along the road leading to the *Djara Cave* in the White Desert National Park.



Nile Tamarisk

Tamarix nilotica

This plant is common throughout the White Desert National Park, and succeeds in blocking the sand with its roots, thus forming a barrier against wind erosion in the desert. Some tamarisks have



Tamarix nilotica as ideal protection against the scorching sun and the hot desert wind.



"created" large and stable hills that can be as much ten meters high.

In order to eliminate excessive mineral salt, these shrubs secrete a saline liquid, a form of adaptation that is vital for their very survival.

Many animals use the leafy branches of

Salt Tree

Nitraria retusa

In the White Desert National Park this plant grows in most of the *Wadi Hennis* and *Rajah*.

It is a very important species because its sweet fruit is

eaten by the small number of gazelles that now live in the park. The locals use the leaves of this tree to reduce swelling and the

extract is utilized as a narcotic, as well as to cure diabetes, since it lowers glycemia levels, while the wood makes for good firewood.



THE FLORA OF THE WHITE DESERT NATIONAL PARK



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Date Palm

Phoenix dactylifera

The date palm has been known for its sweet and energy-rich fruit since antiquity. The ancient Egyptians considered it the symbol of fertility, the Carthaginians represented it in their coins and



monuments, and the Greeks and Romans used its an ornament for triumphal celebrations.

In Christian tradition, date palm leaves are a symbol of peace and refer to Christ's entering

Jerusalem, while in Islamic tradition the plant is considered a symbol of spiritual activity and is thus semi-sacred, which is the reason why destroying it will lead to divine punishment.

Unfortunately, the date palm is now being attacked by a parasite, the red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), for which no effective remedy has yet been found.



Camel Thorn

Alhagi graecorum

This plant is quite widespread in the White Desert National Park, growing mainly on land that was once used for watermelon cultivation, and despite its many thorns it is a favorite food of camels and goats.

In popular medical practices the camel thorn is used as a laxative and vermifuge and to relieve rheumatic

pain. Furthermore, it is known to have antispasmodic effects, acting against gout, sugar diabetes, kidney stones, tuberculosis, and inflammation of the joints, and it also appears to have properties that afford protection against some venoms.



Jointed Anabasis

Anabasis articulata

The jointed anabasis is a shrub that is very resistant to drought and grows mainly in highland wadis. Its leaves grow close to the stem and it has small yellow flowers that when mature emit an unpleasant odor.



Rich in potassium and saponine, the jointed anabasis is used as a detergent and in the past the stem was used to produce edible gum.

Moreover, it is a vulnerary plant, that is, it can heal wounds and sores.



Kharasan Thorn

Fagonia arabica

Growing in various zones throughout the White Desert National Park, this plant prefers sandy soils and has beautiful pinkish-purple flowers and numerous thorns.

In popular medicinal practice the *Fagonia arabica* is used in infusions to relieve stomach pain, and together with other herbs helps to cure high fever.

It seems that it also has properties useful against cancer of the liver. Furthermore, it is a good antiseptic and helps purify the blood.



White Bean-Caper

Zygophyllum album

This perennial shrub, which is widespread in the entire White Desert National Park, may be as much as 20-30 centimeters high and has small, fleshy leaves rich in water and mineral salts.

Thanks to its highly developed root apparatus, which occupies an enormous amount of space compared to the aerial part, and to the presence of small hairs on its leaves that succeed in retaining the



scarce nocturnal humidity, the white bean-caper is able to withstand drought quite successfully.

It contains chemical substances that act positively on sugar metabolism and the intestines as well as against diabetes.

Broom Creeper

Cocculus pendulus

This shrub, which belongs to the Menispermaceae family, is rare in the White Desert National Park.

It appears to have various medicinal properties, including anti-cancer action due to the presence of alkaloids in its leaves and stems.

The entire plant is used to make bitters and the fruit is the basic component of an intoxicating drink.

In folk medicine the roots are used to cure yellow fever and hepatitis, while the leaves are utilized as an ingredient in the preparation of medicaments to increase fertility and regulate menstruation.

