

Whitestem Milkweed

Asclepias albicans S. Watson

White-stemmed Milkweed, Wax Milkweed

The tallest milkweed in North America: chalk-white, essentially leafless stems rising to ten feet from rocky desert slopes in the Sonoran Desert, tipped with clusters of cream flowers in late winter.



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Key facts

Field	Value	Field	Value
Status	Native	Height	3ft-10ft
Flowers	cream, white	Bloom	January to May and November to December
Light	Full sun	Soil	Dry
USDA zones	9-11	Leaves	opposite, threadlike
Sap	Milky latex	Roots	Deep taproot, resents transplanting
Stratification	30 days cold-moist	States	3

How to identify it

- Very tall, wand-like, waxy white stems in a clump.
- Leaves tiny and quickly deciduous, so the plant looks leafless.
- Blooms in winter and early spring, unusually for the genus.

Ecology

A winter-flowering desert nectar source of real value when almost nothing else is in bloom.

Growing

A dramatic specimen for frost-free desert gardens; needs rocky drainage and full exposure.

Cautions

Standard milkweed cautions.

Where it grows

Arizona, California, Nevada

More photographs



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References

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- GBIF: <https://www.gbif.org/species/3170348>
- iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/62299>
- BONAP county map: <https://bonap.net/MapGallery/County/Asclepias%20albicans.png>

<https://milkweedusa.com/species/whitestem-milkweed/>